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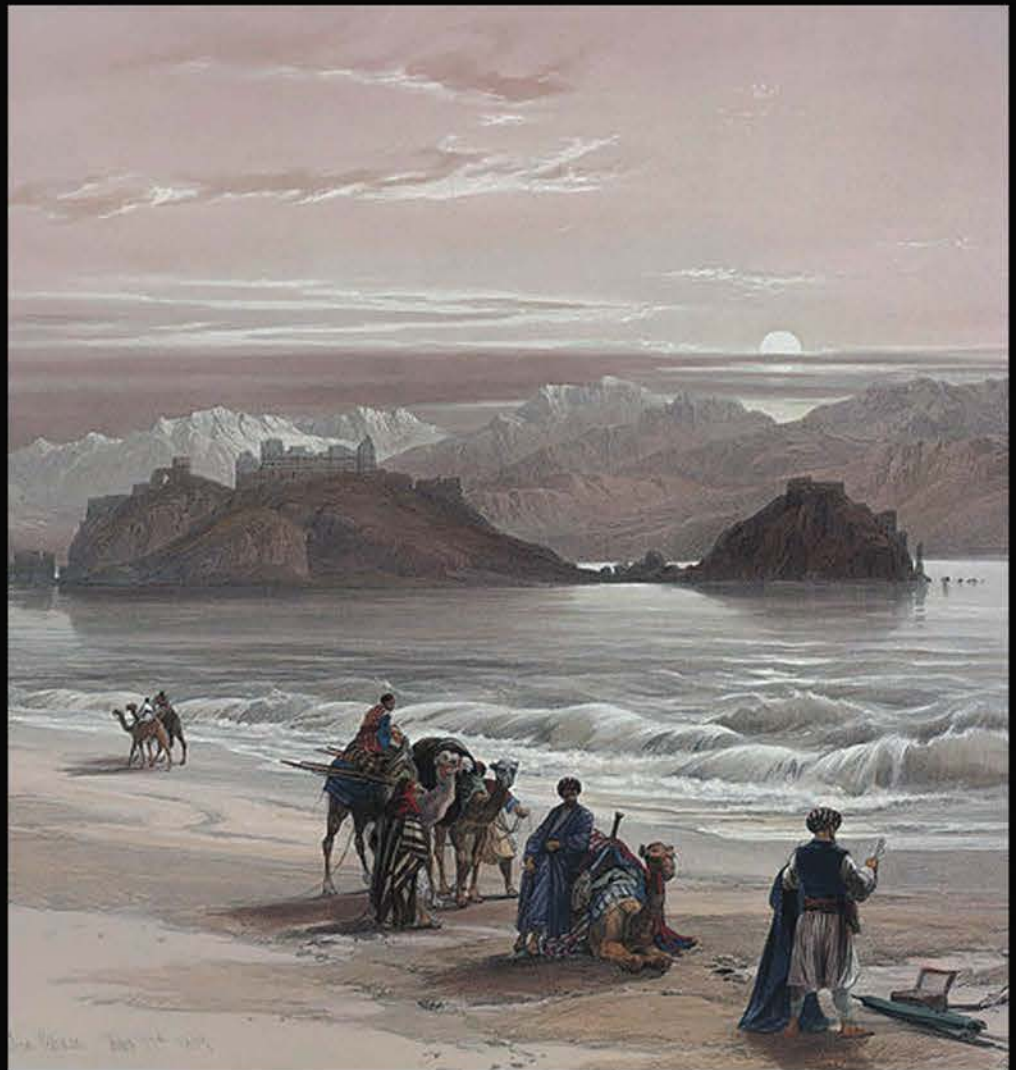


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# DARK CRUSADES



**Visit the Holy Lands in  
Call of Cthulhu:  
Dark Ages**



# DARK CRUSADES

MYTHOS IN THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

A MONOGRAPH FOR CALL OF CTHULHU DARK AGES

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## Introduction

This book is a sourcebook written as an expansion for *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* and will require a copy of that book to make full use of the rules herein. There may be a few references to the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook in different sections of this work, but possession of this book is not required to use Dark Crusades. Some entries and material from *Call of Cthulhu* core rules may be reprinted or modified for use in Dark Crusades, in any cases where there exists a different version of a Mythos entity the *Dark Crusades* version supersedes the one out of the core rulebook.

All efforts have been made by the author to make this manuscript as historically accurate as possible. With that said certain liberties have been taken with historical events and personalities of the Crusades to make for more provocative game play and horrific atmosphere. Given the religious nature of this sourcebook it must be clearly stated that the author does not intend to favor one religious tradition over the other or to show one to be more correct. Religion is a very real motivating force during this time period, which is one the author has decided not omit, its inclusion despite it being a politically sensitive topic. Dark Crusades includes many degenerate and misguided cultists who perhaps at one time where pious Christians, Jews or Muslims but now are deranged by the madness of the Mythos. These cults and cultists are possess twisted reflections of these other more noble traditions and should not be confused with their non-Mythos counterparts.

Finally, to those historians or hobbyists who are well versed in this time period, all errors and omissions in this manuscript are humbly the responsibility of its author. The author of this work is not a scholar or expert in the Crusades and undoubtedly has made a few mistakes in which he humbly apologizes for.

## Glossary of Terms

**Assassins:** A pseudo-religious secret order of Muslim terrorists and killers also called *Nizaris*.

**Atabeg:** A Turkish regent ruling in the stead of a young prince.

**Ahl al-kitab:** Terms means “People of the Book” referring to Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians.

**Ayyubid:** A royal dynasty in Egypt and Syria founded by Saladin.

**Bezant:** A gold coin from the Byzantine Empire also used throughout the Levant and Outremer.

**Caliph:** The successor of the prophet Mohamed, title of the ruler of an Islamic state.

**Dinar:** A gold coin used throughout the Levant and Outremer.

**Emir:** A Turkish title for local governor or field commander in an army.

**Frank:** Term used to refer to all Western Europeans by the Muslim world.

**Hajj:** A religious pilgrimage to Mecca practiced by all Muslims.

**Hospitallers:** Religious order of knights tasked with protecting pilgrims and helping the sick.

**Imam:** A Shi’ite Muslim religious leader.

**Jihad:** Muslim holy war or religious struggle.

**Jizya:** A tribute paid by the Alh al-kitab (see above) to their Muslim rulers for protection.

**Mamluke:** A slave soldier usually Turkish fighting in a Muslim army.

Outremer: French term for the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Crusader states.

**Qadi:** A judge in the Muslim world.

**Saracen:** A term used by the Franks and Byzantines to refer to all Muslims in the Levant.

**Saahir:** A scholar sorcerer in the Muslim world often accomplished in alchemy.

Seljuk Turk: Nomadic warriors from the Central Asian steppe, who proceed to conquer much of the Muslim Levant.

**Sufi:** An ascetic mystic from the Shi’ite Islamic sect.

**Sunni:** The majority orthodox Muslim sect.

## Dark Crusades

**Templars:** A religious military order of knights tasked protecting pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem.

**Turcopole:** Someone who is of both Frankish and Saracen blood.

### INVESTIGATORS IN THE HOLY LAND

*If anyone seizes a bishop let him be treated as an outlaw. If anyone seizes or robs, monks, or clergymen, or nuns, or their servants, or pilgrims or merchants, let him be anathema.*

-Pope Urban II, excerpt from speech at the Council of Clermont 1095 C.E.

### Motivations of the Crusaders

During the Council of Clermont on November 27, 1095 Pope Urban II explained that participating in the first crusade would be a penitential act absolving the participant of all their sins present and previous. Medieval society did not have the strong secular separation of state as modern society has. Religion was a key motivator in many of the lives of the men and women of medieval Europe.

Not all reasons for the Crusades were purely religious in foundation. Many of the crusading knights were second or third sons or petty nobles who owned very little land and decided to seek out plunder in the holy land. One of the motivations of the church was to get many of the feuding knights out of Europe, to stop the sacking and assaults on clergymen which was not uncommon in Europe.

Additional legal incentives were passed by the church for crusaders. Debts were forgiven or deferred, legal judgments expedited, fief service delayed and exemptions from excommunications and finally the honor of being one of the *Ferosolimitanus* or pilgrim who had gone to Jerusalem. The title of *Ferosolimitanus* brought great honor and prestige to their families upon return to Europe.

The Crusades brought people from all segments of life from the peasant to the noble lord of the realm. It was one of the few occasions that an army composed of professional and

### Transliteration and Terminology

Given the numerous sources and translations during this period, some words will have multiple ways to spell them (for example the word 'jinn' which is also spelled 'djinn' further more it is anglicized as 'genie'. For our purposes in this sourcebook the author has chosen to use one spelling and no diacritical marks for pronunciation. The reasons are twofold; first the author is not native speaker of Arabic, French or Latin and last but not least those who are more qualified in these areas probably know where these marks go or need to be added anyways.

non-professional soldiers regardless of status marched together by choice for one goal.

### Franks, Saracens and Outremer

After the conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade the Kingdom of Jerusalem was referred to as Outremer- a French word meaning "the land overseas," including counties or "crusader states" of Edessa, Tripoli, and Antioch.

The term Saracen was adapted by the crusaders from the Byzantines using the original Arabic word *Sharkeyn* "eastern peoples." Its use denoted all Muslims; similarly, the Saracens use the term *Franj* or Frank to denote all crusaders. Not all crusaders were of French or Frankish descent; initially the Franks were the majority in the First Crusade. Many other ethnic nationalities from Europe participated including, but not limited to the Byzantines, Italians, Germans French and English. The Muslims were comprised of Armenians, Syrians and Turks respectively.

The last population in the multi-cultural interchange is the Eastern Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians referred to as *Alh al-kitab*, "People of the Book". The native non-Muslim inhabitants had to pay a special tax when under Muslim rule.

When creating an investigator who is one of the People of the Book, count their occupation choices as ‘Saracen’. These natives have adapted to the lifestyles and customs of their rulers for the most part. Please note that small cosmetic changes may need to be made for some occupations. For example: *A Jewish investigator selects the Sufi (hermit) occupation which can be called a Cabbalist instead and his/her ‘magic’ is derived from mysticism and numerology.*

### Gender Roles

It is recommended that a player seeking to create a Frankish or Saracen female investigator consult the keeper before proceeding, because more thought and preparation will be required when running a historical game during this time period.

### Frankish Female Investigators

As mentioned in the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* main rule book, the medieval world is largely patriarchal, limiting the roles that female investigators can play. Females oftentimes did join the Crusades accompanying family members and their husbands (most famous example Eleanor of Aquitaine). Many of the roles they played historically have to do with tending the sick, building fortifications and a variety of support roles. There are a few rare historical accounts from Muslim of observers of women dressed in armor and participating in some battles.

In the spirit of an entertaining scenario or story the keeper can choose to relax some of the historical restrictions on gender. It is recommended that restrictions on Bedouin Warrior, Knights of a Religious Order, any clerics or priest for Franks remain in place. But as always the Keeper has the final say.

The following occupations are well suited for female investigators: Beggar, Craftsman/Shop keeper, Peasant, Farmer, and Nun.

### Saracen Female Investigators

The roles of women in the medieval Islamic world are considerably restricted based on gen-

der biases prevalent in society and under *Shar’ia* (Islamic law), many of the occupations were strictly domestic and related to the household they grew up in. A small percentage of women were educated if they grew up in scholarly families and some of them numbered among the wandering mentors or teachers along the pilgrimage caravans to Mecca. Women did not attend the *madrassa* (university) but they could attend public recitations of the Koran and lectures.

Females in medieval Islamic society had to cover up to preserve modesty, usually fully robed and veiled when in public. These restrictions did not apply when around their household members; husband, male relatives, females, children, aunts and uncles.

One of the few exceptions as far as power and flexibility are concerned widows and menopausal women who had considerably more freedom of movement and temporal power. They did not possess the same sexual temptations to men, which other females did possess.

The historical primary source material is scarce when it comes to discussions about women and what they were allowed to wear. Unfortunately, the authors of these sources are male and cultural discussions about women’s roles and private lives were viewed as shameful to write about.

The following occupations are recommended for Muslim female investigators: Beggar, Farmer, Hakima, Juggler/Minstrel (Belly Dancer) Scholar. It should be noted as per the earlier discussion with Frankish female investigators that the final decision about which occupations are available to female investigators is up to the keeper.

### Occupations

There are a variety of trades and professions practiced within Outremer. This section will discuss a variety of new occupations for Saracen and Frank investigators as well as new options or roles for the occupations detailed in the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook. All crusaders living in Outremer will start out with language

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Arabic for free which can be bought with occupation points or specialty points. This only applies to periods of time when the Crusader States exist; during the First Crusade the Franks would not have occupied the holy land long enough to pick up Arabic. The native tongue of the Franks is French, which is predominately based on the northern dialect.

**Currency:** During this time period the currency and coinage of medieval Europe as well as the Middle East was not standardized. That will be dealt with in similar fashion to the currency in the Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages rulebook. For the ease of game play and simplicity it is recommended that the silver deniers are worth the same amount as the silver *dirhams* used in the Arab world. One gold *bezant* or gold *dinar* will be worth 15 dirhams or deniers. The lowest domination is *fals* which are copper coins that about 10 to one dirham.

### *Alchemist (Saracen)*

You are seeking through transmutation of base metals into the perfect metal of gold. Using incantations and consulting planetary alignments you hunger to discover the secrets of nature and God. This field of study will not exist in Europe for about a few hundred more years. You possess mastery of arcane and esoteric powers (*sihhr*). You may be apprentice to an alchemist or perhaps encounter some magical tome in your wanderings, enabling you to learn these powers.

**Skills:** Greek, Occult, Own Kingdom, Library Use, Potions, Status, Write Greek and Science (alchemy). Two other skills are personal specialties (spells are allowed).

**Money:** 1d3 x 100 dirhams plus writing materials and books of philosophy and history. In addition to items listed above you possess various chemicals, burners, calipers and flasks.

Yearly Income: 1500 dirhams.

### *Banker (Frank)*

You are a banker who writes loans make commercial investments as well as hold on to deposits from various nobles, merchants and lords. Your institution is relatively new at this time, being practiced primarily in Venice and Genoa; also practiced in Outremer by the knightly order of the Templars. Not all those who worked for the Templars were knights or soldiers; others were bankers.

**Skills:** Accounting, Bargain, Other Kingdom, Own Kingdom, Persuade, Write Language. This occupation can select one other skill of personal specialty.

**Money:** 1d4+4x100 dirhams plus 1000 dirhams in assets or outstanding loans.

**Yearly Income:** 10,000 dirhams.

### *Bedouin Warrior (Saracen)*

You are a desert or steppe warrior devoted to tribal and martial traditions. One example would be a Bedouin from the desert or a Seljuk Turk from the steppe of Central Asia.

**Skills:** Natural World, Navigate, Own Kingdom, Ride, Status, Track, one weapon skill and one other personal specialty.

**Money:** 1d6 x 30 dirhams and a camel or horse, cuirboulli armor, spear or scimitar.

**Yearly Income:** 600 dirhams

### *Knight of a Religious Order (Frank)*

You are a Knight devoted to one of the religious orders like the Templars or Hospitallars. As part of one of these orders you possess an incredible amount of independence in the medieval world. You only answer to the grandmaster of your religious order. All knights have taken vows of poverty, chastity and abstinence (from amusement like falconry, games etc).

**Skills:** Grapple, Occult, Other language (Latin) Own Kingdom, Ride, Status, One weapon skill and (two skills based on your knightly order see below)

*Templar:* Accounting and Bargain.



## Dark Crusades



*The Hospitaller Knights by Dominique-Louis Papety*

*Hospitallar:* First Aid and Medicine

Both orders can pick one personal specialty.

**Money:** None (vow of poverty), 3 horses, shield bearer, longsword and chainmail.

**Yearly Income:** None.

*Mamluke (Saracen)*

You are made a slave and raised as a warrior educated in the Islamic traditions of your country. Some Mamlukes gained the status of advisors and *atabegs* like Zengi. As a Mamluke it is possible through exceptional service to win your freedom. In later years Mamlukes would gain enough power to rule a caliphate in Egypt.

**Skills:** Insight, Grapple, Own Kingdom, Ride, Status, Track, one weapon skill and other skill as personal specialty.

**Money:** None, horse, scimitar, bow, daraq, leather and scales armor.

**Yearly Income:** None.

*Muhtasib (Saracen)*

You are a market inspector in charge of making sure that all merchants are trading fairly; your responsibilities include making sure that scales used in transactions are accurate. You are both feared and respected. Your duty also includes keeping order in the market and authority to administer lashes to law breakers.

**Skills:** Accounting, Insight, Listen, Own Kingdom, Status, Write Language, one other personal specialty.

**Money:** 1d4 x 100 dirhams plus 600 in bribes

**Yearly Income:** 7000 dirhams

*Pardoner (Frank)*

You are a devious charlatan preying on the generosity of religious pilgrims by selling them false relics (saints' fingernails, pieces of the true cross, etc.). You know just enough of the scriptures to delude the masses, but not enough to challenge religious authority like a priest.

**Skills:** Bargain, Conceal, Fast Talk, Hide, Insight, Listen, Other Kingdom, Own Kingdom, Persuade and two specialties of choice.

**Money:** 1d8 dirhams

**Year Income:** 240 dirhams

*Tabeeb (Saracen)*

You are a doctor learned in the most advanced medicines and sciences of the time. In the Islamic world knowledge of the sciences advanced to levels far beyond the Europeans of the west the Saracens had developed algebra and estimated the circumference of the earth.

**Skills:** First Aid, Insight, Library Use, Medicine, Natural World, Occult, Science (choose one), Write language: Greek. One other skill is a specialty.

**Money:** 1d3 x 100 dirhams, plus Surgeons' tools and writing materials.

**Yearly Income:** 1500 dirhams

## Dark Crusades

### Notes on Occupations from CoC Dark Ages

Most of the occupations in the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook function perfectly well for Saracen investigators with little or no modification necessary. The Occupations, Cleric and Scholar replace Latin with Greek. The occupation Monk/Nun does not have a Saracen equivalent. The occupations: Cleric, Monk/Nun, Priest and Scholar all gain the skill science (theology) (Christianity if Frank or Islam if a Saracen) The Household Officer occupation has been replaced with the Mamluke one for Saracens. The final addition is the Command skill for the Sergeant/Mayor occupation. Below is a table with equivalent occupations and their Saracen names.

Dark Ages Name	Saracen Name
Cleric/Priest	Mullah/Imam
Healer	Hakima
Hermit	Sufi/Dervish
Guard/Warrior	Askar

**Mullah/Imam:** This term is used for Islamic priests. The Mullah denotes a priest from the Sunni sect of Islam. The Imam is a priest from the Shiite sect. In addition to the usual occupational skills of the priest; add the additions of two science skills (canonical law) or *shari'a* (theology).

**Hakima:** They are wise women versed mystical powers and potions. This role was prominent in the collection of stories *The Arabian Nights*. The occupation is appropriate for a mythically bent career and less historical game and should be used only with the keeper's permission.

**Sufi/Dervish:** A group of ascetic mystics from the Shiite sect of Islam. They lived in their own communities throughout Outremer and the Islamic world. Many would be under sacred vows restricting even the types of weapons one could use for protection. One such permissible

weapon was the fakir's horns (see **Weapons and Armor** section p 18-20.)

The dervishes are wandering holy men who beg for alms and perform trance-like dances. Their mystical traditions stem from their own unique sect of Islam. Those who are possessed by malicious Jinn (Old Ones) can be brought to them to perform the Zar ceremony which is an exorcism of the possessing spirit.

**Askar:** These comprise the local militia raised to guard cities and towns in the Islamic world. They could bear arms in Islamic lands, unlike the Peoples of the Book.

The remainder of the Occupations in the *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Ages* book can be used unchanged by Saracen characters.

### **Turcoples and Poulains**

A *turcopole* is a person of mixed Frank and Saracen descent. Some of the sergeants and lower born noble families would intermarry with the local populations including the Saracens. It was incredibly rare for more noble born Frank families to intermarry with the Saracens. *Poulains* are a product of marriages with Eastern Christians. Investigators of these backgrounds can take both Saracen and Frank occupations except the Knight of Religious Order occupation. *Turcoples* and *poulains* both start out with a -15 penalty to their Status during character generation, due to their second class citizen position in Outremer society.

**Council of Nablus:** In 1120 C.E. the Council of Nablus determined it was against the law to have sexual intercourse with a Muslim woman and any Frankish man found guilty would be castrated and have his nose cut off. Despite this law it is estimated that 5,000 turcopole sergeants and mercenaries made up the men at arms of the Outremer.

### New Skills and Expanded Old Skills

In Dark Crusades one additional new skill Command has been added to some of the occupations and is available to investigators using this sourcebook. The science skill has been expanded to include alchemy. A further description of the use of science (theology) has been expounded on because of the importance of religion during this particular period.

#### Command (05%)

This skill reflects the investigator's ability to lead groups of people effectively. Many a battle has been lost because of poor leadership. Those who have high command skill can inspire groups of people to greatness and boost the morale of troops under their command.

#### Falconry (05%)

Falconry or the ability to use falcons in hunting for sport was very popular among both Saracen and Frank nobles in Outremer. With the use of the skill the investigator can train or use trained falcon to hunt for game or keep watch. The amount of time it takes to train the falcon is determined by the keeper. This skill can also be utilized to identify the behavior of these birds, to notice signs that perhaps a falcon is wounded or sick. At the keeper's discretion a successful use of the falconry skill can add a +10% status bonus when dealing with Frank or Saracen nobles.

#### Science (Alchemy)

This additional field within the science skill was developed predominantly in the Islamic world and spread throughout Europe in the later Middle Ages. Alchemical theory presupposes that there is a perfect form that other materials and substances are morphing into in a continuous cycle. It was postulated that gold was the perfect metal and that if the right process could be discovered base metals could be transmuted into gold.

This skill imparts to the investigator the basic principles of working with chemicals like sulfurs, alloys and other alchemical interactions.

Alchemy can be used to determine the chemical makeup of powders and mixtures. There is some occult-like crossover in the various incantations used in some of the alchemical recipes and secret ciphers used to protect their works from rivals. Despite the practice and belief in alchemy, there were still many some skeptics as pointed out by Chaucer in Canterbury Tales a few hundred years later.

#### Science (Theology)

This skill entails the scholastic study of religion through reading and studying of texts and scriptures. The knowledge is well beyond what is commonly available to the masses. Each time the skill is taken it must be with a specific religious tradition, for example Theology (Christianity).

#### Religious Fervor: An Option

The fanaticism and religious hysteria of this period strengthened the resolve of many Muslims and Christians. Religious Fervor can be inspired in a group by a successful Persuade or Command check made at a -20 penalty to the roll. The other way it can be inspired is in the presence of a holy relic. This effect lasts 12 hours and when the investigators or characters are required to make an Idea roll to fight temporary insanity they gain -10 bonuses to their Idea rolls, making it easier to protect the mind from trauma of insanity check.

*For Example: John is under the effect of Religious Fervor, he has failed his San check, he will lose 5 points San and he may get temporary insanity unless he fails his Idea roll. His Idea roll is 50, with religious fervor it is now at 40. He rolled a 45, he failed his Idea roll and does not go temporarily insane.*

## Dark Crusades

### ROLE OF RELIGION

[I] saw the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may God be pleased with him) in a dream... Then when I woke up, and the tumour had been tossed to one side and my ailment was gone.

-Usama ibn Munqidh

Book of Contemplation

During the time of the Crusades religion is a powerful moving force in the lives of both Saracens and Franks. Numerous visions and miracles were reported on both sides during and in between major battles. According to some accounts the dead were seen fighting with the living and angels were witnessed.

It is important for both the keeper and Investigator to understand that religion's role was vastly different then in modern times. Atheism and Agnosticism were not as predominant or at the philosophical forefront like they are today. It would be exceedingly rare to find a publically exclaiming Atheist or an Agnostic in Outremer. Anyone who claimed such beliefs would be looked down upon or mistrusted.

### The Five Pillars of Islam

To be a Muslim is the belief that one submits to God. The five pillars of Islam or *al-arkan al-khamsa* are the basic tents and practices of a Muslim as follows: (1) *Shahada*- statement of belief, (2) *Salat*- ritual prayer, (3) *Zakat*- alms giving, (4) *Sawm* - fasting during the daylight during Ramadan (holy month) and finally (5) *Hajj*- pilgrimage to Mecca. According to some *Jihad*, or holy war, is the sixth pillar.

It is claimed that *Salat* is the most important, being the ritual prayer that is performed five times a day facing the direction of only Mecca. These are all performed during set times of day starting early in the morning along with adulations during the call to prayer.

The profession of faith the *Shahada*, is a basic principle intrinsic to becoming a Muslim which states, "There is no God, but God and Mohammed is his messenger."

The act of almsgiving or *Zakat* is also an important duty for devote Muslim to have charity to the poor. It is estimated at amount 10% of during should be dedicated to this task.

Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan is required by all Muslims during the daylight hours.

Finally, a pilgrimage to Mecca is required at least once in the lifetime of a Muslim. These rules are guidelines that are followed by Muslims to varying degrees, the ritual prayer being one of the most important practices followed daily. Sometimes the practice of Jihad or holy war is termed as a sixth pillar.

### Practices of Islam

All Muslims are forbidden to drink alcohol and eat pork. The religion dictates how to live, laws of society and rules for a person's profession. The three holiest cities in Islam in descending order are; Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Idolatry is also prohibited and illustrated in the "smashing of the idols" during the birth of Islam.

### Main Sects of Islam

These are two different sects of Islam, Sunni and Shiites. The sects split off during a debate over the next *Caliph* or successor of Mohammed. The Shiites believe that the caliph should have been Ali, the nephew of Mohammed; not Abu Bakr. The majority of the Islamic world is composed of Sunni Muslims; the only predominately Shiite area is Egypt. Philosophically speaking the Shiites believe that the caliph or what they refer to more often as the Imam, is to be a descendent of Mohammed's lineage.

The Sunni believe that the Caliph is the political leader of the umma (Islamic community), which differs from the Shiites who belief that the Caliph is spiritual religious leader as well as one that is political. These two religious sects are not the only Islamic sects in existence at this time, the Nazaris (the sect the Assassins are members of) and Kharijis to name a few. Given the limited space in this work, only a cursory overview has been given on the Islamic

faith, it is highly recommended by the authors for those interested to read a copy of the Koran.

### Millennialism

The belief in the end times or the final apocalyptic battle between good and evil was made popular again during the twelfth century by European Christians. Many of the letters beseeching people to join the crusades were steeped in apocalyptic language and terminology. Many of the Christian crusaders believed that they were fighting the final battles in the holy land. One Mythos cult that has taken this belief to a twisted and sycophantic extreme is the Pilgrims of Oblivion (for more information see **Mythos Cults** p. 40)

The belief in Millennialism was not unique to Christianity, it is also believed that there will be a final battle fought between good and evil by Muslims as well; the forces of good will be led by the Mahdi (savior at the end times) to final victory over the wicked. One key difference is that the Muslims did not believe that the end times and final battles were being fought at this time.

## LIFE IN OUTREMER

*The Franks (may God confound them) have none of the human virtues except for courage. They have neither precedence nor high rank except that of the knights, and have no man worthy of the name except the knights...*

-Usama ibn Munqidh

Excerpt from the Book of Contemplation

During and after the First Crusade the vast majority of inhabitants of Outremer were of French descent. Society functioned under their stewardship much like a feudal kingdom in Europe.

The Frankish inhabitants of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem started assimilating many of the local customs and traditions of the native inhabitants. For the most part the upper echelons of society could not intermarry with the Armenians, Jews, Muslims, Egyptians, Eastern

Christians (for more information see Turcoples and Poulains sidebar p. 9).

At any one given time it has been estimated that there were never more than 1,000 knights inside the Kingdom of Jerusalem, counties of Edessa, Tripoli or Antioch. The Frankish population started eating local foods and adopting local customs like making use of the bathhouses in their new home.

In later Crusades and ventures into Outremer the Venetians and Pisans branched out into the mercantile trade in many of the major cities throughout the holy land. The Venetians and the Pisans did not assimilate as readily as the Frankish population did.

### Slaves and Mamlukes

Slavery is a big part of the medieval Islamic world. Essentially all of those people living outside the abode of Islam or non-Muslims were fair game for slavery. Possessing house servants or house slaves was common.

Certain ethnic groups were more desirable for slaves; Turkish slaves were the most prized followed by Sub-Saharan Africans and Europeans were the least desirable. A Turkish slave girl could fetch as much as 3000 dinars! The Turkish were known for their beauty as well as their martial prowess and superior horsemanship.

Mamlukes had a unique position in Medieval Islamic society; they were acquired at the age of 10 to 12. These children were always males, which hailed from Turkish stock, Armenians and some other ethnicities. The Turkish nomads were preferred for their martial prowess. There are many instances where Mamlukes served as atabegs (advisors to young emirs or kings). Mamlukes could win their freedom through exemplary service to their master. The bonds of loyalty are so strong that many times even after a Mamluke was released from slavery their former masters would claim them as heir to their legacies. A hundred years later the Mamlukes would rise to positions of incredible power in Egypt.

## Dark Crusades

### Playing Slave Investigators?

Besides playing Mamluke investigators, playing a slave investigator should be strongly cautioned against. Household slaves, body guards and concubines, to name a few slave roles, had very little freedom outside the commands of their master which could make it difficult for the investigator to explore and fight the mythos. This being said, it is not impossible but does require careful consideration from both the keeper and the player interested in playing slave investigator. For example if a keeper ties into the scenario a reason the slave's master needs the mystery solved, perhaps if successful the slave could win its freedom.

By contrast the Mamluke slave option has considerably more freedom than most traditional slaves. Mamlukes could inherit property or be designated heirs to the master. They served as advisors and prominent officials with a much greater freedom and power than non-Mamluke slaves. For a further discussion about Mamlukes see above section **Mamlukes and Slavery**.

## RUNNING DARK CRUSADES

### **Historical Figures and Investigators**

The keeper should address the possibility of what might occur if the investigators encounter historical figures or take part in historical events. For example, what if the Frankish investigators decide to kill Saladin? Or alternatively the Saracen investigators decided to burn down Jerusalem and summon star vampires into the crusading host? Both of these questions and issues are very important for the keeper to consider when running a historical game like a *Dark Crusades* scenario.

There are a few approaches a keeper can use to handle the following situations. The first approach would be used to avoid interactions between historical figures and critical events when running *Dark Crusades* scenarios. The benefit to this approach is keeping historic con-

tinuity and not risking changes or alterations in the events of the period.

The second approach is to allow or create encounters and interactions with key historical events and figures of the period. In this approach the ability to alter and change history does add some unique considerations on the part of the keeper. The keeper will need to do additional planning in considering what would happen as a result of the meddling investigators. If this approach is followed it is advised that keepers strongly caution the players of the investigators to act according to the motivations of their investigators and not themselves. The keeper will have to scrutinize whether or not a player is using "metagame knowledge" or knowledge their investigator would not be entitled to, when trying to alter history. For example: *Joe's investigator John wants to stop crusaders of the Second Crusade from attacking Damascus, because he knows that they will fail and create more enemies for the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The keeper reminds Joe that he might know this, but John his investigator does not.*

Both approaches have pros and cons; it is recommended that the keeper discuss this with the players in the gaming group to find out what is important to their particular play style.



*King Richard I, The Lionheart*

### Running Mixed Saracen and Frank Games

*Among the Franks there are some who have become acclimatized and frequent the company of Muslims. They are much better than those recently arrived from their lands, but they are the exception and should not be considered representative.*

-Usama Ibn Munqih,

an excerpt in the Book of Contemplation

When running a game with investigators of both Frankish and Saracen descent it is advisable that the players rolling up the characters discuss their motivations and backgrounds with each other and the keeper. Given the long history of conflict and prejudices it will take some careful consideration and planning on both sides. The following are some suggestions and advice which may help smooth things out.

When running a mixed game, if the time period is not important to the scenario the keeper should consider setting the game during one of the many truces or alliances between the Franks and with the Saracens. For example: when the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was briefly allied with Damascus out of fear of Nur ed-Din. Another time period is the four year truce with Saladin (for more details see **Gazetteer of Outremer and its Islamic Neighbors** chapter p. 21) The “going native” of Franks did occur historically, but rarely and occurring only after the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. If a player chooses to play an investigator of Frankish descent who has gone native, the keeper is encouraged to relax the restriction on equipment and potentially occupations as well.

Another method for plausible story cooperation between the two different ethnic groups would be if both had experienced a mythos encounter together and decided to ally out of necessity. The horror of the unnatural can create a sense of urgency that can surpass the typical bigotry between Saracens and Franks. To use an old adage “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” This explanation can help with cooperation during the short term, but long term

occasions should be considered by the keeper. For example if during this mythos encounter it was learned that a cult or perhaps an alliance of cults are connected to this event. This deeper conspiracy could add much more longevity and incentive for the mixed investigators to stick together.

It must also be understood that the incredible bigotry of the early crusaders was not as strong in the Frankish populations that grew up in Outremer after the First Crusade. Another interesting historical note is that the Templars made use of turcopole sergeants and Saracen spies during their time in Outremer. The Templars and Hospitaller religious knightly orders have their own interesting problems. Many of Saladin’s generals and commanders fought for the right to personally execute them- it was considered a great honor. Saladin is noted historically for his mercy and generosity towards prisoners, except the Templar who he hated and always executed.

Another approach to running a mixed Frank and Saracen game might be to have the Frank/Saracen party of investigators meet at a castle or fortress and ransom the prisoners (opposite of ethnicity; for Frank party Saracen prisoners etc.) for a certain amount of gold dinars. During the negotiations the guards at the castle are killed by a horrid mythos creatures or mythos related phenomena. This creates a situation where the help of the prisoners is needed for survival against the mythos threat.

The easiest approach is to run a party that consists of mostly Franks or Saracens. Either party can be filled out with *turcoples* or *poulains*, native Christians or Jews to add variety. For a predominantly Frankish party, the *turcopole* or the *poulain* can add more variety giving the investigators access to Saracen careers and equipment. The Franks may look down upon them a little for not being of full European descent, but these issues tend to be more minor. When running a predominately Saracen party the same options appear, except with the further option of having a Frank serve as a slave. This option should not be exercised lightly! It

# Dark Crusades

is recommended that only experienced mature gaming groups should consider playing characters of such a restricted role. Perhaps the player could play a Mamluke, traditionally Turkish stock was favored and treated well by their masters, but other peoples were employed as Mamlukes as well. In latter centuries the Ottoman Empire would create the soldier class called Janissary composed of Christians raised to be slave soldiers.

## Transportation to and from the Holy Land

The cities were not linked by paved roads like the ancient Roman cities of Italy. Instead there were numerous unpaved paths and wilderness between cities and trade routes. The main modes of transportation were riding a mule, donkey or camels; or travelling on boats.

Travelling together in groups was safest because of the brigands and pirates that would routinely prey on travelers. A common Arabic saying is “the companion is more important than the route taken”, meaning that having protection and a good conversationalist was deemed important to travelers.

There were numerous way stations and *funduqs* (inns). These *funduqs* functioned as places for lodging and purchasing food as well as brothels in some places. Many *funduqs* have a mosque or churches attached to them or are located nearby one. These establishments charged high prices to travelers because they were set up by the government as an additional revenue source.

## Warfare and Mass Combat

The Crusades are unique and incredibly dangerous milieu for investigators to participate in. Given the number of large battles, sieges and raids conducted in and around Outremer, the issue of larger scale



Godfrey of Boullion

combats must be addressed. This can be addressed using either of the following methods: (1) Abstract Method and (2) Cinematic Method. Both have their strengths and weaknesses and depend on the play style of the keeper and the investigators.

The Abstract method puts the investigators in the roles of the sergeants and command of the army, the outcome is largely determined by a series of Command rolls verses the Command rolls of the opposing force. The difficulties of the challenges are modified by different factors

Army or Force Situation	Command Roll Modifier
Advantageous Position	+10
Better Trained or Disciplined Force	+10
Larger Force	+5 to +20, Keepers discretion based on size.
Surprised or Ambushed	+10
Poor Morale	-10
Lead by Legend	+10
Behind Fortification or Stronghold	+5 to +15 depending on quality of fortification.

**Note:** This table is by no means exhaustive it is very rough guideline to help the keeper determine relative success of the engagement.





*Battle of Ager Sanguinis*

like the size of the enemy forces, how advantageous the position of the opposing force, etc. A table is listed below with modifiers for different situations.

The Abstract Method works in the following way: both commanders (pick one of the investigators) roll their Command skills and compare which one made the roll by the greatest amount compared to the other. For Example: *John has Command Skill of 80 and Mohammed has a Command Skill of 70. Mohammed has an advantageous position on a cliff where his archers can fire down with good cover. This makes Mohammed's Command Skill effectively 80 based on the situation. Both John and Mohammed roll opposed Command skills, John rolls 60 and Mohammed rolls 50. Mohammed beats John by a difference of 10 points.*

It is recommended that when using this method for the keeper to require at least 3 Command skill rolls in opposition to the enemy, and the one with the most success wins the battle. More than 3 Command skill rolls can be called for depending on the needs of the keeper. These rolls can be used as inspiration for the keeper to describe the failures and successes of the different armies, and add flavor and richness to the game. It is important to keep in mind that *Call of Cthulhu* in all of its forms is not intended to be a tactical war game but a role playing narrative style game.

Whether the investigators succeed or fail will add much depth and interest to the scenario be-

## Dark Crusades

ing played. Possible prices of failure include the investigators being taken captive or enslaved.

The second mass combat rules mechanic is the Cinematic Method. This method assumes that the investigators are not actively in command of the forces. It plays like a movie in the fact that investigators can play pivotal turning points in the battle or “flash points” that could make or break the battle. The strengths of this method include allowing the keeper to leave less to the chance of dice rolls when it comes to the battle, allowing investigators to have more of an impact on its outcome and lastly generating “quick and dirty” results fast.

Flash points can take a number of forms from the arrival of reinforcements to the engagement of the enemy leader and his retinue. These outcomes can be suitably dramatic in the cinematic sense.

Alternatively, the keeper may feel that is not an aspect of his or her game that they want played out. This alternative is perfectly accepted, given the fact that investigating macabre horror is the main premise of all *Call of Cthulhu* games.

### Wilderness Survival and Heat Exposure in Metal Armor

Any investigators wearing mail armors (Chainmail, *Paires de cuiraces*, Plate armor) suffer an additional penalty -2 hit point loss due to extreme heat when using the Wilderness Survival rules for starvation and water loss (for more details see *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* p. 30). Historically, some battles were won not because the heavily armored Frank was killed by the Saracen, but because the armored Frank collapsed from heat exhaustion. It should be noted by the keeper that most of the conditions around the Levant are easily in extremes of above 70 plus degrees easily during daylight hours.

If a character in mail armor is wearing a surcoat then ignore -2 hit point penalty for wearing mail armor during extreme heat for the first occurrence or check for exhaustion.

# Dark Crusades

## Weapon Descriptions

### Ankus

The Ankus or elephant goad is a short wooden shaft with a hook used to control the elephant by Mahout. The usually wooden shaft is 5ft in length. This tool can also be used as a weapon as well.

### Bow, Composite

These bows are made of sinew and bone glued together. The composite bow is hardier and al-

lows for more force behind the shot of the arrows. This variety of bow was used by the Saracens more often than the Franks because of the lack of wood around the Levant. It is theorized that the glued materials would not survive as well in the European climate.

### Fakir's Horns

This unusual weapon is a combination of two curved horn shaped metal pieces joined at the base facing opposite directions. This weapon is primary used by Sufi mystics and other ascetics

## New Saracen Weapons

### Melee Weapons

	Base %	Damage	1H/2H	HP	Length	Impale	Parry*	Knockout	STR/DEX	Cost**
Ankus	20	1d4+1	1H	15	Long	Yes	No	No	7/8	40
Fakir's Horns	15	1d4	2H	10	Short	Yes	No	No	4/4	?
Great Scimitar	15	1d8+1	2H	20	Long	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/7	?
Katar	20	1d6+1	1H	12	Short	Yes	Yes	No	4/4	15
Tiger Claws	25	1d6	1H	10	Short	Yes	Yes	No	4/4	13

\*As per parry rules in *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook.

\*\* Weapons marked with a ? are rare items. Availability and costs will vary.

Damascus Steel Weapons: Weapons made from this unique metal working technique were legendary for their sharpness and metal strength. To this day much like the mysteries of Greek Fire, no modern metallurgical process is able to replicate the technique. All weapons made from Damascene steel count as rare and gives' it +1 to damage. Add 20 dirhams to price of a weapon made with Damascene steel.

### Missile Weapons

	Base%	Damage	Base Range	Attacks per Round	HP	Impale	STR/DEX	Cost	Effect
Bow,									
Composite	10	1d8	80	1	10	Yes	10/10	80	n/a
Naphtha Throw		1d8	20	1	5	No	4/4	30	fire

### New Armor Types for Franks and Saracens

	Damage Defl.	Burden	Fits other SIZ	Rounds to put On	Cost	Culture
<i>Paires de</i>						
<i>Cuiraces**</i>	8	Moderate	+/-2	6	1100(rare)	Franks
Plate Armor#	9	Moderate	+/-2	8	1350(rare)	Franks
Shields	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daraq	See Below	-	-	-	40	Saracens

\* -1 if not wearing a helmet.

\*\*deflects 4 damage from thrusting weapons (spears, crossbows, bow), and 3 from crushing weapons (Fist/Punch, Head Butt, Kick, Club, Flail, Staff, Rock, Sling).

# deflects 4 damage from thrusting weapons (see above), and 5 from crushing weapons (see above for listing).

who have sacred laws and prohibitions about violence.

### Great Scimitar

This oversized curved sword is the cousin of the more common scimitar. It was rarely used on the battlefield; it was favored by executioners for beheading criminals and used as a ceremonial implement for royal guardsmen.

### Katar

Also called a punching dagger, it like other short blades can be easily carried and hidden away. It has a bar and hand guard which allows the wielder to thrust the dagger in punching motion.

### Naphtha

These small ceramic pots are filled with flammable liquid substances (usually Greek fire) and are thrown at fortifications or men during sieges. Naphtha used as an infantry grenade for the Saracens.

### Tiger Claws

These weapons also go by the name bagh nakh, and consist of metal worn over the knuckles with bar covered in spikes. These can be easily concealed and provide quick protection from street toughs.

## Armor Descriptions

### *Paires de cuiraces*

This type of armor consists of shaped leather plates tied to the front and back of chainmail hauberk. Several variations of this design exist having longer or shorter chain sleeves that cover the legs and arms, but from a rules standpoint they offer the same amount of protection. This armor is a precursor to plate armor.

### Plate Armor

This armor is incredibly rare and just started being worn by wealthy lords during the twelfth century. Examples include Richard the Lionheart and William of Barres. In some historical accounts it is referred to as “triple mail” or “double mail” and by some authors like Guil-

### Historical Note on Barding or Horse Armor

During the First Crusade the Franks were shocked to find that the Saracens made use of armored horses. The Horses in Europe were much smaller (closer to the size of the modern day pony) and so initially they were not armored like their Saracen counterparts. The European horses were too small to carry the additional weight of the armor. Later in 1187 during the time of the Third Crusade the Franks made use of barding armor, having bred more hardy steeds at this time.

If using barding armor all of the statistics are the same as the Armor tables in Dark Crusades and Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages, except the price is tripled. Only Saracens have access to barding, in any scenarios run before the Third Crusade. Barding is rare for Franks to acquire even during the Third Crusade.

laume le Breton as “thrice-woven hauberk.” This is the heaviest armor of the period.

### Armor Additions

#### Daraq

This small target shield functions like the buckler used in Europe during later periods. The Daraq is worn on the arm of Saracen cavalry and is used to catch arrows from enemy archers. This shield provides a +1 to the amount of damage deflected by the armor worn by its wielder.

#### Surcoat

This padded garment was worn over mail armor to protect the Franks from the merciless heat of the sun. The surcoat was originally adopted from the Saracens and has found use with both Franks and Saracens. When wearing the surcoat the armor ignore the first 2 hit points of damage from dehydration (for more details see **Running Dark Crusades: Wilderness Survival and Heat Exposure in Metal Armor**).

# Dark Crusades

## Equipment List

### FOOD

2 pounds of bread.....	1 dirham
2 pounds of cheese.....	1 dirham
Food and Lodging per day.....	1 dirham
Horse or Camel feed.....	3-6 dirhams
Sherbet drink.....	3 fals
Camel or Goat milk.....	1 dirham
Fruits.....	5 fals

### CLOTHING

Aba.....	1 dirham
Chaftan.....	15 fals
Chador.....	8 fals
Dishdashah.....	8 fals
Dolman.....	1 dirham
Fez.....	13 fals
Jellaba.....	5 dirhams
Keffiyeh.....	3 fals
Turban wrap.....	3 fals

### TOOLS

- Bucket
- Awl, Hammer, Saw, Shears
- Sickle, Hand ax, Pickax, Spade
- Swing Plow
- Iron Plow and Colter

### ANIMALS

Farm Dog.....	12 dirhams
Sheep.....	12-15 dirhams
Cow.....	24 dirhams
Mule.....	36 dirhams
Ostrich.....	25 dirhams
Monkey.....	13 dirhams
Falcon.....	8 dinars
Goat.....	20 dirhams
Camel.....	80 dirhams

Elephant.....	10 dinars
Peacock.....	8 dinars
Horse.....	25+ dinars
Warhorse.....	60 dinars

### SLAVES

Courtesan.....	30 dinars
Entertainer.....	5 dinars
Eunuch.....	5 dinars
House Servant.....	1 dinar
Guard.....	8 dinars
Mamluke.....	50-80 dinars

(Turkish Descent, multiply x2 to slave price).

### TRANSPORT

Barijah.....	3 dinar
Barge.....	155 dirhams
Canoe.....	120 dirhams
Pony or Mule drawn cart.....	8 dinars
Dromond.....	100 dinars
Galley.....	300 dinars
Sedan Chair.....	1 dinar
Wheeled Wagon.....	15 dinar

### MISCELLEANOUS

Torch, Lamp or Candle.....	1 dirham
Rope 30feet length.....	2 dirhams
Tent 6 person.....	360 dirhams
Travelers Pack: (see below).....	240 dirhams
Paper per sheet.....	1 dinar
Papyrus per sheet.....	5 dirham
Ink and Quill.....	1 dinar
Water clock.....	100 dinar
Sun dial.....	30 dirhams

### EXPANDED ARMS AND ARMOR

This list includes Arms and Armor from the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* for ease of character creation and purchase. A note about which culture commonly uses the item is also included.

Melee	Cost	Culture
Ankus	40	Saracen

Ax	80	Both	Soft Leather	50	Both
Ax, Frankish	100	Frank	Cuirbouilli	100	Both
Ax, Great	100	Frank	Leather and		
Club	-	Both	Rings	400	Frank
Fakirs Horns	-	Saracen	Leather and		
Flail	?	Frank	Scales	375	Both
Katar	15	Saracen	Chainmail	1000	Frank
Knife, Small	10	Both	<b>Armor</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Culture</b>
Knife, Large	15	Both	<i>Paires de</i>		
<b>Melee</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<i>Cuiraces</i>	?	Frank
Lance	80	Frank	Plate Armor	?	Frank
Mace	60	Both	Surcoat	50	Both
Scimitar	180	Saracen			
Scimitar, Great	?	Saracen	<b>Shields</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Culture</b>
Spear, Short	40	Both	Small	40	Both
Spear, Long	50	Both	Medium	60	Both
Staff	-	Both	Large	80	Frank
Sword, Short	150	Frank	Daraq	40	Saracen
Sword, Long	210	Frank			
Sword, Frankish	?	Frank			
<b>Missile</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Culture</b>			
Ax	80	Both			
Ax, Frankish	100	Frank			
Ax, Great	100	Frank			
Bow	60	Both			
Bow,					
Composite	90	Saracen			
Crossbow	?	Frank			
Knife, Small	10	Both			
Naphtha	30	Saracen			
Rock, Thrown	-	Both			
Sling	5	Both			
Spear, Short	40	Both			
Spear, Long	50	Both			

**Note:** The cultural usage information on the tables is not intended to restrict investigators in their use of items, but it is intended to given historical background and allow for usual weapons use with the keepers permission. Investigators of the turcopole or poulain backgrounds to not have any restrictions on weapons based on culture (for more information on turcoples and poulains see Investigators in the Holy Land p. 5).

### Clothing Descriptions

#### Aba

This is a desert robe that is usually fashioned in one solid color: black, brown or white. It is worn with a sash and has open sleeves; it is usually worn with the traditional head covering, the keffiyeh. It can have rich embroidery to denote higher status or for formal occasions. The Jellaba is a heavier aba worn during the winter-

## Dark Crusades



*Isle of Graia*

time usually made from felt or wool. It can be worn over the aba.

### **Caftan**

Long flowing over garment tied at the waist with a stash. Usually made of cotton, it descends down to the ankles. It is embroidered to make it more formal or if the wearer is of a higher status.

### **Chador**

This is a complete robe covering for women, which includes a hood and face covering. This traditional dress is used to preserve the modesty of women and not tempt men (for more information see **Female Saracen Investigators**).

### **Dishdashah**

The Dishdashah is a tunic worn by poor farmers and merchants. It is usually worn with a belt.

### **Dolman**

Long robe with no sleeves, appears much like an aba, but is worn in cities and other urban areas.

### **Fez**

The fez is a felt hat that is conical in shape with a tassel, usually red with black tassel.

## GAZETTEER OF OUTREMER AND ITS ISLAMIC NEIGHBORS

### **Crusader States**

Outremer or the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is divided into the holy land, Antioch, Tripoli and Edessa. These states were split up into the fiefs of: the County of Jaffa, the principality of Galilee, the Seigneurie of Outrejourdain (Transjordan), and finally, Seigneurie of Sidon. All of these vassals of the king of Jerusalem would be required to pay tribute. Incorporated in the king of Jerusalem's personal holdings are the cities of Jerusalem, Nablus, Acre and Dacron.

The crusader states are always changing based on the victories or losses of Franks and their enemies. One of the smallest periods of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was after the battle of Hattin in 1187 A.D. When Jerusalem fell to Saladin many of the states were taken over. The rulers of the states were constantly changing as well; for example Antioch is originally ruled by Bohemond after the First Crusade and changed hands based on deaths or political uprisings. Before the Third Crusade, Raymond the ruler of Antioch died and his widow Constance married Reynold de Chatillon. In this example succession is not based purely on noble bloodlines and hand-selected marriages. Reynold de Chatillon, was married out of love, not his power or political connections.

### **Major Cities**

#### **Asacalon**

This Egyptian city was strategically important to both the Franks and the Fatimid Caliphate. Asacalon is located on the border between Egypt and the Kingdom of Jerusalem. This city was ringed by a series of Frankish castles to guard this potential beachhead for invasion. The Franks did successfully take the city after the launch of the disastrous Second Crusade during the reign of Baldwin III. They were temporarily allied with the Egyptians, forming a protectorate which was dissolved when Amalric decided to conquer all of Egypt.

### Baghdad

The country of Iraq is the power base of the Abbasid dynasty, the city was built on the ancient village site of Baghdad. This city was built by Al-Mansur and according to the Arab historian al-Tabari, Al-Mansur consulted a Christian monk nearby and asked if this construction was in any of his predictions. The monk replied that there was a prediction that the person who built on this site would be named Miqlas; in response Al-Mansur told him that was his nickname. Astrologers were also consulted, they said that the construction was auspicious and the city would be wealthy, a center of civilization and that no Caliph would ever die there.

This round-walled medieval city is fortunate to benefit from the bountiful harvests of the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. It is divided into two regions: Upper and Lower Mesopotamia. The territory between the two rivers is referred to as Jazira or the Island. The goods Baghdad is most famous for are cloth, silks, mats, fine apparel, shawls and turbans.

### Cairo

This capital is an important center for learning, having numerous *madrasas* (universities) and a great center of trade. This city was considered a great prize by the crusaders whom attempted to conquer Egypt multiple times, starting with the First Crusade. The city of Alexandria is the headquarters of the influential cult the Sons of Solomon.

### Constantinople

Constantinople is the capital city of the Byzantine Empire and also the gateway into Anatolia. Passage to the Levant could be blocked to the crusaders by the will of the Byzantine emperors. The relationship of the Byzantines called Romans by many, including the Saracens was tumultuous. Treaties and alliances were made and broken by the Byzantines with the crusaders. The empire also made alliances with the Turks at the borders, sometimes betraying the crusaders to their Turkish enemies.

### Damascus

This city located in Syria is the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. The city gets its name from the textile 'damask' and its quality metal the legendary Damascene steel. Damascus was also known for its splendid gardens and aesthetic beauty along with the famous great Umayyad Mosque. The Arab historian Ibn Jubayr describes it in the following words;

*She is the paradise of the Orient, the place where dawned her gracious and radiant beauty,...She is garnished with the flowers of sweet-scented herbs, and bedecked in the brocaded vestments of gardens.*

The emir of Damascus was allied with crusaders during the rise to power of Nur ed-Din up until the call of the Second Crusade. The crusaders determined that if they took over Damascus, that their borders would be more defensible against Nur ed-Din. The Second Crusade ended in disastrous defeat.

Damascus is renowned has being one of the scholarly centers of the world. It was also the home of the infamous mad Arab Abdul Al-Hazrad author of the Necronomicon (Kitab Al-Azif) who died in 738 A.D. Later Damascus was incorporated into Saladin's area of control following Egypt.

### Jerusalem

*...the city is laid out most beautifully, and cannot be criticized for too great length or as being disproportionately narrow. On the west is the tower of David, which is flanked on both sides by the broad wall of the city.*

-Fulcher of Chartres describes the city of Jerusalem in 1098 A.D.

This holy city is the focus of the crusades and the conflicts of the Crusades. It is the holiest city in Christendom and it is the third holiest city in Islam, after Mecca and Medina. It is on the Dome of the Rock that the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven. It is walled fortified located near a hill that was called Mount Pilgrim by the crusaders. Its citadel, the Tower of David, is one of the most prominent fea-

## Dark Crusades

tures, besides the sacred Temple of Solomon which served as the headquarters of the Templar gifted to them by the king of Jerusalem.

### Messina

This southern Italian port city served as the disembarkation point to many naval fleets heading to the holy land. It became one of the major ports used by the crusaders and Italian merchants. This port was used by the famous King Richard I.

### Tripoli

Tripoli is a strategically important port city serving as a buffer for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Its conquest importance was of seminal importance to the crusaders of Jerusalem. One of the most famous personages from this city was Raymond of Tripoli who was the ruling regent of Jerusalem during the reign of Baldwin IV, the Leper King.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST THREE CRUSADES

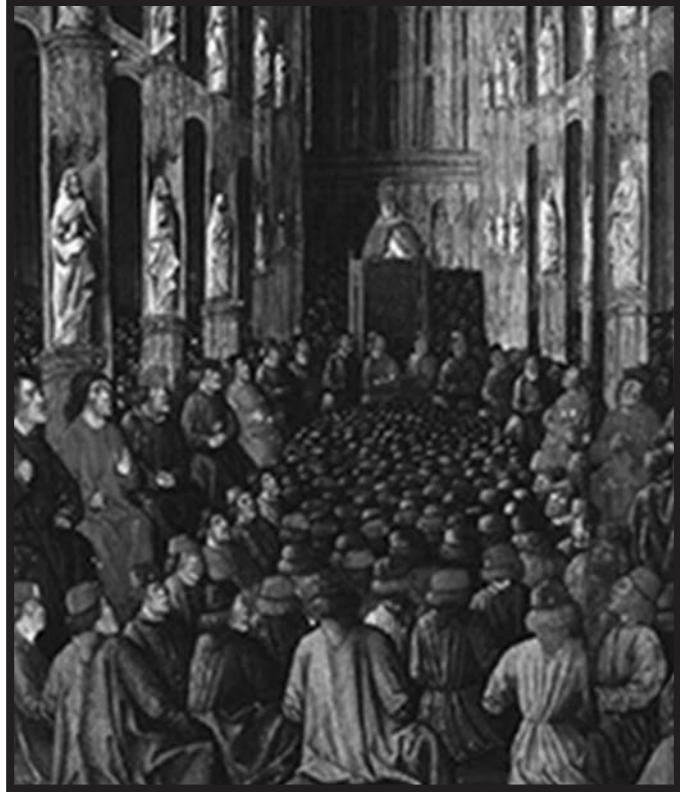
*All who die, by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of God...*

-Pope Urban II, speech at the Council of Clermont 1095 A.D.

### Council of Clermont

Pope Urban II calls together knights, clergy and nobles in 1095 at the Council of Clermont. Urban II is motivated by the request of the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comenus to help him fight the Turks who are invading his borders. Urban II uses this opportunity to stop the numerous feuding knights in Europe from burglarizing clergymen and peasants alike.

Pope Urban II calls the First Crusade to liberate the holy city of Jerusalem from the hands



*Council of Clermont*

of the Muslim rulers and help Alexius with the Turks at his borders. His speech is followed by yelling of *Deus volt!* (“God wills it”).

### The Peoples Crusade

The extraordinary preacher Peter the Hermit starts proselytizing all over Europe raising a massive army from the lower classes to fight in the First Crusade, called the “Peoples Crusade.” This motley mob of crusades leaves in a hurry in advance of the official launch date of August 15th.

Another smaller crusade was led by a French lord Walter Sansavoir consisting of a large band of minor knights and numerous peasants, earlier than Peter. Walter agreed to rendezvous with Peter in Constantinople. Both of these undisciplined and mob-type armies wrought much violence and rioting along the way through Europe. The majority of both armies could not afford to buy food and basic goods.



**Other Worldly Motivations for the Crusades**

Pope Urban II has been covertly manipulated by an avatar of Nyarlathotep called the Dark Legate (for more details see *Creatures of the Mythos* p.32) The Dark Legate seeks to use the crusaders to find the buried Black Ark and free the Outer God Demogorgon, causing much insanity in his wake. Secondly to his master plan the Dark Legate seeks to destroy the Holy Sons of Solomon as revenge for the “smashing of the idols” during the birth of Islam. With the help of the crusaders the Dark Legate hopes to accomplish both goals. At this time he has taken the identity and the form of Adhemar of Le Puy papal legate to Pope Urban II; he also accompanies the main body of crusaders to Jerusalem. How and when the occurred no one can say. In the future and beyond the purview of the sourcebook the Templars are brought to trial and their grandmaster Malory is executed 1309 by a scheme hatched by the Dark Legate.

**The Disintegration of the Peoples Crusade**

These two undisciplined masses further fraction into smaller crusades when traveling through Europe to get to Constantinople. These “crusades” were anti-Jewish in nature, the greed and avarice of the crusaders plundering Jewish wealth. The most notorious of these anti-Jewish crusades was lead by Count Emicho of Leiningen. The terror and horror of Emicho’s crusaders assaulting the palace of a bishop in Mainz, described in the words of Albert of Aix,

*They killed the women, also, and with their tender children of whatever age and sex. The Jews, seeing that their Christian enemies were attacking them and their children, and that they were sparing no age, likewise fell upon one another, brother, children, wives, and sisters, and thus they perished at each other’s hands.*

Emperor Alexius I ordered both Peter and Walter to keep their armies outside the walls of Constantinople until the main force of crusaders could join them and so he could properly organize provisions for the forces and logistical accommodations could be made. Both Peter and Walter urged patience with their hosts, but were unable to keep them in line, looting and pillaging occurred throughout the suburbs of Constantinople. Finally, the Emperor agreed to send them on their way into Turkish lands.

The armies started disintegrating into smaller raiding bands looting nearby towns and villages. Infighting divided up ethnic lines (like Germans, Italians and French for example) and led to a general disorder of the mobs. Eventually both armies were overcome and defeated by the Turks; the members were given the choice to renounce Christ or be killed. Those that renounced Christ were sent to the East. Peter escaped the massacre because he was at Constantinople at the time.

**The Launch of the Main Crusading Host**

The main wave of crusader forces assembled and departed around mid-August 1096. These forces were lead by Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine along with his brother Baldwin of Boulogne; providing a large retinue of knights.

The brother of the king of France Hugh of Vermandois arrived first to Constantinople and was entertained and asked to swear an oath, that entailed return of lands conquered to the Byzantine Empire and an oath of personal loyalty. Hugh stalled and eventually complied with the emperor’s demands, when the emperor refused to ferry his troops across the Bosphorus.

Godfrey arrived after Hugh and learned of the oaths that Alexius I wanted him to swear. Godfrey refused to swear the oaths; the emperor decided to cut provisions to Godfrey’s war host as well as refused to transport his army across the Bosphorus. In retaliation Godfrey’s army started looting and pillaging the outskirts of Constantinople to secure food and provisions. He laid siege to the massive walled city, even though he was greatly underprepared for the endeavor.

## Dark Crusades

or. He siege was easily, quelled and he finally relented to the emperors demands and was allowed to cross the Bosphorus in January of 1097.

Shorty after the ferrying across of Godfrey's host was the arrival of Bohemond of Taranto, a Norman lord whose fortunes did not fare well after the allied forces of the Byzantines and the Venetians took back many of the lands owned by the Normans. Of all the European lords' motivations, Bohemond was using the First Crusade as way to gain more land and power from his dwindling lands in Southern Italy. Despite the hostilities and bad blood between himself and the Byzantines, Bohemond readily accepted the oaths the other great lords were reluctant to take.

The lord with the most massive army was Raymond, Count of Toulouse. He owned land, wealth and power that spread out over thirteen countries. His army was bigger than that of the king of France; he was favored by Pope Urban II, who sent Adhemar bishop of Le Puy as his papal legate attached to Raymond's forces. Raymond refused, like the other lords to take the oaths- he said that he would serve the emperor if he led the crusading army as a compromise. The emperor mentioned that he had duties in Constantinople that kept him there. He did swear an oath of loyalty, but not for the lands acquired in the crusade like his fellow lords.

### The First Successes of the Crusade

The first city they took was Nicaea, the capital of the Turkish sultanate. The battle for this city was short lived and an overwhelming victory for the massive crusading host. It was believed in error that the small disorganized host of the "Peoples Crusade" was the army at their doorstep. Sultan Kilij Arslan did not take the host seriously; remembering the massacre of Peter the Hermit's forces earlier, after the battle on May 21, the sultan fled.

After the taking of Nicaea, the crusading host divided into two armies; the first lead by Bohemond and few lords, the second lead by God-

frey and Raymond. Both armies departed on June 26th journeying to Antioch.

The first army lead by Bohemond was by Kilij Arslan, mistakenly believing that he was attacking the whole crusading army. Bohemond's host was able to hold off Arslan for about a day and send a message to Godfrey and Raymond's army which joined the battle and routed the sultan's army.

During the advance on Nicaea, Baldwin of Boulogne and Tancred, cousin of Bohemond split off from the main force. First they headed toward Cilicia and shortly after Baldwin left for the city of Edessa was proclaimed heir to Toros. A brief time after Baldwin was declared heir, Toros was removed by a coup and Baldwin made ruler which created the first crusader state of Edessa.

*The Siege of Antioch*



**Peter the Hermit's Discovery**

During the long extended siege of Antioch, Peter had learned a dreadful secret. Among the crusaders ranks were vile cultists called Pilgrims of Oblivion who served the Outer God Demogorgon. He learned about the Mythos and how some of the vile cultists were encouraging the cannibalism of the dead in worship of their dark gods. Peter fled in horror, but he was found by the crusaders and forced to serve the Dark Legate by Pilgrims of Oblivion.

**The Walls of Antioch**

The crusading army marches through Anatolia for four months, battling starvation and thirst. When the warhost finally arrives on October 21st 1097 at the city of Antioch, they are reduced to eating horses and in some cases cannibalizing the dead Turkish forces. The siege is protracted and leading to further despair upon the crusaders was news that the Egyptians had conquered Jerusalem and thus displaced Turkish armies heading north to reinforce Antioch. This terrible news led to mass desertions, including Peter the Hermit. Later Peter was discovered by the crusaders and brought back, he begged for their forgiveness and received it.

Though all seemed lost, in the midst of this situation Bohemond was working on bribing the captain of the guard in Antioch to open the gates and let the crusaders in. He succeeded and the city of Antioch was taken in short order, experiencing the heaviest resistance in the citadel.

The Byzantine emperor Alexius marched his troops down to aid the crusaders at Antioch, but was stopped by news from Stephen of Blois who told the emperor about the hopeless situation in Antioch and the Turkish army's inevitable victory. Alexius turned his army around and returned home to Constantinople. This soured the relationship between the crusaders

and the Byzantines, the latter viewed as cowards.

The Turkish horde that left northbound headed toward Antioch to lay siege to the city. In this time of desperation Peter Bartholomew received a vision of St. Andrew telling him that the holy lance that pierced Christ was buried in Antioch. Later a meteor hit the camp of the Turks outside the walls of Antioch. Peter led Raymond to the Cathedral of St. Peter where the lance was supposed to be buried. After hours of digging a spear point was found and proclaimed the holy relic.

The Turkish horde laid siege to Antioch; it was fortuitous for the crusaders that the Turkish army was riddled with internal factions and divisions stemming from various rival emirs. After seeing the size of the crusading host, they offered terms to negotiate for the city; the frenzied crusaders offered no terms. At the realization by many of the emirs that this would be a hard fought and bloody battle many of them deserted. After an astounding victory Bohemond was given Antioch to rule, formerly the second crusader state.

**From Antioch to Jerusalem**

*Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet colored to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared.*

-Fulcher of Chartres, on the capture of Jerusalem in 1098 A.D.

In the summer of 1098 a plague swept through the city of Antioch, killing the papal legate Adhemar of Le Puy.

After months of petty squabbling and intense negotiations between Bohemond and Raymond about ownership of Antioch, the crusaders were finally underway in January. The crusading army had little problem traveling in Syria as numerous petty emirs allowed the crusaders to pass by suing for peace. These smaller emirs were Fatimids from Egypt of the Shi'ia sect, while the more powerful lords of Damas-

## Dark Crusades

cus were Sunni Turks who would not aid the Egyptians. The Egyptians were seeking to make an alliance with the crusaders to fight the Turks, which was ignored because their true objective was Jerusalem, which the Egyptians were unaware of.

On June 3, news reached the crusading host that the Egyptian army was moving to defend Jerusalem. The summer heat and exhaustion would add further difficulty if the army hoped to take Jerusalem which was heavily fortified and walled. On June 6th in the evening a lunar eclipse which swallowed the crescent moon was viewed as a sign that God willed the crusaders to conquer Jerusalem. The crusaders launched an attack which was easily repelled by the well fortified defenders. But once again when all seemed lost six English and Genoese vessels appeared at Jaffa, providing materials to build siege towers and engines to take the city.

Once again foul news of a massive Egyptian army heading towards Jerusalem only a month out caused despair and panic. A vision of the spirit of Adhemar Le Puy appeared scolding the crusaders for their despair and telling them to focus Jerusalem. Peter the Hermit preached an inspiring sermon, and the whole crusading army fasted for almost a month, in which time all their engines and siege towers were built. Finally, city was taken before the massive Egyptian army could reach them.

### OUTREMER AND THE SECOND CRUSADE

A monarch or ruler needed to be established for Jerusalem. It was assumed by many that either the papal legate Adhemar or the Greek patriarch would rule Jerusalem. Adhemar was dead and the Greek orthodox patriarch was in exile. It was decided after internal struggles for leadership that Godfrey of Bouillon accepted the title of *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri* or Protector of the Holy Sepulcher, but refused the crown.

The Egyptian army was expecting the crusaders to stay behind the safe walls of Jerusalem and wait out a siege. Instead the crusader army left the walls of Jerusalem and attacked the encamped Egyptian army by surprise, completely

### Secret History of the Legate's Death

Peter the Hermit was able to make contact with the Holy Sons of Solomon (for details see Mythos Cults p. 40) With their aid Peter conducted a powerful spell which banished the Adhemar of Le Puy (Dark Legate avatar) back to Limbo unable to retake that shape for 101 years. Unfortunately, during the ceremonial banishment the Dark Legate cursed the city with a plague killing many residents before his avatar was banished. Official sources and Peter maintain that the poor papal legate was killed in the plague.

neutralizing their forces. After this astounding victory the vast majority of the crusaders left on vessels bound for Europe.

Besides Godfrey the only other remaining leader of the First Crusade was Tancred, cousin of Bohemond. The remaining forces numbered three hundred knights and about two thousand foot soldiers, responsible for the protection of Jerusalem securing the surrounding lands. Tancred fought and conquered close by Tiberias, which he ruled as fief of Jerusalem. The arrival of Daimbert the archbishop of Pisa, complicated matters further with his belief that the church should rule Jerusalem. He eventually became patriarch of Jerusalem. Godfrey died in July of 18th 1100 C.E. Daimbert believed the throne was his for the taking, but the friends and allies of Godfrey had other plans, they sent for his brother Baldwin of Edessa. When Baldwin arrived he was crowned Baldwin I (1100-18), the first king of Jerusalem.

### Crusades of 1100-1101

At this time the Venetians and Pisans who had taken four years to build up fleets of ships large enough to help the crusaders were ready to launch their ships. Originally the plan was for the naval support take the port of Acre, but the death of Godfrey had complicated this, instead

Haifa was conquered by Venetians and then they returned to Venice.

After the success of the First Crusade, many deserters and potential crusaders who did not finish the long journey were invigorated by the tales of victory and proceeded to take the land route through Byzantine lands. One of the largest concentrations was from Lombardy in Northern Italy. They were eager to rescue Bohemond of Antioch, who was captured by the Turks recently. Despite the advice of Raymond of Toulouse and others the Lombards marched straight into Anatolia and were destroyed by a large army of Turks in battle. Only a handful of survivors escaped the massacre by the Turks. This crusade was rather short-lived and discouraged support for the crusaders for awhile.

### Alexius comes for Antioch

Bohemond never made a move to fulfill his oath to Byzantine emperor Alexius I to restore his former lands back to the empire. Alexius sent troops to take back his former lands and he took Cilicia, but that was as far as the Byzantine got. Bohemond sailed to Italy in 1107 C.E. gathering his Norman troops to invade the Byzantine Empire, failed and was defeated by a joint Byzantine and Venetian venture. Bohemond never turned to the holy land. Tancred ruled Antioch in his place.

Tripoli was captured by the crusaders in 1109 C.E. and held as a fief from Jerusalem by Bertard son of Raymond of Toulouse. This was the last crusader state to be formed, but was a strategically important port for the kingdom of Jerusalem.

### The Formation of Knightly Orders

At the time of King Baldwin II (1118-31) the knightly orders of the Templars (for more information see **Mythos Cults**) was followed by the Hospitallars. The Hospitallars order started out as a hospital for poor and sick pilgrims making their way to the holy land. This order mandate started changing to a more active independent order in 1113 C.E. The Hospitallars and the Templars were one of the few military

forces in Outremer that would stay behind in the holy land after a crusade was over with.

### The Ascension of Zengi

Zengi was the *atabeg* of Mosul and Aleppo; his power was on the rise. He actively preached *ji-had* against all Christians. For the time being he was actively engaged in other battles and could not attempt to conquer Damascus. The Franks feared an attack from Damascus border of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, so King Fulk (1143-44) formed an alliance with the emir of Damascus to help prevent Zengi from capturing the city. They succeed in stopping Zengi from taking control.

To the south was the Egyptian threat posed by the border city of Ascalon, it served as base of operations for futures invasions from the south. In response King Fulk ringed the city with series of castles and forts to prevent this threat from materializing. One such castle was the famous Krak des Chevaliers which he awarded to the Hospitallars.

In 1144 C.E. Zengi besieged Edessa and conquered the city, effectively breaching the northern border of the Latin Kingdom. Edessa was the First Crusader state to fall in the tenuous existence of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Zengi's power extended over the northern territories and unfortunately during its highest point he was murdered by an angry slave in 1146 C.E. fragmenting his empire.

### The Second Crusade

The fall of Edessa to Zengi sent an alarming message that the crusader states were in danger and needed aid. Pope Eugenius III (1145-53) issued papal bull *Quantum praedecessores* beseeching the aid of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, promising the forgiveness of debts and sins if the crusade was joined. The crusade was called by Pope Eugenius III, but the real spirit of the crusade was its key promoter the charismatic preacher Bernard of Clairvaux spreading the sermons all across Europe.

Bernard convinced King Louis VII, his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine and the German em-

## Dark Crusades

peror Conrad III to join the Second Crusade. The Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-80) made deals with the Muslims in Anatolia, which created more distrust between the Byzantines and the crusaders from Europe.

The crusaders after Zengi's death made an attempt to capture Edessa from Nur ed-Din. They failed to take the city back in 1148 C.E. and Nur ed-Din ordered all the Christians in the city to be killed.

On June 24th 1148 C.E. all council of the leaders of the crusaders states and Baldwin III to decide about what to do about the threat of Nur ed-Din. He had just married the daughter of the atabeg of Damascus; the Franks believed that soon he would capture the city, threatening Jerusalem. They decided to break their alliance with Damascus and laid siege on the city, in hopes of protecting their border.

During the siege with the largest army of crusaders ever, they blundered tactically and so were soundly defeated and humiliated. This spelled the disastrous end of the Second Crusade, causing Conrad to return home.

## THE DECAY OF THE LATIN KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM AND THE THIRD CRUSADE

### The Temptation of Egypt

After a brief power struggle between Baldwin III (1143-63) and his mother, the co-ruler at the time, he finally won power and decided to pour all of his military might into conquering Ascalon. Ascalon held out for numerous sieges, but eventually fell to the might of Baldwin III.

Baldwin III's conquest of Ascalon left Damascus vulnerable for invasion by Nur ed-Din and despite Damascus's renewed relations with Jerusalem, the king of Jerusalem did not have the resources to come to the aid of the atabeg of Damascus.

King Baldwin III wanted to foster good relations with Byzantine Emperor Manuel I, so his planned attack on Egypt would be supported. Count Raymond of Antioch was killed during

the conflicts involving Nur ed-Din and his widow Constance chose to marry the adventurous rogue Reynold de Chatillon out of love instead of the usual arranged marriages. This choice proved to be disastrous politically for the Kingdom of Jerusalem (for more details see **Personalities of Outremer**).

In 1163 Baldwin died; without heirs, he chose his brother Amalric (1163-74) as his successor. Amalric was married to Agnes of Courtenay, daughter of Joscelin II of Edessa. The patriarch of Jerusalem did not condone the marriage because of how closely they were blood related. So when Amalric took the throne in 1163 he had the marriage annulled on the conditions that his two children Baldwin and Sybylla were declared legitimate.

It seemed when Amalric took the throne that Egypt was primed for invasion by the Franks, it was plagued by political in-fighting between its viziers. Nur ed-Din sent his Kurdish general Shirkuh to struggle and restore order. He grew to become a rival and enemy of the vizier Shawar who sent to Amalric for aid. Amalric laid

*Bernard of Clairvaux*



siege to Shirkuh's camp and a truce was signed between Nur ed-Din and Amalric on the conditions that Shirkuh left Egypt.

In 1166 Nur ed-Din made his move by invading Egypt and placing Alexandria under the control of Shirkuh. Again Shawar appealed to Amalric for help and the Franks expelled Nur ed-Din's forces from Egypt receiving 100,000 gold dinar tributes annually and establishing a Christian protectorate over Egypt.

Amalric was eager to fully seize Egypt for himself; initially he was willing to wait for the aid promised from Constantinople for this invasion. He was persuaded by the religious order knights the Hospitallars to make the raid without the aid of the Byzantines. The Templars argued against this, stating that it would be another disaster like Damascus, and refused to help.

In 1168 when Shawar learned of his betrayal by the Franks he turned to Nur ed-Din for aid promising him one third of Egypt, so Nur ed-Din sent Shirkuh again turning back the tide of Frankish forces. Amalric's forces were soundly defeated, once again losing them another ally.

### The Rise of Saladin

A few days after the defeat of the Christians, Shirkuh killed Shawar and than two months later he died. His nephew Saladin became the vizier and in 1171 C.E. eliminated all the Shi'ites ruling Egypt, replacing the dynasty with Sunni Abbasid Dynasty ruling from Baghdad.

A series of failed attacks on Egypt by the allied crusaders and Byzantines ensued because of lack of coordination and trust between the forces. Finally in 1174 C.E. Roger II of Sicily led his Normans allied with Amalric to invade Alexandria when the king died of dysentery and effectively the siege fell apart.

On May 14, 1174 C.E. Nur ed-Din passed away, creating chaos and inter conflict based on succession in Syria and Damascus. Saladin capitalized on this strife, by seizing Damascus and naming himself the rightful heir. He compromised by giving Mosul and Aleppo to the Zengid dynasty and taking control of both

Egypt and Syria for himself. To legitimize his claim he married Nur ed-Din's widow, and finally the Islamic world was unified. Saladin continued the *jihad* propaganda started by Zengi and Nur ed-Din, his goal being to drive the crusaders back to Europe.

### 4-year Truce with Saladin

In 1176 C.E. the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor utterly annihilated the imperial armies of the Byzantine Empire during the battle of Myrioccephalum. This caused an end of Byzantine support in the Levant. No help was coming from Europe because of the war the Pope and Lombard League was conducting with northern Italy.

Saladin was busy consolidating his power in the Islamic world, made alliances with Seljuk Turk Sultan Kilij Arslan II in 1185 C.E. and later captured Aleppo and made an alliance with Mosul of the Zengid dynasty. Saladin also made a 4-year truce with the Franks. During this time he made a friendly alliance with the Byzantine Emperor, who did not have much choice given his difficult situation with the Turks. The Truce allowed Saladin to further increase his power in Syria.

### Intrigues of the Leper King's Court

Baldwin IV the king of Jerusalem had contracted leprosy from an early age and would be unable to sire offspring. Many of the nobles believed that his reign would be short. His kingdom was effectively run by his regent Raymond of Tripoli. Because of the physical condition of the king his direct interaction with people was fairly limited so the court had split into two competing factions for power of Jerusalem.

The first faction composed of Raymond of Tripoli and the archbishop William of Tyre, while the other faction included Agnes of Courtenay (King's mother), Reynold de Chatillon, Joseclin III of Courtenay, titular count of Edessa and finally Guy of Lusignan.

Sibylla the King's sister, was enchanted by the young dasher noble Guy and asked for consent in marrying him, which she received. He be-

## Dark Crusades

came guardian of the royal heir Baldwin V, and when leprosy claimed Baldwin IV's sight he became the regent.

In 1183 C.E. Saladin's army crossed the Jordan looking to provoke a fight with his large army. Guy summoned the crusaders together to meet Saladin and kept the army out of reach of Saladin, knowing full well that his enemy's force could not sustain themselves indefinitely and could be waited out. After a few weeks Saladin left, not being able to sustain the army long enough to wait for Guy. When Guy returned King Baldwin IV was enraged that Guy did not engage Saladin, calling him a coward and traitor. His regent status was stripped and the King tried to annul Guy's marriage to his sister which failed.

In 1185 C.E. Baldwin IV died from his leprosy and a year later his heir Baldwin V succumbed as well. A feud started between Joscelin III and Raymond of Tripoli that almost led to open warfare between the crusader lords. Raymond in his rage makes a formal alliance with Saladin.

Sibylla agrees to annul her marriage to Guy, if preparations are made to set him and his needs up for life. After these negotiations and the legitimizing of her heirs, the nobles agree to let her pick her new husband, in which she picks Guy and crowns him herself.

### Battle of Hattin

Reynold de Chatillon in 1187 C.E. began raiding trade routes from Egypt and Syria, involving merchants loyal to both King Guy of Lusignan and Saladin. The relationship between Guy and Jerusalem deteriorated to the point where Reynold declared his fief of Transjordan independent of laws and treaties of Jerusalem.

These incidents resulted in such seriousness that Guy demanded that Reynold pay restitution to Saladin. Reynold refused; this marked the beginning of the end for Jerusalem. This provided the excuse Saladin needed to meet the crusaders in open battle and finish off the crusaders for good. Raymond of Tripoli realized that the Franks were divided and so he decided to join them in their fight against Saladin.

Saladin attempted to provoke the army twenty thousand men and twelve thousand armored knights to meet his army of thirty thousand half of which consisted of light cavalry troops. As per four years ago Saladin could not offer to field his army for long, so he hoped to make the crusaders come to him. Originally Guy wanted to wait them out, Raymond of Tripoli was in agreement despite Saladin's forces laying siege to his fief of Tiberias. But, as fate would have it Gerard of Ridfort (grandmaster of the Templars) convinced him that Raymond was not to be trusted and that the crusaders would win the battle for sure.

Guy decided to march towards Saladin's forces in the dead of summer heat in July, with few water holes between his and Saladin's forces. They met at the "Horns of Hattin" or hills located in the region. The crusaders were surrounded and exhausted from the travel; this led to their massacre.

After the battle Guy was captured as well as many Templars, Hospitallars, Gerard and Reynold de Chatillon. All the Templars and Hospitallars were executed save Gerard. Reynold de Chatillon had his head personally cut off by Saladin himself. The rest were ransomed and those that could not offer the ransom were sold into slavery. In his victory Saladin paraded the Christian relic, the true cross, upside-down in the streets of Damascus.

Jerusalem was later conquered by Saladin's forces. The Christians and Jews were allowed to leave the city unharmed because of Balian of Ibelin's threat to burn the city and kill the Muslims in it. The Christians and Jews fled as the city was taken out of their hands.

### The Third Crusade

After the fall of Jerusalem to the forces of Saladin, the newly risen Pope Gregory VIII issued an *Audita tremendi* (crusading papal bull) to launch another crusade to save Jerusalem from the Saracens. He equated the failure to hold Jerusalem with spiritual sin.

Many influential kings and lords answered the call to crusade starting with Roger II of Sici-



ly and his bands of Normans who rescued Tripoli from being captured after which Roger died, effectively taking the Normans out of the fighting.

Frederick Barbarossa joined the crusade in April of 1189 C.E. entering through Byzantine lands, his progress and attempts for passage were stymied by a secret deal between Isaac II and Saladin. This provoked attacks and repercussions from Frederick, eventually the Germans made it to Anatolia. On June 10 the crusaders entered Christian Armenia, where Frederick drowned on horseback trying to cross the river Saleph.

### Feud of Guy of Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat

After the release of Guy and many of the crusader lords in 1188 C.E., Conrad of Montferrat proceeded to try and take over kingship of the crusader states for himself. Guy and his forces marched to Tyre; he was locked out of the city by Conrad refusing to acknowledge him as king of Jerusalem.

Guy left to try and take Acre against hopeless odds with a crusading fleet out of Pisa in 1189 C.E. This ended up being a rallying call for other crusaders, and seeing this Conrad, whom was hunkered down in Tyre, was forced to join the fight in 1190 C.E. and acknowledge Guy as king of Jerusalem. Misfortune struck that Fall as Sibylla and her two daughters died, destroying Guy's linkage to the throne. Conrad took the opportunity to marry Sibylla's sister Isabella against her will to take the throne of Jerusalem.

Richard I (the Lionheart) King of England and Phillip Augustus left for the crusade on July 4th, 1190 C.E. Through numerous conflicts in Sicily and feuds over land acquired and the dowry of Richard's sister Joan, both kings were at odds with each other from the start.

Richard overshadowed Phillip at every turn; he became a legendary general and warrior during the Third Crusade. He defeated Saladin in one engagement and was never able to face Saladin again. Richards's forces came within twelve miles of the walls of Jerusalem, but never

had the right circumstances to make the siege. On June 7, 1192 Richard's forces did capture Ascalon, putting them in a key position to take Jerusalem but they would never have the force of arms to hold it permanently. Richard was bitterly forced to leave because of the treachery of Phillip Augustus coming after his land.

Despite Richard's failure to retake Jerusalem, his numerous victories helped reclaim many of the lost cities and territories after the dreaded battle of Hattin. The Third Crusade was successful in keeping the crusader states in a permanent presence for a while longer.

### Future Crusades

This sourcebook only covers the first three crusades, but this is by no means the only time periods that are playable in **Dark Crusades**. Beyond these crusades are the Children's Crusade, the Fourth Crusade and the sacking of Constantinople by the crusaders. Perhaps in future expansions these additional crusades will be covered in more detail.

## CREATURES OF THE MYTHOS

In this section are detailed notes and activities for mythos creatures located in or near Outremer. These notes are intended to be a guide to inspire the keeper's use of these beings when running or creating his/her scenarios for *Dark Crusades*.

Some of these creatures of the mythos are new; while the roles of others are being defined further to enrich the setting. In some cases, as noted some of the creature entries may be altered from the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook. All entries that are altered will be noted in the entry.

It is always important to keep in mind that these are just guidelines and suggestions, the keeper should always feel free to alter or omit these entries to better suit his/her scenarios.

### **Byakhee, Lesser Servitor Race**

*There flapped rhythmically a horde of tame, trained, hybrid winged things...not altogether*

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*crows, nor moles, nor buzzards, nor ants, nor decomposed human beings, but something I cannot and must not recall.*

-H.P. Lovecraft "The Festival."

They oftentimes serve Hastur or in Outremer his avatar the Veiled Mahdi. These entities do not dwell on Earth, but must be summoned by sorcerers or mad mystics. They are interstellar mounts that can be ridden by cultists or sorcerers into space. These serve as the favored mounts of Silats (hags) of the desert wilderness.

### ***Dagon & Hydra, Rulers of the Deep Ones***

*In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.*

-The Bible, Isaiah 27:1

### ***Deep Ones***

*...legends have clustered for generations about crumbling, half-deserted Innsmouth and its people. There are tales of horrible bargains... and strange element "not quite human" in the ancient families of the run-down fishing port...*

-H.P. Lovecraft, "The Thing on the Doorstep."

Deep Ones have a presence throughout the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, dwelling primarily in underwater caves where their terrestrial cults dedicate shrines to them. Throughout the crusades periods there are numerous pirates and sea reavers whom pay homage to Dagon, Mother Hydra and great Cthulhu. Some of these pirates and descended from foul interbreeding of Deep Ones and humans.

Some of the various unexplored islands are homes to cannibalistic Tcho-Tcho or debased Tcho-Tcho deep one hybrids. There are a number of disturbing stories in the Thousand and One Arabian Nights about the hostile island dwellers.

### ***Denizens of the Nameless City***

*They were of the reptile kind, with body lines suggesting sometimes the crocodile, sometimes the*

*seal,...In size they approximated a small man, and their fore legs bore delicate and evidently flexible feet curiously like human hands and fingers...[They possessed] horns and the noselessness and the alligator-like jaw...*

-H.P. Lovecraft, "The Nameless City."

The reptile-like horned humanoids only known as the Denizens of the Nameless had a powerful antediluvian empire that stretched across all of Arabia and Africa. They were masters of highly advanced techno-sorcery beyond the limits of mankind. Their one great fear was death. What eventually led to their downfall was the discovery of the Elixir of Immortality (See **Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts: Alien Devices** for more details on p. 47) this elixir has devolved both their minds and bodies. The elixir has a strong additive property to the Denizens, which may or may not affect other species.

By the time the adverse side effects of the Elixir of Immortality were discovered the majority of the Denizens were already under its control. Because of the potency of the Elixir many of the Denizens under its influence have projected their minds into Limbo and the Ultimate Gate, flooding the ether with images of the Elixir and the Nameless City. This has caused many Christian and Muslim mystics to receive visions of the Nameless City and the Elixir.

### **DENIZENS OF THE NAMELESS CITY, Mad Prisoners of Immortality**

<i>Char.</i>	<i>rolls</i>	<i>averages</i>
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	4D6+6	18-19
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6+6	16
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 7		HP: 15

**Av. Damage Bonus: +0**

**Weapons:** Claws 45%, 1D6+grapple

Bite 50%, 1D8

**Armor:** Natural scaly hide gives it a value of 5. Due to the natural physiology of these creatures attacks that would impale only do normal damage.

**Spells:** Each Denizen has chance INT x2 percentage chance to know a 1D4 spells.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points for anyone seeing a Denizen of the Nameless City.

### **Ghouls, Lesser Servitor Race**

*I was struck with astonishment and horror to see my wife with this ghoul. They dug up a dead body which had been buried that day, and the ghoul cut off pieces of the flesh, which they ate together by the grave-side...the remembrance of which still makes me shudder.*

-“The Story of Syed Naomaun” from Arabian Nights.

Throughout Outremer and the Levant the occurrence of Ghouls at grave sites and as carrion eaters after great battles is not uncommon. Deeply hidden underground there exists a city of ghouls called Ghulistan. Deep within a hidden vault in the city rests the infamous Mythos artifact the Black Ark. These ghouls are rumored not to serve any of the Mythos gods, but instead they are allied with the “ghoul king” which some believe is the mysterious Gilgamesh.

### **Mi-Go, the fungi from Yuggoth**

*But though that voice is always in my ears, I have not even yet been able to analyse it well enough for a graphic description. It was like the drone of some loathsome, gigantic insect ponderously shaped into the articulate speech of an alien species...*

- H.P. Lovecraft, “The Whisperer in Darkness.”

For many hundreds of years the blasphemous Children of Ishtar cult dedicated to the goddess Ishtar (an avatar of Shub-Niggurath) has been working loosely with a Mi-go outpost underneath the Dead Sea. The Children enslave people to mine precious ores for the Mi-go. In exchange the Mi-go assists the cultists in opening

the Ishtar Gate (See Children of Ishtar: **Mythos Cults** section for details p.40).

Some of the Mi-go outposts in the major cities like Antioch, Cairo and Damascus, to name a few, have taken to manipulating practicing Alchemists into searching for the “philosopher’s stone.” This rare alchemical material is believed by them to possess the properties of transmuting lead into gold. The true reason for the quest is quite different. The Mi-go are looking for a rare mineral from the lost continent of Mu. Through alchemical divinations and sorcery the lost secrets of Mu will be revealed along with the elusive mineral. Once this alchemical breakthrough is made the unfortunate alchemist’s brain will be removed and placed, still living, into a metal tube. In this device it will reveal the location of this lost mineral and the means of finding it.

### **Old Ones**

*“When the smoke was all out of the vessel, it reunited and became a solid body, of which was formed a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants.”*

-Tale of Fisherman from Thousand and One Arabian Nights.

These ancient beings manifest as the *Jinn* of the Koran and the folklore of the *Arabian Nights*. The Jinn have been imprisoned inside different vessels and containers by Solomon for their disobedience to him by a group known as the *Shayatin* lead by Iblis.

Many of these vessels have been long buried in the sands or in the sea waiting for countless years to be found. Some of these beings have been known to help their rescuers by granting them a boon of three wishes. It must be noted that these wishes often take the forms of powerful delusions and illusions that can lead to the misfortune of mortals.

Another form of the Old Ones commonly encountered in Outremer and the surrounding regions is that of an angel. Many Old Ones will take this form during fierce battles ‘guiding’ or deluding the witnesses with celestial ‘visions’.

## Dark Crusades

The motivations and arcane designs of the Old Ones varied depending on the form they decided to adopt. For detailed statistical information see *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook.

### Rat-Thing, Lesser Servitor Race

*On departing [the Devil] delivers to her [the witch] an imp or familiar. The familiar, in shape of a cat, a mole, miller-fly, or some other insect or animal...*

-Grose's Antiquities in Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain.

Despite the name of rat-thing, these twisted familiars can take the forms of various animal-like shapes like cats, rats, moles, flies and frogs. No matter the base form, these hideous creatures have malevolent features of distorted human faces and paws or feelers replaced with human fingers.

These unnatural creatures are created by the black sorcery of a witch or necromancer performed on a cultist or follower. In some cases those that were transformed are unwilling subjects or desecrated dead bodies.

These fiends usually attack from the ceiling or some hiding place, making a biting attack and clinging on to their victims. Tearing one off causes 1d3 hit points of damage.

### RAT-THINGS, Scuttling Spies and Mockers

Char.	rolls	averages
STR	1D3	2
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	1	1
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6	7
DEX	4D6+4	20
Move:	9	HP 4

**Av. Damage Bonus:** -1D6

**Weapon:** Bite 35%, damage 1d3

**Armor:** none, but subtract 40 percentiles from the chance to hit a running rat-thing, and subtract 20 percentiles from the chance to one attached to somebody.

**Spells:** those of INT 14 or more know 1D3 spells of the keeper's choice; those who knew spells in life retain that knowledge as rat-things.

**Skills:** Dodge 95%, Hide 80%, Sneak 65%

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 sanity points to see a rat-thing; if the rat-thing was known to the observer in life, however, it costs 1/1D8 Sanity points to see it.

### Shedu, Bulls of Heaven

#### Greater Independent Servitor Race

When they reached the gates of Uruk the Bull went to the river; with his first snort cracks opened in the earth and a hundred young men fell down to death.

-The Epic of Gilgamesh, excerpt from an encounter with the Bull of Heaven.

The stellar race of Shedu originally hailed from the star of Aldebaran. They were but banished by the usurpers of the Veiled Mahdi (Hastur) and legion of traitor Jinn called *Shayatin* lead by Iblis. They fought valiantly with the two arch-sorcerers Gilgamesh and Solomon who led their own army of Jinn.

The Veiled Madhi and his army of traitorous Jinn and Byakhee overthrew the Shedu and the existing monarch of Aldebaran. Hidden within the maddening play *The King in Yellow* is the story of how the Shedu were defeated by the spirit of truth. This hidden truth is a seminal part of the doctrine of many a Sufi mystic and dervish.

The Shedu are exiled from their homeworld and now dwell on Earth. After their defeat they were tasked by Solomon and Gilgamesh to guard the prisons of many of the fallen *Shayatin* captured during the revolt. Various vessels are buried throughout the Levant. These vessels have been sealed with the Elder Sign (Solomon's Seal) to prevent the escape of the Jinn whom dwell within.

Exile has been difficult on the Shedu; many have shunned and eschewed contact with humans for thousands of years. These silent stoic guardians continue to guard the Jinn and other

forbidden treasures inside the ruins of ancient Mesopotamia.

### Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, Satraps of the Sleeper

The various myths about dragons have evolved from sights of these horrid minions of great Cthulhu. Some of the most infamous dragons from Sumerian legend were Star-Spawn; Tiamat and Azi Dahaka of Zoroastrian myth. The tale of Saint George slaying the dragon stems back to an episode when an enlightened warrior with knowledge of the mythos slew a star-spawn and dispersed a massive cult of Cthulhu located in the Levant hundreds of years ago. During the many battles of the Crusades, there are periodic sightings of St. George fighting alongside the Franks.

It is rumored that deep within the Indian Ocean lies R'lyeth and that the biblical monster Leviathan is none other than Great Old One Cthulhu. Some cultists believe that Leviathan is not Cthulhu, but rather a monstrous minion of Cthulhu trapped inside R'lyeth waiting to be freed.

### Tcho-Tchos

*"The Banu Ubayy are an Arab clan from the tribe of Tavy'. They only eat carrion..."*

-Usama ibn Munqidh his reflection upon meeting one particular Bedouin tribe. An excerpt from the *Book of Contemplation* 1188 C.E.

This foul and degenerate species of human hails originally from the Tsang Plateau around Tibet. The Tcho-Tcho peoples have migrated and intermingled with various fierce peoples of the steppe of central Asia. Many of the disturbed degenerate nomads had already taken to the worship the Great Old One Chaugnar Faugn.

Some of these corrupted nomadic tribes merged and migrated with the Seljuk Turks invading the Byzantine Empire. This led to the genesis of the *Brotherhood of Blood*. During this mass Diaspora from central Asia, the Tcho-Tcho began spreading into Anatolia, Syria and into surrounding wilderness, even some

remote isles mentioned by Sinbad in *Arabian Nights*.

During the conquests of the Seljuk Turks, there were attempts made by the now "civilized" rulers to eliminate the savage practices of the nomads. This censure of their macabre ways forced the Tcho-Tcho in more urban areas to practice underground.

### Statistics:

Use the same statistics for humans, except that the adults have 0 Sanity points, the children have half the normal amount and a Tcho-Tcho cultist has a chance to know a 1D3 spells at 2x INT score. Usually the Curse of Chaugnar Faugn is one of the spells, other can be chosen at the keeper's discretion.

### Gods of the Mythos

In Outremer and around the Levant many of the gods of the Mythos have taken different forms with various avatars. Some of the gods in the *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook have different avatars in the setting or in some cases have more than one avatar functioning at one time in the case of outer god Nyarlathotep. He has the avatars of Loki in Europe, the Black Pharaoh in Egypt and the Dark Legate with the crusaders in Outremer. Most of the other deities only possess one avatar functioning at any one time.

### Tawil at'Umr

*They were surprised to see me, but more so at hearing the particulars of my adventures. "You fell," said they, "into the hands of the old man of the sea, and are the first who ever escaped strangling..."*

-"The Fifth Voyage of Sinbad" from  
Arabian Nights.

In the Levant this avatar is sometimes known as "The Old Man of the Sea" as mentioned by Sinbad in one of his voyages. His presence here guarding the portal of the Ultimate Gate is believed by some worshippers to be the Ishtar Gate. If this proves true, a conflict with the Children of Ishtar cult could be coming.

## Dark Crusades

Another guise that is taken by Tawil at' Umr is that of the mythical Prestor John. He resides deep within a mythical land of "dragons" and mystical beasts. There have been letters from the Crusaders to John. Prestor John has responded to these inquiries as well. What macabre motivations this avatar of Yog-Sothoth has in mind is anybody's guess.

### Dark Legate

#### AVATAR OF NYARLATHOTEP

*Some demons, in fact, intend only to play pranks, while others have mind in mind acts of cruelty that usually lead to injury.*

*-Monodoies and On the Relics of Saints* by Guibert of Nogent (French monk who lived during the Crusades).

The Dark Legate is a manipulative Machiavelian schemer avatar of Nyarlathotep. He is one of the principal architects of the various crusades into Jerusalem. The Dark Legate seeks vengeance against Holy Sons of Solomon and the secret societies responsible for destroying the Mythos shrines in the Ka'ba during the "smashing of the idols" at the birth of Islam.

Along with his vengeance at the mortals, the Dark Legate seeks to free Demogorgon from his prison in the Black Ark hidden deep in the holy land. If Demogorgon is freed thousands of mortals will go mad, adding to the perverse joy of Nyarlathotep.

The chaos and slaughter of the various crusades have enhanced and prepped the way for the bending of reality and the entrance of the Outer Gods and their servants into the realm of Earth. Numerous agents of the Dark Legate are scattered throughout both Saracen and Frank camps causing political turmoil and madness within the ranks of both cultural groups.

Some rumors persist that the Dark Legate was responsible for the leprosy of Baldwin IV. The multiple scheming factions of the Leper king's court add some credence to this theory.

When encountered the Legate appears dressed either as a regally dressed papal legate with gold chain of office or a Saracen vi-

#### The Role of the Elder Gods?

Detailed information and statistics for these beings can be found in the Call of Cthulhu core rule book. Some keepers do not find these more "benevolent" deities appropriate for their personal games and have decided to omit them. If keepers are interested in including them, the goddess Bast would be well suited for games based in or around Egypt.

zier dressed in silks. Physically his face is pale and his skin is drawn tightly across his skull with deep set black eyes. Whenever mortals look upon him they only see a commanding beguiling visage of their own race (Frank or Saracen) staring back at them.

**CULT:** The Dark Legate has a false church of duped clergymen based in France that have led and engineered the Crusades. These deceived clergymen have convinced Pope Urban II to call the First Crusade at Clermont. Many of these clergymen whom serve the Dark Legate have taken on leadership positions in other cults, like the Pilgrims of Oblivion to help lead the crusaders into following the mad schemes of the Dark Legate.

**ATTACKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS:** The Dark Legate avatar seeks to manipulate and corrupt humanity through deception and trickery. The Dark Legate will only use supernatural powers or spells when necessary to accomplish its schemes which usually serve to bring about mass madness to humanity.

**Communal Visions:** If the Dark Legate spends up to 15 POW, he can induce a mass communal vision in a group of people up to 5,000 in number. All those subject to the mass vision must make opposed POW roll vs. POW 100 on the resistance table or experience a horrific vision of the Legates choosing. This causes a SAN loss of 1D10 if the resistance POW roll is failed. Because of the Legates' master plan regarding the crusades most visions tend to be religious in nature foretelling the guiding of saints and an-

gels or eventual apocalypse if a certain course of action is not followed.

### NYARLATHOTEP, the Dark Legate

Char.	Score
STR	12
CON	19
SIZ	11
INT	86
POW	100
DEX	19
APP	18
HP	15
Move	12
Db	+0

**Weapons:** Any Weapons 100%, damage as per weapon.

**Armor:** None, but if brought to 0 hit points, he collapses on the ground spasms into a monstrous tentacle filled flailing mass and disintegrates causing a SAN 1/1D6.

**Spells:** The Dark Legate knows all Mythos spells in **Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages** rulebook, as well this one and other sourcebooks. He can summon any Mythos creature at the cost of 1 magic point per his POW score.

**Sanity Loss:** No San loss for seeing the form of the Dark Legate, but if witnessing any of his other forms 1D10/1D100.

### Demogorgon, The Beast

#### OUTER GOD

*And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth...and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.*

-Book of Revelation 13:1-3

Demogorgon or The Beast of Revelation appears as a horrid seven-headed amalgamation of multiple animals including a leopard and possessing feet like a bear. His mouths are lion-

like and covered with blasphemous names and runes from the outer gulfs of space. This horrific entity is presently bound in the Black Ark hidden away in the underground city of ghouls called Ghulistan.

This Black Ark is being looked for by multiple cults for different designs and purposes. The Holy Sons of Solomon seek to find it and keep it safe and away from any who would seek to free Demogorgon. The Pilgrims of Oblivion seek to release their master Demogorgon. The Templars members of the inner circle seek to find the ark and destroy it along with the Outer God who dwells within.

**CULT:** The Pilgrims of Oblivion is the biggest cult dedicated to Demogorgon in and around the Outremer. Numerous cults have emerged and they vanished serving Demogorgon throughout the ages as early as the millenarian prophecies of Daniel a patriarch of the Old Testament.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** The mere presence of Demogorgon on the mortal plane causes earthquakes, plagues and natural disasters of "biblical proportions." Mass hysteria and floods will ensure the longer Demogorgon is present on Earth.

**ATTACKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS:** Obstacles and physical barriers of any kind cannot prevent Demogorgon from attacking his prey, at best with the keeper's discretion some large objects like buildings might slow him down.

### DEMOGORGON, The Beast of Revelation

STR 220	CON 180	SIZ 77	INT 18
POW 70	DEX 21	Move 18	Hp 185

**Weapons:** Claws and Bite 100%, These attacks cause a 1D100+db for each attack for up to three attacks.

**Armor:** The tough otherworldly hide provides a Armor value of 10. Due to the unnatural power of Demogorgon he cannot be hurt by natural weapons. Only enchanted or magical weapons can harm Demogorgon.

## Dark Crusades

**Spells:** Demogorgon does not prefer to use spells, but can make use of the Riders of Apocalypse spell at will. The Beast prefers physical confrontations; it knows 10 other spells at the keeper's discretion.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D10/1D100 Sanity Loss to see Demogorgon.

### *Ishtar*

#### AVATAR OF SHUB-NIGGURATH

*And this, I learned, was the never ending flight of those who sinned in the flesh, the carnal and lusty who betrayed reason to their appetite.*

Canto V stanza 37-39, *Dante's Inferno*

This malignant avatar manifests as gigantic whirlwind composed of an intermingled amalgamation of various grotesque people embracing carnally. Ishtar emits a cacophony of misplaced and lusting voices and echoes from within the wind column.

At the epicenter of this etheric whirlwind is spinning mass of the most infamous betrayers who fell prey to their animal lusts. For full game statistics see *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook. If any investigator is unlucky to encounter this avatar they need to seriously rethink their investigation.

### *Veiled Mahdi*

#### AVATAR OF HASTUR

*...Hallaj met Junayd one day, and said to him, "I am the Truth." "No," Junayd answered him, "it is by means of the Truth that you are! What gibbet will you stain with your blood!"*

-Al-Hallaj's famous declaration of being God by the Sufi mystic. He was later executed in Baghdad in 922 C.E. for heresy.

Hastur's avatar the Veiled Mahdi is a great deceiver and thespian of madness. Many dervishes and heterodox Sufi mystics venerate the Veiled Mahdi. The Mahdi promises spiritual secrets and esoteric wisdom about the nature of reality.

Some of the vocal and exuberant dervishes offer to perform the mystical play *The King in Yellow* to audiences who care to watch. These troupes believe that they are sharing existential knowledge to those ignorant of the divine mysteries.

The Veiled Mahdi seeks to corrupt and subvert the spiritual, temporal and existential order of things. Through cacophonous music and ecstatic trance states, the Madhi leads his throngs of mad mystics.

Currently this Hasturian avatar seeks to reach a more diverse audience for its dirges of despair. It is believed by some that a troupe of dervishes of the Yellow Sign have infiltrated some of the royal courts in Outremer. If this is the case it is only a matter of time before the Franks witness the "truth" about their existence.

The physical manifestation of this avatar appears as a seven foot tall slender humanoid in a heavily jeweled embroidered dark robe. All of the dervish's features are concealed by an ornate black patterned veil except for two glowing green eyes. The mystical dancer is perpetually shrouded by intoxicating and hallucinogenic multi colored fumes.

If anyone viewing the Veiled Madhi sees underneath his robes, they behold true terror. Beneath these robes hides a rubbery green-gray collection of twisted and mutated fetuses gnawing at each other in the shape of a torso. For a head it has a mass of tentacles, two of which have a ghastly glowing green orb at their end. In place of two legs it has ethereal vapor starting at the torso. Where its arms should be are two crustacean-like pincers.

**CULT:** Many of the Veiled Madhi's cults consist of degenerate outcast Sufi mystics and dervishes. These ascetics can be found in the more populous cities throughout Outremer as well as wilderness areas. The most successful of the numerous small cults is the Dervishes of the Yellow Sign.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** The manifestation of the Veiled Mahdi leads to a myriad of visions experienced by soothsayers and oracles. The



Madhi is not an aggressive and destruction entity, it prefers to manipulate and use the masses for its own incomprehensible ends.

**ATTACKS & SPECIAL EFFECTS:** The Veiled Mahdi can entrance anyone who watches in mystical otherworldly whirling dance. The cacophonous melodies and discordant music is soul shattering and hypnotic at the same time. The viewer witness the thin veil of reality being rent apart revealing the Outer Spheres and the Dreamlands. This event puts the viewers in a trance-like state unless than can resist the Madhi's POW of 112 vs. POW on the resistance table if they fail they are in trance for 1D10 rounds. After which they must make a SAN 3/3D6 roll.

### HASTUR, THE VEILED MAHDI

For additional game statistics please see *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook. It is felt that additional statistics would not be necessary, given the dangers posed by encountering a god.

## MYTHOS CULTS

This section details the various cults and secret societies throughout Outremer and the Levant. All of these organizations have knowledge of or dealings with the Mythos.

### ASSASSINS (NAZARIS)

*When the Isma'ilis made an attempt on the citadel of Shayzar, one of our comrades called Hammam the Pilgrim encountered one of the Isma'ilis in a portico...The Isma'ilis had a knife in his hand and Hammam had a sword...Hammam struck him... He cut through the top of his skull and his brains fell out.*

-Usama Ibn Munqih, excerpt from the Book of Contemplation. Occurred in 1114 A.D.

**Aliases:** Hashishim (users of hashish), Isma'ilis, Nazaris, Twelvers

**Organization Type:** A quasi-religious cult of killers contracted out by the grand master. Numerous spies and cultists make up the ranks of the organization. The ranks starting from the top down are: Old Man of the Mountain,

Grand Priors, Political Emissaries, Associates in Training, Law Brothers and finally the Common Peoples.

**Estimated Membership:** Perhaps thousands; it is unknown but their sphere of influence was very wide.

**Holdings and Interests:** Their headquarters are located in a mountain fortress called Alamut "Eagle's Nest" near Aleppo established in 1090 C.E. Alamut is not the only holding, there-are numerous fortress and castles located throughout Syria.

**Known History:** The Assassins were founded by Hasan Saba of Khorasan. He went to school with the famous poet Omar Khayyam and Nizam ul Mulk (who became Grand Vizier of the Seljuk Sultan). Hasan was politically powerful and well educated, he got into political trouble about his heterodoxical beliefs and eventually fled Cairo and made mountain fortress Alamut his home.

Hasan, called "The Old Man of the Mountain" recruited peoples from all over the Levant to join his new quasi-religious order called the Nazaris. The Assassins are known to be on relatively good terms with the Templars and do not have any political allegiance with either the Saracen or Frankish rulers. There are numerous attempts on Saladin's life as well as assassinations of Frankish nobles conducted by them.

**Indoctrination:** Initiates were brought to Alamut, drugged then they would proceed into a beautiful garden with maidens and told that they were in paradise. They would be told that this awaited them if they obeyed the instructions of the grand master, then the initiates would be returned to their chambers when the drugs wore off. The process inspires fanatical loyalty in the new initiates.

**Doctrine/Dogma:** The vast majority of this cult believes that they are serving the divine will of Allah. All members of the upper echelon of power realize the truth of the secret doctrine. "Nothing is true and all is allowed," meaning that the religious dogma is a tool used to con-

## Dark Crusades

trol their followers. Many of the highest members are atheists and nihilists seeking secular power.

### Unconfirmed Rumors:

- The Assassins seek the fabled “Letter of Heaven” carried by Peter the Hermit to allow them to build an empire.
- The order has been employed by Pilgrims of Oblivion to kill off the grandmaster of the Holy Sons of Solomon.

### SECRET HISTORY

During the founding of the Assassins by Hasan, he was hunted and persecuted by his use of forbidden sorcery and Mythos magic. The Holy Sons of Solomon revealed this to the religious authorities in Cairo, who tried to execute Hasan and his followers. Hasan and his followers fled, lead by Nyarlathotep’s avatar, the Black Pharaoh. Hasan is deeply indebted to the Black Pharaoh for saving his life, but still seeks employment with whoever will pay him the most, unless the employer’s plans directly counter the schemes of the Black Pharaoh.

Hasan has recently broken a truce with the cult of the Knights Templar; he suspects their true knowledge of the Mythos and their motivations to fight it. Hasan has taken great pains to hide his associations with the Mythos and continues to play a dangerous game of duplicity and feigned ignorance.

**Tomes in the Possession of the Assassins:** Hieron Aigypton, Rasul al-Albarin.

**Current Goals and Projects:** The Assassins seek to eliminate their main rival the Holy Sons of Solomon. Hasan has not forgotten being expelled for his heterodoxy from Cairo and he seeks vengeance against the religious leaders responsible. Hasan also seeks to see the influence of the his secret master the Black Pharaoh grow throughout the Levant and Outremer.

### Brotherhood of Blood (Daem Al Ukhuwwa)

*Upon a blasted cairn of a hill, I beheld a profane blasphemous ritual of unimaginable horror. Illu-*

*minated by ghastly pale moon light was a throng of men and women robed in blood drenched hides of their fellow men. Even the shock of beholding this diabolic ceremony could not steel me from the abject horror of the chanting. It was a vile choir of inhuman tones and sounds that harkened back to a primordial darkness before the dawn of man.*

-Excerpt from the Journal of Jean Carter  
circa 1145 C.E.

**Aliases:** Blood drinkers, Slayers of the Elephant Demon.

**Organization Type:** Loose cluster of Tribes from the Steppe. The majority of the cult is composed of Seljuk Turks, a very small percentage of its members are East Indians from India. Many of the powerful Seljuk dynasties are members of or serve this cult.

**Estimated Membership:** It is believed to be about 600 members strong, but the numbers of new initiates among the Bedouin is on the rise. The rest of the cult consists of numerous degenerate Tcho-Tcho followers of Chaugnar faugn.

**Holdings and Interests:** The Brotherhood is primarily based in Anatolia near the Byzantine Empire. The cities of Mosul and Aleppo have some highly placed members of this cult located to the south. Many of the holdings are forts or mobile camps that can move at a moment’s notice.

**Known History:** Much of the Brotherhood of Blood’s history is not well known. It is believed that the cult migrated with the initial invasions of the Seljuk Turks out of the Eurasian Steppe. Many scholars believe that this cult originated in the Steppe. It is an aggressive martial cult associated with extreme bloodletting and sacrifice. During the establishment of the Seljuk dynasties there were attempts by the Sultans themselves to curb the more barbaric and un-Islamic practices that many of their followers still practiced. This forced the cult to be practiced in secret societies based on warrior lodges.

**Indoctrination:** A warrior is selected by one of the Blood Chiefs (leaders of the lodges) and he or she is taken to a secret location and participates in a ritual sacrifice to Chaugnar faugn and some of his/her blood is drained by the Great Old One.

**Doctrine/Dogma:** The Brotherhood of Blood believes the world was made to be dominated by warriors and should not be ruled by the martially weak. They believe with arrival of the “white acolyte” that Chaugnar faugn will rule all of the Levant and Outremer. The way to expedite eventual kingship of this Great Old One is to make mass sacrifices to Chaugnar faugn.

### Unconfirmed Rumors

- The Brotherhood believes that Saladin is the “White Acolyte” that they seek and they are gathering an army for him to take the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
- The Brotherhood has awakened all the “Brothers of Chaugnar faugn” and seeks one final sacrifice to summon Chaugnar faugn to the mortal realm. They need to find the tusks of the albino elephant.

### SECRET HISTORY

This blasphemous bloodthirsty cult actually originates from the Tsang Plateau in Central Asia. The nomads of this region migrated to India and invaded the northwestern portion of India by Mohammed of Ghazi in the 11th century A.D. It spread into Anatolia and the Levant. The Brotherhood of Blood took quickly to the martial pride of the warriors of the Eurasian Steppe; it spread like a plague among many of the tribes.

The weakening of the Byzantine Empire helped with the further expansion of the cult. The few individuals with knowledge of the Mythos within the empire were treacherously killed off by the Dark Legate (avatar of Nyarlathotep) and the last remnants eliminated in the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 A.D. The Dark Legate through political acumen and manipulations groomed pro-Mythos sentiment with

the Byzantine Empire. By the time of the reign of Alexius I anti-counter Mythos pogroms were in effect throughout the Empire. It made it impossible for the Holy Sons of Solomon to find out about the Brotherhood of Blood until the Seljuk invasions.

**Tomes in the Possession of the Brotherhood:** Scriptures Al-Daem, Pnakotica.

**Current Goals and Projects:** The Brotherhood seeks to replace all of the Sultans and rulers throughout Outremer and the Levant with members of the Brotherhood. Many members of their order are in high positions of power and are well placed to make a move when the moment is right.

### Children of Ishtar (Atfaal Al Ishtar)

*Which of your lovers did you ever love forever? ... There was Tammuz, the lover of youth, for him you decried wailing, year after year. You loved the many coloured-roller, but still struck him and broke his wing... he sits and cries...*

-Gilgamesh telling the goddess Ishtar the fates of her previous lovers. The Epic of Gilgamesh circa 3000 B.C.E.

**Aliases:** Whores of Babylon, Temple Prostitutes.

**Organization Type:** Priesthood based on the worship of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (an avatar of Shub Niggerauth).

**Estimated Membership:** 500 to 1000 members living in ruined temples or ancient hill tops or caves in the desert.

**Holdings and Interests:** One of the largest concentrations of the Children of Ishtar is located in Tel al Ghul (a mound near Baghdad). This was the ancient city of Babylon. Other key locations near the Dead Sea.

**Known History:** The origin of the Children of Ishtar is shrouded in antiquity, perhaps as early as Neolithic settlements in the Fertile Crescent. The rise of the priesthood of Ishtar can be traced to ancient Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq).

## Dark Crusades

During the fall of the Babylonian empire it was thought that the priestesses of Ishtar were all hunted down and destroyed. After the rise of Islam many holy places were destroyed including a sacred shrine located inside the Ka'ba in Mecca during the destroying of the idols which marked the birth of Islam.

Many of the Children of Ishtar have gone into hiding in ruins of old Babylonian city-states or small hidden shrines within Baghdad, Damascus and some have penetrated into Jerusalem.

**Indoctrination:** Many of the cultists are born into families of priestesses whom have been practicing its tradition of many generations. Some members of the cult are kidnapped and brainwashed into joining the cult as well.

**Doctrine/Dogma:** The Children believe in performing debaucheries and obscene rituals in order to open the Ishtar Gate and let in their sensual goddess, who will heighten their earthly pleasures and take them to her realm. Members of the Children do not care who they harm or what lives they destroy in pursuit of their goals.

### Unconfirmed Rumors

- The Children have captured many of the leaders from the Holy Sons of Solomon cult. They have taken their brains and put them in Mi-go brain jars. Soon they will have the formula to unlock the Ishtar Gate and free their goddess.
- The Children of Ishtar have the ear of the King of Jerusalem and wield much political power in the Latin kingdom

### SECRET HISTORY

During the founding of the cult in ancient Babylon a powerful priestess named Eshkamira allowed Sub Niggerauth (Ishtar) to possess her giving her the power to open a permanent gate into the realm of the daemon-sultan Azathoth.

During the turmoil and pandemonium a sect of sorcerers dedicated to Gilgamesh performed a magical ritual to seal the gate permanently. This ritual was so taxing that it took the sacrifice of all forty sorcerers, save their leader Gil-

gamesh (some whispers say that he is descended from a Great Old One).

Gilgamesh went on to found the cabal of sorcerers known as the Holy Sons of Solomon and nominated Solomon as their leader. To this day the Children of Ishtar and Holy Sons of Solomon are bitter enemies who will never cooperate or work with each other under any circumstances.

**Tomes in the Children of Ishtar's Possession:** Gate of Ishtar, Sapientia Maglorum, The Black Tome, Tupsimati.

**Current Goals and Projects:** The main goal of the Children is to open the Gate of Ishtar again. They are hoping to manipulate the rulers of the Muslim world and or Outremer to do it.

### Holy Sons of Solomon

(AL GHAZI IBN SULEIMAN)

*To Solomon We subdued the wind, travelling a month's journey morning and evening. We gave him a spring flowing with molten brass, and jinn who served him by leave of his Lord.*

-Koran 34:12

**Aliases:** Magus of Armageddon, Cabal of the Elder Sign.

**Organization Type:** Cabal or conclave of sorcerers. Ranks based on esoteric practices and lineage of Solomon.

**Estimated Membership:** Membership ranges in the thousands, sorcerers populated higher levels in hierarchy. Members come from all religious backgrounds and ethnicities, including Franks and Saracens.

**Holdings and Interests:** Currently they are based in Egypt. The Holy Sons have various holdings and madreshas scattered throughout the Levant.

**Known History:** It is commonly believed that King Solomon of the ancient Israelites was the founder of this cabalistic order. Under the leadership of Solomon the order's seat of power was in Jerusalem located in the Temple of Solomon.

**What Happened to Gilgamesh?**

After picking Solomon as his successor and revealing the magical ritual which would destroy the Ishtar Gate, Gilgamesh disappeared. He was on the verge of pure madness, his mind was nearly shattered by the various realms he visited between the spaces of reality. Where is Gilgamesh? Nobody knows for certain, given his damaged state of mind and his power as a legendary sorcerer descendant of the Great Old Ones; most hope he never comes back.

During the rise of Islam, Jerusalem fell out of Christian hands and was seized by the Muslims. Solomon's order was expelled out of the Temple and fled to Egypt, making their new home in the city of Alexandria. It is believed by some that an internal quarrel led to expelling of the Sons from the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

**Indoctrination:** Many of the highest ranking members of the cabal are related to the bloodline of Solomon. These are descendents of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Membership inside the cabal does not require relationship to Solomon; in fact this organization is multi-cultural in its makeup, including many Muslims, Christians and Jews. The goal of fighting the Mythos transcends cultural bigotry.

**Dogma/Doctrine:** The Holy Sons seek to use Mythos artifacts to prevent the opening of the Ishtar Gate and to defeat the followers the Great Old Ones. (This oftentimes puts them at odd with the Templars who seek to destroy Mythos artifacts).

**Unconfirmed Rumors:**

- The head of the order seeks out a silver key possessed by a crusader with the family name of 'Carter'.
- There is a feud between the Templars and the Holy Sons over the Mummified Head of Solomon.

**SECRET HISTORY**

This order was founded by King Gilgamesh of Uruk. He gathered a cabal of sorcerers to seal the troublesome Gate of Ishtar that was opened by the priesthood of Ishtar. During the sealing of the gate all of the sorcerers were sacrificed except Gilgamesh.

It is rumored that Gilgamesh is a descendant of one of the Great Old Ones, possessing two-thirds of their blood in his veins. Gilgamesh feared that the Ishtar Gate would not remain permanently sealed so he travelled into the Dreamlands and the outer gulfs of space looking for a solution.

When he returned to the world over a thousand years had passed. Gilgamesh possessed many terrible and vile esoteric bits of lore. His other worldly mind was being to fragment and drift; in desperation Gilgamesh sought out a worthy successor to share his solution with. Finally, after many long years of searching he found Solomon, the wise king of the Hebrews.

Solomon possessed an uncanny mastery over occult and metaphysical arts. Solomon decided to found a cabal of sorcerers to fight the Children of Ishtar and the many other degenerate followers of the Mythos. Once this cabal was founded he gathered a conclave around the Gate of Ishtar seeking to use arcane ritual taught to him by Gilgamesh.

Before the ritual could be completed the conclave was ambushed by their archenemies, the Children of Ishtar. Unfortunately, Solomon was killed in the struggle. The Sorcerer Absalom Payens struck off the head of Solomon so that his brain could not be removed by the Children's Mi-go allies; thus not compromising the enchantments holding the gate closed. Hundreds of years later Hugh de Payens would find a box with the Mummified Head of Solomon (see **Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts** p. 47 for details) and instructions on how to use it to fight the Mythos.

**Tomes in the Possession of the Holy Sons:** Al-Azif, Black Rites, Book of Black Kabbalah, Cabal of Saboth, Key of Solomon, Tupsimati.

## Dark Crusades

**Current Goals and Projects:** They are seeking out potential allies in their struggle against the Children. A tertiary albeit an important goal is to find out where Gilgamesh has disappeared to and determine whether or not he needs to be destroyed.

### Pilgrims of Oblivion

*[Answering the call for crusade]... raised up also false prophets and mixed false brethren and degraded women among the Lord's host under the appearance of religion.*

-Fulk of Chartres, A commentary on the First Crusade.

**Aliases:** Flagellants of the Beast and Harbingers of Doom.

**Organization Type:** A priest organized as a dark analog of the Catholic Church. The hierarchy contains various titles for priests, preachers and saints.

**Estimated Membership:** About 300 scattered throughout the masses of pilgrims who took up the cross and throughout Outremer.

**Holdings and Interests:** Their two primary bases of power are located in the city of Edessa and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem their headquarters is an old ruined Zoroastrian temple burnt down by the crusaders during the First Crusade.

**Known History:** This religious cult was founded by a flagellant named Magnus, who received horrid visions of the Apocalypse. He was a former Benedictine monk who turned to flagellation to further ward off his sins and better commune with God.

The cult was formed in a monastery near Paris circa 999 C.E. During the hysteria of nearing the end of millennium many pilgrims and flagellants flooded the ranks of this cult. When the fateful year of 1000 C.E. came the religious zealots sacrificed themselves to the biblical Beast to distract it during the final battle to allow Christ to kill it. After the mass sacrifice of many of its members, including the death of

Magnus, the cult went through a transformation.

Its members changed their dogma and creed to further bring about the end times written in the Book of Revelation. They have a reputation for being unruly agitators filled with fanatical zeal and brutal violence; it is said that the Peasant's Crusade led by Peter the Hermit degenerated and fell apart because of the Pilgrims of Oblivion.

**Indoctrination:** All members are secretly sworn in by making blood oaths to the Outer God Demogorgon by forsaking their former religion. The vast majority of recruits are Franks who were former Christians. A few former Muslims and Eastern Christians have joined their ranks over the years.

**Doctrine/Dogma:** These fanatics seek to bring about the Apocalypse. They believe if enough bloodletting and sacrifice is made to Demogorgon that he will be released from the Pit and the Apocalypse will begin.

### Unconfirmed Rumors

- The Pilgrims seek the "Black Ark" a mythos artifact that will bring about the Apocalypse.
- The Pilgrims have cursed King Baldwin IV with leprosy and are seeking to take control of the kingdom supporting one of the political factions.

### SECRET HISTORY

During the mass sacrifice of 1000 C.E. Magnus himself was also killed in this orgy of bloodletting. The mysterious patron of Magnus' visions, the Outer God Demogorgon did not let Magnus remain dead. He was instead animated as a vampire sorcerer to continue leading the cult.

Magnus is a truly tortured being who has deluded himself to the point where he actually believes he is receiving visions from angels, despite the despicable and horrific behavior of his brethren. Magnus believes that acts of horror and terror his cult is performing are visions of what will happen if he fails to do penance for

his sins. He believes the Beast (Demogorgon) is an agent of redemption.

Magnus is a long time descendant of the ancient sorcerers of Mu. Given his ancient bloodline he makes the perfect vessel for possession by Demogorgon. During his possession episodes he imparts instructions to the Pilgrims about their goals and targets for bloodletting.

**Tomes in the Pilgrims Possession:** Chaat Aquadingen, Daemonlorum, Liber Ivonis, Revelations of Magnus.

**Current Goals and Projects:** The Pilgrims seek to defile all the genuine holy relics in Outremer in an unholy ritual which will should them the location of the Black Ark and the prison of the Outer God Demogorgon.

### Templars

*Again I say, consider the Almighty's goodness and pay heed to his plans of mercy. He puts himself under obligation to you... that he can help you to satisfy your obligations toward himself.*

-Bernard of Clairvaux speech after call for the Second Crusade 1145 C.E.

**Aliases:** Knights of the Temple of Solomon, Brothers of the Temple.

**Organization Type:** Monastery. Hierarchical and feudal structure based on the Benedictine order.

**Estimated Membership:** Possibly 500 knights and the remainder of the order is divided into sergeants, clerics and numerous Saracen and turcopole spies. The spy network is one of the best informed in all of Outremer. Loosely associated with Holy Sons of Solomon and receives tribute from the Assassins.

**Holdings and Interests:** Headquarters in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Numerous castles located on borders of Outremer. Various nobles and lords used banking services.

**Known History:** The order was founded about 1118 A.D. by a small group of knights led by Hugh de Payens. Through extensive ties from the Cistern and Benedictian orders funding and

support helped with its initial founding. King Baldwin I of Jerusalem donated the temple of Solomon for use by the order.

Originally their primary mission was to guard the perilous road from the port of Jaffa to Jerusalem and taking care of the sick. After their initial deployment into the Kingdom of Jerusalem the Templars focused more on their military might and less on almsgiving, the sick, and guarding the road to Jerusalem.

As the power of the Templars grew they started dealing in banking and lending to various nobles and lords throughout the holy land. Because of their permanent military presence in the kingdom of Jerusalem their influence over the politics of the crusader states grew.

The Templars grew to be the most feared Frankish force in Outremer. Followers of the order have a reputation of fighting to the death and never backing down. The Saracens that did battle with them considered it a great honor to personally execute one of them. Despite the reputed benevolence and prisoner leniency of Saladin, he never spared the life of a captured Templar.

**Indoctrination:** Many landless knights and disenfranchised nobles joined the ranks of the Templars. The clerics and sergeants are composed of more commonly born in Outremer. All members are required to take vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

**Doctrine/Dogma:** Vast majority of the order believe in reclaiming and or protecting the kingdom of Jerusalem for Christ and the church. There is a secretive inner circle *compagnons du mestre* (master's companions) who know the truth about the Mythos influences and threats in the holy land.

### Unconfirmed Rumors:

- They have discovered a "holy relic" or mythos artifact in an excavation under the Temple of Solomon.
- The Templars speak with a commune with disembodied head of John the Baptist.

## Dark Crusades

### SECRET HISTORY

One of the formative events in the life of Hugh de Payens was an encounter with cult of Sub Niggurath in the forests of France. After this horrific encounter and the death of his wife who was a cult member he resolved with his friend Bernard of Clairvaux to found an order of holy knights to fight the Cthulhu Mythos.

The *compagnons du mestre* have in their possession Mythos artifact *Mummified Head of Solomon* (**Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts** p. 47 for details). The council uses their occult magical techniques to speak to the head for divinations about the Mythos and its cults.

During the Third Crusade the fortunes of the Templars took a turn for the worst. In the tumultuous years 1184 through 1185 the election of grand master Gerard de Ridefort occurred. This election was expedited because of precarious ongoing fighting with the Saracens and gradual death of Baldwin IV the Leper King. Under normal circumstances this election would have never occurred, due to numerous scandals rumored to be connected to Ridefort. His military acumen made him a prime candidate given the current political climate.

The dark truth about Ridefort is that he was handpicked by leader of the Brotherhood of Blood to infiltrate the Templars. Ridefort serves the Old One Chaugnar Faugn.

**Tomes in the Templar's Possession:** Black Rites, Cabal of Saboth, Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus.

**Current Goals and Projects:** The Inner circle and the Master of the Temple seek to destroy all traces of the Mythos and find the Black Ark (Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts p. for details) ending the threat of Outer God Demogorgon who dwells within the ark.

### HOLY RELICS AND MYTHOS ARTIFACTS

*We ought to revere and honor the relics, both because of the saints' examples and the protection they provide, but we must have truly sound evidence as to the authenticity of these relics...*

#### Are Holy Artifacts Real?

It should be noted as mentioned earlier it is not the goal of the authors to promote one religion over another. With this said the power of holy relics inspire people to greatness and deeds, without having game effects such as a boost to morale or surge of religious zeal. Many of these relics are based on real historical accounts during the period and have been lovingly altered or changed to create exciting or horrific game play. The Mythos artifacts differ in this regard because of their "technology" and its mysteries.

-Guibert of Nogent, excerpt from religious treatise *On the Relics of Saints*

In the Medieval world at the time of the Crusades both Muslims and Christians held the belief in the power of holy relics. These were items used by the saints and apostles of the respective religious traditions. They can also take the form of physical body parts from these sacred individuals ranging from the beard hair of Mohammed to the tooth of Jesus and many variations inbetween. These sacred items were venerated and attributed mystical powers.

Given the theme of macabre horror and desperate hopeless struggle as an integral part of many *Call of Cthulhu* games it is recommended to the keeper to carefully consider the effects a relic might have on their game. The relics presented here are examples of mythos related "false relics" and genuine articles that will inspire dramatic quests and interesting scenarios. At the keeper's discretion the holy relics could inspire Religious Fervor (see pg under Skills for details) if the optional rule is being used.

#### Black Ark

Currently this alien artifact is safely being guarded in the secret underground city of ghouls called Ghulistan. The location of Ghulistan has remained a secret from many who seek the Black Ark, like the Pilgrims of Obliv-



ion and the Dark Legate to name a few. It is located in a deep vault guarded by forty to fifty ghouls at any given time. It is rumored that these ghouls do not serve any Mythos gods but serve a different master, a “ghoul king”. Some Mythos scholars believe Gilgamesh to be the mysterious half-mad descendant of the Great Old Ones.

This blasphemous facsimile of the Ark of the Covenant was created by the arch god-sorcerer Gilgamesh as a prison for the Outer God Demogorgon. During Gilgamesh’s quest for immortality he learned by the threat posed by the Outer God Demogorgon or, in Biblical Revelation, “the Beast”. During his travels in-between the spheres and the Dreamlands, Gilgamesh foresaw mass devastation and destruction caused by Demogorgon in the mortal realm.

Gilgamesh made a pact with various gods and alien intelligences from beyond reality to forge this prison, exacting a cost that must be paid by him to the entities. What this price was is far beyond the imaginations or corporeal comprehension of mortal minds. Suffice it to say only a being of direct descent or partial of Great Old One lineage could even hope to understand.

The Ark is thirty feet in length, 10 feet wide and twenty feet high. It is carved of jet black stone outlined in ghastly purple-green slime. The ark’s stone is carved and proportioned in unimaginable unnatural angles which will unnerve the observer. The longer it is observed the more the geometry morphs and changes slightly. The stony surface is covered in eldritch symbols and glyphs from ancient Valusia and Mu. If examined closer the observer will notice that the ark is not made of stone, but a metallic-like substance of extraplanar origin.

**For the Keeper:** First a word of caution. This mythos artifact is a major story changing artifact any only should not be used with proper planning. It is the prison of an Outer God and should not be randomly placed in a scenario without prior planning. It is one of the key motivations of the Dark Legate, when he manipulated Pope Urban II in calling the First Crusade (**Gazetteer of Outremer** p. 21 for details).

All who see the unholy transmuting Black Ark must make SAN roll or lose 1/1D6 for seeing this unnatural alien construction. This artifact cannot easily be opened; it requires the casting of a complex ritual involving at a minimum the sacrifice of 200 individuals and the permanent expenditure of 200 magic points of a group of 20 sorcerers or cultists. Even when these conditions are met, seven magical seals must be magically broken by overcoming the POW of the artifact for each seal which is POW of 70. Only after all of these conditions are met will Demogorgon be released causing death and destruction at Biblical levels.

### Holy Lance of Antioch

The Holy Lance of Antioch is believed to be the spear head of the weapon Longinus used to kill Christ. During the battle of Antioch at the time of the First Crusade, Bartholomew had a vision of St. Andrew showing him where the holy lance lay. During the night a comet struck the camp of the Turks camped near the city; this showed further proof of divine providence to the crusaders.

Bartholomew scrambled with his fellow Franks to unearth the holy relic from where he believed it was buried. He found the holy spear head, to the amazement of many and incredulity of some. Some of the nobles who lead the First Crusade believed that he had planted the spear head to lend support for laying siege to Antioch.

**For the Keeper:** The Pilgrims of Oblivion, using sorcery sent Bartholomew this false vision so that he could unearth their dark relic. This spear head is known to them as “The Fang of the Beast.” Its dark influence will slowly corrupt and possess its user to serve the dark designs of Demogorgon and the Pilgrims.

All who carry the spearhead on their person must make a POWx4 each day to resist being possessed by the spirit that dwells within the spearhead (See *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* rulebook for rules on Spirit Possession). Each week that the lance is in the possession of an investigator, he or she must make SAN roll at 1/1D10

## Dark Crusades

loss from the horrific apocalyptic visions they receive from the Outer God Demogorgon. The spearhead can be affixed onto a spear or a lance. It is unbreakable and adds a +2d6 damage bonus to the base weapon.

### Letter of Heaven

This sacred holy relic is a letter reputedly sent from Heaven beseeching the Christians of Europe to retake Jerusalem for the Lord. It is divinely sent according to legend. This celestial letter is possessed by Peter the Hermit.

Nobody has read the letter, save Peter but it has been claimed by many mendicant, saint or clergymen to be authentic and of divine origin. This is one of the myriad of signs and guide posts that have enhanced the recruitment of crusaders during Peter's building of the "Peoples' Crusade". The letter is always kept on Peter's person in a sealed scroll case embroidered with angelic script and glyphs. Peter acquired the letter during a "vision" of Enoch showing him marching armies into the holy land and the rebuilding of the temple which triggers the Final Battle and the Apocalypse.

**For the Keeper:** The Letter of Heaven was penned and imbued by the mystical powers of Dark Legate, a conniving avatar of Nyarlathotep. This potent mythos artifact has amplified the sermons of Peter and dominated and destroyed the will of the masses. It corrupts and warps the minds of large groups of people during the sermons.

All Persuade rolls count as 100% when conducting a sermon or trying to persuade someone to join the crusades, when the letter is in the speaker's possession. All of those who can hear the speaker and have listened to the whole sermon must make SAN rolls at a -20 penalty or lose 5/3D10 points of sanity. If only part of the sermon is heard then a regular SAN roll is required at no penalty and loss of 1/1D6 SAN.

Later during the dark days of besieging Antioch did poor Peter learn about the Mythos involvement and infiltration of Pilgrims of Oblivion into the ranks of the crusading host of Godfrey de Boullion. Peter fled the horror

only to be recaptured. He helped in the taking of Jerusalem, and only after its miraculous capture did he come to suspect the dark powers of the letter. After the capture of Jerusalem he left with the letter and founded a monastery in Belgium. It is believed that Peter tried to destroy the Letter of Heaven with the aid of Hugh de Payens, before the knightly founder of the Templars left for the holy land. Whether this is true, or if they were successful is not known.

### Mummified Head of Solomon

This relic is the disembodied head of the legendary wise sorcerer-king Solomon. Solomon was a precocious student of the enigmatic and powerful Gilgamesh of king of Uruk. Solomon founded his own cabal of sorcerers dedicated to fighting the mythos in all its forms, especially the cult, The Children of Ishtar.

Gilgamesh, Solomon's mentor, had left and sojourned into the Dreamlands, Limbo and other planes of existence seeking a way to permanently seal the Ishtar Gate; preventing the entrance of Shub-Niggerrauth. Upon the semi-deific Gilgamesh's return after centuries of searching in otherworldly time he had become half mad with horrid revelations. He imparted a secret ritual to his student Solomon to permanently seal the Ishtar Gate. After this he mysteriously disappeared with a grave warning not to go seeking him.

Solomon after studying the mythos ritual consulted with Absalom de Payens his second in command, ordering him to not allow himself to be taken alive by the Children of Ishtar. Solomon told de Payens, about the foul Mi-go technology to hold a beings brain in a cylinder, thus compiling them to reveal all of their secrets. Solomon feared that the secrets of the ritual would be revealed and that a counter measure or loophole could be exploited by the cult if his brain was captured.

During the gathering of sorcerers from the cabal all final preparations were made for the sealing of the gate ritual. In the midst of the performing of the ritual, the cabal was ambushed by the Children of Ishtar and their Mi-

go allies; Absalom turned and cut off the head of Solomon preventing his brain from being captured by putting it in an ornate box. As the combat ensued Absalom fled the scene with the head in the box.

Many of the sorcerers in the cabal felt betrayed by Absalom, because he slew their leader and left with his head. The survivors of the cabal fled and were reorganized into the Holy Sons of Solomon. Meanwhile Absalom fled and wrote a letter with specific instructions on the use of the box and arcane rituals for speaking to the head of the sorcerer king. His letter was left for his descendents with instructions about the plight of the Ishtar Gate in Mesopotamia (Modern day Iraq). His descendant Hugh de Payens founded the religious knightly order of the Templars to destroy the Ishtar Gate.

The Mummified Head of Solomon is now closely guarded by the inner circle of the Templars. This relic is a half insane oracle that can be consulted by spell caster who invokes the right rituals to awaken it. The head speaks in mad riddles and cryptic phrases foretelling future events and mythos secrets, which the order uses to guide its struggles against the Mythos.

**For the Keeper:** For the purposes of using the Mummified Head of Solomon, its POW score is 45, hence making it practically requires a group use of Ritual Magic (for more details see p. 81-82 *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages*). Failure to use the artifact does not drain the usual 3D6 magic points, instead it drains 5D6 magic points and causes 1/1D10 Sanity loss and the artifact can never be mastered.

The messages received from Solomon's Head are vague and cryptic. It makes predictions into possible futures and outcomes based on what is likely to occur. The keeper is advised to use this artifact as a plot device to further the story, but not to use it as a "mystery spoiler" or "clue finder." The head can be a useful aid for keeping the investigators on track if they are getting hopelessly lost or derailed. It is recommended that only one or two divinations can be performed by the head at one time. If the keeper feels the need to change this to better suit his/her pur-

poses that is optional. All divinations should be spoken from the point of view of a deranged half insane undead sorcerer!

Given the dangers of consulting the Mummified Head of Solomon, it is only ritually "awakened" during dire circumstances. The insane ramblings and ranting of the head can provide invaluable insight on the mythos when it is understood.

### Skiff of the Black Pharaoh

The Black Pharaoh (Nyarlahotep's avatar) periodically blesses his cults in Cairo with his otherworldly vessel Mesektet. It is said that every night the Black Pharaoh rides his skiff Mesektet ferrying the souls of the dead to cross the waters into the underworld (Limbo). It has been mistakenly reported by scholars and Egyptians that the ancient deity Ra rides his vessel Manjet during the day and it changes into Mesektet during the night. This lie was perpetuated by a propaganda campaign of the Black Pharaoh's cultists since the days of the Pharaoh Djoser and his architect the legendary Imohotep during the 3rd millennium B.C.E. Many believe that the myths of Ra are pure and untainted by the insidious influences of the Black Pharaoh.

This skiff appears as a funeral skiff 20 meters across and 8 meters wide from end to end. It is jet black composed of luminescent black stone that bends in unnatural and impossible angles. The black stony material shines an iridescent green at its angles and appears distorted and shifts, slightly unnerving the viewer. When moving the vessel is capable of flight, which is always accompanied by whistling and moaning sounds emanating from the hull of the skiff.

**For the Keeper:** This malignant vessel can be used to automatically open a doorway into the realm of Limbo, following all of the rules of the Create Limbo Gate spell (detailed in the **Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages** rulebook p. 84), with the exception of the POW requirement. When the vessel is being used to travel through Limbo it causes a SAN loss of 0/1D4. In addition to having the power to travel through Limbo the

## Dark Crusades

vessel harbors the myriad of deceased spirits of dead cultists and madmen.

Once a night the pilot of Mesektet can release the horde of dead spirits into the mortal realm. When this occurs multiple spirits attack or possess or haunt the area. It is up to the keeper to determine how long this occurs and how many of the spirits possess or harm people before vanishing. It is recommended that this dreadful event would require a SAN 1/10 loss.

The Black Pharaoh's awful vessel is sometimes bestowed on a particularly favored cult; other times it appears seemingly randomly at different locations throughout the Levant. According to some cultic sources the sultan Saladin has recently discovered the location of this dreaded vessel and is serving as an unwilling pawn in the Black Pharaoh's latest scheme.

## ALIEN DEVICES

These mythos devices and technologies are used primarily by creatures of the mythos. All of the entries in this area are new, except the Mi-Go Brain Cylinder which is reproduced from the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook, in the interest of making it usable to keepers who do not have access to this book.

### Ethereal Lens of the Nameless City

This otherworldly device is created and employed by the Denizens of the Nameless City (See Creatures of the Mythos section of Dark Crusades p. 32 for details.) to gaze into the other realms of Limbo, space and the Dreamlands. The lens is roughly 3 inches in diameter and formed of prismatic rainbow hued crystalline material. Encircling the lens is a scaly symbiotic frame that attaches to the Denizen that is using the device.

The device allows the user to see into Limbo and it will reveal the location of spirits and otherworldly entities in the area of a 60ft radius. The lens can be attuned to gaze into the Dreamlands as well as allowed the wearer to stare into different realms of the Dreamlands, and locate specific entities like servitor crea-

tures, but non-god level creatures (Great Old Ones, Elder Gods, Outer Gods respectively).

Ethereal lenses are crafted by the priest class of the Denizens of the Nameless City. They are used as an aid in finding and ultimately contacting extraplanar beings for different tasks and the imparting of information. These lenses have been discovered by human sorcerers or witches and surgically implanted in their heads for use in their black arts. The knowledge of medicine and the occult lore required to do this procedure is fortunately rare.

**For the Keeper:** Use of this device does increase percentage of success by +30% for Contact or Summoning spells involving Servitor Creatures, Ancient Ones and Old Ones. All who employ the lens must make a SAN check at -20 to the roll or lose 1/2D6 SAN in addition to any SAN cost incurred by the casting of the Contact or Summoning spell it can used to enhance.

The second use of this device is to find creatures that are using spells to hide in Limbo or spirits that are nearby, which can be detected within a 60 ft radius with a successful Spot Hidden roll at a +10 bonus. This device cannot be worn or used by humans without the proper surgery and cultic rites which animates the lens grafting permanently into the flesh of the human wearer. To perform the surgery it requires a successful roll on the Medicine skill -10 (-20 for Frankish physicians), as well as a successful roll on the Occult skill or Cthulhu Mythos skill, whichever is higher. If either of these rolls are failed the surgery is unsuccessful and the patient suffers a loss of 1D6 hit points and 1/1D6 SAN loss. If the surgery is successful the patient and the doctor must roll SAN 0/1D4 due to the horrific nature of the ritual surgery.

### Mi-Go Brain Cylinder

These shiny cylinders are used to preserve extracted brains. Lovecraft described them as "a foot high and somewhat less in diameter, with curious sockets set in an isosceles triangle over the convex surface." Each cylinder is filled with a nutrient solution which sustains the brain within, and the inner surface of each cylinder is

### Science Fiction Themed Devices in a Medieval Setting?

Using devices that have computer parts and sensor arrays like the brain cylinder seem counter to the theme and mood of Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages game. The keeper should consider use of words and terms more appropriate to the Medieval mindset. Consider the following example when describing the Mi-Go Brain Cylinder: *The cylindrical apparatus housed a human brain submerged in a briny alchemical fluid. Affixed to the arcane phylactery were mystical pipes that transmitted the disembodied spiritual speech of the brain.*

lined with a complex array of sensory filaments which detect electrical activity within the captive brain, interpret it, and channel neural impulses to a complex microcomputer behind the sockets into the connected machines, or funnels input from those machines back to the brain via a network of electrodes which directly stimulate the neurons in specific centers of the brain.

The cylinder is hooked up to a machine that generates a monotonal voice from the brain. When it is switched off the brain goes into a maddeningly deep semi-sleep. Every game month a human in a brain cylinder must match INT vs. POW. If INT wins, the character loses a 1D3 SAN.

### Elixir of Immortality

This potent opaque white brew was developed by the antediluvian Denizens of the Nameless city. The untold eons and the glory of their advanced achievements could not stave off their inborn racial fear of death. The greatest minds of the priest class devised a way to life forever, creating this elixir of immortality. One of the unforeseen side effects of this elixir was causing the populations that partook of it to go mad and physically it degeneration them. Through-

out the generations many of the Denizens lost their ability to continue to function and build their magnificent cities of old.

This fabled elixir has been prophesied and seen in visions by a myriad of diviners and soothsayers across the globe. The esoteric and occult arts of alchemy seek to unveil the secrets of eternal life. Chinese Taoists, Arabic Alchemists and later Europeans all have a long history of seeking immortality. It is rumored that during an earlier mythic period in China, the fabled Eight Immortals had found the secrets of this elixir.

**For the Keeper:** The elixir requires the imbibing of a full vial for its effects to manifest. It must be consumed once every 15 years and warmed in the fire under moonlight to extend the imbibers life by 1D100 years. Unfortunately for the imbibers its side effects are severe.

Once the potion is fully consumed the imbibers is plagued with visions of “spaces in-between the spheres” and the Ultimate Gate. This doorway into Limbo is too much for many minds to fully comprehend and causes a SAN loss of 1D6/1D20 sanity points. In addition to this assault on the imbibers psyche his/her body starts regressing and devolving into a more primitive and degenerate form. The degeneration can be fought off with a CONx3 test. If the test is failed, the following characteristics are reduced by 2D4; INT, EDU and POW.

## ADDITIONAL SPELLS FOR THE OLD GRIMOIRE

### Communal Visions

**Range:** 1 mile per 40 Mp **Duration:** Special

**Cost:** Min 40 Mp and 40 POW

**Sanity:** 5/1D20 per 6 hours

**Resistance Table:** Yes

The caster of this spell creates a massive chain of mystical visions experienced by crowds of people. The use of this spell requires a group of people of similar faiths and beliefs and the use of religious relics or icons as a focus. Only the

## Dark Crusades

most power sorcerers possess the training and acumen to perform this horrid rite; it is only known to be used by the **Dark Legate** avatar of Nyarlathotep.[...]

### Curse of Chaugnar Faugn

**Range:** Unlimited      **Duration:** Special

**Cost:** 1 Mp per hour of chanting.

**Sanity:** 1D3 per 12 hours of chanting

**Resistance Table:** No.

The casting of this spell requires a tiny fragment of flesh from the victim as a focus for the spell. It also requires 12 hours of chanting per week. The caster must be a sworn worshiper of Chaugner Faugn. The target is affected by the spell regardless of distance and success is automatic.

The night of and many nights after the spell is cast the victims' dreams are disturbed by visions of Chaugner Faugn. The target is affected by trance-like states where the target is making physical attempts to reach the Great Old One and become a sacrifice. The interval between trance states is determined by using POWx2 or, for strong willed individuals POWx3 at the keeper's discretion. Eventually the target will be devoured and the flesh fragment will rot showing that the spell is complete.

### Curse of the Rat-Thing

**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Permanent

**Cost:** 20 Mp and 1 POW

**Sanity:** 1D10      **Resistance Table:** No

This curse must be cast on a corpse dead within 24 hours, it causes the deceased spiritual essence to enter the newly formed being of a rat-thing. Keep in mind as per the section Creatures of the Mythos [on p. 32] there are many different types of "things": cat-things, fly-things, frog-things, etc. The corpse transforms into the body of a rat-thing and its face becomes a twisted grotesque version of its former self. This despicable rite is usually performed by the most vile sorcerers and witches, never performed on friends.

### Dust of Suleiman

**Range:** Throw      **Duration:** 1 round

**Cost:** Dust of 2000 year old Egyptian mummy.

**Sanity:** None      **Resistance Table:** No

It is believed that this ancient spell was created by the fabled magician king Solomon. This powder requires dust of an Egyptian mummy of at least 2000 years. Each mummy produces up to 3 doses or uses. The final ingredients are frankincense, sulfur and salt pepper.

If sprinkled on an outer-planar being it causes 1D20 hit points of damage. It takes one round to apply one dose. It affects creatures that can be Summon/Bind or Call spells like byakhee, or Sub-Niggerauth, but is useless against Cthulhu or deep ones.

### Summon Horsemen of the Apocalypse

**Range:** Special      **Duration:** Permanent

**Cost:** 3 Mp per 10% and 10 POW

**Sanity:** 3/3D10      **Resistance Table:** No

The forbidden knowledge of this spell is closely guarded by the cult the Pilgrims of Oblivion. It can only be cast once special conditions are met; it requires 3 authentic relics (Christian, Muslim, Jewish etc.) as well as the Mummified Head of Solomon (see **Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts** for details p. 47). When the ritual is started it takes months worth of nightly chanting and ritual defiling of all relics except the Mummified Head of Solomon. At the start of the ritual the initial SAN cost listed above is paid and during its climax the same SAN cost is paid again.

For every 3 Magic points that are sacrificed in the ritual there is 10% chance to summon a Rider of the Apocalypse (An Ancient One mounted on a steed, see *Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages* for details). During this profane ghastly ritual, animals are howling, lightning strikes and natural disasters like earthquakes occur in the region. Depending and which horseman arrives (War, Plague, Famine or Death); these calamities follow the appearance of the dreaded rider. The

details and natures of these natural disasters are left up to the keepers' discretion.

According to legend if all Horsemen of the Apocalypse are released than the Ultimate Gate will be opened and the Beast (Demogorgon) will be released on earth.

Note of Caution: Given the power and scenario or campaign destabilizing potential it is recommended that this spell only be used as the basis of a campaign or plot, not something randomly stumbled on.

## MYTHOS TOMES IN OUTREMER

These tomes describe the forbidden lore of the Mythos through its various authors from various lands in the Levant. The following tomes will include spells taken from the **Call of Cthulhu Dark Ages** core rulebook as well as a few additional spells out of **Dark Crusades**.

### AL-KITAB DAEM

(two versions follow)

- **Hidden Veda**-in Sanskrit, author unknown, c. 1000 B.C. this ritualistic text was first discovered inside the ruins of an old Neolithic settlement in Pakistan, originally bound in preserved elephant hide and stitched together with muscle sinew. The text soon spread among the corrupted Brahmins perpetuating the foul knowledge of Chaugnar Faugn. Later the text would be burned by more mainstream Hindus and viewed as heretical blasphemy against their elephant headed deity Ganesh. It is believed that only about twenty copies of this book exist. *Sanity loss:* 1D6/2D6: *Cthulhu Mythos* +12 percentiles; average 38 weeks to study and comprehend. Spells: Augur, Become Spectral, Bind Soul, Call/Dismiss Old One, Call/Dismiss Brother of Chaugnar Faugn, Call/Dismiss Ghoul, Call/Dismiss Dimensional Shambler, Contact Chaugnar Faugn, Curse of Chaugnar Faugn, Create Limbo Gate, Dust of Suleiman, Fury, Gray Binding, Levitate, Poison Blood, Scrying Window, Shrivelling.

- **SCRIPTURES AL DAEM**-in Turkish, author is Maroof al Faris, 935 A.D. It is believed that this collection of manuscripts originated in northern India and after the invasion of Mohammad of Ghazi a hundred years later travelled back to Anatolia making it's way to the Seljuk Turks. The incomplete translation suffers from extensive damage and passages that are almost unreadable. There are about fifty copies in circulation all based on the badly damaged original. *Sanity loss:* 1D4/1D8 *Cthulhu Mythos* +7 percentiles: average about 15 weeks to study and comprehend it. Spells: Augur, Call/Dismiss Brother of Chaugnar Faugn, Curse of Chaugnar Faugn, Levitate, Poison Blood.

- **BOOK OF BLACK KABBALAH**-in Hebrew author is Herod of Canaan, c. 500 B.C. This tome was created by heretical sect of Jewish cabalists dedicated to the spiritual worship of the "dark tree of dreams" a path to a union with the Veiled Mahdi (avatar of Hastur). The sect was persecuted by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, believed by many to be destroyed. It is not known how many copies of this blasphemous text survive. *Sanity Loss:* 1D4/1D8: *Cthulhu Mythos* +10 percentiles. Average about 17 weeks to study and comprehend. Spells: Become Spectral, Call/Dismiss Byakhee, Compel Byakhee, Contact Veiled Mahdi, Create Limbo Gate, Demon Hearing, Demon Sight, Dust of Suleiman, Scrying Window, Soul Singing.

- **KEY OF SOLOMON**-in Hebrew written by King Solomon. This mythical grimoire contains extensive lore about the Jinn, Shedu and cryptic hints about the fabled underground ghouly city, Ghulistan. Only a handful of copies of this text are rumored to exist. One copy buried in hidden vault in Alexandria guarded by the Holy Sons of Solomon. *Sanity loss:* 1D6/2D6: *Cthulhu Mythos* +12 percentiles; average 40 weeks to study and comprehend. Spells: Augur, Bless Blade, Bind Soul, Cast Out the Devil, Call/Dismiss Old One, Call/Dismiss Shedu, Cloud Memory, Compel Old One, Contact Old One, Contact Shedu, Create Limbo Gate, Dismiss Old One, Dust of Suleiman, En-

## Dark Crusades

thrall, Flesh Ward, Heal, Nyhargo Dirge, Power Source, Return Follower of Mad Cthulhu, Scrying Window, Seal of Nephren-Ka

**GATE OF ISHTAR**-in Sumerian and Babylonian both versions are inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform letters, the author is unknown, c. 1300 B.C. Horrid rites to Ishtar and ceremonies are littered throughout the collection of clay tablets. The Children Ishtar are some of the only ones who possess they tablets, one rumor claims an incomplete collection of them are in library in Damascus. *Sanity loss:* 1D4/1D8 *Cthulhu Mythos* +9 percentiles: about 20 weeks of study to comprehend its contents. *Spells:* Body Warping, Blindness, Call/Dismiss Ghoul, Call/Dismiss Mi-go Curse of the Rat-thing, Fear, Find (Iron), Power Drain, Shriveling, Winds of Desolation.

**REVELATIONS OF MAGNUS**-in Latin written by Magnus c. 999 A.D. After his rebirth to serve the Outer God Demogorgon. This is the seminal scripture of Pilgrims of Oblivion cult. This ritualistic text is littered with horrific apocalyptic prophesies and descriptions of the Beast's return. Thankfully a full version of this text is incredibly rare; only few are known to exist. Many of the cult cells possess partial copies and in some cases are poorly transcribed. *Sanity loss:* 1D8/2D8; *Cthulhu Mythos* +13 percentiles. It takes an average of 55 weeks to study and fully comprehend. *Spells:* Bind Soul, Bless Blade, Body Warping, Call/Dismiss: Denizen of the Nameless City, Call/Dismiss: Old One, Call/Dismiss Ghast, Call/Dismiss Hound of Tindalos, Contact Demogorgon, Curse of the Rat-Thing, Entrhall, Fear, Power Drain, Summon Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

## PERSONALITIES OF OUTREMER

This section details important historical figures and non-player characters the investigators may encounter during play in Outremer and the Muslim world.

### Jean Carter

*He spoke of the flame-eyed Crusader who learnt wild secrets of the Saracens that held him captive...*

-H.P. Lovecraft, "The Silver Key."

Jean Carter is the great ancestor of Randolph Carter who is a main character in many of Lovecraft's tales involving the Dreamlands. Carter began as an ordinary Templar knight guarding the pilgrims road to Jerusalem. Jean Carter was captured during the failed attempt to capture Damascus during the Second Crusade. He was plagued by numerous visions during his captivity with "the Sheikh", a sorcerer and latent dreamer of incredible power.

In time Jean Carter's religious fervor softened as his eyes were opened to the esoteric mysteries of the Dreamlands by his captor/mentor the Sheikh. After many lost years of imprisonment in the dungeons of Damascus, Jean made his escape and killed the Sheikh and stole his Mythos artifact, the silver key. The silver key would become a family heirloom passed down through generations and eventually discovered by Randolph Carter.

### Jean Carter

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 16  
DEX 10 APP 12 EDU 11 SAN 20 HP 15

**Weapons:** Spear Long 75% damage 1D10, Scimitar 55% 1D8, Knife Long 35% 1D6

**Armor:** Paires de Cuiraces, surcoat and small shield

**Spells:** Become Spectral, Bind Soul, Cloud Memory, Contact (Tawil at'Umr) Create Limbo Gate, Curse of the rat-thing\*, Disembodiment, Dust of Suleiman\*, Power Drain, Return Follower of Mad Cthulhu.

**Skills:** Accounting 40%, Bargain 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 60% Dodge 68%, Occult 45%, Other Language 45% (Arabic) Other Language 45% (Latin), Other Language 40% (Ghoul), Own Kingdom 35%, Own Language 55% (French)



Ride 60%, Science (theology) 23%, Write Language 65%

### Peter the Hermit

*He wore a wool shirt, and over it a mantle reaching to his ankles; his arms and feet were bare. He lived on wine and fish; he hardly ever, never, ate bread.*

-Guibert, Guibert's Account of Peter the Hermit.

Peter the Hermit, proselytized and persuaded many to join the First Crusade. He rode on his donkey from town to town; miracles followed in his wake; demons were exorcized, the sick were healed and sinners turned to the Lord. Masses of peasants, nobles, men and women together jointed the crusade. Peter's reputation was so legendary that people would sometimes join if they heard he was in their town or city. Some say in possessed the Letter of Heaven (see Holy Relics and Mythos Artifacts p. 47)

The majority of the masses that joined Peter's crusade were composed of peasants and non-nobles leading to the term "Peoples Crusade", which left much earlier than the official departure of August 15th.

After the ambush and decimation of the "Peoples Crusade" by the Turks, Peter joined

*Peter the Hermit*



## Dark Crusades

the main force heading to Antioch. Throughout the hard winter many deserted the crusade, including Peter. Many of the deserters left because of the starvation and the news of an impending army joining the forces of Antioch. Peter left because of his discovery of the Pilgrims of Oblivion cult that had infiltrated the crusader army. Upon fleeing he was captured by the crusaders and forgiven for his desertion.

Peter redeemed himself by becoming an envoy to the Muslim army and finally during the siege of Jerusalem his preaching and moral support aided the crusaders in capturing the city in 1099. After the capture of Jerusalem he returned to Europe creating a monastery in Belgium.

### Peter the Hermit

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 18  
DEX 10 APP 8 EDU 16 SAN 65 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Staff 50% damage 1D6,  
Knife small 35% 1D4.

**Armor:** None

**Skills:** Command 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 35%, Hide 30%, Insight 65%, Library Use 52%, Listen 40%, Natural World 50%, Occult 65%, Persuade 85%, Status 65%, Theology 70%.

**Spells:** Augur, Bless Blade, Bless, Cast out the Devil, Dismiss Spirit, Enthrall, Fury, Heal, Shield

### Magnus, the Mad

*The moment is upon us brothers and sisters, when the unbelievers will be cleansed by the power and majesty of our lord Demogorgon!*

-Magnus' speech during start of 1st Millenium A.D.

Magnus, is the maniacal founder of the Pilgrims of Oblivion he considers himself the voice of the Beast (Demogorgon). He is no longer living after his participation in the mad millenarian mass sacrifices during the turning of millennium. He is an acutely intelligent

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vampire gifted with malignant mythos spells. He seeks to free Demogorgon from the prison of the Black Ark, and he believes by enacting a powerful mythos ritual of summoning all four Horsemen of Apocalypse he will succeed.

### Magnus, The Mad

STR 17 CON - SIZ 14 INT 18 POW 20  
DEX 8 APP 4 EDU 18 SAN 0 HP 25

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Claws and Fangs 50% 1D6.

**Armor:** His undead body takes have damage from all non-magical attacks.

**Skills:** Command 85%, Cthulhu Mythos 75%, Dodge 55%, Insight 65%, Occult 90%, Own Kingdom 40%, Other Kingdom 10%, Other Language Latin 70%, Own Language 80%, Persuade 77%, Potions 55%, Science Alchemy 60%, Theology (Christianity) 75%, Write Language 50%.

**Spells:** Become Spectral, Body Warp, Contact Demogorgon, Contact Old One, Contact Great Old One, Call/Dismiss Ghoul, Call/Dismiss Dimensional Shambler, Fear, Gray Binding, Summon Riders of the Apocalypse.

### Reynold, Chatillon de.

*Fire is not daunted by quantity of wood to burn.*

-Reynold de Chatillon, 1187

This roguish bandit knight is married to the widow of Prince Raymond of Antioch, Constance. Reynold has been part of numerous raids on Muslim caravans during peace treaties with Saladin; Reynolds lust for rapine and plunder was not only confided to Muslims, he attacked Christian lands like Byzantine Cyprus despite Baldwin III's attempts at making peace with the emperor.

The Byzantine emperor Manuel I captured Antioch and released Reynold, making him a vassal of the empire. In 1159 C.E. Manuel I and Nur ed-Din signed a truce; which was broken by zealous Reynold. Reynold was so unpopular

that nobody paid the ransom to free him, so he was held in prison for sixteen years.

Later after the Battle of Hattin in 1187 C.E. Saladin captures Reynold and follows through with his vow to personally kill Reynold. Saladin cuts his head off with one clean blow.

### King Richard I, The Lionheart

*It is easy to understand to what anger we were aroused to punish such villainy. Supported by divine aid, we engaged this enemy in battle and won a quick victory.*

-Richard the Lionheart, 1191

### King Richard I, The Lionheart

STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 13 POW 11  
DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 12 SAN 55 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6

**Weapons:** Long Sword 85%, damage 1D8 +db

Crossbow 50%, damage 2D6

Knife large 60% damage 1D6,

Fist/Punch 70% 1D3 +db

*King Richard I*



Grapple 40% 1D3 +db

Headbutt 20% 1D3 +db

**Armor:** Plate Armor, Shield Medium, Surcoat.

**Skills:** Art Poetry 25% Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Command 80%, Dodge 68%, Insight 25%, Library Use 45%, Own Kingdom 75%, Own Language 65%, Persuade 35%, Ride 45%, Status 85%, Tactics 75%, Write Language 21%

### Saladin

*...our lord the Victorious King, Salah al-Dunya wa'l-Din, Sultan of Islam and the Muslimin! Unifier of the creed of faith by his light, subjugator of the worshippers of the Cross by his might, raiser of the banner of justice and right.*

-Usama Ibn Munqidh, *Book of Contemplation*

### Saladin

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 17  
DEX 13 APP 16 EDU 18 SAN 55 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

**Weapons:** Scimitar 75%, damage 1D8,

Bow 80%, damage 1D8,

Knife, Large 55%, damage 1D6.

**Armor:** Leather and Scales, Daraq, Surcoat, Horse Barding; Leather and Scales.

**Skills:** Command 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Dodge 55%, Insight 55%, Occult 65%, Own Kingdom 60%, Other Kingdom 40%, Other Language Greek 40%, Own Language 90%, Persuade 60%, Potions 41%, Ride 55%, Status 90%, Science Alchemy 50%, Theology 40%, Write Language 53%.

**Spells:** Auger, Bless Blade, Bless, Cast Out the Devil, Cloud Memory, Contact Old One, Dust of Suleiman\* Dismiss (spirit), Exaltation, Fear, Return Follower of Mad Cthulhu, Scrying Window, Seal of Nephren-ka.

\*Originally from *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook, reproduced in Additional Spells for the Old Grimoire section in *Dark Crusades*.



Saladin

This list of personalities is by no means exhaustive; it is only a brief starting point for keepers to expand upon based on the needs of their games.

## Dark Crusades

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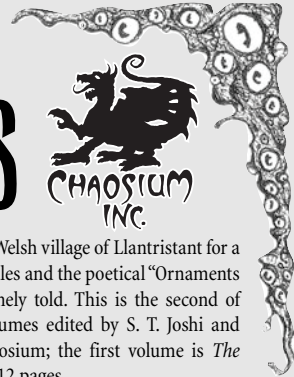
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# Selected Chaosium Titles



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"H.P. Lovecraft — like his creation, Cthulhu — never truly died. He and his influence live on, in the work of so many of us who were his friends and acolytes. Today we have reason for rejoicing in the widespread revival of his canon. . . . If a volume such as this has any justification for its existence, it's because Lovecraft's readers

continue to search out stories which reflect his contribution to the field of fantasy. . . . [The tales in this book] represent a lifelong homage to HPL. . . . I hope you'll accept them for what they were and are — a labor of love." —Robert Bloch

Robert Bloch has become one with his fictional counterpart Ludvig Prinn: future generations of readers will know him as an eldritch name hovering over a body of nightmare texts. To know them will be to know him. And thus we have decided to release a new and expanded third edition of Robert Bloch's *Mysteries of the Worm*. This collection contains four more Mythos tales — "The Opener of the Way", "The Eyes of the Mummy", "Black Bargain", and "Philtre Tip" — not included in the first two editions.

### The Yellow Sign & Other Stories

#6023 ISBN 1-56882-126-3 \$19.95

This massive collection brings together the entire body of Robert W. Chambers' weird fiction works including material unprinted since the 1890's. Chambers is considered a landmark author in the field of horror literature for his King in Yellow collection, which itself represents but a small portion of his weird fiction work. These stories are intimately connected with the Cthulhu Mythos introducing Hali, Carcosa, and Hastur.

This book contains all the immortal tales of Robert W. Chambers, including "The Repairer of Reputations", "The Yellow Sign", and "The Mask". These titles are often found in survey anthologies. In addition to the six stories reprinted from *The Yellow Sign* (1895), this book also offers more than two dozen other stories and episodes, about 650 pages in all. These narratives rarely have appeared in print. Some have not been published in nearly a century.

A Chambers novel, *The Slayer of Souls* (1920), is not included in this short story collection.

### The White People & Other Tales

#6035 ISBN 1-56882-147-6 \$14.95

THE BEST WEIRD TALES OF ARTHUR MACHEN, VOL 2. — Born in Wales in 1863, Machen was a London journalist for much of his life. Among his fiction, he may be best known for the allusive, haunting title story of this book, "The White People", which H. P. Lovecraft thought to be the second greatest horror story ever written (after Blackwood's "The Willows"). This wide ranging collection also includes the crystalline novelette "A Fragment of Life", the "Angel of Mons" (a story so coolly reported that it was imagined true by millions in the grim initial days of the Great War), and "The Great Return", telling of the stately visions

which graced the Welsh village of Llantrissant for a time. Four more tales and the poetical "Ornaments in Jade" are all finely told. This is the second of three Machen volumes edited by S. T. Joshi and published by Chaosium; the first volume is *The Three Impostors*. 312 pages.

## CALL OF CTHULHU RPG

CALL OF CTHULHU is a horror roleplaying game set in the world of the Cthulhu Mythos, as described by H. P. Lovecraft, the father of modern horror.

### Call of Cthulhu, sixth ed.

#23106 ISBN 0-56882-181-6 \$34.95

CORE PRODUCT — The Great Old Ones ruled the earth aeons before the rise of humankind. Originally they came from the gulfs of space and were cast down by even greater beings. Remains of their cyclopean cities and forbidden knowledge can still be found on remote islands in the Pacific, buried amid the shifting sands of vast deserts, and in the frigid recesses of the polar extremes. Now they sleep — some deep within the enveloping earth and others beneath the eternal sea, in the drowned city of R'lyeh, preserved in the waters by the spells of mighty Cthulhu. When the stars are right they will rise, and once again walk this Earth.

*Call of Cthulhu* is Chaosium's classic roleplaying game of Lovecraftian horror in which ordinary people are confronted by the terrifying and alien forces of the Cthulhu Mythos. *Call of Cthulhu* uses Chaosium's *Basic Roleplaying* system, easy to learn and quick to play. This bestseller has won dozens of game-industry awards and is a member of the *Academy of Adventure Game Design Hall of Fame*. In 2011 *Call of Cthulhu* celebrated its 30th anniversary. In 2003 *Call of Cthulhu* was voted the #1 Gothic/Horror RPG of all time by the Gaming Report.com community. *Call of Cthulhu* is well-supported by an ever-growing line of high quality game supplements.

This is a softcover 6th edition of this classic horror game, completely compatible with all of previous editions and supplements for *Call of Cthulhu*. This is a complete roleplaying game in one volume. All you need to play is this book, some dice, imagination, and your friends.

### Call of Cthulhu Keeper's Screen

#23120 ISBN 1-56882-345-2 \$15.95

A 3-Panel Keeper's Screen mounted on thick hardcover stock that folds out to

33 inches wide. One side, intended to face the players, portrays an investigative scene. The other side collects and summarizes important rules and statistics, to help ease the Keeper's task. The package includes a 22"x34" *Mythos Vade Mecum* poster by the mad french artists Christian Grussi and El Théo, postulating relationships between the deities and minions of the Cthulhu Mythos.

## H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham

#8803 ISBN 1-56882-165-4 \$28.95

*"Behind everything crouched the brooding, festering horror of the ancient town . . . the changeless, legend-haunted city of Arkham, with its clustering gambrel roofs that sway and sag over attics where witches hid from the King's men in the dark, olden days of the Province.*

*It was always a very bad time in Arkham . . ."*

—H. P. Lovecraft

Arkham is a small town along the Massachusetts coast—the setting favored by author Howard Phillips Lovecraft in his tales of monstrous horror. All in all a quiet place, Arkham is best-known as the home of Miskatonic University, an excellent school becoming known for its esoteric and disturbing volumes residing in its library's Restricted Collection. These tomes form the foundation of all current efforts to thwart the dire desires of the Mythos legion.

*H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham* contains extensive background information about this haunted New England town — written to be used by serious investigators as a base from which to further explore the mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos. Pertinent buildings, useful people, and important locations are described in depth. A 17x22" players' map of Arkham is bound into the back, and four thrilling adventures complete the package.

Includes the H.P. Lovecraft short story "The Dreams in the Witch-house" (1933).

## H. P. Lovecraft's Dunwich

#8802 ISBN 1-56882-164-6 \$25.95

Dunwich is a small village located along the Miskatonic, upriver from Arkham. Until 1806, Dunwich was a thriving community, boasting many mills and the powerful Whateley family.

Those among the Whateleys came to know dark secrets about the world, and they fell into the worship of unwholesome creatures from other times and places. Retreating to the hills and forests surrounding the town, they betrayed their uncorrupted kin.

Prosperity fled, and a dark despair seized the people. What remains is a skeleton town, mills closed, its citizens without hope or future. However, secrets of the Mythos survive, to be discovered by brave and enterprising investigators.

*H.P. Lovecraft's Dunwich* begins with "The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft's masterful tale of life in the town and its surrounds. It expands upon the story with extensive information about the town: pertinent buildings, useful people, and important locations are described in detail. A 17x22" map depicts the area for miles around, and two scenarios are included. All statistics and gameplay notes for d20 Cthulhu are also provided.

## Keeper's Companion II

#2395 ISBN 1-56882-186-7 \$23.95

A CORE BOOK FOR KEEPERS, VOL. 2—New to Call of Cthulhu? A battle-scarred veteran of many campaigns? Here are essential background articles useful to most keepers.

"The History Behind Prohibition" — A lengthy article bringing anti-alcohol advocates, law enforcement, gangsters, rum-runners, and consumers into focus. Lots of good stories.

"The Keeper's Master List of *Call of Cthulhu* Scenarios" — Lists are alphabetical by the following topics: scenario era; creature / maniacs / great old ones; legendary heroes and villains; cults / sects / secret societies; Mythos tomes; fictitious locations; and Mythos books from publishers other than Chaosium.

"Iron: a Survey of Civilian Small Arms Used in the 1890's, 1920's, and the Present". Practicalities of firearms; common malfunctions; new skills Handloading and Gunsmithing. Firearms considered are likely to be encountered or thought specially useful by investigators. Insightful discussions of nine specific rifles, five shotguns, ten handguns, a sniper rifle, and the Thompson submachine gun. Hot load damage values for most weapons, along with comparative ratings for noise, maintenance, powder, reloading per round, more, plus standard stats.

"Medical Examiner's Report" discusses the unusual corpse recovered by the Essex County Sheriff's Department, as does "Dr. Lippincot's Diary" from another point of view. Also a short article on deep one / human reproduction.

Brian Sammon's "Mythos Collector" submits write-ups for the *Book of Loä*, *Chronike von Nath*, *Confessions of the Mad Monk Clinthanus*, *Letters of Nestar*, *The Nyhargo Codex*, *Soul of Chaos*, *Testament of Carnamago*, *The Tunneler Below*, *Visions From Yaddith*, *Von denen Verdammten*, as well as for more than a dozen new spells.

And More: "Mythos ex Machina" gathers about forty examples of alien technology from Cthulhu supplements. Gordon Olmstead-Dean outlines the odd connections between H. P. Lovecraft and the Satanists HPL never knew, in "LaVey, Satanism, and the Big Squid". Indexed.

# Basic Roleplaying

Welcome to Chaosium's *Basic Roleplaying* system, a book that collects in one place rules and options for one of the original and most influential role playing game systems in the world.

## Basic Roleplaying

#2026 ISBN 1-56882-347-9 \$44.95

A CORE HARDCOVER BOOK—This book comprises a roleplaying game system, a framework of rules aimed at allowing players to enact a sort of improvisational radio theater—only without microphones—and with dice determining whether the characters succeed or fail at what they attempt to do. In roleplaying games, one player takes on the role of the gamemaster (GM), while the other player(s) assume the roles of player characters (PCs) in the game. The gamemaster also acts out the roles of characters who aren't being guided by players: these are called non-player characters (NPCs).

From its origin, *Basic Roleplaying* was designed to be intuitive and easy to play. Character attributes follow a 3D6 curve, and the other *Basic Roleplaying* mechanics are even simpler. Virtually all rolls determining success or failure of a task are determined via the roll of percentile dice. This means that there's less fiddling with dice of different types, and the concept of a percentile chance of success is extremely easy for beginners and experienced players to grasp. There aren't many easier ways to say a character has a 70% chance of succeeding at an activity.

The system is remarkably friendly to newcomers. It is easy to describe the basics of the game system, and the percentile mechanics, to non-gamers.

Players of other game systems often find *Basic Roleplaying* to be much less mechanistic and less of a barrier to the actual act of roleplaying. Less time spent on game systems usually equals more time available for roleplaying and thinking "in character."

Characters tend to evolve based on practicing the skills they use the most. They do not arbitrarily gain experience in skills and qualities based on ephemeral elements such as levels or experience ranks.

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