

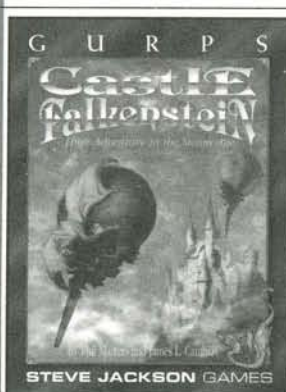
G U R P S[®]

Castle Falkenstein[™]

— THE —
OTTOMAN
EMPIRE

By PHIL MASTERS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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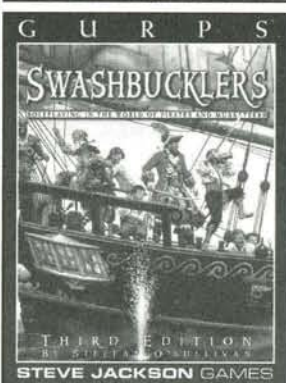
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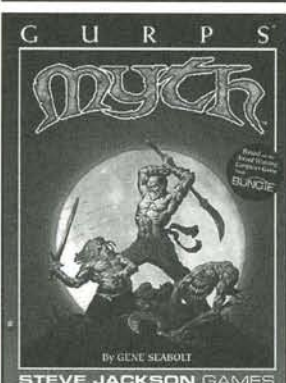
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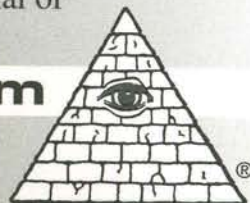


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G U R P S[®]

Castle Falkenstein[™]

The Ottoman Empire

Based on CASTLE FALKENSTEIN, created by Mike Pondsmith

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Thanks also to everyone else who commented
on *Pyramid*, and to the author's old *Castle
Falkenstein* group.



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ISBN 1-55634-575-5

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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ABOUT GURPS

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Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our website (below).

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The *GURPS Castle Falkenstein: The Ottoman Empire* web page can be found at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/ottoman/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are AN for *GURPS Arabian Nights*, AT for *GURPS Atlantis*, CF for *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, PM for *GURPS Places of Mystery*, and M for *GURPS Magic*. The abbreviation for *this* book is OT. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction



This is a supplement for *Castle Falkenstein*, in both its original and its *GURPS* versions. It has the same form as previous *Castle Falkenstein* supplements – a message received from that world through the Faerie Veil, with an account of events and locations and additional game details.

The subject is the Ottoman Empire of the *Falkenstein* world – the great power which rules the Middle East, taking in modern Turkey, most of Arabia, and much of North Africa. Whereas “New Europa” – the West, especially Europe and North America – is a region where faerie powers, ritual magick, and “steampunk” technology vie for dominance, the Ottoman lands seem partly stuck in a fantastical medieval past. This Empire has changed relatively little – certainly less than it *should* have – since its glory days, which coincided with the European Renaissance.

However, things are just a little more complicated than that. New ideas do cross the border sometimes, albeit with difficulty, and the powers of steam and modern military technology are making their presence felt. On the other hand, desert raiders, flying carpets, and whimsical Djinn remain an occasional feature of this region, too. Like other parts of the *Falkenstein* world, the Ottoman Empire displays a weird mixture of Victorian super-science and traditional fantasy wonders; it’s just that here, they have a strong *Arabian Nights* flavor, a background of imperial

decline, and a fair amount of developing world patch-and-mend.

This setting’s recent history probably comes closer to that of our world than any other part of the *Falkenstein* setting. There’s magick and Djinn, admittedly, but “our” Ottoman Empire was as dramatic, chaotic, and strange as any fantasy gamer could wish. See some of the books in the Bibliography for details.

But for now, it’s time to meet our guides for the trip.

About the Author

“It is my belief, Watson . . . that the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside.”

– Sherlock Holmes, in “The Copper Beeches,”
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Phil Masters, it may be recalled, was the author of *GURPS Arabian Nights* (among others) and the co-author of *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, which history he believes renders him qualified for this present employment. His first paid scribbles were published in the year 1980, which renders him, he fears, somewhat of an archaic period fantasy himself. He does business with his publishers from his residence in a small town amid the smiling and beautiful countryside of rural England.

1. Eastern Questions



This book consists largely of a manuscript received through the Faerie Veil from the universe of **Castle Falkenstein**. It was sent by Tom Olam, who is still resident in that universe, but only the introductory text, some game-mechanical notes, and a brief epilogue, were written by Tom himself. We'll let Tom explain why that is . . .

Folks,

As you'll have gathered if you've read my past letters, I'm hardly the only person having adventures here in the world of **Castle Falkenstein**. So, this time, I'm sending you a copy of someone else's story. Anyway, this gives me an opportunity to pass on something about a part of this world that I haven't had much chance to see for myself – the Ottoman Empire, a land of mighty Djinn, flying carpets, scheming Grand Viziers, and crazy Sultans.

The Empire is also known as "The Sick Man of Europe," for reasons which are part of how this story came to pass. I did get to see the very beginning and very end of it all, here in Ludwig's palace in Munchen, but strictly from the sidelines.

I should say that there's a down-side to my life as a secret agent and court advisor – well, apart from people trying to kill me occasionally. The really **depressing** part is sending other people off into danger. Young Eberhardt Starkmann, for example.

I first met him one dark (but not very stormy) night last year, when General von Tarlenheim summoned me down to one of the sitting-rooms. The old soldier didn't say very much at that point, but when I arrived, I found several of the old crew present. Ludwig himself took the chair, with Auberon looking cool and enigmatic at his side. Von Tarlenheim bustled about with some papers, while Morrolan sprawled with a brandy in his hand.

I asked what was going on – again – and von Tarlenheim smiled mirthlessly.

"Prussia," he said.

"What a surprise," I said. "What's Bismarck up to now?"

"Long-term schemes," the General answered, "but dangerous. He's turning his attentions to the East, and we need to start building alliances that way ourselves. We've been keeping an eye on this for a while, and now . . . We've found someone to act as a courier, and he will be here tonight. We've sent a couple of equerries to fetch him. Here, look at this. We would value your comments."

He pushed a dossier of papers across to me. This turned out to be a file, penned by our small but sharp-witted band of spooks (under one of their harmless-sounding pseudonyms). That makes it secret, so you should be flattered to learn that I've now got clearance to send a translated copy to you. Please don't leak it to Bismarck.

CIRCUMSTANCES WITHIN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Notes by the Office of Court Protocols

The condition of the Ottoman Empire is, of course, one of the great Questions of contemporary European diplomacy, but it is not one with in which we of Bayern have previously felt a pressing interest. However, we regret to inform the court that matters may be entering a new phase, to which Bayern, and our allies of the Second Compact, may be obliged to attend. It would appear that our enemies in Prussia are turning their gaze that way.

This had not previously seemed a great risk. In very recent years, Chancellor von Bismarck was heard to say publicly that he "never even bothered to open the mailbag from Constantinople." For all its size and thaumaturgical might, the Ottoman Empire is corrupt and disorganised, but none of the great powers have permitted any of the others to bring it down. For example, when Russia found an excuse to assail Turkey, Britain and France allied and fought the Crimean War to check Russian ambitions. Prussia has considered the unification of Germany its first concern.

But the Prussians have also dreamed of *Drang nach Osten*, the "Drive to the East" which would spread German power further afield, as our ancestors spread our culture into Austria and along the Baltic coast. Now, with his conquests in Germany halted by the Second Compact, the Iron

Chancellor (encouraged, no doubt, by his Unseelie allies) appears to be contemplating the exploitation of an alternative source of aid.

Regrettably, the Turks are susceptible to Prussian influence. They are a warlike people, and even their most progressive "Westernizers" dream of resurrecting Ottoman glory and strength by adopting modern, Western military skills – and they judge the Prussians to be the most dedicated and impressive source of advanced military ideas. Only recently, in 1869, for example, the Turks decided to introduce a new system of conscription to strengthen their armies – and they based it on the Prussian model.

Now the Prussians are showing themselves willing to respond to Turkish flattery. They have lately sent many staff officers and drill-sergeants to Constantinople to assist with the modernisation of the Turkish Army. Moreover, they are showing a new interest in an idea previously discounted; the creation of a substantial railway network, to bind the Ottoman Empire closer together (and to enhance the mobility of its reformed army).

We are certain that the recent construction of a railway through the Turks' European Provinces to Constantinople involved considerable Prussian funding, as well as Prussian steam engineers; given that they seek to bind Europe in "Chains of Iron," to the detriment of the Seelie Faerie, this

was doubtless part of their scheme. They are now openly discussing with the Turks the creation of more lines, beyond the Bosphorus.

One scheme would proceed through Asia Minor, alongside the Euphrates River, to Baghdad (and doubtless through there to the Persian Gulf), strengthening communications between the Ottoman capital and the ancient capital of the Caliphate, at the eastern end of their domains. (This would also enable the Turks – or their allies – to send military forces rapidly to the borders of Persia; the Prussians may even have designs on India.) Another idea is to construct a rail line along the Levantine coast, through Syria to Jerusalem. A third, boldest of all – perhaps too bold for Turkish tastes – would involve the creation of a railway network to carry Muslim *Hajj* pilgrims from Syria to the Holy City of Mecca. This, however, would be seen by Muslims as intruding deep in sacred territory; doubtless, this system would have to be financed and constructed purely by members of that faith, with Prussian involvement remaining well hidden. Nonetheless, it would place Ottoman credibility at the mercy of Prussian expertise.

All of these schemes require watching. Nor can we trust the other European Powers to restrain Prussia, at least without complex considerations of their own advantage.

For example, Britain is divided on the Ottoman Question. Mr Disraeli, for the Tory Party, seems to have a certain liking for the Turks, and takes a cool, “realistic” view of events in the East. His rival, Mr Gladstone of the Liberals, clearly feels a furious distaste toward the Muslim religion, taking every opportunity to denigrate the Ottomans. As he can produce countless reports of massacres and tyranny in their lands, he has much ammunition. But he will not work to help the cause of Reform – he seeks only the *destruction* of the Sultanate. He will hardly be supported in this by the Steam Lords, who care nothing for massacres or tyranny, but seek only a feeble, compliant East wherein to sell their manufactures. So Mr Disraeli and the Steam Lords are in alliance on this issue. In truth, however, the main concern for all British factions is to ensure that the new Suez Canal, their best and swiftest route to India, is kept open and unthreatened, and they may be prepared to permit the Prussians some advantage in the internal affairs of the region in exchange for this.

The British concern for the Canal is shared by the French, its chief builders, who otherwise seem mostly concerned that the vast Ottoman debt to French banks should be safe. They are unlikely to make any move that would threaten Ottoman stability, or cause the Sultan to cancel payments. The Russians have an ancient and persistent enmity with Turkey, although for now they seem to accept the lesson of the Crimea; that they cannot bring down the Ottomans without all Europe opposing them. They might fear schemes that strengthen the Ottoman Empire overmuch – but it may well

Ottomans Elsewhere

Although this book deals specifically with the Ottoman Empire in the universe of *Castle Falkenstein*, circa 1872, it could also be useful in other games. Apart from the supernatural elements – the Djinn and Magick – much of the information is drawn direct from our own world’s history. Hence, much that follows would be applicable in other steampunk games (see *GURPS Steampunk*), or indeed in realistic Victorian-era games. In fact, the majority of the characters detailed in this book really existed, although their depiction here is cinematic and melodramatic.

For that matter, much of the treatment of the supernatural draws on real-world myths and stories. The *Arabian Nights* shows Djinn much as depicted here, and more than one of the “Magickal” volumes mentioned are based on real books. Games based on *GURPS Goblins*, *GURPS Cabal*, or *GURPS Warehouse 23* could all involve the strange secrets or dark legacies of the Ottoman Empire.

Printing the Legend

However, there’s one drawback to depicting the Victorian-era Ottoman Empire from a Western point of view. Westerners of the period, brought up on the *Arabian Nights* and stories of the Crusades, had a monumentally romanticized view of the whole subject. Many of those who visited the region were excellent reporters, but even they tended to see things through a mental filter. That’s what irritated modern scholars call “Orientalism.”

Still, it’s plain fact that the Ottoman Empire had mad sultans, scheming viziers, desert tribes, and wild-eyed dervishes. In brutal reality, most of that probably made it a much less pleasant place to live. On the other hand, *Castle Falkenstein* is about high melodrama; when in doubt, we print the legend. Still, even in the *Falkenstein* universe, there are ordinary people living in this Empire.

be fear of Russia that the Prussians are using to persuade the Turks of the need for their aid. Our best allies in this matter are the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who have their own old worries about both Turkey and Prussia – but *they* suffer from a persistent urge to meddle in the Balkans.

In short, we feel that it may be necessary to build our own system of reliable informers and friends in the Ottoman Empire, and we must regretfully request further funds for this project. Our first concern is to improve our present, somewhat limited, set of contacts, which project is now in hand.

Tom Olam Again:

I finished skimming this, and looked up. Morrolan looked at me. “Is there anything you would add to that, from your, ah, unique viewpoint?” he asked.

“Not much,” I said. “Mind you, that Drang nach Osten idea is likely to bring New Europa a lot of grief in the future, and I think our people may be right to guess that Bismarck is making moves in that direction a few years ahead of schedule. In my world, Turkey did rather fall under Prussian influence – they sided with Germany in the Great War at the start of the 20th century. That cost them their empire, but they managed to reorganize as a fairly modern nation. The Middle East was still a bit of a mess at the end of the century, though.”

Eberhardt Starkmann, Surveying Engineer and Secret Agent

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Comeliness Good, Connections Good, Courage Good, Education Great, Fisticuffs Poor, Marksmanship Good, Perception Great, Performance Poor.

GURPS

125 points

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 11 [10]. Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 6 (Fencing).

Advantages: Attractive [5]; Language Talent +1 [2]; Luck [15]; Patron (Royal Luftschwansa, 9 or less) [15]; Status +1 [5].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10]; Incompetence (Performance) [-1]; Sense of Duty (King and Country) [-10].

Quirks: Interested in exotic lands and peoples; Little taste for brawling or fisticuffs; Prefers living languages to the classics; Secret romantic. [-4]

Skills: Airshipman (Aerocruisers)-11 [1/2]; Architecture-12 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Bavaria)-14 [1]; Aviation-12 [1/2]; Cartography-13 [1]; Engineer (Combat)-14 [4]; Fencing-10 [1/2]; Forward Observer-12 [1/2]; Geology-12 [1]; Gunner (Mortar)-12* [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)-14* [1]; Guns (Rifle)-14* [1]; History-11 [1/2]; Literature-11 [1/2]; Mathematics-12 [1]; Naturalist-11 [1/2]; Physics-12 [1]; Research-13 [1]; Riding (Horse)-10 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-16** [0]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-14 [1]; Surveying-14 [2]; Writing-12 [1/2].

* Includes +2 for IQ.

** Free from Status.

Languages: Arabic-13 [1/2]; English-14 [1]; French-13 [1/2]; German (native)-15 [0]; Turkish-13 [1/2]. (All include +1 for Language Talent.)

Eberhardt Starkmann is aged 23 at the time of his journey to the Ottoman Empire, and has been employed by the Bayern Royal Luftschwansa for two years, having obtained an excellent degree from Munchen University just as the company was being organised. Despite his youth and relative inexperience, his employers have already identified him as possessing promise, and have decided that he has the qualities demanded by his current surveying mission. Being a young company, the Luftschwansa often places potential and talent before mere seniority.

However, despite his stout heart and determination (and handsome face), Starkmann is not a warrior or a natural swashbuckler. He has no taste for a brawl, and becomes tongue-tied if obliged to act or sing. His greatest assets are sharp wits and clear eyes; he lacks extensive training in the arts of war. He volunteered for service during the war with Prussia, but after giving him a little weapons training, the army wisely placed this young scholar where he could be most use – in a support unit that distinguished itself in tasks miles from any battle.

Having received a modern, technical education, Starkmann is unusually ignorant of the classics for a man of his time and position; he prefers living languages – English and a little French. However, in recent weeks he has been taking crash courses in Arabic and Turkish, in preparation for his mission – and he has proved a good pupil. His minor flair for languages is, after all, one reason he was selected for this job.

(In **GURPS** terms, during his mission in the Ottoman Empire, Starkmann has a -20-point Secret, being effectively a spy. The Bavarian court and secret service might represent an additional Patron, but he would have a lot of difficulty contacting them.)

"Ah-ha," said Morrolan, "all the old problems?"

"And several new ones," I said. "Actually, there's one thing we maybe ought to consider. Arabia will turn out to be sitting on oceans of natural oil."

"This is important?" asked Ludwig.

"It will be, when people get around to making internal combustion engines work properly," I explained. "We have to assume that the Unseelie Court know that as well as I do. So they may be prompting Bismarck to play a long game. But if so, it's not going to come to anything for decades yet."

Just then, an equerry appeared, announced "Herr Eberhardt Starkmann, your Highness," and ushered in a handsome but ordinary-looking young Bavarian civilian,

who was still in the process of shedding a black traveling-cloak. I guessed he'd been sneaked in through darkened streets and a back door to the palace by one of the shady sort of fellows that we've acquired recently, and it was pretty clear that he wasn't entirely aware what was going on. In fact, when he saw the king, his jaw just dropped – ah, the mystique of monarchy. Gets 'em every time.

Still, young Starkmann collected himself soon enough, and managed an appropriate bow. Ludwig, all charm and natural leadership, made some basic introductions, and soon had him seated at the end of our conference table.

"My friends," Ludwig announced, "I must apologize for the air of secrecy surrounding this meeting, and most especially for calling Herr Starkmann away from his travel

preparations. I am sure that he has much on his mind. However, the General and I judge it necessary to request a favour of this young man, and whether or not he agrees, it might put him in some danger if he were known to have been called here in these circumstances. Conversely, if Herr Starkmann **does** agree, it seems only fair that he should receive the best briefing that the court can offer."

"A – favour, Majesty?" Starkmann stammered out. Ludwig smiled abstractedly.

"Of a sort," he said, and turned to the rest of us. "Herr Starkmann here will shortly be travelling into the depths of the Ottoman Empire, on open and legitimate business. We have, I fear, been rather sluggish in realising that this represents a rare opportunity. He will be asked to keep an observant eye open during his travels, and we would be grateful if he could also deliver a pair of letters for us, to some of our possible friends in the area. He will be empowered to argue our case, and to reply to the recipients' questions."

Starkmann looked stunned.

"What's his cover – the official reason for his trip?" I asked.

"I am a surveyor," Starkmann explained, "employed by the Royal Luftschwansa."

"Right," I said, "the aeroliner company."

Starkmann nodded. "It is thought that we might establish a schedule of flights to the East as well as to the Americas," he said. "To India, perhaps, or even Australia. Such journeys could involve stops along the way. I am to study possible docking places and port facilities in the Middle East."

"Now that – 'tis a mission with some small risks of its own," declared Auberon. "For be sure there's forces that would like to hurt Bayern's commerce, almost as sure as they'd love to harm the land in war."

"Nonetheless, we are proposing to add to the risk this gentleman is taking," said Ludwig. "We cannot require such a service . . ."

"Oh, I'll do it, Majesty!" said Starkmann, almost interrupting the king in his enthusiasm. I winced a little. Heck, I'd have volunteered myself – but I like to think that I've learned a **little** caution in my adventures.

"Excellent," barked von Tarlenheim, who's a soldier, and never worries about a question once he's had a simple answer. "Here's what we'd like you to do . . ."

And so began the great adventure of Eberhardt Starkmann.

– Tom Olam

✧ TRAVELLING EASTWARD ✧

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

I was thrilled! I had been entrusted with missions, not only by my employers, but also by King and Country! However, the first stage of my itinerary was a calm and simple matter; I was to travel to Venice by the regular railway service.

Perhaps fortunately for my state of mind, there was one item that demanded my immediate attention. The Court Intelligencers had provided me with notes describing the past history and present state of the Ottoman Empire. I had been advised to read this immediately, and then to

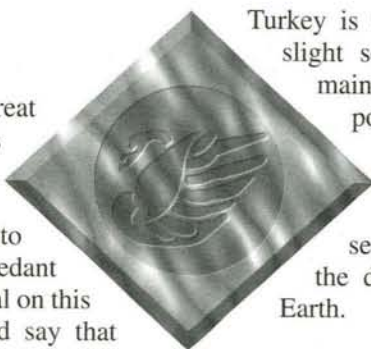
destroy it, for although it contained nothing of a particularly secret nature, its self-evidently official origins might attract the attention of curious Turkish customs functionaries. Indeed, such individuals might even regard the objective, direct nature of its contents as reason to take offence on behalf of their country; the Turks are a proud folk, and suspicious of foreigners.

Thus, I settled in my seat and began to peruse the documents that General von Tarlenheim had pressed upon me. The first was written by a gentleman I recalled from my University days as having a reputation for cool detachment and advanced opinions . . .

✧ THE OTTOMANS: A HISTORICAL VIEW ✧

By Prof. von Tuchmann, of the University of Munchen

The Ottoman Empire is one of the Great Powers of Europe, despite the fact that it is much diminished from its past Ages of Glory. However, it is also an anomaly. In most eyes, it is an outpost of Asian power which happens to rule some European territories; however, a pedant might insist that an Empire with lands and capital on this continent is a European Empire. Some would say that



Turkey is decrepit and impotent, requiring but a slight set-back to bring about final collapse, maintained only by the fact that no European power dares engineer its destruction for fear that some rival would profit more; others point out that the Turks still command vast territories and unknown secrets, and should not be dismissed until the day they vanish from the Face of the Earth.

To understand this peculiar situation, it is necessary to consider the history of the Ottoman Dynasty, heirs to the power, glory, and learning of Imperial Rome – and also to the barbaric violence and dark mystic secrets of a nation of nomad warriors.

Constantinople

The Ottomans govern from the city they call **Istanbul**, which many Europeans know better by its Roman name of **Constantinople** – or by the yet more ancient **Byzantium**. Founded in Greek times, this city was in various eras ruled by Persia, Athens, and Sparta. Subsequently, the Romans absorbed it into their own Empire.

At first, Byzantium was simply another trading-town, but it grew to dominate its region. When the Roman Emperor Constantine decided to divide the Empire in two, he made this city capital of the East and renamed it after himself. Then, when Rome fell, the city gave its old name to its own Empire, Greek-speaking and Christian.

The Byzantines resisted attacks from Goths and Persians; their defences also saw off ravening Unseelie monsters and the occasional ill-tempered Dragon from the depths of the Arabian desert. They sometimes waxed and sometimes waned in power. At the time when Islam arose in Arabia, Byzantium was passing through a phase of bitter religious dispute, fighting a long hard war with Persia, and probably suffering from Unseelie machinations, enabling the Arabs to carry their conquests to the very walls of Constantinople; but the walls held, reinforced by Magicks drawn from the libraries of Greece and Rome, and Byzantium endured while even Persia fell.

The Age of the Arabian Nights

The high point of purely Arab power came a century later, with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphs, and especially Haroun al-Rashid. This was the Age of the Arabian Nights, when Baghdad, founded to be the Abbasid capital, was the wealthiest, most sophisticated city in the world. It is said that Haroun's citizens, such as the famous explorer and adventurer Sinbad "the Sailor," could locate and obtain anything Haroun's heart desired, even without the aid of the Djinn (who they did also sometimes command).

However, the Abbasids also had problems. Their own Viziers were usually Persians, descendants of the race

whom the Arabs had conquered. The best of these Court Ministers were honourable and wise, and served the Caliphs well – but the worst were devious schemers, determined to gain revenge on behalf of Persia, to restore their nation to power, or simply to grasp power for themselves.

The Persian Viziers were eventually controlled – Baghdad produced many an Arab hero in those days – but the result of all these struggles and courtly plots was that the Caliphs became nervous and suspicious. Both they and their

courtiers came to expect that the court would be a place of plots and treachery, and even their own wives and sons made a habit of scheming. Meanwhile, Arab magickal scholarship was sometimes growing ahead of their judgment; large numbers of bound Djinn were unleashed in this era, and many set about making mischief.

The Abbasids survived every single incident, but the process, and the atmosphere of betrayal and mistrust, left them weakened and open to outside assault. They had to fight off a string of invasions and barbarian raids, and eventually came to depend utterly on a nation of foreign mercenaries – the Turks.

These folk were, in a sense, the most successful barbarian invaders of all. They were also a threat to Constantinople. For, while Haroun had been content to keep the Byzantines in line with the occasional border war, the Turks, driven by nomad instincts, determined on a westward drive.

Thus, faced with waves of assaults, by Muslims ever more adept in siege-craft and Magick, Constantinople's strength was worn away. Much of the Middle East, including the Holy Land, was now firmly under Muslim control. After one military disaster at the hands of the Seljuk Turks, the Byzantines appealed to Europe for aid.

Hence the Crusades, in which the Byzantines were spectators; the Crusaders were not prepared to hand their conquests back to the "Greeks." Worst of all, some had come for booty rather than religion; the Fourth Crusade, subverted by the Venetians (deadly rivals of the Byzantines) actually conquered Constantinople. The Byzantines later regained it, but they had now been reduced to a vestige.

The Ottomans

We first hear mention of the Turkish chieftain Othman in 1301, when he was already expanding his territory at the expense of the Byzantines. His father had been granted

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It is said that Haroun's citizens, such as the famous explorer and adventurer Sinbad "the Sailor," could locate and obtain anything Haroun's heart desired.



border-lands by the Seljuks in exchange for military service, and the aid of his tribal shamans against a band of evil Ifrit who had recently been released by a bungling wizard; his successors expanded into Europe at the suggestion of the Byzantines, who desired allies. (Their shamans had some success against hostile European supernatural beings, who were unused to such magical opposition.) Othman is said to have borne a deadly cold iron blade, the "Sword of the Ottomans," which is regarded by the Turks as the secret of his power. (Its current location is unknown; it is *probably* hidden away in the depths of the Ottoman treasury, regarded as too precious ever actually to be used.)

Murad I conquered Serbia, and Bayezid I, "the Thunderbolt," carried on into Bulgaria. By 1400, the Ottomans had an embryonic Empire on two continents. The Byzantines found themselves threatened.

It is rumoured that Byzantine scholar-wizards sailed the Black Sea and gave their secrets of power to Timur the Lame, the terrifying Khan of the Mongols, in order to distract the Turks in the East. If so, this was misplaced heroism – a devil's bargain. Timur *certainly* revered both tribal shamans and the Sufi mystics of Arabia, and they repaid his favour with their own power. During Timur's last campaign, in 1402, he defeated Bayezid, who died in captivity; a band of Djinn who Bayezid had bound to service were returned to their brass bottles by mystical allies of the

sanctimonious, ruthless Timur. However, the aged Timur then departed Anatolia with his plunder and the submission of the Turks and Djinn.

The Empire

The Turks recovered, to push into Europe, but met resistance from the Hungarians, Poles, and Albanians. The Magick that they commanded was often tied to the power of the Djinn, who were in turn bound to their homelands by ancient, immoderate oaths (and also by the great bindings of Solomon). Even when they won, the Turks often suffered heavy losses; after one battle, the Sultan Murad II murmured, "May Allah never grant me another such victory." Then, in 1451, Murad was succeeded by his youthful son, Mehmet II.

Mehmet mustered power from every quarter of his empire, sending heroes and wizards to acquire it wherever it might be found. His enemies whispered that he had bargained for aid from the Ifrit, and even from the ancient cults surrounding the lost city of Irem of the Pillars, in southern Arabia – but Mehmet was a great captain as well as a devout Muslim, and may well have been able to spurn such unlawful aid. The Turks had developed a taste for wall-shattering cannon, and had learned to merge the wild Magick of their own tribal shamans with refined, mathematical spells created by Muslim scholars.

Solomon and Suleiman

There's a small problem when writing about people who don't usually use the Latin alphabet; the "correct" spelling of certain words, especially names, can be a tricky thing. This book has a particular problem with Solomon and Suleiman.

The great king of ancient Israel is usually referred to, in English translations of the Bible, as "Solomon." However, the Turks (and a lot of other people in that part of the world) still use the name, and it's usually then transliterated as "Suleiman." This book has to talk about both the king and Ottoman sultans of, technically, the same name. To minimize confusion, the text uses "Solomon" for the biblical figure and "Suleiman" for Turks.

Except, just to make life difficult, Turkish sorcerers have a very important spell-book which they trace back to the ancient king. And it really does feel better to use a Turkish style of spelling when talking about a book which is usually read in Turkish. So it's referred to here as *The Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud*. ("Ibn Daud" means "Son of David"; Hebrew speakers might refer to King Solomon ben David. Same person, same meaning, mostly just different pronunciations.)

Sorry about any slight confusion, but this is what happens when you get multiple different nations and cultures, speaking multiple different (if related) languages, occupying the same territory over thousands of years, and borrowing each others' history and ideas.

(On a similar topic, the use of "New European" or "European" in this book follows the conventions explained on p. CF6.)

The End of the Roman Empire

In 1453, Mehmet "The Conqueror" hurled his power, military and Magickal, at the walls of Constantinople. A mere 7,000 defenders faced 80,000 besiegers; with every advantage in the hands of the attackers, the outcome was never in doubt. Still, the Greeks fought desperately for several weeks, trawling their decaying libraries for Wards and importing what military skill they could from allies in Europe.

The victorious Ottoman Empire was becoming a sophisticated world power. Their elite Janissary infantry gave the Sultan a loyal personal following; beneath the royal court, the "Sublime Porte," grew a system of bureaucracy and provincial governors. The ancient sorceries of the region were meticulously studied and analysed – and anything that might give them any manner of advantage was brought to the new capital, stored away, and preserved against need.

Constantinople was henceforward often known as Istanbul (meaning simply "The City" in Turkish). The

Ottomans had little in common with the Byzantines, but they were not ashamed to borrow ideas. Greek officials manned the civil service, and Greek scholars helped research ever-more-powerful systems of Magick for the Turkish Viziers. The Orthodox Greeks, who had never forgotten the Fourth Crusade, sometimes felt that they had more in common with the Turks than with Catholic Europe.

Mehmet conquered yet greater territories; however, Hungary continued to defy him, and some European provinces proved hard to swallow. Wallachia was an interesting, if exceptionally dramatic, case.

What had happened was that the new power was worrying even the Dark Lords of the Unseelie. The Turks did not submit to the evil Ifrit, even if they sometimes sought their aid, and being Muslims, they were a stern, puritanical folk, little inclined to tolerate the doings of whimsical Faerie. And so the Vampiric Sidhe Vlad Tepes – better known as Dracula – rose to power in Wallachia, offered his powers and aid to the human citizenry – with honest and binding promises of sincerity – and challenged Mehmet.

This was a war with few rules and no quarter given. Vlad "the Impaler" was as cruel as any of his ilk, which only made him a greater hero to his human subjects; the Turks were determined that their advance should not be stopped. Eventually, Vlad faced the Ottoman Grand Vizier himself in a great supernatural duel, which is said to have lasted for days; in the end, Dracula was defeated and bound. Legend says that his head was struck off with the Sultan's own cold iron sword (although recent reports from Dr van Helsing of Holland may lead us to question this). In any case, this was another expensive victory for the Turks; Wallachia retained a degree of independence, albeit as a client state.

Nonetheless, the Turks' advance continued; they could, if necessary, unleash bound Djinn against the European Sidhe, having struck complex bargains for aid. They also marched into Egypt and North Africa, and subdued Persia.

A Golden Age

Ottoman Turkey was at its peak. Selim "the Grim" was another cultured autocrat, a poet who was so ruthless to his own court that his citizens' great curse was "May you become a Vizier to Sultan Selim." When he died in 1520, the enemies of Turkey were relieved; his only son was young and mild-mannered. They were in for a shock.

Suleiman the Magnificent

Suleiman I, "the Magnificent," "the Lawgiver," had the great ruler's talent for finding good servants. His Grand Admiral Barbarossa, "Red Beard," as fine a sailor as Sinbad himself, conquered the North African coast and defeated the fleets of Europe. Suleiman was also a leader in his own right. In 1521, he took Belgrade; five years later, at the Battle of Mohacs, he destroyed the Hungarian army, whose knightly cavalry proved no match for the disciplined

Janissaries and their sorcerous auxiliaries. In 1529, he marched into Austria.

However, the Turkish armies were operating at the limit of their lines of communication, in European weather. Worse for Suleiman, the disunited Magickal societies of Europe had finally organized themselves, settled their differences, and determined to prove that their combined powers were a match for the ancient secrets of the East.

The Turks besieged Vienna, but found winter closing in with unexpected ferocity. The Druid Orders had realized how little the Turks liked European weather, and demonstrated their command of this power. With Illuminati and Masonic wizards assailing their minds as the cold winds lashed their bodies, the Turks were forced back and retreated in disorder. Similarly, in the Mediterranean, where Suleiman's fleets dominated, he ejected the Knights Hospitaller from Rhodes – but then they and their allies, the Templar magicians, moved to Malta, and held it in the face of the entire Ottoman army, so that Europe retained a foothold in those seas.

But in the East, Suleiman could wage war on his own terms, defeating Persian armies and capturing Iraq. Although “scorched earth” strategies saved Persia, Suleiman now ruled Arabia, and was therefore the guardian of Mecca and Medina – Heir to the Caliphs.

After Suleiman died, war continued. The naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571 was a Turkish defeat, but they could build a complete new navy in a single year; the allied Christian powers won, but lost the island of Cyprus. Turkish power still seemed limitless.

But a rot was setting in.

The Ottoman Decay

Suleiman had left three sons. In the great tradition of the Caliphs, they fought viciously for the throne. It was a prize worth winning – but the very contest reduced its value.

The Empire was built on its servants. The qualifications for membership of the ruling classes were loyalty to the Sultan (whoever held that title), fidelity to Islam, and knowledge of the system of etiquette known as “the Ottoman Way.” Those who met these standards advanced; those who did not were subjects. Those who rose from humble birth were admired, not despised as in Europe. The Janissaries provided a pool of loyal soldiers and administrators, independent of anyone but the Sultan; scholars, often drawn from the more worldly Sufi orders, swore loyalty in exchange for use of his vast libraries, from which they could extract Magickal secrets.

However, the sorcerous Viziers of the “Diwan of the Golden Road” were all too aware of their own importance, and often worked to line their own pockets. The harem was a closed world, imbued with a tradition of scheming that weakened the court. The Janissaries enjoyed acting as king-makers, deciding which prince should become Sultan; in time, they degenerated to mere crime-lords.

Worst of all, because the chief qualification for promotion was knowledge of tradition, the Empire became

lodged in the “good old ways.” Anyone who suggested change might well be murdered as a trouble-maker. But because the Turks were still rich, powerful, and strong, change was not forced on them.

When Byzantium fell, thousands of Greek scholars fled West, carrying knowledge. This not only aided the Renaissance; it gave the Europeans new Magickal techniques and ideas. The invention of the printing press helped these spread, while the persistent rivalry between petty states and princedoms at least ensured that dozens of wizards were seeking out and improving new “War Magick.” They were still not as powerful as the Viziers of the Ottoman Court – but the Viziers guarded their spell-books with bitter jealousy. And a hundred moderate wizards can defeat a dozen great mages.

What About Egypt?

Alert readers will note that, although Egypt is technically part of the Ottoman Empire, and features more than once in the historical notes, it doesn't get much mention in the discussion otherwise. There are reasons for this. The first is, of course, that Herr Starkmann didn't get that far on his travels, and his employers had other things on their minds. The second is that proper treatment of the subject would likely have doubled the length of the book.

After all, Egypt has a recorded history going back thousands of years, and in the *Falkenstein* version, has seen many peculiar supernatural events. It still has the monuments and hidden secrets to show for this. Even under Ottoman rule, it has often gone its own way, its governing *Khedive* acting like an independent ruler. In the 1870s, the newly opened Suez Canal has given it vast strategic importance, and it has thus become a hotbed of espionage, diplomatic intrigue, and vicious plots.

In other words, while it is part of the Ottoman sphere of influence, it is a topic unto itself, which may perhaps merit separate treatment one day. Meanwhile, GMs who become interested in the subject are recommended to read up on the real-world history, which in itself would be good for countless complex and dramatic scenarios.

Meanwhile, Europe was inventing deadlier muskets and artillery, and tactics to go with them; even Persia reformed its army and society on modern lines, threatening the Ottomans from their eastern borders. But the Ottomans held on to what they knew.

Part of the problem was that the Turks still had immense wealth and resources, so they still won wars against smaller foes. There seemed to be no *need* for reform. In fact, the Empire rarely suffered overwhelming defeat; it merely declined slowly, over centuries, amid an atmosphere of luxurious decadence and court intrigue.

CHRONOLOGY

- c. **8000 B.C.:** Foundation of Jericho. Humans, with Seelie aid, create walled towns as resting-places for nomads and to defend against Unseelie monsters.
- c. **4000 B.C.:** Rise of the Tigris-Euphrates city-states.
- c. **2700 B.C.:** First great Egyptian dynasties build the Pyramids, and study the mathematical basis for "formal" Magick.
- c. **1300 B.C.:** Unseelie persuade Assyrians to build an empire based on bloody conquest.
- c. **1200 B.C.:** The Djinn Lords abandon Faerie society and establish their courts throughout Arabia and the Middle East, treating humans and lesser Djinn alike as serfs, and encouraging human wars for entertainment. Weakened by the ensuing disruption, Egyptian and other empires decline.
- 950 B.C.:** Solomon, King of Israel, binds the Djinn with the system of oaths and spells known as the Seal of Solomon. Many malicious and powerful Djinn are imprisoned in brass bottles; the worst are then thrown into the sea. Solomon's kingdom acquires great wealth in the ensuing period of peace.
- 660 B.C.:** Byzantium founded as Greek colony.
- 550 B.C.:** Cyrus the Great founds the Persian Empire.
- 512 B.C.:** Byzantium captured by Persian King Darius.
- 479 B.C.:** Byzantium recaptured by Greeks.
- 330 B.C.:** Alexander the Great conquers Persia and sweeps toward India. Scholars accompany his army; their studies of eastern mysticism and lore are relayed to Greece, where Aristotle combines them with Greek logic. The Persians admiringly record Alexander's personal duels with dragons and Unseelie monsters.
- 50 B.C.:** Rome turns eastward; Caesar allies with Cleopatra, gaining a foothold in Egypt. More eastern lore travels west. The Seal of Solomon has no power over European Faerie, but the Romans now realize that supernatural creatures can be defeated.
- 70 A.D.:** Fall of Jerusalem to the Romans after a Jewish revolt. The Jews scatter across the world, taking their knowledge with them.
- 196:** Byzantium sacked by Romans.
- 324:** Byzantium selected by Emperor Constantine as administrative capital of Eastern Roman provinces. The city is renamed Constantinople, and extended and fortified; a secret Magickal library is founded there.
- 390:** Roman Empire split in two; Constantinople becomes the capital of the Greek-speaking "Byzantine Empire."
- 610:** Muhammad proclaims the Word of Allah in Mecca, founding the religion of Islam.
- 632:** Death of Muhammad.
- 670:** Muslims conquer large parts of the weakened Byzantine Empire. However, they fail to capture Constantinople, despite a four-year siege.
- 717:** Muslims again besiege Constantinople.
- 786:** Haroun al-Rashid becomes Caliph, beginning the first Golden Age of Muslim civilization. Muslim scholars combine ancient arts and sciences, mastering a range of Magicks, and greatly advancing the science of alchemy. Explorers such as Sinbad bring home treasures and secrets from the furthest shores of the Indian Ocean, while expeditions reach the ancient City of Brass in remotest North Africa.
- 969:** Cairo founded in Egypt by the Fatimids; the Muslim Caliphate fragments into sects and kingdoms, each jealously hoarding its secrets.
- 1071:** Battle of Manzikert; Byzantines defeated by Seljuk Turks, losing much territory. In a panic, the Byzantines appeal for help from the West, eventually inspiring the Crusades.
- 1190:** The Third Crusade; Richard the Lionheart, supported by the swords and spells of the Templars, faces off against the strategic genius of Saladin and the mathematical Magicks of the east.
- 1204:** Europeans on the Fourth Crusade treacherously storm Constantinople, founding the "Latin Empire."
- 1258:** Mongol invaders sack Baghdad; much Magickal knowledge lost or scattered.
- 1261:** Byzantine Greeks recapture Constantinople.
- 1300:** Rise of Othman, first known wielder of the "Sword of the Ottomans."
- 1402:** Mongols defeat Ottomans at Ankara.
- c. **1420:** *The Memorial Lessons of Dede Korkut* compiled by Ottoman Viziers.
- 1453:** Constantinople captured by the Ottomans, renamed Istanbul, and made capital of their Empire. Byzantine refugees carry ancient knowledge west.
- 1520:** Accession of Suleiman the Magnificent: high point of Ottoman power and culture.
- 1521:** Suleiman captures Belgrade.
- 1526:** Battle of Mohacs; destruction of the Hungarian knights.
- 1529:** Siege of Vienna. Ottoman Empire meets its limits in Europe. The Diwan of the Golden Road is defeated by the combined sorcerous Orders of Europe.
- 1566:** Death of Suleiman. Civil war among his sons.
- 1571:** Battle of Lepanto.
- 1663:** The Turks invade Austria; they are defeated by Prince Charles of Lorraine.
- 1672:** The Turks invade Poland; they are defeated by the Poles, with Russian aid.
- 1683:** The Turks, under the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa, invade Austria and besiege Vienna. Kara Mustafa proves a second-rate sorcerer; Charles of Lorraine and King John Sobieski of Poland annihilate the Turkish army.
- 1703:** Sultan Ahmed III institutes the "Tulip Era" of mild Westernization and strong central rule.
- 1717:** Austrians capture Belgrade. Ottoman power apparently collapsing.
- 1739:** Ottomans retake Belgrade.
- 1744:** Foundation of the *Wahhabi* sect in Arabia.
- 1769-74:** Ottomans launch disastrous war with Russia; the Seal of Solomon is ineffectual against the Leshye.
- 1790:** Russia attacks Ottomans, and wins again.
- 1798:** Napoleon of France invades Egypt; driven out by British.
- 1807:** Unsuccessful attempt to suppress the Janissaries, who are warned by the Magick of their Bektashi Dervish allies.
- 1811:** Mehmet Ali of Egypt allies with the Senusi Dervishes, massacres the Mamelukes (Egyptian equivalents of the Janissaries), and modernizes his army.
- 1815:** Mehmet Ali defeats the *Wahhabi* in Arabia, recapturing Mecca.
- 1825:** Egyptian troops shipped to Greece to suppress revolt there.
- 1826:** Janissaries massacred by Sultan Mahmud II, who recruits Senusi and hires "freelances" from the Wielders of the Balance to counter Bektashi Magick.
- 1832:** Greece achieves independence. Mehmet Ali invades Turkey, with Senusi aid, only being defeated by European intervention.
- 1839:** Sultan Abdul Mejid comes to the throne and institutes the *Tanzimat* reforms.
- 1853-6:** The Crimean War; European powers and Seelie allies defend Turkey against Russia and the scheming Leshye.
- 1861:** Abdul Mejid dies; succeeded by Abdul Aziz.
- 1865:** Foundation of the "Young Turk" movement.
- 1867:** Abdul Aziz tours Europe – the first Sultan to do so.

The 17th-19th Centuries

The Turks continued to threaten Europe. Now, however, the nations of Europe were willing to unite (temporarily) against them. The Austrians drove them off in 1663, and the Poles (with Russian allies) did the same in 1672. Then, in 1683, the Turks returned to Austria, laying siege once more to Vienna. The city was hard pressed, but the Turkish commander, Kara Mustafa, wanted to starve it into formal surrender, as he could then lay claim to its wealth as the representative of the Sultan. If his troops had stormed the place, they would by tradition have been free to sack it for themselves.

Mustafa's hesitation gave the Austrian's slow-moving allies time to organise. First, German troops seized the heights above the city. Then, the Polish noble cavalry, the famous "winged hussars," arrived after a long, hard ride, and launched their devastating charge. The Turkish army was completely broken; even the Janissaries were swept away. Many historians date the decline of the Ottoman Empire to that day.

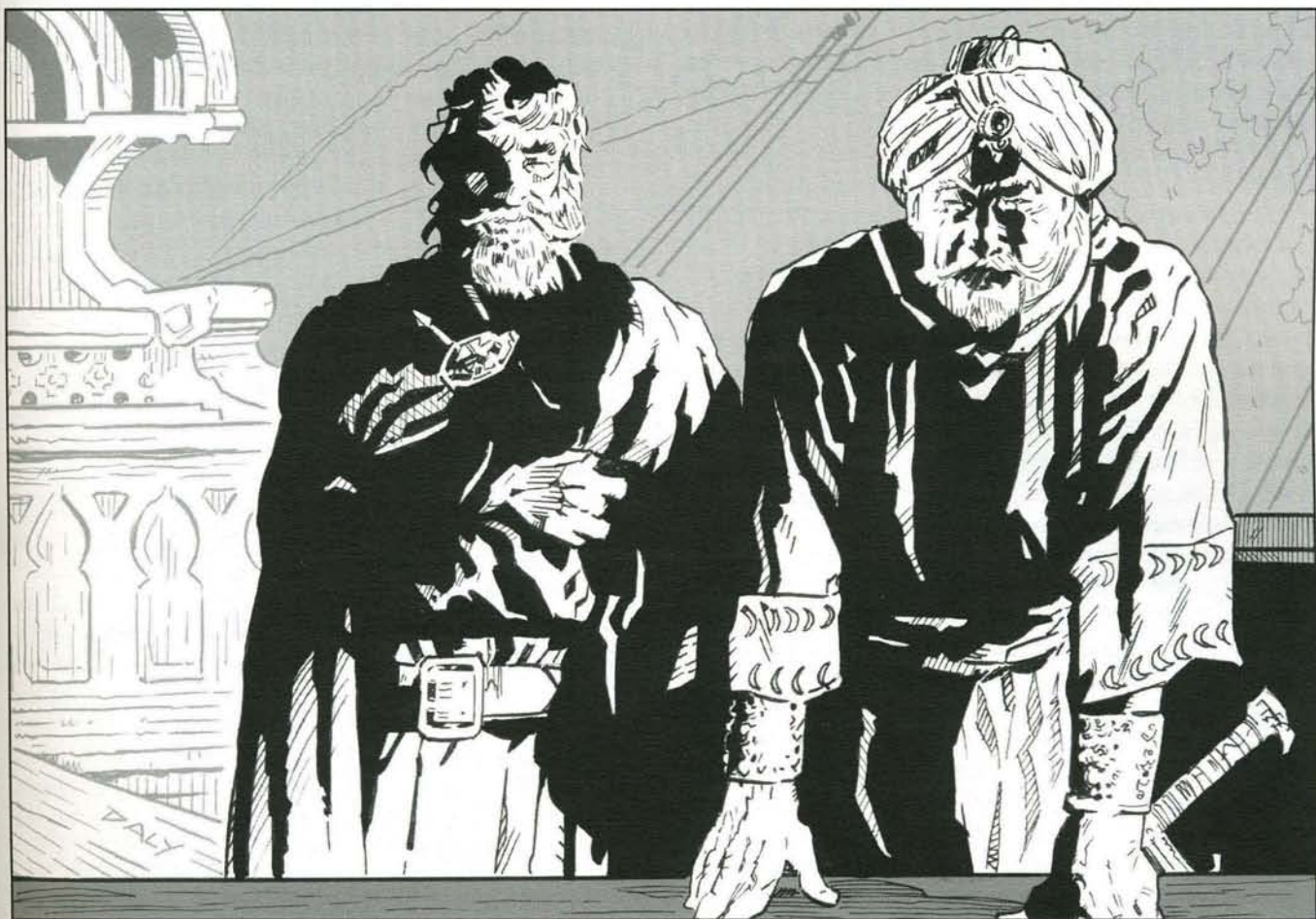
Certainly, decay was becoming visible. Just as Europe was entering a period of growth and new inventions, the Ottomans became locked in a futile cycle of coup and counter-coup. Bad luck added a series of bad harvests to the problem. By 1699, the Turks had to surrender most of Hungary. Provincial governors were grasping personal power, independent Viziers retired to private fiefs and did as they liked, and European subjects formed independence

movements. But the Ottomans could *still* win wars; it was not until 1832, when the European Powers were dragged into events, that Greece became the first European province to win freedom. But even in 1798, Napoleon of France had attacked Egypt, and had only been driven out by his European enemies. The Ottoman Empire had become a battleground for others.

In Egypt, Mehmet Ali, an Albanian Muslim who had fought in the war against Napoleon, had himself declared governor. He allied with the emerging Senusi Dervishes, who were willing to use their Magickal skills in the pursuit of power, wiped out the traditionalist "Mameluke" soldiers, modernized the army and industry, and recaptured Medina and Mecca from the hated Wahhabi sect. Mustering a rag-bag of Magickal allies, from minor Djinn to Senusi and independent scholar-wizards, he was able to neutralize the threat of the Ottoman Viziers. Eventually, he attacked his Ottoman "overlords" through Syria, nearly reaching Istanbul before the European powers intervened to maintain the strategic balance.

The Sick Man

The Empire is now labelled the "Sick Man of Europe." Reform has proved ineffective; tradition has proved disastrous. Europe has a strange, decaying, Oriental Empire on its south-eastern edge, and the Great Powers are obliged to watch each others' every move in that area, for fear that the collapse could lead to disaster for us all.





THE GOVERNMENT OF THE OTTOMAN LANDS



*By the Bayern Intelligence Service
(advised by Prof. von Tuchmann)*

The Ottoman Empire is often, accurately, called "Medieval" by Europeans. However, we do not speak here of a European Medievalism. Rather, it is what might be termed an "Oriental Despotism." The Sultan rules with absolute authority, through a court of glorious and ritualistic formality. He does not have Lords and Barons; he has Slaves and Ministers.

And yet . . . the Sultans have, for generations, been a mixed and unstable crew, often driven mad by the uncertainty of their wait for the throne, which could as easily end in death as in power. They have ruled through the Viziers, the chief of whom at least is always a formidable and sinister sorcerer. Even today, they also take the advice of Court Astrologers. They have a Secret Police force of great size and deviousness. Even the Janissaries, supposedly annihilated decades ago, lurk in the shadows, allied with other conservative factions. Who can say where true power lies?

The Sublime Porte

Europeans refer to the Ottoman Court or Government as the "Sublime Porte." This is a translation of the Turk's own name for the central component of government, made up of the office of the Grand Vizier (and his magickal cabal, the "Diwan of the Golden Road"), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Great *Diwan*, or Council of State.

The first of the two words is simply an expression of power and importance; the second means "gateway" or "portal." In ancient times, Turkish tribal chiefs would hold audiences in the entrance of their tents; their descendants, still traditionalists, use a more spectacular gate. This is located in the innermost, most exclusive courtyard of the Topkapi Palace, and is marked by two stone pillars, excavated somewhere in southern Arabia during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, and allegedly created by Solomon ben David himself. The Ottomans claim that they were a gift from Solomon to the

Queen of Sheba, and that they were found in her ancient palace. Arabian texts speak of them as both the "Gates of Paradise" and the "Gates of the Djinn."

No one in the West knows what these terms mean (if anything), but certain of our Faerie advisors suggest that the pillars may incorporate spells that would enable a competent sorcerer to open a two-way gate to the Faerie Veil.

While it might be interesting for a foolhardy scholar to contemplate travel through such a gate, to that dangerous "Paradise" beyond, we believe that the Sultans may value them for another reason. Solomon's lore is primarily concerned with the binding and controlling of Djinn; it is unlikely that any device associated with him would permit uncontrolled Faerie access to our world. More likely, Djinn can be *summoned* through the Sublime Porte and, in the process, bound to the will of the

summoner.

All this is pure speculation, of course, but – if we should ever be asked – we would not recommend anyone to attempt a frontal assault on the Sultan's palace, no matter what forces might be available.

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The Devshirme and the Janissaries

The first Ottoman Sultans faced the eternal problem of the autocrat. They ruled a society of many tribes and nations, in a large proportion of which the only right to rule was that of might. Who could they trust? Their answer was not new in the Middle East, but it remains strange to European eyes: *slaves*.

First, the Sultans declared that all their ministers and personal servants were required to accept the status of slave to the ruler. They were wealthy and powerful ministers, but their rights were those of property. They rose and fell with their master. In a society already hierarchical, this was not so great a price to demand; the Sultans have never lacked willing staff.

Second, the Empire instituted the *devshirme*. This was a simple thing: a tax, payable in live human children. The sons of Anatolian peasants and (especially) conquered Christian Europeans were taken away and brought up in special schools. The most intelligent became the pages and servants of the court, often rising to ministerial rank; the others became soldiers – the Janissaries.

These were once the finest soldiers in the world. They were raised from childhood to be fanatically loyal to Islam and the Sultan, and spent most of their lives, from infancy, training in weapons. They were closely allied with various Dervish orders, and could call upon magickal assistance and tricks; their officers often carried enchanted swords. Legends say that, before they went into battle, their communal cooking-pots were used to make a special brew that gave them superhuman toughness. They wore towering white hats (which the officers decorated with feathers and precious stones), and long blue or green robes over short tunics, all belted with a broad sash from which hung their scimitars and other weapons. They shaved their heads and chins, although their moustaches were long. Their foes were terrified by their uniformity of costume combined with a wild individual bravery in battle.

These formidable soldiers were the solid rock on which the conquering armies of the Turks were built. In politics, the slave-ministers checked the old Turkish aristocracy – perhaps too well; in time, the aristocrats became enfeebled, while the ministers lost all restraint, and waxed arrogant.

However, the *devshirme* could not last forever; even the Ottomans could not sustain such a rule, and too many folk wished to leave their rights and privileges to their children. So positions became hereditary; the Janissaries were transformed, by stages, into a formidable but undisciplined gang who roamed the streets of Constantinople, extorting money and respect. They might or might not still be willing to fight furiously in war, but they refused to accept discipline and drill, which was why the Ottoman armies became ineffectual against the rifles and bayonets of Christendom; they evidently forgot much of their Magick, and in any case, it was not enough to defeat modern weaponry. In peacetime, they became accustomed to having their own way, and would depose a Sultan if he annoyed them.

This was why the Sultan Mahmud II determined to be rid of the Janissaries in 1826. Of course, he could not simply disband them, so he took the brutal but effective path of massacring them.

This was a large task, at which at least one earlier Sultan had failed. The Janissaries were still a strong force with supernatural aid; the Sultan had to resort to the same modern weapons which had made them useless in war. He also hired mercenary sorcerers, who prevented the Janissaries' Dervish allies from discovering the plot. Eventually, the Janissaries were surrounded by the Sultan's forces, trapped in their barracks in Constantinople, and wiped out by artillery under the command of a legendary, terrifying officer known only as "Black Hell." The last of them were cornered in the city's underground water-storage reservoir, and slaughtered to a man by "modernized" troops.

However, it seems that the massacre was not completely successful. The Janissaries were a large force, wealthy from years of extortion, with many friends. A few survivors "burrowed underground," and today we have reports that they still endure in the Ottoman Empire as a violent, conservative movement. One does not see anyone wearing the old Janissary uniform in Turkey today – except when this secret society decides to act in strength, when the white hats and jewelled scimitars are brought out. This faction must be one of the reasons why all attempts at reform in the Ottoman lands are so unsuccessful.



Provincial Government

Another persistent threat to the Sultan's authority comes from the Provinces. With Medieval forms of communication, the Empire must deputize authority to a hierarchy of governors and minions, the best-known of whom are the Pashas.

"Pasha" is a rank of state, which may be held by an army general, a fleet admiral, or a civilian governor. It is divided into three grades, distinguished by the number of horse-tails that the Pasha may attach to his banner; one, two, or three. The title is retained as the holder moves between offices, and usually appended at the end of the holder's name for the rest of his life; for example, the present Grand Vizier is Mahmud Nedim Pasha.

In order to restrain ambitious governors, the Sultans have developed a network of Spies and Secret Police which Bismarck himself might envy. Of course, the system has become confused and corrupted, with every agent seeking his own advantage, but the traveller must always be careful to whom he speaks in the Ottoman lands . . .

For all the efforts of the Sultan and his Secret Police, provincial governors may transform their authority into personal power. The extreme example is Mehmet Ali, who began as a simple army officer. Proving himself invaluable and efficient, he rose to governorship, and was soon dictating terms to the Sublime Porte, and providing armies superior to their own. Ultimately, he almost conquered Constantinople . . .

The Ottoman Armed Forces

Since the suppression of the Janissaries, the Ottomans have attempted to create a modern, Western-style army – with limited success. They purchase European guns and bayonets and uniforms, and employ European drill-sergeants and advisors – but they are applying all of this to recruits from the poorest hill-farms of Asia, and often attempting to place the resulting force under the command of Turks who despised “foreign ways.” The new Prussian contingent in Constantinople may succeed where others have largely failed, if only by sheer effort and persistence, but they face a large task.

The Ottomans remain dependent for their effective power on hordes of undrilled irregulars – the *bashi-bazouks*. Fighting for loot rather than pay, these backwoods regiments – barely more than over-sized bandit gangs – are often responsible for the brutal massacres and wholesale pillaging that accompany every repression of revolt or border skirmish in and around the Empire. (Not that the regulars are saints, one may add.) Unfortunately, this is yet another venerated Ottoman tradition, and it is only slowly that the Sublime Porte is coming to realize the horror that such policies induce in the rest of the world. (The fact that they often face revolt in Balkan lands, where intercommunal hatred is endemic, is another element. One may hope that such problems diminish in the future, whatever the fate of Ottoman power.)

For **Cavalry**, the Turks rely on a truly Medieval feudal levy – the *sipahis*. These are wild and dedicated warriors, but disdainful of discipline, little more than *bashi-bazouks*

on horseback. The Sultan may dream of importing Prussian armoured steam vehicles, but fortunately for all concerned, his Prussian friends are too wise and cautious to release their sophisticated technology to the untrained and unpredictable Turks.

One arm of the Ottoman forces that is certainly formidable is the **Artillery**. The Turks have an ancient fondness for gigantic siege-guns, and a well-armed and capable artillery corps provided the Sultan with great assistance in the annihilation of the Janissaries. Under a commander who always adopts the nickname of “Black Hell,” this body uses its vast assortment of weapons enthusiastically.

Ottoman **Military Sorcery** is potent but erratic. The supreme wizards of the Empire are the Grand Vizier and his faction: a small, very powerful band, who guard their secrets jealously. This group may be terrifying, or it may be absent, indisposed, or confused. The sieges of Vienna failed partly because, on each occasion, a single overconfident Grand Vizier’s attempts to control the local weather were countered and reversed by dedicated bands of less potent but more co-operative Europeans.

As to the **Ottoman Navy**: the Sultan is fond of the sight of iron-clad battleships in full steam (despite his tendency to sea-sickness), and when he toured Europe, the British shrewdly allowed him to review their own Fleet. As a result, he ordered yet more craft (which Turkey cannot afford) from British shipyards. Unfortunately for him, Turkey lacks competent crewmen. The great ironclads sit rusting in harbour, or lurch across the Black Sea, forever having to return to port for repairs.

NONHUMAN RACES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE



An Additional Note, by Auberon of Faerie

My own people, along with the Dwarves and Dragonkind, are relatively rare in Ottoman lands, and it is surely unlikely that the reader of this will encounter any such. However, I have been asked to append some comments, for completeness and certainty.

Both Seelie and Unseelie have, to be sure, played their parts in Middle Eastern history. For example, the Adversary attempted to take control of Egyptian civilization by playing at godhead in the guise of the beast-head Set, and my faction aided in the creation of those great city walls that European scholars occasionally unearth. (They were created much more to hold off Unseelie monsters than ‘gainst enemy armies, I should say.) However, we are not often seen in those parts now. As to the Dwarves; recall that each of these folk must, if he wishes to father a family, court and marry a woman of the Faerie folk. Thus, though the Dwarves are not obliged to follow our kind around the world, they generally so choose, for the sake of the family life which they value.

As to the *why* of all this; well, there was an ancient falling-out among the Sidhe. Some 3,000 years past, a band of Sidhe lords – powerful enough to assert themselves against the majority – took umbrage at some imagined lack of respect. Being, for the most part, denizens of the Middle East, they took that region for their own. They were, as one might say, mostly of the darker side of our folk, but they were more selfish than brutal; some, in fact, were honourable enough, after their fashion. These were the Djinn.

They, and their servants, who were oft times powerful in their own right, took upon themselves to claim authority over Sidhe and men alike, which was troublesome for all. They declared themselves Lords and Masters of those lands, and built improbable palaces and cities as marks of their power. (Some still exist, in deep caverns in the mountains of Arabia, ‘neath the waters of the Red or Indian or Mediterranean Seas, or lost in the trackless desert. Most of ‘em are empty, but I’d not advise much visiting, all the same.) They carved out petty kingdoms, enslaving any men who passed their way; when they

deigned to notice human powers, they would generally destroy cities and armies. Worse were those who chose to intervene in human life; they would offer their services to kings who would repay with blood sacrifices, not because they had much use for human blood but for sport, and out of secret admiration for the ingenuity that humans brought to the ensuing wars. The brutishness of Assyria and the decadence of Babylon were, I'd guess, reflections of the incitement of these Ifrit. The least of 'em wandered the wilderness in monstrous guise, slaying and laying waste at whim.

And so the Djinn are mostly trapped . . .

However, they underestimated human resource. King Solomon ben David, of Israel, was a mighty wizard (whose father, 'tis said, had once slain one of the great Unseelie giants). He, fearing what the Djinn might do to his kingdom out of jealousy, set out to resolve the problem of the tyrant-Djinn by Magick. He crafted a set of binding inscriptions that any human could wield, and matched with this simple spells of control that the least hedge-wizard could master. Like other clever humans, he exploited the Faerie inability to break a sworn oath, trapping whole clans of evil Djinn in webs of promises and compulsion. He was even shrewd enough to bargain with the more honourable of the lesser Djinn, gaining their free service by showing himself preferable to the lords of their own race; 'tis said that, when he was done, a thousand of 'em would obey the slightest gesture of the hand which bore his seal-ring.

This was a Long and Secret War, the full record of which is, in truth, known to none in modern Europe. (Even I have only second-hand tales, and my deductions.) Suffice it to say here that Solomon forced many Djinn into brass bottles or stone pillars, closed with his Seal, and many of these prisoners have spent the last 3,000 years at the bottom of the sea. Even those who are free are oft obliged to wear iron bracelets in symbol of their subservience, preventing them from changing shape or using many other supernatural arts. The primary symbol of this victory is the Seal of Solomon, which no Djinni may pass or break.

And so the Djinn are mostly trapped, or prone to retiring from human company out of caution. However, the rest of Faerie-kind still avoid their lands, partly out of ancient habit, partly out of fear of the Djinn – for we cannot safely wield the Seal – and partly out of a subtler fear. We are not formally bound by Solomon's master-work,

but it has overtones and aspects that extend in ways that none have yet mapped; "Solomonic" spells might, at the very least, induce *discomfort* in our kind.

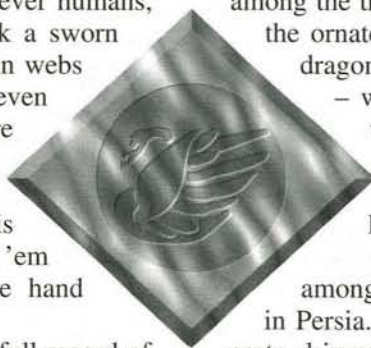
Which said, there are a few lesser Faerie free in the Middle East. The *Ghuls* are the lowest of the Djinn, renegade servants and diminished outcasts, who lurk the desert, using powers of shape-shifting and mimicry to ensnare travellers. They are brutes, whose malevolence leads 'em to enjoy a diet of human flesh; having formed this habit, they haunt graveyards in quest of sustenance when they are unable or fearful to hunt live prey. There are also the *Peri*, although these are more frequently encountered in Persia than the Ottoman domains; they almost all take female shape, and are closely akin to the various Nymphs and Forest Women of Europe. They are rarely evil, but they are whimsical and proud, and anticipate respect.

But the Djinn were never numerous. In sum, I estimate that no more than 500 of the breed might still endure within the lands of Arabia. However, we of Faerie have never been like to take census of our numbers.

Dragons, too, seem infrequent in Turkish and Arabian realms, for reasons that are not entirely clear to me. They can survive in hot deserts, for sure; in fact, I believe that such are their native environment. But, in general, they choose not to; in fact, almost the entire draconian race would seem to have developed a *taste* for lush green pastures – a taste I can fully comprehend. You might meet a dragon on the streets of Istanbul or Cairo, browsing among the treasures and curios of the bazaars – indeed, the ornate and exquisite are things that will draw a dragon anywhere. But since the days of Gilgamesh – who had dealings with many dragons, who were not above passing themselves off as gods – only a few discontented and ill-tempered beasts make their permanent lairs in the Arabian desert.

It would seem that a fair few of the least among dragonkind have settled a little further east, in Persia. However, these are mostly exiles and outcasts, driven southwest from China or (less often) southeast from Europe – and like many forced exiles, they are displeased by their condition, and so made tetchy and perverse. The perfect Dragon memory is a curse to one who is fallen low. They have small and unremarkable hoards, of which they are ferociously defensive, and vulgar appetites, extending to man-flesh – a habit that their more fortunate kin regard as *passé* and crass. Many a Persian legend tells of heroic dragon-slaying.

(I have heard tales of dragons of Europe making bargains with human adventurers to handle matters with these Persian exiles; one concerned a dragon who discovered that part of his collection was missing, and deduced that some old draconian associate had purloined it. This was too embarrassing to resolve personally, especially as the thief had been forced into Persian exile, so the dragon commissioned a human band to recover the item "with due discretion." Well, it's a good story.)



✧ TRAVEL IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ✧

Adapted From "The Bayernese Gentleman's Companion-Guide to Turkey"

Ordinary visitors to the Ottoman Empire should not, in general, encounter undue hostility or danger from the populace, although travel in more remote regions carries at least as much danger of bandits as it would in less civilized parts of our own continent, and the remote desert is the territory of Bedouin tribes, for whom raiding is a hal-
lowed and honoured occupation. Aside from the fact that the Turks, and most of their subjects, are at heart generous and hospitable people, there are a number of treaties outstanding between the Ottomans and the Western powers, the so-called "Capitulations," by which visitors must receive special consideration, rather than being subject to the arbitrary force of Ottoman authority. Most embassies feel it desirable to demand full enforcement of these rules.

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However, one must not forget that the Turks are a warrior race, ruled by an absolute monarchy, with a long national memory and a number of grievances (justified or not) against European nations. The Capitulations themselves are often seen as humiliating impositions upon Turkish sovereignty, and it is more tactful of a visitor to refrain from reminding a Turk of such a thing unnecessarily. It is wise always to recall that one is, to the Ottoman, a *Farangi*, a "Frank," which term, while not abusive, is not entirely respectful and dates to the days of the Crusaders, when "Frankish" armies were seen as invaders of the Muslim homelands.

Faerie visitors to the Ottoman Empire should take especial care, as the Turks are largely unfamiliar with such beings, and may react with superstitious violence. Recall that the typical "Faerie" of these lands is either an arbitrary, whimsical, and powerful Djinn or a loathsome anthropophagous Ghul, and you may comprehend the nature of their fears. Dwarfs may fare somewhat better;

their race is known, if rare, and respected as hard-working, talented, and usually good Muslims. However, a Dwarf should be prepared for some caution and odd glances.

One sound piece of advice is to ensure that one carries full travel papers – the more sumptuous, the better. At the very least, one may brandish such at minor officials, who will often respond with subservience; at best, one may seek to have a more significant person, such as a Pasha, countersign them, whereafter no lesser official will dare to challenge them.

In part, this extraordinary respect for mere papers is the sign of a society where many of the populace are still illiterate. But make no mistake; the officials are not usually so ill-educated. Rather, they see documents as symbols of power and authority. That *tugra*, or ornamented signature, will be hard obtained, but pity the Pasha; if he should apply his *tugra* to the wrong document, he could be strangled within a week, and his family disgraced. The printing-press is still rare in Ottoman society; there is no such thing as "mere" papers to these folk.

Matters of Money

For centuries, the Ottoman Empire retained a Medieval view of currency; traders dealt in whatever gold or silver coins they might trust – or, very often, in barter. However, in this age, the Turks have determined to bring their commercial proceedings up to date. Thus, the Ottoman Treasury now issues the *Turkish Pound*, a unit initially set identical in value to Britain's Pound Sterling, and still as near to equivalent as makes no difference.

The Turkish Pound takes the form of a gold coin, actually rather too valuable for workaday transactions in this impoverished region. Thus, the coin which the visitor is most likely encounter is the small silver *piastre*. There are 100 of these to the pound. A range of even smaller units are used for minor purchases, down to the copper *aspra*, of which there are 80 to the piastre. Routine purchases (such as basic food and clothing) may seem extraordinarily cheap to visitors, although their quality and style may not encourage those visitors to take many purchases home.

Turkish banks do not, as yet, regularly issue paper money; the Turks do not trust them enough. In fact, outside of the most sophisticated commercial cities, any form of bill of exchange or promissory note will be viewed with grave suspicion; the populace retain the ancient belief that "money" is gold or silver, not fragile paper. Conversely, this can give the Western visitor one small benefit; any gold or silver coins are acceptable as a form of payment, provided that they appear trustworthy and undebased . . .

See p. 23 for rules for handling Turkish currency in games.

2. Characters



After talking to Eberhardt and Sir Richard Burton, I've come to the conclusion that Ottoman heroes (and heroes who have settled in the Ottoman Empire) shouldn't be too difficult to integrate into the Great Game, perhaps even as Dramatic Characters.

One note; throughout this whole book, the words "Ottoman" and "Turk" are used almost interchangeably. That's slightly misleading; the Turks are a **nation**, whose royal family and culture – the "Ottomans" – run a multi-

national Empire. But not every nation in that Empire is Turkish, let alone "Ottoman," and there are Arabs who'd kill you for saying they were. What we've tried to do is use "Turk" for the nation, and "Ottoman" for the Empire and everyone within it who isn't in open revolt just at the moment – so we might even refer to, say, Armenian merchants as "Ottomans," despite the fact that they are Christians, quietly hate the Empire, and may even try a revolution next year. The distinctions are fuzzy.

❧ CASTLE FALKENSTEIN ❧

Standard Abilities

Education: Schooling in the Ottoman Empire is erratic. Traditionally, the lower classes receive little, while the aristocracy and *devshirme* slaves are taught a mixture of old-fashioned sentiments and practical government. Reformers have tried to update all this, with limited success – especially as few Turks would trust a foreigner, especially a Christian, with their offspring. Some "progressive" Turks have traveled abroad, to New European universities – and are often distrusted at home as a result.

Exchequer: Wealth in the Empire varies dramatically. The Sultan's court has fabulous riches, although courtiers are at the mercy of the Sultan himself, who can depose and dispossess them in an instant. Provincial officials claim to be impoverished, but gouge their subjects for every piastre they can get, while peasants live from hand to mouth. "Average" wealth, by New European standards, is limited to a few small-time merchants, honest officials, and minor functionaries.

Fencing: Rename this ability "Swordsmanship" for Ottoman characters, if you want to get the "feel" just right.

Fisticuffs: Vulgar fist-fighting is something that Ottomans leave to street thugs and ruffians, and although one sees a fair number of curved daggers, skilled knife-fighting is also mostly left to the criminal class. *Wrestling*, on the other hand, is a sport that the Turks love, and there are a fair number of professional wrestlers around the Court and the households of rich sports fans; they may also come in useful if the master needs some straightforward muscle.

Marksmanship: The Ottomans have some trouble persuading their armies to take modern firearms seriously. On the other hand, they have always been good with bows; Sultans have traditionally flaunted their archery skill.

Performance: There are several aspects to this ability in the Ottoman Empire. High-grade harem slaves are taught as much singing, musicianship, and dancing as possible, and the bazaar always has entertainers who have mastered all sorts of styles and techniques. Story-telling, on street corners or in coffee houses, is an ancient occupation. For the ordinary, respectable Turk, however, enter-

tainment skills are displayed by *other* people. Oh, and the Dervishes (see pp. 79-81) study all sorts of exotic "meditation aids" in their quest for transcendence, including music and dance.

Physician: As in other areas of modern science, the Ottomans can be a little hazy on advanced surgery. However, they are no worse than anyone else at basic first aid.

Social Graces: This is replaced by Ottoman Way (see below). An Ottoman transplanted to New European society starts with, in effect, Poor

Social Graces, although polite Westerners will usually make allowances for ignorance; a cultured Ottoman who is willing to make the attempt can usually manage a fair level of European-style politeness, often embellished by some "charming," flowery, Eastern-style courtesies.

Sorcery: Mastery of Magick has traditionally been one way to get on in the Ottoman Empire; at the very least, you can become a respected independent professional, and at best, you can get to be a Vizier. So if you meet a sorcerous Ottoman, he or she is likely to be making a good living out of it, or to be a crazy Dervish with other priorities.

Tinkering: The Ottoman Empire has never really got the hang of the Industrial Revolution; a combination of magic, widespread poverty, a shortage of Dwarfs, and – most of all – innate conservatism, has stifled that idea. Even publishing is still left to a large and comfortable class of scribes and copyists.

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On the other hand, some Ottomans are surprisingly adept at *Tinkering* as such. Some of those wizards are mechanics, going in for clever hand-built gadgets; Haroun al-Rashid was using a sophisticated water-clock while, in the West, Charlemagne's paladins were getting up with the sun and going to bed when they fell over drunk. There's even evidence of really *ancient* gadgets; it's certainly unwise to explore an Egyptian tomb without keeping a sharp eye out for booby-traps. And – well, there's a railway running to Constantinople these days, and the merchants of Pera carry Swiss pocket-watches.

New Abilities

Ottoman Way (♥): This is the Ottoman equivalent of Social Graces. Ottoman society is very formal; you need to know even more rules and mannerisms to fit in there than in the European aristocracy. On the other hand, it's strangely open, in just one way; if you do master these rules, and if you show that you're prepared to do things *their* way, they don't worry about where you were *born*. Foul up on those rules, or insist on keeping your own ideas, and you'll never be more than an outsider. Birth is not important; showing that you're a devoted Ottoman is everything.

Ottoman Currency

Nominally, the main currency unit of the Ottoman Empire is the "Turkish Pound," with a value approximately equal to that of the British Pound Sterling (see p. 20). However, this is mostly a unit of account. In this relatively poor country, the most commonly *used* coin is the small silver *piastre*. Historically speaking, the Turkish Pound was worth about 12 Bayernese Florins, or five Dollars American. Games using a simplified rule-of-thumb for currency, especially that described in *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* (p. CF70) should treat it as equal to \$2; hence, for game purposes, the piastre is worth a little over \$0.02.

Incidentally, Ottoman Turkey suffers from noticeable but not currently runaway levels of inflation; the value of its currency may slip during periods of uncertainty, but it is generally unlikely to collapse completely unless the Empire falls.

GURPS players should remember that \$1 is worth more in this setting than in some; see p. CF70. For convenience, the "dollar" (with the same value as in *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*) is used in the *GURPS* rules sections of this book.



Turkish Education

For New Europeans, one sign of the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire is the fact that it has no real universities on the Western pattern. The nearest thing is perhaps the school for civil servants which was opened in 1859 as part of the *Tanzimat* reform process, and there are plenty of religious schools and such, but an Ottoman character with modern scientific skills or broad knowledge must have traveled abroad – which is rare, and attracts suspicion.

Poor Ottoman Way ability does not necessarily make you a barbarian; you could just be an ignorant peasant. You don't know the correct forms of address and salutation for other members of society, or the dress rules that apply in Istanbul or other cities – and if anyone prompts you, you probably foul up anyway. Average ability means that you can get by in the bazaar, and sneer at peasants; you don't break any major rules, and you know enough to bow to more important folk. Good Ottoman Way lets you start up the social ladder; you can dine with local Pashas and officials without embarrassment, your turban is exactly the right size for your social standing, you know the full range of correct salutes, and you can drop the occasional flowery compliment. Great ability is the least you need to attend the Sublime Porte as anything better than a cringing petitioner; you know the subtle rules of court etiquette, your costume denotes your status with precision, and you can read others' mannerisms with a glance.

At the Excellent level, you can pass for a Vizier; everything you do or say conveys *class* to Ottomans, and while you always dress perfectly, you could probably establish your rank without. Extraordinary Ottoman Way ability is the sort of thing you expect from the Vizier in charge of Court Protocols; you know *all* the rules, even the defunct and forgotten ones, and you live and breathe them.

Note: With the Host's permission, characters who are going to spending most of their time in Ottoman lands may take this as one of their required *Poor* abilities. Of course,

this means that they are either a peasant, an oaf, or a crass foreigner.

Trader (♥): This is the skill of buying, selling, bargaining, and thus making a more-or-less honest profit. It includes a working knowledge of the values of goods, but mostly it's a question of persuading someone to give you the best price for something, and judging when they'll shift further and when they're really going to stick.

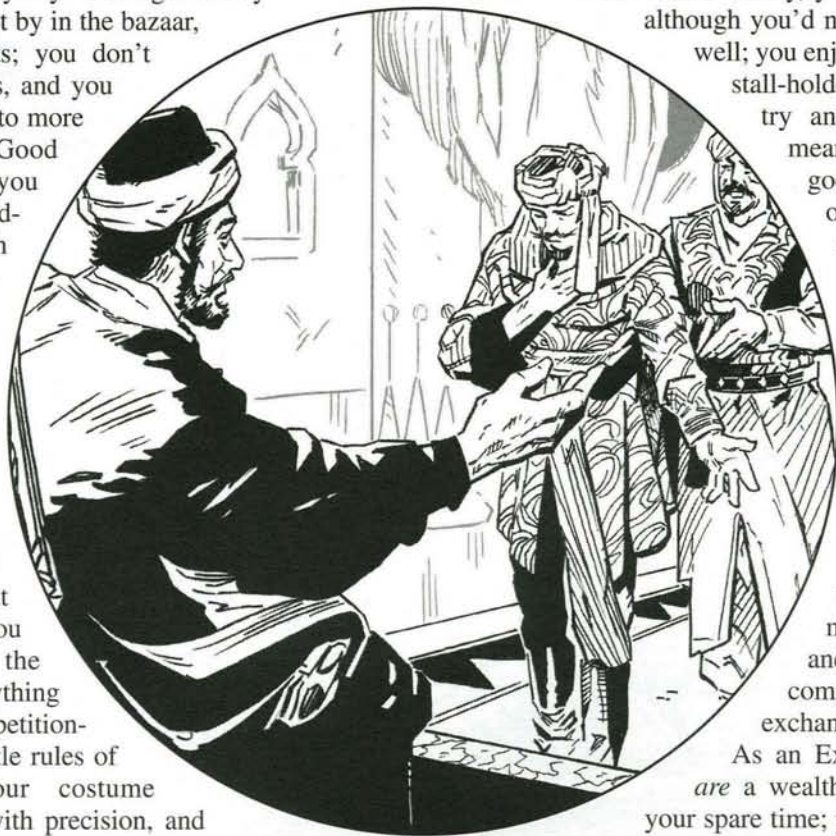
Most people are capable of haggling a little, if only over the price of a horse, but in the Middle East, it's an art form. The talented trader is regarded with admiration and caution rather than dislike, unless he or she gets a reputation for excessive or unfair greed.

As a Poor trader, you are continually being swindled and tricked; you either lose track of true values, or become too quickly flustered and distracted in the bargaining process. Average ability means that you can get by from day to day in the bazaar, provided that you remember not to try buying from the most *enthusiastic* merchants. With

Good Trader ability, you could *be* a merchant, although you'd need other advantages as well; you enjoy a lengthy haggle, and stall-holders who know you don't try any tricks. Great ability means that you can make a good living as a merchant or broker, or terrorize minor stall-holders when buying your groceries; you usually pay less than an item's value, while selling at a premium. Excellent ability means that you are a legend of the trade routes; if you aren't a wealthy professional merchant, you've missed your vocation, and you certainly hold a complete set of prices and exchange rates in your head.

As an Extraordinary trader, you *are* a wealthy merchant, if only in your spare time; people only haggle with you so that they can learn technique and for the pleasure of your company, and spend hours afterward trying to work out how you convinced them.

Note: With the Host's permission, characters who are going to spending most of their time in an area where prices aren't generally fixed can take Trader as one of their required Poor abilities. It's a serious disadvantage, as the character will find his money swiftly running out, and the bazaar regarding him with a mixture of disdain, amusement, and avarice.



Ottoman Empire-based characters can usually be created very easily using **GURPS** and **GURPS Castle Falkenstein**. There are, however, a few points to note.

Tech Level: The major cities, armed forces, and upper classes of the Empire are mostly at a slightly crude and unreliable TL5. However, TL(5+1) skills and equipment are only generally available to wealthy characters living in major Mediterranean ports, if at all. Because much of the **Falkenstein** world operates at TL5, this is not considered a disadvantage for Ottoman characters from a game viewpoint.

Some remote parts of the Empire are backward enough to be considered TL4, and characters from such areas may take the Primitive disadvantage. If they visit the more advanced cities, they may or may not be exposed to enough higher technology to buy this off with experience, depending on their personal circumstances.

Wealth: The Ottoman Empire displays even greater variations of wealth and poverty than the West. Bejeweled Pashas daily ride through streets thronged with beggars and struggling peasants. The *standard* starting wealth is therefore the same as for other **Castle Falkenstein** characters (\$750), but PCs from this area are very likely to take wealth-based advantages or disadvantages.

Nonhumans: The dominant faerie-related "race" in this region is the Djinn (see chapter 8). There are also a few Dwarfs. Other nonhumans are extremely unlikely to originate within the Ottoman Empire; GMs would be fully entitled to charge such characters a large Unusual Background.

Magick: Magick is widespread in the Empire, and is the province of a variety of societies, factions, and dervish sects. See chapter 6 for details. These local factions are often aggressively protective of their privileges and territory; few of the Sorcerous Orders detailed in **GURPS Castle Falkenstein** have established much of a foothold in these parts.

Advantages

Clerical Investment *see p. B19*

While Islam does not, arguably, have a priesthood in the strict technical sense, religious authority is greatly respected. Imams and noted religious teachers should take this advantage. By this date, unlike earlier periods, Sufi orders have organized into "colleges," with teachers and leaders; such "sheikhs" might take Clerical Investment to reflect their position. The *muezzin* who issues the call to prayer from a mosque, however, is a secular figure, albeit usually a respectable one in local society.

Destiny *see pp. CI35-36*

Islam teaches that each human being has a destiny ordained by Allah, and the popular fiction of these lands, such as the *Arabian Nights*, often reflects this attitude. While Westerners might sniff at "Eastern Fatalism," the

Destiny advantage (or disadvantage) fits well enough anywhere in the melodramatic **Castle Falkenstein** world.

Legal Enforcement Powers *see p. B21*

Senior Ottoman provincial officials often have personal responsibility for local law enforcement, and considerable leeway in how they carry this out. Legal Enforcement Powers can be used to represent this. The Ottoman police forces are disorganized and unimpressive, but the Empire has little conception of "civil rights," so the 10-point version of this advantage is usually appropriate for their members.

Military Rank *see p. B22*

The Ottoman army has a confusing and chaotic traditional system of ranks, compounded by the fact that many of its troops are irregulars fighting for loot. (For example, NCOs in the old Janissary units were called "Chief Cooks" and "Chief Water-Carriers.") However, military reforms over the last century have all been based on Western models, so it is sensible to borrow Western titles for Ottoman military characters.

Rank *see p. CI29*

Aside from the army, few or no Ottoman organizations have the kind of formal structures which justify use of **GURPS Rank**. Middle and high level civil servants should simply have high Status; they either get their jobs because they were born into the upper classes, or they work their way up to the jobs and then command general social respect because of their positions. There *are* grand titles associated with some such jobs, and an official might expect to be addressed as "Your Excellency," but all that's just associated with the Status.

(Incidentally, such officials make much of their income from bribes. It's notoriously difficult for even the most idealistic young reformer to avoid being sucked into a culture of corruption and indolence.)

Reputation and Status *see pp. B17-B18*

In the Ottoman Empire, high Status commands a fair amount of servility, but less automatic *respect*. A good Reputation is hard to earn, but then receives genuine admiration.

Disadvantages

Addiction *see p. B30*

Hashish and opium are known and fairly widespread in the Ottoman lands. Both are usually smoked, as is tobacco; hashish is also occasionally chewed. *Qat*, a leaf which can be chewed or made into a drink, with an effect that is initially stimulating and later depressing, may be encountered in southern Arabia and East Africa.

In the low-strength forms in which they are usually available in the Empire, most of these drugs are relatively cheap (“less than \$20 a day” for game purposes); some people can handle them fairly well, while others find them highly addictive. They are usually legal for practical purposes, if not by the letter of the law – but sometimes a Sultan or a local ruler or governor will attempt to stamp them out, or an influential religious figure will launch a campaign against them. If such events render them illegal, they may also push the price up.

GURPS Status in the Ottoman Empire

Status	Examples	Monthly Cost of Living
7	Sultan	*
6	Prince, Court Vizier	\$10,000
5	Court Official	\$3,000
4	Provincial Pasha	\$1,000
3	Governor's Staff	\$500
2	Rich Merchant, Mid-Ranking Official	\$200
1	Minor Merchant, Village Sheikh	\$80
0	Bedouin Herdsman, Notable Peasant, Shopkeeper	\$40
-1	Bedouin Wanderer, Poor Workman, Peasant	\$20
-2	Beggar, Street Scum	\$7.50
-3	Runaway Slave	\$7.50

* The Ottoman Sultan automatically receives sufficient income to support his Status, *by definition*. That said, the court often spends beyond its means. This is all rather academic, as this role is not generally open to PCs, but if it becomes important, assume that the Sultan has access to 1d×\$1,000 in spare cash at any time (and probably owes twice as much to creditors who can't press the issue).

Remember that Status is universal. An aristocrat is an aristocrat, wherever he goes. Of course, in some places, some people may regard him as a despicable heathen foreign aristocrat.

Note also that it is possible to maintain reasonable Status in the Ottoman Empire with what would rate as a merely modest income in the West. This is one of the things that attracts a certain sort of expatriate to these lands; they can live well and receive a degree of respect with little actual cash. However, rising to the highest levels of Ottoman society requires lavish expenditure.

Alcoholism *see p. B30*

Islam prohibits alcohol, and the Ottoman Empire has laws, or at least social rules, to enforce this. However, in this big, ill-governed, multinational empire, rules are always being broken, by everyone up to and including the royal family. Alcoholism is only worth -15 points to characters

based in the Empire – but being frequently, visibly drunk, let alone seeming to lack respect for Muslim tradition, could represent an Odious Personal Habit, or justify a negative Reputation.

Code of Honor *see p. B31*

Although various Muslim peoples of this period would insist that their ideas of honor are significantly different (and many regard each other as lacking *true* honor), they have a broadly common set of rules which can be summarized as the “Muslim Code of Honor” for game purposes. This resembles the “Gentleman's Code,” with an emphasis on hospitality, which is held sacred. Honorable Muslims in the country will never refuse shelter to a stranger; in the city, they give alms to beggars who come to their door. Someone who has received bread and salt in a house can never be maltreated there unless he commits a gross violation of courtesy (such as physically assaulting the host), while an honorable guest must support his host, at least verbally, in any disputes. Nomadic groups or caravans treat tents as “houses” for these purposes. It is impolite and mildly dishonorable to impose on a host for more than three days without specific invitation, so lone travelers who join caravans usually switch between tents every third night. Naturally, returning past hospitality is a matter of honor, if the opportunity arises.

Honorable personal combats should be fair and open, but clever deviousness is acceptable and admired in warfare. Prisoners of war are not guests, unless specifically declared such. Even Bedouin bandits *may* have their own honor; the honorable sort will respect surrenders, and refrain from plundering those to whom they have some kind of social connection – so a victim who invokes some shared loyalty or association can instantly transform a robbery into a polite social meeting.

This Code of Honor is worth -10 points.

Disciplines of Faith *see p. CI89*

Dervishes (Sufi mystics) pursue various paths to communion with the divine, which include Asceticism, Monasticism, and Mysticism. In this era, some pay only lip service to these things, either because of hypocrisy or because they are pursuing some secular goal in which they sincerely believe but which leaves them insufficient time for proper observances.

Eunuch *see p. B28*

This is traditional for harem guards, but by 1870, it is rare outside the Sultan's palace.

Illiteracy and Semi-Literacy *see pp. B33, CI94*

While education is respected in the Ottoman Empire, and some minimal schooling is available to children in most cities or towns, plenty of folk from backwoods areas suffer from these disadvantages.

Vow and

Compulsive Vowing see pp. B37, C188

Middle Eastern characters, or at least those in the *Arabian Nights*, seem excessively prone to making Vows, which they then tend to take very seriously.

Skills

Artistic Skills see pp. B47-48, B242, and C129-130

While some Muslims, especially Arabs, preserve a well-known prejudice against representational art (seeing it as blasphemous imitation of the works of Allah), Ottoman Turks tend to be more relaxed on such matters. Still, Calligraphy is probably a much more widespread and respected skill than Artist or Sculpting. Poetry is traditionally very well regarded in this world, and an Ottoman noble who occasionally dashes off an elegant Turkish verse will earn much applause.

Savoir-Faire see p. B64

Politeness and social grace in the Ottoman Empire follows a markedly different set of rules to that which governs New European society, so characters moving from one to the other will suffer severe unfamiliarity penalties at first (see p. B43). The Ottomans have very precise rules of behavior and civility (the "Ottoman Way"), which make even those of Victorian Europe look simple. Most Ottomans will tolerate quite a few lapses from foreigners – "these people can know no better" – but repeated rudeness or major lapses (Critical Failures on a Savoir-Faire roll) will probably offend them beyond repair. Visitors who master the Ottoman Way can do well in the Empire, whatever their origins – but once they have been accepted on these terms, any errors are likely to cause much worse trouble.

Sword Skills see pp. B50, B52

A range of types of sword may be encountered in Ottoman domains, and no doubt a range of fighting styles to go with them. However, in this matter, the swashbuckling style of the *Falkenstein* world is at least as prevalent in the Ottoman lands as elsewhere, so treating all students of the sword (which means most Ottoman nobles, professional guards, and Bedouin heroes) as possessing Fencing

Ixarette

Traditionally, Ottoman sultans learned a special sign language, called *Ixarette*, for use in court, so as to maintain an air of dignity and detachment. In our universe, this was probably lost by the Victorian era; in the *Falkenstein* world, who knows?

If it survives, it will usually only be known to Ottoman characters with advanced knowledge of the Ottoman Way (Ottoman Way Great or better in *Castle Falkenstein*, Savoir-Faire 15+ in *GURPS*) who have been specially trained to work at court; anyone else would need a very good story indeed. (In *GURPS*, this would mean an Unusual Background, which might have to be large for non-Ottomans.) It is unclear how versatile *Ixarette* was, realistically speaking, but for dramatic game purposes, it can be assumed to be able to express anything that spoken Turkish can (and thus must be bought as a Sign Language skill in *GURPS*).

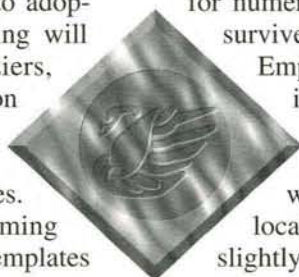
skill is entirely appropriate. Swords in these parts are almost invariably curved, and should usually be treated as sabers. A few hulking palace guards may wield massive blades that can only be classed as broadswords, bastard swords, or even two-handed swords, and should have the appropriate skills.

Unarmed Combat see pp. B50-51, B242-243

As elsewhere in the *Falkenstein* world, the upper classes of the Ottoman Empire regard simple, practical unarmed combat techniques with disdain; only low-Status characters can learn Brawling to any significant level without an Unusual Background. However, there is an ancient and honored tradition of *wrestling* among the Turks, which occupies something like the same position as Boxing in the West. While successful wrestlers are likely to be strapping lower-class lads who gain some fame through their physical prowess, it would not be too eccentric for a noble would-be hero to learn this skill. (Some Sultans were famous for their wrestling prowess.)

❧ POSSIBLE CHARACTER TYPES ❧

The following are roles particularly suited to adoption by players. Obviously, games in this setting will involve many other "types" – Guards, Viziers, Eunuchs, Harem Girls, Sultans, Pashas, and so on – but these will usually be taken by the Host/GM. (Some of the named characters detailed in this book can serve as good examples. *GURPS* players should watch for the upcoming *GURPS Historical Folks*, which will include templates



for numerous low-tech professions, many of which survived in much the same form in the Ottoman Empire.) Arabian character types are discussed in chapter 4, Magick wielders in chapter 7, and nonhumans in chapter 8. The notes assume that the heroes will be working with at least one visiting Westerner; for "all local characters" games, the motivations will be slightly different.

Bazaar Entertainer

You make the world a better place. The streets of the city are hot and hectic, and most people live lives of worry. You make them forget that. Whatever your chosen art – singing, acrobatic dancing, story-telling, juggling, even petty magic – you bring a little colour into their lives. In return, all you ask is a few coins.

Sometimes, the only way you can
make a living is to keep moving.

Of course, your own life isn't all joy. There's rivalry for the best spots, and petty officials who keep thinking of new licenses and taxes. Sometimes the only way you can make a living is to keep moving. But you're no rogue; your skills are genuine. In fact, you preserve an ancient tradition – and you are very good at what you do.

In Your Diary: Reminders of good pitches and bad officials; new jokes, stories, and lines of patter; names of patrons who might pay for private performances.

Motives: Times are hard, and the local officials have been finding extra excuses to make trouble – which has cost you a fortune in bribes. On the other hand, these *Farangi* seem taken with your charm. You can provide them with useful assistance – you know every bazaar and back street from here to Samarkand – and if things start getting complicated, your skills might come in useful. Actually, an adventure might be fun, as well as profitable.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Athletics, Charisma, Performance.

Possessions: The tools of your art (musical instrument, juggler's props, etc.); a plain knife; slightly shabby clothes.

GURPS Template 50 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Charisma +1 [5]; and one of Alertness +1, Attractive, Charisma increased to +2, Double-Jointed, Fit, Sanctity, or Sensitive [5].

Disadvantages: Struggling [-10]; and -10 points from any of Congenial [-1], Distractible [-1], Dreamer [-1], Imaginative [-1], Impulsiveness [-10], Laziness [-10], Nosy [-1], Wealth level reduced to Poor [-5], Semi-Literacy [-5], Skinny [-5], reduced Status [-5/level], or Weak Will -1 [-8].

Skills: Area Knowledge (home city) (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; any *three* of Acrobatics (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11, Acting (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Augury (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-10, Bard (M/A) IQ [2]-13*, Bardic Lore (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Climbing (P/A) DX [2]-12, Dancing (P/A) DX [2]-12, Disguise (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Escape (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11, Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Fire Eating (P/A) DX [2]-12, Fortune Telling (M/A) IQ [2]-13*, Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Hypnotism (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Juggling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13, Knife Throwing (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13, Mimicry (Human Speech) (P/H; HT) HT-1 [2]-10, Musical Instrument (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Panhandling (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14*, Psychology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Punning (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Singing (P/E; HT) HT+1 [2]-12, Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11, or Stage Combat (P/A) DX [2]-12; and +1 to any one of those three selected skills [+2].

* Includes +1 for Charisma.

Note: Several skills in this list have defaults, prerequisites, or other modifiers that may need checking.

Customization Notes: Life on the streets often grants low-level Contacts. It may also be rough enough to make combat skills useful. A more successful entertainer may acquire a little more money and perhaps a Patron.

Expatriate (“White Man Gone Native”)

You've been Out East now for more years than you care to count, and you claim to have forgotten why you left your homeland. There are various ways that you might

be making your living: as a small-time trader, as a guide or interpreter for Western visitors, or perhaps by seagoing trade, keeping some run-down steamboat (that's older than you are) going by sheer willpower. Or perhaps you are a little higher class than that, and have a steady income from investments or other myste-

rious sources back home.

No, this is home now, and the locals have taken to you. You've taken to them, don't offend them – except sometimes, when they realize that you've got a steady source of whisky from somewhere. But what the . . . You ain't a Muslim. You ain't turned Turk. Never mind what the high 'n' mighty visitors may think.

In Your Diary: Practical notes about business contacts and deals; financial accounts of recent transactions; cryptic ramblings about your past.

You'd never admit
to yourself that you might be
hoping to redeem yourself for
whatever it was made you
abandon your homeland.

Motives: These other folk are newcomers to this part of the world, and although you've sworn to forget your old loyalties, you can't let them walk into trouble. They seem polite enough, after all, if a bit naive. You'd never admit to yourself that you might be hoping to redeem yourself for whatever it was made you abandon your homeland.

(*Note:* A variant "White Man Turned Native" type is one who has developed an interest in Eastern Mysticism, and perhaps even attained membership in a local Dervish Order or the like. Such a character should have Good Sorcery rating – and a very complicated and dangerous life, being caught between several worlds, and fully trusted by no one. Another type again is the Expatriate who has spent so long with the Bedouin that he is, effectively, a Tribal Warrior – see p. 66 – albeit one who can suddenly surprise a New European visitor by "unmasking.")

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Marksmanship, Perception, Tinkering.

Possessions: Shabby western clothes; an aged bolt-action rifle and a little ammunition; if the Host permits, a small steam-launch.

GURPS Template

50 points

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: 10 points from Alertness [5/level]; Alcohol Tolerance [5]; Charisma [5/level]; Composed [5]; Cool [1]; Independent Income [5]; Language Talent [2/level]; Light Hangover [2]; Manual Dexterity [3/level]; Pitiable [5]; or Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; and -15 points from Alcohol-Related Quirks [-1 each], Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10], Broad-Minded [-1], Careful [-1], Code of Honor (Pirate's or Gentleman's) [-5 or -10], Compulsive Carousing [-5], Guilt Complex [-5], Jealousy [-10], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15], Low Self-Image [-10], Nightmares [-5], Odious Personal Habits (Drinking, cursing, not washing, etc.) [Varies], One Eye [-15], Post-Combat Shakes [-5], Secret [Varies], Sense of Duty (Friends, customers, or native country) [Varies], Struggling [-10], Stubbornness [-5], Unattractive [-5], Unfit [-5], Unluckiness [-10], Vow (Break off all connection with past life) [-5], Weak Will -1 [-8], or Xenophilia [Varies].

Skills: Acting (M/A) IQ [2]-11; Area Knowledge (The Middle East) (M/E) IQ [2]-12; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ [4]-11; First Aid (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Guns (Rifle) (P/E) DX+3 [4]-14*; Language (Arabic) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Language (Turkish) (M/A) IQ [2]-11; Streetwise (M/A) IQ [2]-11; and any three of Bartender (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Boating (P/A) DX [2]-11, Boxing (P/A) DX [2]-11, Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12, Carousing (P/A; HT) HT [2]-11, Camouflage (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Fast-Draw (Pistol) (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12, Fishing (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Gambling (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Gesture (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Gunner (any) (P/A) DX+1 [2]-12*, Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Intelligence Analysis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, Intimidation

(M/A) IQ [2]-11, Mechanic (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Navigation (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-10, Prospecting (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Riding (P/A) DX [2]-11, Sailor (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Scrounging (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Seamanship (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, or Survival (Desert or Island/Beach) (M/A) IQ [2]-11.

* Includes +1 for IQ.

Customization Notes: A lot of variations are possible with this sort of character, depending on his background before coming out east. He may have gained local Contacts, possibly Allies, and quite likely Enemies. He may also still be remembered back home; if the PCs will recognize his real name (once he gets around to mentioning it), this would justify a Reputation. A really interesting Reputation will combine honorable and shameful elements, perhaps having a low or zero net value.

If he owns a steam launch or similar boat, it will probably be so old and unreliable that its cash value will be very low. Traditionally, the fictional version usually has a great secret, and is very good in at least one or two skills.

Local Spy

Some people would consider you a skulking professional gossip; you prefer to think of yourself as a dealer in that rarest and most precious of all commodities – The Truth. You are paid a retainer by the Sublime Porte to keep them informed of events in your home district, but that is barely enough to live on, and in any case, you don't think anyone ever reads your reports. So you obtain additional income by selling other news to whoever might find it interesting; merchants can learn of bandit activity from you, and bandits might learn of caravan movements. But you prefer to avoid that latter sort of business. It is not legal, or moral. You might get caught.

You sell only The Truth,
and sometimes
not even that.

No, you are not lacking in honor. You would never betray a friend or a host, and your official work lets you bring local corruption and official misbehavior to light (if you can get anyone in authority to listen). Besides, you are completely honest in your business. You sell only The Truth, and sometimes not even that. You know when to keep silent as well as who to talk to. And your prices – for silence or for talk – are always reasonable.

In Your Diary: Cryptic (possibly coded) notes on events and personalities; financial accounts; speculations on motivations and possibilities.

GURPS JOB TABLE

<i>Job (Prerequisites), Monthly Income</i>	<i>Success Roll</i>	<i>Critical Failure</i>
Poor Jobs		
Beggar* (None), (Scrounging or IQ) × \$1	HT or Panhandling	1d/2d
Errand Boy/Girl* (Merchant 8+, Savoir-Faire 9+, or Streetwise 11+), \$8	IQ+2	-2i/-1i, 1d
Porter* (ST 11+), \$12	HT+1	-1i/-1i, 1d
Struggling Jobs		
Bedouin Nomad* (Riding 12+, Survival 11+), \$20	HT	1d/-1i, 1d
Cloth-Worker (Dyeing, Tanning, or Weaving 12+), \$28	PR+1	-1i/LJ
Herdsmen (HT 10+, Animal Handling 11+), \$34	HT+1	1d/LJ, -1i
Peasant* (HT 10+, Agronomy 12+), \$36	Agronomy+1	-1i/-2i, 1d
Ruffian* (ST 13+ or Combat/Weapon skills totaling 20+), \$25	Streetwise or IQ	-1i, 1d/-1i, 3d
Sailor (Seamanship 12+), \$35	PR	1d/LJ, 1d
Stable-Boy (Animal Handling 10+), \$20	PR+1	LJ/LJ, 2d
Street Entertainer* (Acrobatics, Bard, Dancing, Juggling, or Singing at 13+), \$22	Best PR	-1i, 1d/-1i, 2d
Average Jobs		
Bedouin Chief* (Riding 12+, Leadership 12+, Tactics 8+), Best PR × \$5	Best PR	-2i/-3i, 1d
Caravan Driver (Packing 13+), \$60	PR	LJ/LJ, 1d
Copyist (Calligraphy 12+), PR × \$5	PR+2	-2i/LJ
Craftsman (Any Craft Skill at 12+), PR × \$5	PR+1	-2i/-1i, LJ
Sea-Captain* (Shiphandling 12+, Merchant 10+), \$90	Best PR+1	-1i/-2i, 1d
Soldier (ST 10+, HT 10+, and Combat/Weapon skills totaling 12+), (Rank+5) × \$6	HT or Intimidation Worst PR	1d/-1i, 2d -1i/-2i
Sufi Teacher* (Teaching 7+, Theology 12+), \$80		
Comfortable Jobs		
Bazaar Magician* (Magery, Ritual Magic 11+, Merchant 8+), \$120	IQ+1	-1i/-2i, 1d
Court Servant (Savoir-Faire (Servant) 14+), \$200	IQ	Intrigue†/-4i
Imam (Clerical Investment, Bard 10+, Theology 13+), \$200	IQ	-2i/-3i
Jeweler* (Jeweler 14+, Merchant 12+), Merchant skill × \$15	Worst PR-1	-2i/-3i
Merchant* (Merchant 11+), PR × \$14	PR-2	-1i/-3i
Military Officer (Rank 3+, Status 2+, Riding 10+, Leadership 8+), (Rank-1) × \$40	Savoir-Faire (Military)	-1i/-3i
Petty Official (Administration 11+, Diplomacy 12+, Intimidation 9+), (Status+1) × \$100	Best PR	-1i/-1i, LJ
Wealthy Jobs		
City Governor (Status 4+, Administration 12+, Area Knowledge (city) 11+), \$2,000	Administration-2	-3i/Intrigue†
Harem Guard (Eunuch, ST 13+, Broadsword 10+, Savoir-Faire (Servant) 10+), \$100 + living expenses	Savoir-Faire (Servant)	Intrigue†/3d
Vizier (Status 5+, Administration 12+, Detect Lies 10+, Diplomacy 12+, Intimidation 9+, Savoir-Faire 14+), \$10,000	Worst PR-2	Intrigue†/-5i

Key to Table

PR – Prerequisite

LJ – Lose Job

“d” – Dice of damage suffered (the GM may opt to play this out).

“i” – Months of income lost.

* – Freelance job

† – Roleplaying opportunity, to be expanded upon by the GM.

Many of these jobs, especially the government posts, carry at least the option of bribery and corruption. If the GM allows this for a specific job, treat it as *freelance* for purposes of calculating income. Occupants of some posts may be expected to have other sources of income (usually inherited) to support themselves in the style with which the job is associated.

Motives: You deal in information – and that is something that Western adventurers certainly need. Furthermore, their activities may unearth more interesting facts, for which you could find a market in the future. They may pay well for guidance and advice; they are certainly unusual company, and years of spying have made you wearily familiar with the local folk, with their petty failings and rivalries. You'll have to be careful; you have become dangerously interested in things which lead to personal risk.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Perception, Stealth, Trader.

Possessions: Smart but unobtrusive clothes; a small pistol (for extreme emergencies); a notebook, and a European pocket watch and pen.

GURPS Template

50 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: 5 points in Contacts; and 10 points from Acute Hearing or Vision [2/level], Alertness [5/level], Composed [5], Cool [1], Language Talent [2/level], Pious [5], Sanctity [5], or Sensitive [5].

Disadvantages: -15 points from Careful [-1]; Cowardice [-10]; Curious [-5 to -15]; Edgy or Paranoia [-5 or -10]; Extravagance [-10]; Greed [-15]; Jealousy [-10]; Low Pain Threshold [-10]; Nosy [-1]; Responsive [-1]; Secret (Past spying activities or present employers) [Varies]; Selfish [-5]; Sense of Duty (To employers and/or the Empire) [Varies]; Uncongenial [-1]; Unfit [-5]; or Weak Will -1 [-8].

Skills: Acting (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-13; Area Knowledge (base of operations) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Diplomacy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Merchant (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Shadowing (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-11; Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Writing (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; and any two of Accounting (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, Carousing (P/A; HT) HT-1 [1]-9, Chess (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Disguise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Filch (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10, Gambling (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13*, Holdout (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Intelligence Analysis (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, Knife (P/E) DX [1]-11, Knife Throwing (P/E) DX [1]-11, Languages (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Lockpicking (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Pickpocket (P/H) DX-2 [1]-9, Psychology (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, or Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX-2 [1]-9.

* Includes +2 for IQ.

Customization Notes: A Patron is possible for a spy, but the Ottoman bureaucracy really isn't a very good employer. Enemies are also possible, although a smart spy will avoid provoking grudges. Combat skills might be handy, but a spy who becomes involved in physical violence is probably in severe trouble whatever his skills.



Noble Ottoman Adventurer

You are the offspring of a provincial official, or one of the old, disregarded, feudal nobility. As such, you have learned the basics of etiquette and the running of the Empire; you also received weapons training.

Now, you find that you have a Goal. Perhaps your family has been disgraced by the machinations of an evil foe, or maybe one of your old friends has sent you a letter, asking help. Or perhaps you have fallen out with your family over your dreams of a glorious career, and you are seeking to prove yourself.

In any case, you have taken up your sword and gone out into the world. You don't like it when people call you a dreamer, but you *do* have a taste for legends of noble heroism; you could enjoy living out such tales.

You are equally at home in the court or the bazaar, and you can sometimes think your way out of trouble as well as fight – but if you must give battle, then you are something of a swashbuckler. You may know somewhat of missile weapons, but the sword is the more honorable form of combat. And yours is ready to your hand!

In Your Diary: Notes on your current adventure; names of distant relatives and family allies who might or might not assist you; some amateurish attempts at heroic poetry.

Motives: Whatever your reasons, you are an adventurer – and the company of these *Farangi* seems like a good place to start adventuring. Everyone knows that heroes travel with strange companions. Perhaps they are pursuing some cause that you think is just, even if they are infidels. Perhaps they share your own great goal, for their own reasons. Perhaps you are taken with their crazy spirit. Or perhaps this is a way to win fame and fortune, and prove to your family that you aren't just a dreamer.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Athletics, Ottoman Way, Swordsmanship.

Possessions: A fine sword; a good horse; plain but high-quality clothes.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Status 3 [15]; and 15 points from Acute Vision [2/level], Attractive or Handsome [5 or 15], Charisma [5/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Comfortable [10], Cool [1], Fearlessness [2/level], Heir [5], Higher Purpose [5], Independent Income [5], Luck [15], Pious [5], additional Status [5/level], or Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; and -15 points from Bad Temper [-10], Bully [-10], Callous [-6], Chauvinistic [-1], Compulsive Generosity [-5], Compulsive Spending [Varies], Compulsive Vowing [-5], Dependents [Varies], Disowned [-5 or -15], Dull [-1], Enemy [Varies], Fanaticism (Ottoman Empire) [-15], Hidebound [-5], Honesty [-10], Impulsiveness [-10], Overconfidence [-10], Proud [-1], Selfish or Self-Centered [-5 or -10], Sense of Duty (Friends, underlings, and/or the Empire) [Varies], or Truthfulness [-5].

Skills: Carousing (P/A; HT) HT-1 [1]-10; Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Riding (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [0]-12*; and any three of Administration (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Area Knowledge (home estates) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Black Powder Weapons (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14**, Chess (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Falconry (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Guns (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14**, History (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Lance (P/A) DX [2]-12, Poetry (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Strategy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Survival (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Tournament Law (Ottoman contests of arms) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Tracking (M/A) IQ [2]-10, or Wrestling (P/A) DX [2]-12.

* Free from Status.

** Includes +1 for IQ.

Customization Notes: A noble may have Allies, Contacts, Dependents, or Patrons within his own class, although it's equally possible that he is out of touch with any such people. To improve this character, raise as many attributes and add as many combat, social, or administrative skills as the points will cover.

Old-Fashioned Adventurer

You are, some would say, a throwback to the days of Haroun al-Rashid and Sinbad. Is this a bad thing? When all around you are sunk in the complacent decadence of the Ottoman Way, you have decided that you want Action and Adventure. And so, after somehow obtaining suitable training, you have taken up the sword, and set out to find fame and fortune.

Perhaps you have become a sailor, boldly navigating through the Isles of Greece or along the coast of the Indian Ocean; even the *Farangi's* steam-ships haven't destroyed all of that ancient trade. Or perhaps you are a soldier of fortune, guarding trade caravans in the desert or rich men's houses in town. Perhaps you have been obliged to engage in a little adventurous roguery, separating valuables from their unappreciative owners. The chances are, you've tried a bit of everything. Whatever you've done, though, you've always

done it with panache – and truth to tell, you've always made sure that you enjoyed it.

In Your Diary: Snippets of poetry; some ideas as to possibilities for adventure and fortune; sketch-maps of places visited.

Motives: They may be crazy – and foreign – but you can be sure that these *Farangi* are adventurous; otherwise, they wouldn't be here. Perhaps they've offered to pay for the aid of your sword-arm or other skills; you see no disgrace in mercenary service. Or perhaps one of them is an attractive lady, who appeals to your romantic heart *and* your love of the exotic. Or perhaps you've agreed to share some profitable quest with them. Who cares, really? Adventuring is what you all *do!*

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Athletics, Charisma, Swordsmanship.

Possessions: A decent sword; plain but functional clothes.

GURPS Template

80 points

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Attractive [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Strong Will +1 [4]. Add 15 points from Acute Hearing [2/level]; Alertness [5/level]; Appearance improved to Handsome [10]; additional Charisma [5/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Cool [1], Collected [5], Composed [5], or Fearlessness [2/level]; Danger Sense [15]; Daredevil [15]; Destiny [Varies]; Fit [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Higher Purpose [5]; Intuition [15]; Language Talent [2/level]; Luck [15]; Magic Resistance [2/level]; Night Vision [10]; more Strong Will [4/level]; or Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Impulsiveness or Overconfidence [-10]; Sense of Duty (Friends and companions) [-5]. Add -10 points from Bad Temper [-10]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Bully [-10]; Chummy [-5], Congenial [-1], or Loner [-5]; Code of Honor (Pirate's or Muslim) [-5 or -10]; Compulsive Carousing [-5]; Compulsive Generosity [-5]; Compulsive Vowing [-5]; Curious [-5 or -10]; Dreamer [-1]; Imaginative [-1]; Jealousy [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Joshing and speechifying) [-5]; Proud [-1]; Truthfulness [-5]; or Undiscriminating [-1].

Skills: Acrobatics (P/H) DX [4]-12; Carousing (P/A; HT) HT-1 [1]-11; Climbing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Fencing (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13; Riding (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13; Running (P/H; HT) HT-2 [1]-10; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12; Swimming (P/E) DX [1]-12; Tactics (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-8; and any three of Axe/Mace (P/A) DX [2]-12, Bard (M/A) IQ+1 [2]-11**, Boating (P/A) DX [2]-12, Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-10, First Aid (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Guns (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14*, Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Jumping (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13, Knife Throwing (P/E) DX+1 [2]-13, Languages (choose) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [2]-11**, Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Sailor (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Seamanship (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11, Sex Appeal (M/A; HT) HT [2]-12, Streetwise (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Survival (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Throwing (P/H) DX-1 [2]-11, or Tracking (M/A) IQ [2]-10.



* Includes +1 for IQ.

** Includes +1 for Charisma.

Customization Notes: This character should be played as cinematically as possible, which really means spending a lot more points on attributes and combat-related abilities. A real Old-Fashioned Adventurer may well have Allies or an Ally Group of trusty sidekicks (who may also include Dependents).

Ottoman Dwarf

You are a rarity, and proud of it: a Dwarf who also happens to be a citizen of the Ottoman Empire. With your shaven head, magnificent moustaches, colourful clothes, and massive gold earrings, you know you present an imposing sight to the world. (Anyone who smiles at the sight of you should be politely asked why.) Your skill with metals and gadgets makes you invaluable in the bazaar, and your Turkish neighbors (mostly) know you for a Good Muslim and an Honest Fellow, whatever your birth.

As to how you came to live in this part of the world, where your kind is rare – well, either you are a member of a small local Dwarf-Clan, quite likely dating back to the days when the Dwarfs brought bronze-work to Babylon, or you wandered out this way from Europe many years ago, in search of a fortune and a way to gain a Name, and somehow settled down.

In Your Diary: Designs for simple but extremely elegant devices; current bazaar prices for precious metals; contact addresses for Dwarfs in distant lands.

Motives: For all your local standing, there are problems for a Dwarf in the Ottoman Empire; the chances are that this group of Westerners may represent a way to resolve some of them. To begin with, you need to establish your fame *among Dwarfs* to qualify for a name, and there are precious few other Dwarfs in this area; perhaps there's one such visiting with this group, who you can impress with your ingenuity, or perhaps the humans could convey word of your accomplishments back to the European Dwarf-holds – or perhaps you might even consider traveling back there with them in person.

Secondly, there are even fewer female Faerie in this region than there are Dwarfs, which is inconvenient if you have any hopes of marrying and starting a family. Even if there are no Elf-maids among these visitors, you could again consider traveling back to their homelands with them.

And last – it's well known that these days, the most fascinating machines in the world come from New Europa, thanks to all the Dwarfs there (and the human "Industrial Revolution," perhaps). Associating with Westerners might get you a glimpse of some of these steam devices and calculating machines, which you've no doubt you could work with and improve on. Perhaps some of these folk know something of this subject? You know that your human Ottoman neighbors regard such foreigners as less than respectable, but what's disreputable about machinery? It's one of the finest forms of intelligent endeavour.

Oh, and as a matter of fact – you have heard tales about New European Beer, too. Not that you, as a good Muslim, have any interest in such substance. Obviously.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Fisticuffs, Tinkering, Trader.

Faerie Power: *Love of Metal*. See the *Castle Falkenstein* rule-book.

Possessions: A collection of eccentric but effective craftsman's tools; stout but colorful Eastern-style clothing; huge, reinforced leather slippers; massive and ornate gold earrings.

GURPS Template 160 points

Attributes ST 11 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [0].

Advantages: Dwarf [172]; Manual Dexterity +1 [3]; and either Composed or Single-Minded [5].

Sample Turkish Personal Names

Thanks to their shared Muslim culture, Turkish and Arabic names are often similar. (See *GURPS Arabian Nights*, pp. AN64-65, for Arabic naming systems.) However, there are also differences, including the popularity among Turks of names drawn from Turkish history. See the main body of the text for several examples of Turkish names. Note also that nicknames are sometimes used, even in semi-official and historical sources, and that some names have specific meanings of which Turkish speakers will be aware.

Male: Abdul, Abdullah, Ahmet, Akçay, Ali, Alparslan, Bayar, Besim (smiling, friendly), Bozkurt (grey wolf), Burç (tower, bastion), Burak (lightning), Celil, Cihangir (world conqueror), Demir (iron), Doruk (mountain peak), Emin (trustworthy), Enver (lights, radiance), Ertan, Fadil (brilliant, superior person), Ferhat, Gökay (sky and moon), Göktürk, Habib, Hasan, Hikmet (wisdom), Idris, Iskender (Alexander), Kadir (strong, powerful), Lokman (wise man, storyteller), Mahmud, Mehmet, Murad, Musa (Moses), Mustafa (chosen one), Mümtaz (select, distinguished), Oktan, Osman, Refik, Serhat, Talat, Tekin (auspicious), Türkay (Turkish moon), Ulug, Uzay, Vahit, Yavuz (stern, tough), Yildirim (thunderbolt), Yusuf, Zulfu.

Female: Bahar (spring), Bedriye, Behice (beautiful, merry, smiling), Behiye (beautiful, charming), Çagla (green almond), Çiçek (flower, blossom), Dilar, Emine (trustworthy), Fadime, Fatma, Fusun (charm, enchantment, spell), Hanife, Hayrunissa, Hüsnüye (beauty), Katife (velvet), Latife (joke, quip), Leyla (dark nights), Mihriban (loving friend), Müjde (good news), Nesrin (wild rose), Pertev (light, brightness, brilliance), Reyhan, Sabriye, Seda (voice, echo), Semiramis, Süheyla (bright stars), Tayyibe (good, pleasant), Vicdan (conscience), Yasemin (Jasmine), Zübeyde.

Male or Female: Ayhan, Cihan (world, universe), Dünya (earth), Evren (universe, cosmos), Ilkay (new moon), Sezgin, Zeynel.

Disadvantages: Obsession (Winning a Name) [-10]; and any two of Bad Temper, Clueless, Code of Honor (Muslim), Extremely Curious, Fat, Honesty, Jealousy, Miserliness, No Sense of Humor, Odious Personal Habit (Breaking dietary laws and/or drinking alcohol in public), or Struggling [-10 each].

Skills: Any four of Area Knowledge (home city) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Armoury (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Axe/Mace (P/A) DX [2]-10; Blacksmith (M/A) IQ [2]-10;

Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-11; Dyeing (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Jeweler (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9; Lockpicking (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Mechanic (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Metallurgy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9; Merchant (M/A) IQ [2]-10. Also add 1 to any of the above [+2].

Note: Several skills in this list have prerequisites or special modifiers that may need checking. The Dwarf racial package includes three quirks. "Gruff" and "Embarrassed by own feet" are just as applicable to Ottoman Dwarfs, but "Loves beer and pork" is hardly appropriate for a good Muslim, who is supposed to avoid alcohol and treat pigs as unclean. It should therefore be replaced by "Loves rich food, and finds alcohol very tempting." Dwarfs who succumb to these temptations qualify for a -10 point Odious Personal Habit. Also remember that Dwarfs have a racial +4 skill bonus when applying Craft skills or Engineer to any metal object, in addition to any bonuses for Manual Dexterity. (Neither are included in the skills list above.)

Customization Notes: Most Ottoman Dwarfs learn their skills at TL5 (or even TL4), but a few are exposed to the more advanced knowledge that is widespread among their kind elsewhere. A smart Dwarf will realize that a high Merchant skill is the key to capitalizing on his other skills in the bazaar. Remember also that a Dwarf who succeeds in gaining a Name will not only lose his Obsession, but will probably gain Status and Wealth.

Runaway Slave

Some people say that slavery is in decline among the Ottomans, what with Europeans lecturing them on its evils at every diplomatic conference and Western navies patrolling the coasts of Africa. On the other hand, some people say that the Ottomans' slaves have it better than many a European servant; they are part of the household, are often helped to set up in business on their own after a few years, and have plenty of protection in law.

That's the general theory. It may work some of the time. The rest of the time . . .

You don't remember much about that African village or Caucasian farm; you were kidnapped as a young child. The slavers decided that you looked like a promising specimen, and fed you well – while working you mercilessly. The man they sold you to followed the same plan; whatever work you were given, and there was plenty, was always the toughest and most strenuous.

Well, that built up your physical strength. Meanwhile, in your heart, you had another source of strength, and it also grew. When you eventually made your getaway, you broke locks and cuffed aside anyone who tried to stop you.

Now, you are on the run. You think you've shaken off pursuit, but you have to live on the fringes of Ottoman society, fearful that you'll be noticed. But perhaps you occasionally dream of finding a way home.

In Your Memory: The names and faces of your former owner and his friends; some vague ideas about your home.

Motives: You are a hunted man; you need shelter and allies. Anyway, these mad *Farangi* don't treat you the way that Turks do. They don't understand how this land works – which you learned the hard way. They say they don't have slaves back where they come from, which sounds foolish; who does the housework? Perhaps their current task means that they are fighting your old, cruel owner; that could be dangerous, but you'd like the chance of revenge. Or perhaps they are prepared to *pay* you to help them with some adventure; they might even help you get away to other lands, later.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Fisticuffs, Physique, Stealth.

Possessions: The rags you are wearing; an improvised weapon (axe, heavy club, etc.); does damage as a Blow with your Physique, plus 1).

GURPS Template

75 points

Attributes: ST 14 [45]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Strong Will +1 [4]; and 25 points from Alertness [5/level], Cool [1], Daredevil [15], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5], High Pain Threshold [10], Luck [15], Night Vision [10], Pious [5], Pitiable [5], Sanctity [5], extra Strong Will [4/level], or Toughness [10 or 25].

Disadvantages: Poor [-15]; Status -3 [-15]; and one of Edgy, Intolerance (Ottoman Turks), Primitive (TL4), Semi-Literacy, Social Stigma (Second-class citizen – obviously provincial origins), Stubbornness, or Uneducated [all -5].

Skills: Axe/Mace (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; Savoir-Faire (Servant) (M/E) IQ [1]-10; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-11.

Customization Notes: This treatment assumes that the runaway is well ahead of any specific pursuit, and hence has no enemies hunting him, but that he is still having to lie very low. An ex-slave who found some minimal employment might have a little more money and Status, but also a serious Secret, as he would have to keep his history quiet from NPCs around him. (Fellow PCs may know about a runaway's history, assuming that they aren't likely to turn him in.) In "gritty" games where disease is a serious threat, some degree of resistance or immunity may be desirable for someone living as rough as this.

Street Brat

You are a child of the city streets. If your parents are still alive, they despair of you, and may even be thinking of disowning you – just because you aren't interested in breaking your back working all day and all night in some pointless job!

But you're convinced that you have a Greater Destiny. You just have to find it. You enjoy the bazaar tales of Aladdin and Ali Baba, and you feel that you could accomplish just as much as them, given half their luck – which you're convinced will come. In the meantime, why shouldn't you enjoy yourself? Your friends aren't as bad as people like to say, and they are a lot

more fun to be around than "respectable" folk.

And you're not without honor. You're quite prepared to respect the laws of hospitality, if anyone ever gives you the chance. You're *certainly* not a thief. Oh, you like to play the odd joke, but why should the bazaar fruit-seller begrudge you one of his peaches? You've done him enough favors. You're sure you have.

And you'll certainly be generous to him, when you find your Destiny.

In Your Memory: Details of the layout of your home town, especially back alleys and hiding places; dozens of bazaar stories and heroic legends.

Motives: These *Farangi* visitors need a guide, and they pay well; perhaps you've even found yourself in their debt. You heard somebody warn them that you're untrustworthy, and you're determined to prove otherwise. Anyway, this is an *adventure*, just like in the stories. Perhaps it's even your Destiny!

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Athletics, Stealth, Trader.

Possessions: Ragged clothes; a hidden knife; a few cheap trinkets, "accidentally" acquired.

GURPS Template

50 points

Attributes ST 9 [-10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [0].

Advantages: 15 points from Acute Hearing or Vision [2/level]; Alertness [5/level]; Ambidexterity [10]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Daredevil [15]; Destiny [Varies]; Fit [5]; Heir [5]; Luck [15]; Manual Dexterity [3/level]; or Pitiable [5].

Disadvantages: Poor [-15]; Youth (Age 15) [-6]; and -10 points from any of Code of Honor ("Pirate's") [-5], Compulsive Vowing [-5], Congenial [-1], Delusion ("I have a great Destiny") [-5], Disowned [-5], Distractible [-1], Dreamer [-1], Gluttony [-5], Imaginative [-1], Illiteracy or Semi-Literacy [-10 or -5], Imaginative [-1], Impulsiveness [-10], Laziness [-10], Nosy [-1] or Curious [-5 or -10], Odious Personal Habits (Cheekiness) [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Primitive (TL4) [-5], Proud [-1], Reduced Hit Points [-5/level], Skinny [-5], lower Status [-5/level], or Weak Will -1 [-8].

Skills: Area Knowledge (home city) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Climbing (P/A) DX-1 [1]-12; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Filch (P/A) DX [2]-13; Holdout (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Pickpocket (P/H) DX-2 [1]-11; Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-13; Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; and any two of Acrobatics (P/H) DX-2 [1]-11, Escape (P/H) DX-2 [1]-11, Juggling (P/E) DX [1]-13, Jumping (P/E) DX [1]-13, Lockpicking (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Panhandling (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Running (P/H; HT) HT-2 [1]-9, Shadowing (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Stargazing (P/E) DX [1]-13, Survival (Urban) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, or Throwing (P/H) DX-2 [1]-11.

Customization Notes: The Delusion and Destiny offered are somewhat incompatible – but not entirely; someone with a Destiny can have completely the wrong idea as to its nature. A streets-based character like this can also acquire lots of Contacts, or Enemies if he's slipped into outright criminality. The disadvantage level, while high, is a consequence of youth and social position, and could be even higher for a younger urchin; it should be reduced with experience as the character matures.

Unemployed New European Mercenary

You started your military career with ideals, and achieved some success as a drill sergeant or staff lieutenant. But something didn't work out. Perhaps you were passed over for promotion in favor of men with better social contacts; perhaps you met some kind of disgrace through no fault of your own; perhaps you just became bored.

Then you thought of the Turks, who are trying to modernize their army. For decades now, they've been recruiting advisors from Europe, looking to hammer some sense into their farm-boy soldiers and useless commanders. So you made some contacts, confirmed that the pay was good, and moved out East.

But *that* didn't work out. Perhaps you annoyed some idiot Pasha with no military knowledge but too much influence. Perhaps your contact was disgraced in some game of Ottoman politics. Perhaps you were sickened by the corruption and the way that the army's biggest job seems to be massacring civilians. Or perhaps you got squeezed out by all these stiff-necked Prussians who've breezed into Stamboul lately.

So you're out on your ear. But you haven't headed home yet. You came out here to make your fortune, blast it, and you're not running home with your tail between your legs at the first setback. You'd be embarrassed. Besides, it's an interesting country, in its way.

In Your Diary: Notes on drill and tactics; unrestrained opinions of the local troops; addresses of old comrades back home, and of some less corrupt local officers.

Motives: If the Ottoman Army doesn't want your skills, there are still uses for them here – and working with Western visitors gives you the chance to hear a familiar language and discuss familiar topics. Perhaps they can pay

well, or perhaps one of them served in the same regiment as you. You can certainly help them; you've managed to get something of a feel for Turkish society, which does need a little careful handling at times.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Courage, Marksmanship, Physique.

Possessions: Sabre, revolver, and swagger-stick; your old uniform (out of sentiment); plain, military-style garb, suited for the weather and impressing the natives.

GURPS Template

70 points

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Courtesy Rank 2 [2]; and 15 points from Combat Reflexes [15], Cool [1], additional Courtesy Rank [1/level], Fearlessness [2/level], Status [5/level], Strong Will [4/level], or Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10]; and -15 points from Bad Temper [-10], Bloodlust [-10], Bully [-10], Code of Honor (Pirate's or Gentleman's) [-5 or -10], Greed [-15], Honesty [-10], Impulsiveness [-10], Lecherousness [-15], No Sense of Humor [-10], Overconfidence [-10], Odious Personal Habits (Bragging, excessive military mannerisms, etc.) [-5], Secret [Varies], Sense of Duty (Employers and/or comrades) [-5], Struggling [-10], Stubbornness [-5], Truthfulness [-5], or Unluckiness [-10].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Ottoman Empire) (M/E) IQ [1]-10; Guns (any) (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14*; Language (Turkish) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]-10; and any three of Animal Handling (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Carousing (P/A; HT) HT [2]-12, Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Gunner (any) (P/A) DX+1 [2]-13*, Hiking (P/A; HT) HT [2]-12, Intelligence Analysis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Riding (P/A) DX [2]-12, Spear (P/A) DX [2]-12, Strategy (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9, or Teaching (M/A) IQ [2]-10.

* Includes +1 for IQ.

Customization Notes: Pick optional skills to suit the character's personal history, unit type, and rank. Raise Courtesy Rank and Status to get an officer, take Fearlessness, Strong Will, or Toughness to get a tough NCO, or select Combat Reflexes for a soldier of fortune who's lived all too dangerously. This character may have Allies or Contacts, locally or back home; he may also have made Enemies in either land.

If he gets to go back home at the end of any adventures in the Ottoman lands, the mercenary will have to buy off his Social Stigma. (However, it might be temporarily partially replaced by a negative Reputation as a mercenary who vanished for some questionable reason a while ago.)

Young Turk

A simple fact; you are a loyal servant of the Ottoman Empire, for which you would fight and die. Those who say otherwise, lie.

You probably sought to serve the Empire in the *Tanzimat* Civil Service, or perhaps the Army. In order to perform your duties properly, you studied both the state of the Empire and the rest of the world. This brought home to you a terrible truth; Turkey has fallen far behind in every essential area. The Empire is ruled by a Sultan who is out of touch and possibly even mad, and a Court full of blind, greedy viziers. Your country is the laughing-stock of Europe.

Yours is not a safe opinion.
The agents of tradition would knife
or strangle you in a dark alley,
given the chance.

There is some debate as to how much reform is needed. Some hold that a little more democracy, and the rooting out of corruption, would suffice; others say that Turkey should abandon its ungrateful Empire, and transform itself into a modern republic. Perhaps you are still making up your mind.

As a patriot, you could not help but speak out, and join a group of like-minded reformers. Unfortunately, yours is not a *safe* opinion. You have either felt obliged to go into hiding, or you traveled abroad to Paris, the meeting-place of the "Young Turks," and now you have returned in secret. The agents of tradition would doubtless knife or strangle you in a dark alley, given the chance – but you will give them a run for their blood.

In Your Diary: Notes on schemes for Reform; coded addresses of friendly contacts and safe hiding-places; drafts of essays on your Cause; lists of possible enemies.

Motives: Associating with Westerners is dangerous – you don't want your enemies calling you a traitorous Christian-lover – but you must take your allies where you find them, and after all, you *are* prepared to learn from the West. Furthermore, you feel that there is merit in convincing these people that not all Turks are superstitious and backward. For now, you and they may both be on the trail of some villain who is no friend to Turkey *or* the West; or perhaps they are potential or current sympathizers, and you

feel the need to cultivate them. Certainly, the adventure they are undertaking could teach you something new about the world.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Courage, Education, Ottoman Way.

Possessions: "Westernized" clothes; revolver; a secret bundle of assorted foreign currencies for emergencies; a couple of New European books of political theory.

GURPS Template

30 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Status 1 [5]; Strong Will +1 [4]; and 15 points from any of Comfortable [10], Cool [1] or Composed [5], Danger Sense [15], Fearlessness [2/level], Heir [5], Higher Purpose [5], Pious [5], Sensitive [5], additional Status [5/level], or additional Strong Will [4/level].

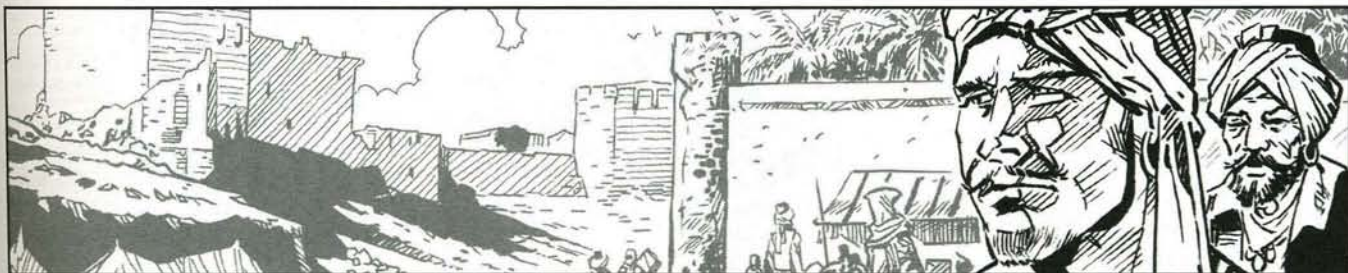
Disadvantages: Fanaticism (Reform Movement) or Obsession (Introducing a particular set of reforms) [-15]; Sense of Duty (Ottoman Empire) [-10]; and any two of Disowned, Edgy, Selfish, Stubbornness, or Workaholic [all -5].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Europe) (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Area Knowledge (Turkey) (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Bard (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Fencing (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Guns (Pistol) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13*; Language (any European) (M/A) IQ [2]-12; Riding (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [0]-14**; and one of Conspiracy Theory (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-10, Economics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, or Politics (M/A) IQ [2]-12.

* Includes +2 for IQ.

** Free from Status.

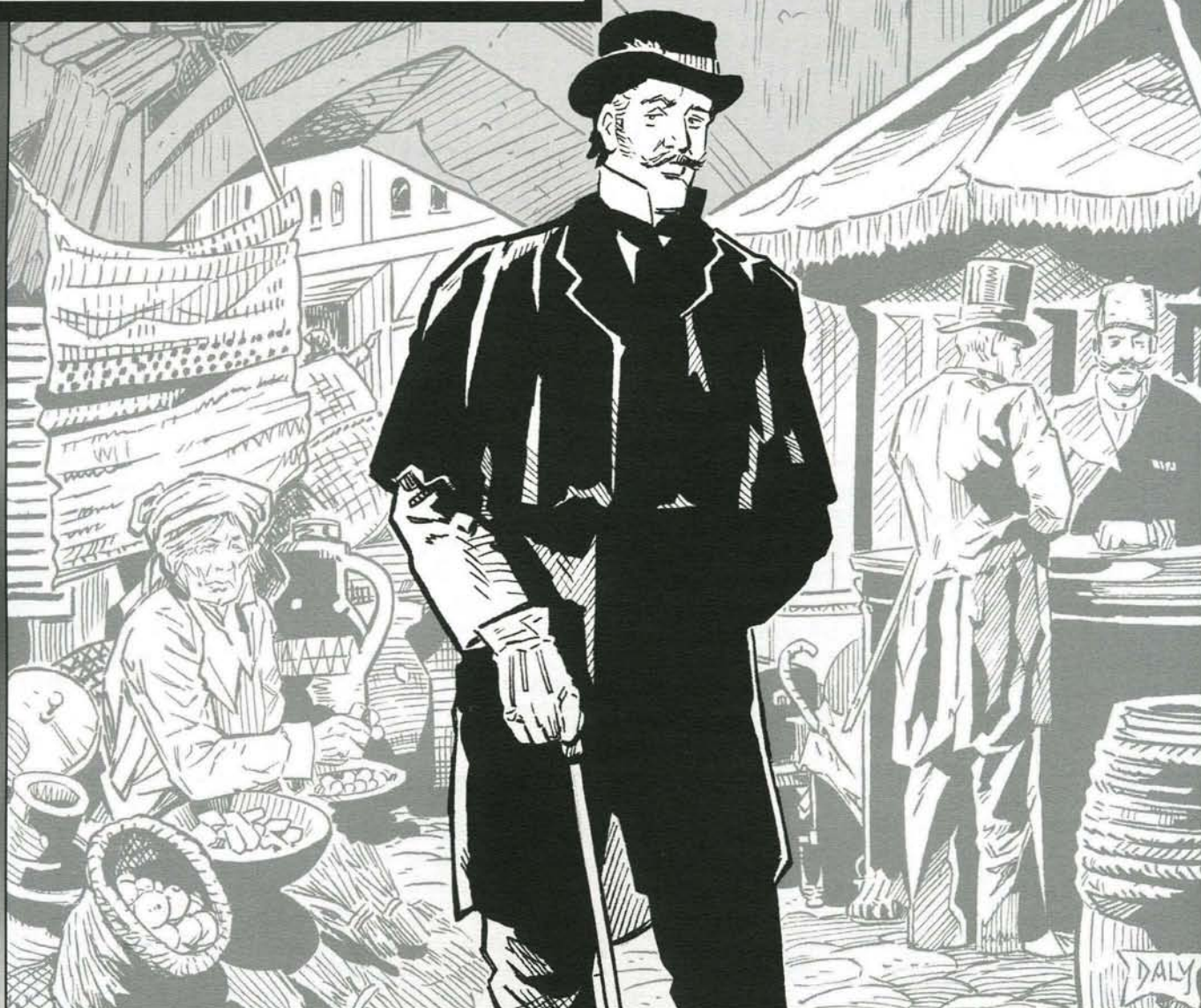
Customization Notes: This is a somewhat partial character sheet. A Young Turk may be (or have been) a noble (with social connections and wealth), an army officer (with military skills and Contacts), or a government official (with administrative experience). If he is still working in any of those positions, membership of the reform movement could represent a Secret instead of providing some of the Disadvantages listed above. As the forces of the established order close in on a rebel, they may become personal Enemies. On the other hand, other sympathizers may well represent Allies, Contacts, or even Patrons, while experienced reformers may gain skills related to political activity or avoiding arrest. If the movement becomes more successful, its members may find that they have fewer problems and more advantages.



3. Into the Empire

Eberhardt's travels make an interesting story, but a lot of his journals are pretty routine. Remember that he was sent east as a surveyor, and that's what he spent most of his time doing and recording, with professional thoroughness. What follows is to a large extent an annotated summary of his account, prepared with his approval.

— T.O.



Passing Greece

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

Although I was venturing into the heart of an alien culture, the first part of my journey was accomplished in the most conventional and comfortable European style. I traveled by railway across the Austrian Alps and Northern Italy, wishing only that I could afford the time to disembark and admire the city of Milan for more than the one night I spent there. In Venice, too, I found myself dreaming that I might one day come to that place on less pressing business.

But any questions of aeroliner docking in this region had already been reviewed by other agents of the company, and a berth awaited me on the steam-packet *Lorenzo Bernardo*, bound for Constantinople by way of Athens.

(Lest readers wonder why I did not travel by railway direct to Constantinople, as would indeed have been possible: my employers had charged me with making a brief survey of the cities of this coast and of Greece, and of the coastal geography, with a possible view to making occasional aeroliner excursions to the area. However, this task proved simple enough, and had little effect upon my journey.)

As the steam-packet progressed down the Adriatic coast, I reflected on this tumultuous region, the Balkans. The shoreline that I saw, with its ports and fishing villages, is securely in the hands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The steam-packet paused at Split, where the palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian now serves as the city's cathedral, and at the ancient walled port of Ragusa, which Slavic peoples call Dubrovnik; clearly, there is much for the tourist to contemplate here. However, the mountain country that I could see on the eastern horizon, on clear mornings, is disputed territory, and rarely peaceful; Austrian authority is weak there, and the legacy of years of struggle between Ottoman and Hapsburg is seen in local conflict and banditry. Meanwhile, more "progressive" local anarchists and revolutionaries threaten revolt and terror against their nominal rulers. I fear that this is not a stable land. But politics are not my sphere.

In time, I made my first entry into Ottoman territory, as the ship attained the coastal waters of Albania. The people of this especially sparse and mountainous country may, for the most part, have been converted to Islam by their Turkish overlords, but they remain fierce and proud, often serving the Ottomans as soldiers. From my reading, I knew that this was no land to place an aeroliner station.

Then, the *Lorenzo Bernardo* reached Greece, and my reflections became, I fear, more emptily romantic. Not only is this country the ancient birthplace of European civilization; it was, in the memory of my own grandparents,

the first province of the Ottoman Empire to achieve independence by its own efforts. From the deck of the vessel, it appeared simply to be stark Mediterranean mountains plunging vertiginously into warm seas, but I knew this as the land of Homer and Aristotle, of the Olympians and Titans. Although we now believe these races to have been the Faerie, in imposing disguise, their influence remains deep and subtle. It is said that harpies still haunt the peaks of these mountains, although cold iron and firearms have made them more cautious than in the days when they plundered the Argonauts' ship . . .

There are a number of possible aeroliner docking-places in this area, and I am sure that the company could find passengers for the journey. However, there may be difficulties for such a project; I fear that we Bayernese are not vastly popular in Greece . . .

Tom Olam Comments:

When Eberhardt gave us his notes, I asked Ludwig and Tarlenheim what exactly that last paragraph might mean, and I'd swear that the temperature in the room dropped 10 degrees. Okay, Ludwig officially had a Bad Experience in Greece, but still, it seemed very odd.

Eventually, Morrolan took me aside and explained. When the Greeks broke away from the Turks, back in '32, they had the backing of assorted European powers. The Europeans decided that this new nation needed a King, looked around, and installed a spare Bavarian prince.

Don't ask me what they thought they were doing. This was 40 years ago, and even today, a lot of Europeans tend to assume that a proper civilized country is better off with any random king at the top than, say, as a republic. Don't get me wrong, I get on just fine with Ludwig; he does a great job. But there are times when my 20th-century, American upbringing makes me want to turn round and scream at these people.

Anyway, in this case, 17-year old Otto of Greece – another Wittelsbach, Ludwig's uncle – was installed, complete with three Bavarian regents and a mostly Bavarian army. He hung in there for a good few years, although it took a military coup to impose a written constitution; another coup, in 1862, finally threw him out. The Great Powers replaced him with a Danish prince, George I. At least this time, they persuaded the Greeks first.

Oh, and the one thing that Otto and his subjects really agreed on was the "Great Idea." This said that Greece had a Glorious Destiny, to rule every Greek-speaking territory they could find. That this implied that they, as a small, under-powered, newly founded nation, would have to conquer large parts of the Ottoman Empire – including its capital – didn't make any difference. They tried a grab during the Crimean War, but Britain and France squashed them without breaking stride. So, any time there's trouble in that part of the world, we've got one more thing to worry about – and the Greeks don't trust us an inch.

To Istanbul

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

... Now, we were sailing through the sea that Homer called "wine-dark," the Aegean, amid the Greek islands – yet more disputed territory, for the Greeks and Turks contend for control, and after a thousand years of Crusade, piracy, border warfare, and politics, several other European powers have interests in this region ...

In fact, not all of these islands are in the hands of any human empire. There are still archipelagos of rocky outcrops where the locals dare not land, even when they see fat sheep and goats grazing, because they know that one-eyed giants lurk in caves around the shoreline. These *Cyclopes* are clearly cousins to the Unseelie Ogres of my homeland, and similarly dangerous; they may be diminished since the days of Odysseus, but they remain fond of the taste of human flesh, and strong enough to catch such food if it comes to hand. A few, it is said, remember the lessons learned when the greatest of their line were assistants to Hephaestus, and craft bronze-work of surpassing quality.

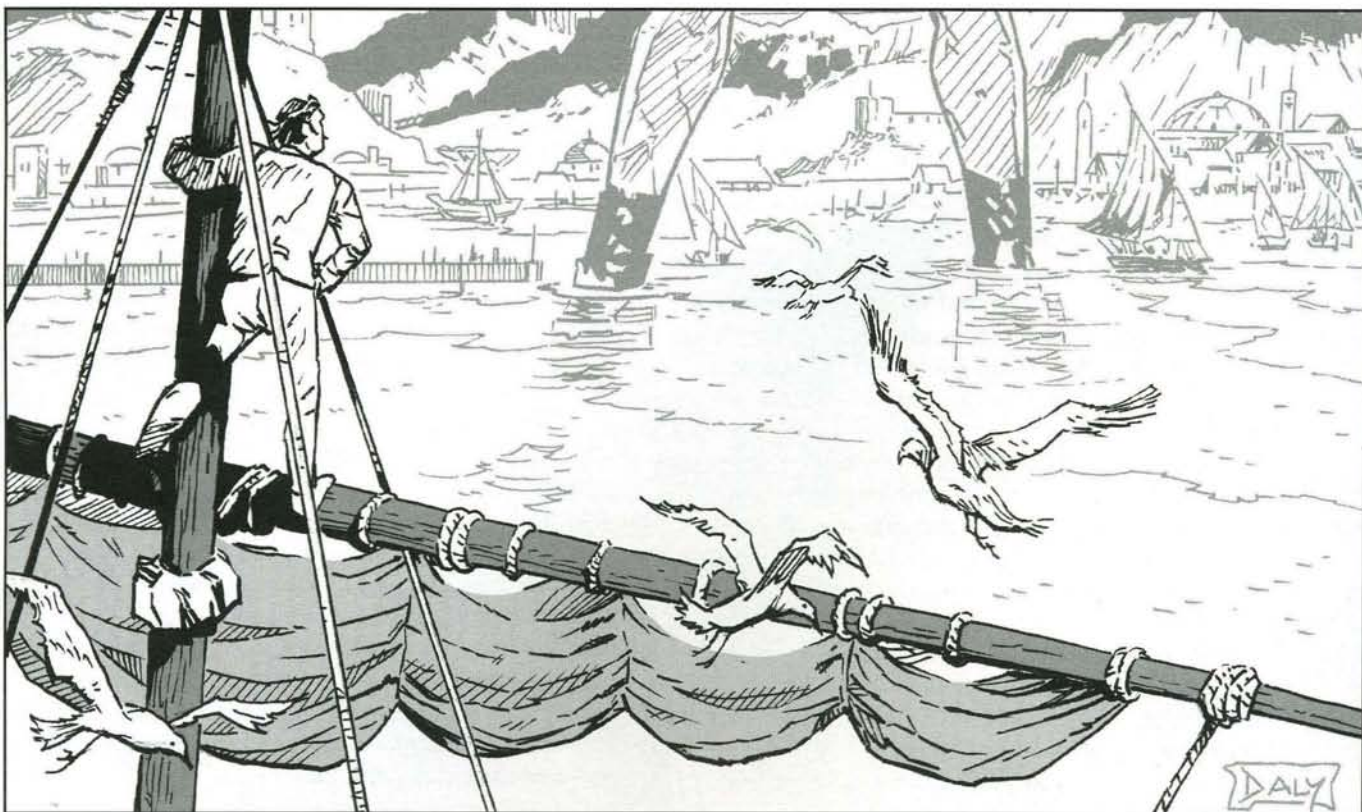
"The great charm of Constantinople to the European eye exists in the extreme novelty, which is in itself a spell; for not only the whole locality but all its accessories, are so unlike what the traveller has left behind him in the West, that every group is a study ..."

— The Beauties of the Bosphorus,
Julia Pardoe

A possible example: Far to the south of my route lies the island of Rhodes, famed for the brave and stalwart defense put up by its Hospitaller defenders against Ottoman sieges. But centuries earlier, it had another claim to fame; its port-capital was the site of the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, a statue of the sun-god Helios that bestrode the harbor mouth. The statue was demolished by an earthquake, although the stumps of its legs still stand. Modern human engineers profess themselves unable to comprehend how such a structure could have been created at that time. Clearly, dwarven craftsmen must have been employed to design and assemble its iron frame, but its skin – of beaten bronze – is

said by reliable legend to have been the last great working of the Ancient Cyclopes. Somehow, I doubt that any of their descendants could match such brilliance today.

(An editorial note here: In our world, historians and engineers are certain that the Colossus **couldn't** have spanned the harbor mouth. Not that they know where it did stand – not a fragment of it remains. The influence of the Dwarves on the history of this world is considerable. – T.O.)



And so, in time, the steam-packet sailed through the Dardanelles Straits, 150 miles across the Sea of Marmora, and into the Bosphorus Straits. As the vista of the city of Constantinople emerged before me, I recalled with new understanding the travellers' tales which I had browsed in preparation for this moment.

Istanbul is, in a way, not one city but two. The old walled Byzantium of the Greeks and Constantinople of the Romans sits upon the promontory known as *Seraglio Point*; this part alone should properly be called *Stamboul*, and is the heart of Ottoman power. It is built on seven hills, many of them crowned with great and glorious mosques constructed by the greatest Sultans. Across the *Golden Horn*, one of the world's finest deep-water harbours, lies *Pera*, a more recent development, with many shops and the communities of various subject-peoples. Beyond and around all this, suburbs are springing up, especially along the coastline. The Turks, like Europeans, often speak of the entire metropolis as "Constantinople," but perhaps prefer their own name for it – Istanbul.

In our century, the Sultans have tired of the cramped confines of Stamboul, and have built new palaces for themselves along the shores of the Bosphorus, including one in Scutari, the outpost of the city on the Asian side of the straits. The most spectacular of these is the Dolmabache Palace, north of the city's core.

Pera is where foreign ambassadors and trading-houses make their residences, and this was where accommodation had been arranged for myself. I am told there are no European-style hotels anywhere on the Stamboul side of the Golden Horn.

Istanbul is further subdivided into quarters. The Ottoman tradition is to permit subject-peoples a degree of self-government; the *millets*, or religious groups, especially make clear distinction among themselves. Thus, there is an Armenian Quarter, a Jewish Quarter, a Greek Quarter, and so on.

Istanbul seems a truly Medieval city, and this includes its sanitation. There are few sewers, and the place would surely have choked on its own filth by now, were it not built on sloping ground above a sea with a fast current. The houses are irregular and shabby; even the best are often built of wood and plaster. Fire must be a terrible danger.

The Turks, I am told, refer to Pera as the "Giaour City," *Giaour* being a contemptuous term for "Christian." In fact, it has much of the air of a European city, magically transported to the East. Even the main avenue is named in French – the *Grand Rue de Pera* – and one may purchase English or French newspapers here, as well as more durable imports. Turks often visit the place to buy European manufactures and be shocked by foreign ways. However, Pera is still cramped and grimy, and its back-streets may well have more cut-throats and villains than those of Stamboul – the pickings are richer and, to make matters worse, the legal confusion of the place gives many a ruffian escape from justice. The Capitulations, by which foreign embassies are immune to some Ottoman law, have been greatly abused. There is a thriving trade in forged papers, and many a rogue will claim to be "French" or "British" when in truth he merely worked

for a short while as an embassy gardener – if that – and he truly originated in some part of Greece or Armenia. Like any trading-town, Pera is, sadly, a natural haunt for confidence-tricksters and fallen women. An ill-managed provincial quarter may become far dirtier and more dangerous than Stamboul-town, which lies close under the eye of the Sultan's court . . .

"But when we rounded the Seraglio Point,
and slowly glided into the Golden Horn,
where the whole gorgeous panorama
opened . . . in its unequalled loveliness, the
feeling of wonder and admiration became
absolutely oppressive . . . the magnificent
domes and lofty minarets . . . detached
themselves from the amphitheatres
of buildings as we proceeded,
and stood in clear white relief
against the bright blue sky . . ."

– The Beauties of the Bosphorus,
Julia Pardoe

Murder in Pera

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

But I was not in this city as a tourist. Aside from the time I spent examining possible berthing-places for aeroliners, I was charged to deliver the first of my two secret letters here. Extracting it from the hidden compartment in my traveling-case, I went in search of the recipient, in the mercantile quarter of Pera.

Although this might be the Westernised, most modern part of the city, it nonetheless had much of the air of an Eastern bazaar. The streets were alive with Ottoman citizens and their Eastern neighbours and subjects, the richest arrayed in colorful robes, the ordinary folk in plain white that could dazzle in the Mediterranean sun, the poorest in rags and tatters, all but the most daring women veiled. Among them moved visiting traders and diplomats in their European garb, with even a few frock coats and top hats for those most determined to prove their modernity, despite the heat. Indeed, some of the figures thus attired were, I realised, Turks – evidently, these were the daring young modernisers, sympathisers with the "Young Turk" movement of which I had heard, determined to cast aside every symbol of the outmoded past.

"On the other side of this living lake rises the city of Constantinople. It displays a mountain of houses extending both ways, as far as the eye can reach; the seven hills form an undulating line across the horizon, crowned with imperial mosques . . . altogether disproportionate to everything about them, and the contrast gives them an apparent size, almost as great as the hills on which they stand . . . The whole of this view . . . was singularly lovely . . ."

— Narrative of a Residence at Constantinople, Robert Walsh

These crowds were brought to this place by one thing: trade. In ancient times, Constantinople was the terminus of the Silk Road, and the treasures of Asia were carried here for Europeans to purchase. Today, the commerce of the town also sees many European manufactures and devices — bright dyes and intricate watches, steel pens and children's toys of tin. But the shops I passed were mostly concerned with selling local and Asian goods to visitors from the West. Anything and everything was to be had; for a moment, I even contemplated the purchase of a tame monkey — the little creature chattered at me amicably from a street-vendor's shoulder, and appeared amusing and charming in a miniature jacket of crimson velvet. But I decided that I would have difficulty looking after such a pet on my travels, and in any case, monkeys can be treacherous, unreliable beasts. Other street-vendors offered me dates and apricots, or iced sherbet or mint tea from flasks hung over the salesman's shoulder. The smaller and poorer shops sold woven baskets and clay pots, while their richer neighbours had silks and fine woolen cloth; the grandest of all, waiting dark and cool along either side of the street, offered fine carpets, closely woven and dyed in subtle but intricate patterns, or bronze vessels and ornaments, hand-cast or beaten, decorated with minute patterns, then diligently polished to a dark sheen.

A dozen languages rang in my ears, and the scent of a score of spices struggled with the tang of oil-lamps and the reek of primitive drainage. But I had a mission, and could

not let myself be distracted for long. I was seeking Eznik Vaksoudian, an Armenian dealer in curios and antiquities, who maintained a shop in this district. Vaksoudian was known to Bayern's diplomats also to deal in information — essentially, he was a freelance spy, selling to the highest bidder. However, he was, it was judged, an honorable man in his way; once purchased, his loyalty was thought to be solid, and it seemed that he possessed a certain sympathy for the more honest of his customers. The letter I carried offered him a permanent, substantial retainer if he would work for us.

But this was not to be. As I approached Vaksoudian's shop, I became aware of a commotion. Attempting to preserve the air of a casual foreign tourist, I enquired of a passing Greek what had befallen.

"Ai, foreigner," he declared, "a terrible thing. Vaksoudian the Armenian has been murdered in his shop!"

This was worrying news which I felt obliged to investigate, and so I worked my way through the muttering, excitable crowd until I caught a glimpse of the scene; the body of a well-built middle-aged man, slain with three or four dagger-thrusts, lying upon the floor of a shop filled with brazen vases, rich woolen rugs, elegant glassware, silk scarves, and countless other oriental treasures.

"Constantinople is a city not of one nation but of many, and hardly more one than another . . . Eight or nine languages are constantly spoken in the streets and five or six appear on the shop fronts . . . The races have nothing to unite them; no relations, except those of trade, with one another; everybody lives in perpetual dread of everybody else."

— "Handbook for Travelers in Turkey,"
John Murray

I turned away from this unpleasant sight to scan the vicinity for further information, and to question the crowd — and found that I was not the only passer-by whose interest exceeded their dread of death. A local woman was standing at my side, and although she was enveloped in a yellow woolen shawl that served her as a veil, I could see that her eyes were young and attractive, in that dark,

Eastern fashion. Moreover, they burnt with a startling, intense curiosity, quickly leaping back from myself to the corpse.

In my homeland, I would have attempted to turn her attention from this subject. Although I have a high regard for the fortitude of her sex, I have been taught that a gentleman's place is to guard a lady from distress. However, I understood that for me to speak publicly, in this land, with any woman to whom I was not related, by blood or marriage, would cause public outrage; and so I decided that it was best to say nothing.

Ottoman Behavior

Other people who visited Ottoman Turkey at around the same time as Starkmann might have said that he described the locals fairly accurately, but at their *noisiest*. When haggling in a market or learning about a murder, anyone can get a bit excited. Actually, as a culture, they tended to pride themselves on their reserve and economy of movement. Remember, Turkey is quite a hot country; running around too much is just plain uncomfortable. Among other things, Ottomans found Victorian Westerners' habit of raising their hats in greeting all the time rather funny.

The crowd were seething with uncertainty, their mood rendered volatile by the sight of blood and a mystery, but some were talkative enough; I gathered that Vaksoudian had closed his shop at midday, and a later passer-by, noticing a wooden door swinging loose, had chanced to glance within, and hence had discovered the scene. It was generally assumed to be the result of a robbery which Vaksoudian had resisted too strenuously, which I judged possible; equally, I wondered if Vaksoudian's trade of freelance espionage had led him into danger. I doubted that the matter was related to my mission – but nonetheless, I felt that there might be cause for concern.

However, my speculations were disturbed when some of the crowd became irate at the sight of a *Farangi* taking an interest in local matters, and began to jostle me. There were officials present, members of what passes for a police force in Istanbul, but they showed me no sympathy, and I felt some alarm, until another foreign voice barked dismissively across the throng, in tones which convinced them that this harassment was unwise.

I turned to thank my rescuer, and found myself facing a tall, aristocratic figure, dressed in a simple but immaculate military uniform. He thrust out his hand briskly.

"It was no trouble," he declared, in excellent but accented German. "Count Nikolay Ignatyev, of the Russian Embassy to the Sublime Porte, at your service."

A Diplomatic Guide

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

I was to spend the subsequent few hours with the Count, who seemingly found it amusing to show a new visitor the sights. First, however, he cross-examined me very briefly concerning the murder; then, concluding that we could accomplish nothing by becoming involved in the event, we slipped away into the bustle of the streets.

As we went, I noticed the female spectator in the yellow shawl, apparently watching us from the shade of a nearby alley-way. I made some remark on this to the Count, and he looked toward the woman, briefly but pensively.

"Ah well," he said, "such macabre curiosity is a widespread human failing. One does encounter such – ghoulish folk, of either sex, wherever one travels."

I decided that he was probably correct, although it distressed me to think of one seemingly so fair thus obsessed with death.

We sat for a while in a coffee-shop, conversing. Across the room, a professional story-teller stood on a wooden podium, plying his ancient trade; for a moment, I endeavored to listen, to determine if this was, perhaps, one of the marvelous tales of the Arabian Nights in its original form, but my grasp of the local language was inadequate for me to follow the man's high-flown oratory, and in any case, I could not politely disregard my recent savior's conversation.

The Count declared that he was required to make a visit in Stamboul, commenting when he heard that I would be touring the East that I would have plentiful opportunities to visit mere shops, but only one to see certain marvels.

I believe that this was a little unfair of him, as the commerce of Istanbul is legendary throughout the world; even the brief glimpses I caught, of both the ancient covered bazaar and the manifold shop-windows of Pera, convinced me that here was Aladdin's Cave made real. The bazaar especially is a maze of

The bazaar is a maze of arched, vaulted passages, lined with stalls selling exquisite rugs and carpets, silks and laces, Chinese porcelain and Indian brasses; a visitor could spend days in the place.

arched, vaulted passages, lined with stalls selling exquisite rugs and carpets, silks and laces, Chinese porcelain and Indian brasses; a visitor could spend days in the place (most of them bargaining).

However, the Count truly did indeed lead me to sights unique in this world. We crossed a floating wooden pontoon bridge from Pera to Stamboul, whose narrow alleyways led windingly up to the region of the old Topkapi Palace. As we approached this, we became aware of a commotion in the crowd. The Count looked about him and listened briefly, then turned to me.

"You are fortunate," he said, "the Sultan himself is to progress in full state from the Palace to the Hagia Sophia Mosque for the afternoon prayers. Some whim of his, no doubt."

And indeed, I did witness this occurrence – a sight from another age. The great crowd of Turkish citizens, much like those in Pera, parted with much confusion and some jostling, but swiftly enough; I sensed that they did not wish to be thought to be obstructing their monarch. One or two were slow or unlucky, and were hastened on their way, with many a brutal blow or kick, by a band of burly men in tall, red, cylindrical hats, who sallied forth with short, heavy staves in their hands.

Then, a vast throng of people spilled out from the outer court of the Topkapi Palace through the towering gates, while the Count calmly identified some of the more important figures or categories; Dervishes in woolen shawls, astrologers in ornate robes, the Chief Cook of the Court carrying (I do not jest) a giant spoon as his mark of office, the Chief Huntsman in a golden cap, religious scholars in pure white. All around, I saw more of the tall red hats.

"Those fellows are wearing the same style of costume as the police with whom I had dealings earlier," I observed to Ignatyev.

"Yes," he agreed, "they are *bostanchis* – the palace gardeners."

I expressed startlement, and the Count smiled.

"The Sultans are fond of their gardens, and employ large forces to tend them," he explained. "Stout, simple country boys, happy with their work. Over the centuries, they have also been employed in many additional tasks. Police, fire-fighting, executing enemies of the Sultan – excellent fellows. Very loyal to their master. Today, the Corps of Gardeners is what keeps Constantinople working."

Then came the reason for all this excitement. First, we saw two palace servants carrying two huge and ornate turbans on the end of long poles, which the crowd cheered dutifully.

"The Sultan's spare turbans," said the Count, "sent out as preliminary salute."

After that, there were two officials in fur-trimmed robes, carrying silver staves, preceding a serious-looking fellow in green with a great, gold-ringed, conical turban.

After that was a huge black-skinned individual in especially ornate and complicated garb.

"The *Kislar Aga*," was Ignatyev's explanation, "the Chief Black Eunuch. Captured and castrated by illegal slave-traders, probably never learned to read – now he's one of the most powerful men in the Empire. In the harem, his power is absolute."

"And that is all we will see of the harem," I commented. The Count smiled.

"Indeed," he agreed, "the slave-girls and their servants remain within – a separate world. Who knows what dark secrets and mysteries lurk in that palace, my friend?"

Then came the Sultan himself, Abdul Aziz. Matters were carefully arranged that we in the crowd could barely see him. The Sultan was preceded by a throng of yet more officials, including the Chief Armourer, bearing his scimitar in a velvet case.

He himself was on horseback, and was surrounded by guards wearing helmets topped with circular, umbrella-like plumes of feathers so vast and broad that they shielded the ruler almost entirely from the vulgar gaze. Through this screen, I glimpsed a full face, staring eyes, and a gray-streaked beard.

"An impressive fellow," commented the Count dryly. "They say that his first imperial command was to order a giant bed for the palace, and that he eats a dozen fried eggs at a sitting – except when he throws them at someone who annoys him."

"Very imposing," I agreed.

"He is also a fool, and probably mad," the Count continued in a low voice. "You should see the current state of the Empire's debts, according to my embassy's calculations. The Sultan's tour of Europe a few years ago did nothing but increase the debt and show him more to spend it on. Oh, and I'm told that he enjoys himself by playing soldiers in the cellars of the Dolmabache, with real soldiers and live ammunition."

I wondered if the native Turks shared the Count's view; there was certainly a quantity of muttering among those near to us. One wild-eyed fellow surged forward, shouting in barely coherent Turkish – what, I could not say – before he was caught, pinioned, beaten, and dragged away by a band of the gardeners. However, there was also much cheering, and many cries of unmistakable enthusiasm. I recalled that the Turks are, above all, a patriotic people, who revere their national traditions; any sultan, no matter how demented, could count upon a solid core of instinctive support from his people.

When the procession had passed on out of sight, the Count led me in the opposite direction, into the outer court of the Topkapi Palace. I had read of this place; an old warren of living quarters and government buildings, now largely abandoned for the former purpose, as recent Sultans have preferred to reside in less gloomy residences

Who knows what dark secrets
and mysteries lurk in that palace?

such as the Dolmabahçe. However, the Topkapı remains a major center of Ottoman government.

"In addition," commented the Count on this topic, "the harem houses the concubines of previous Sultans, except for those who have been married off to favored officials, and the one who managed the trick of becoming Queen Mother to the next ruler. A 'Palace of Tears,' as the Turks put it."

We walked through the Outer Court, a broad expanse within the palace's great park (which itself is surrounded by a wall three miles long, and slopes down to the waters of the Bosphorus). Passing through what the Count referred to as the Middle Gate, we entered a Second Court, and the Count gestured to indicate the layout of this place.

"To our right, the Cooks' Quarters and the Palace Kitchens. Before us, the Gate of Felicity. To our immediate left, the wood-stores and stables, along with the quarters of the Wiggid Halberdiers. They serve as guards, but their main duty is carrying firewood wherever it is needed. Their wigs are designed to prevent them casting sideways glances at the Sultan's concubines, should they have to go near the harem. And over there, in the far left corner, is the meeting-place of the *diwan*, the Sultan's council. The Sultan himself has a private room in that tower, from which he may spy on the council without them knowing whether he is there."

The Count paused. "We cannot enter the Third Court without formal invitation; that is where the Throne Room is sited, along with a library, a small private mosque, and so on. A corridor runs from around here somewhere, alongside that court and into the depths of the harem, which is over beyond the *diwan* chamber. No foreign male would ever be permitted in there, of course. Nor in the fourth court."

"What lies there?" I asked.

"Some fine gardens, I'm told," the Count answered, "and a great and exquisite Kiosk built to celebrate the capture of Baghdad in centuries past. Oh, and the Cage. That is where especially cautious Sultans have kept their own brothers prisoner, for decades, with only deaf-mutes and sterile concubines for company. To avoid intrigue and mutiny, you understand."

"That is barbarous!" I said.

"Oh, it no longer happens much," said the Count. "In any case, it was preferable to the original idea. They used to just murder their brothers."

By now, we had reached a doorway in the vicinity of the *diwan* chamber, where the Count knocked. An ornately dressed clerk appeared, and a brief conversation followed, too quiet and swift for me to follow. Then the Count turned to me. "I am done here," he declared, "let us depart. Will you take refreshment in my house?"

The Count's residence proved to be one of the anonymous, slightly shabby-seeming wood-and-plaster buildings of Pera. As we entered, he apologised for its appearance. "I have had little time to amend its rather Turkish nature," he explained, "and in any case, it helps to put Turkish visitors at ease."

At this point, I paused, impressed. The house was an illustration of the fact, which I had heard explained but never truly grasped, that a Turk's home is a private matter, and that the *exterior* is considered far less important than the *interior*. (Similarly, those Turkish mosques which I glimpsed were often plain and even drab without, but ornamented internally with a richness and intricacy that would make the grandest Christian cathedral appear stark.)

We had passed through a small, negligible door. The plain walls surrounded a shady courtyard, surrounded by pillared cloisters embellished with climbing plants; at the center, a small fountain splashed pleasantly. At the far end was a flight of steps, up which the Count led me to a saloon. This was heavily decorated with paint and gilding, and the superb rugs and carpets of the East. A set of well-stuffed furniture showed that the Count retained some European habits; a Turk would surely have sat on the rugs or the broad window-ledges. The windows themselves overlooked the courtyard through an intricately carved screen.

"I believe that this was once the *harem*," the Count commented. "The ladies of the household could look out at male guests without being seen." He turned to a local servant and commanded coffee.

The Gift

From the Private Memoirs *of Eberhardt Starkmann*

As we sat together, speaking of European events, a servant entered and bowed low. "Mahmud Nedim Pasha," he announced, and a moment later, a well-dressed Turk entered.

I leapt to my feet almost before I recalled the significance of the name, and Count Ignatyev, too, arose.

The Turk was in his fifties, with a cold, fierce gaze. I had seen him earlier in the day, in procession; although he was no longer preceded by staff-bearers, and his huge formal turban had been replaced by a simple red fez, and his robes by a partly Westernised costume with only a few bright green facings and details, his air of power was unchanged. Glancing out through the screen as he gravely shook hands with the Count, I saw a small band of servants standing quietly in the shade.

These men were clad in plain Ottoman tunics, but they openly bore steel scimitars, and I glimpsed a pistol tucked in one sash. Their tanned, mustachioed faces were impassive, but their eyes were alert; one met my gaze, and I felt myself assessed and dismissed in one moment as no threat.

The Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire travels nowhere unguarded.

"May I introduce Herr Eberhardt Starkmann, of Bayern?" said the Count, in English, clearly having determined what language we all shared with competence.

"Thank you, Ambassador," said the Grand Vizier, as he shook my hand, and I realised the level of power and influence into which I had fallen.



We resumed our seats as the Count sent for another coffee, and the Grand Vizier sat, apparently studying the Count. The Turks are not, as a people, given to what the English (who are experts) call "small talk." Rather, when they are at ease, even in company, they prefer a relaxed silence.

But the Count clearly had felt the need to progress to significant matters. "As my message said, I have the gift," he declared.

"I am pleased," said the Grand Vizier. "This will assist me in convincing the Sultan of your nation's goodwill."

"Of course." The Count smiled slightly, and gestured to the servant who had just brought the third coffee. The man was evidently well-trained; he departed instantly, and returned within a moment with a long, narrow, solid-seeming box resting in both his hands.

The Count presented this wooden case to the Grand Vizier. "A fitting gift for the Sultan, I believe," he said. Mahmud Nedim Pasha smiled, placed the case upon a convenient table, and opened it.

Within lay a sword. This was not an obviously extraordinary weapon; its long, straight blade was of blackened steel, while its cross-guard was of plain brass, and its grip was wrapped in plain, dark cords. Its pommel, however, was a large, dark red stone – surely a garnet, for a ruby of that size would be precious beyond conception, and the color was very dark; it was, however, evidently well-cut, for it

caught the afternoon sunlight so that it almost seemed to glow.

The Grand Vizier lifted the blade carefully, one hand under the grip, the other under the blade, and spoke a thoughtful phrase in Turkish that exceeded my knowledge of that tongue. My curiosity overcame me.

"An antique blade?" I enquired.

"Indeed," said the Count, "one that my commercial representatives discovered in an obscure, ah, curio-shop in an easterly province. I believe that the Sultan will be pleasantly surprised by it."

"I think that there is more of a tale than that, to tell the Sultan," said the Grand Vizier.

The Count smiled. "Oh yes," he said, "there are tales. You may inform him that, if we have identified this blade correctly, it was once used by the Caliphs of Baghdad. You can say that it was no doubt forged by his court wizards – the *Brethren of Purity* were the greatest Sorcerous Order of that age, I believe, so perhaps it was them – to make its wielder mighty in battle."

"Not a recommendation," commented the Grand Vizier. "The Caliphs fell, in battle, and were murdered."

"Ah, but there's the important part," the Count went on. "The sword was stolen, by a young man who had slipped into the Caliph's harem to romance one of the slave-girls. When the eunuchs discovered him, he found this sword

lying around, took it up, and fought his way out through an army of guards. But the girl was killed in the course of all this – that makes the tale so much more *moral*, do you not think? – and the young man fled, grieving, to the wilderness, where he lived and died. The Caliphs, deprived of their magic sword, fell; the sword was only discovered recently, in the hermit's cave, by a lost traveller. He sold it to a merchant, and so, eventually, it passed to us. Fortunately, one of our friends – a scholar – recognised it."

"Perhaps we should say that the cave was hidden and guarded by magic?" asked the Grand Vizier. "After all . . ."

"No," interrupted the Count, "then we would only have to explain where the cave was, and so on. There would be . . . complications. People are always far too interested to hear of buried treasure." Mahmud Nedim Pasha nodded thoughtfully at that.

I had remained scrupulously silent throughout this exchange, but the Count turned to me with a look of cool amusement. "I fear that our German guest is shocked. He believes that we are concocting lies to impress the Sultan." He waved aside my denials. "Oh, we are certainly considering

the best way of telling the story that goes with this blade. All good diplomacy is about telling stories, and the Sultan likes a good tale as well as anyone in this land. But I swear to you, my friend, on my honor – we are not cheating the Sultan, or misleading him in anything important. This is truly an ancient and excellent blade, and a mighty weapon. A fitting gift for the ruler of the East." He produced a fine silk handkerchief from his pocket, and turned once more to the sword, which the Grand Vizier had placed on the table. The Count drew the cloth swiftly and lightly over the blade, then turned to show me two separate halves of fabric.

"The edge, as you can see, is truly formidable, and the quality of the metal is excellent," he remarked. "I would match it against any target, were it not too precious to wield."

The Grand Vizier looked at us. "I do not understand your European humour," he said, "but this blade will certainly serve. Now, Mr. Starkmann . . . How long will you remain in this city?"

And so, my own thoughts returned to the subject of my travels in the Empire.

≡ TO THE LEVANT AND THE EUPHRATES ≡

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

My work in Constantinople complete, I had no good cause to remain in that city, and my employment required me to survey other sites and locations. The Royal Luftschwansa was considering lofting its craft over the highlands of Anatolia, and potential aeroliner ports were thought to lie along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Therefore, I was to make my way across the heartland of Turkey to the Levant.

And so, I made the ferry-crossing to Scutari, and found there the pair of horses which the Bayernese Embassy had acquired on my behalf. The diplomats further informed me of the roads and inn-towns that were considered safe along my way . . .

Tom Olam Comments:

Eberhardt spent over two weeks riding across Anatolia – and he was making good time, on some of the best roads in the region. However, as his diary says at some length, "good roads" there aren't quite the same as they are in Europe. It's poor, old-fashioned country. A lot of that travel was pretty dull, I'm afraid, so I'll just pass on some of his impressions.

"May your fatigued and hated soul find no
more rest in purgatory than a European's
hat enjoys on Earth!"

– Turkish curse

*Through Anatolia: to
Angora and Beyond*

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

Anatolia is mountainous country, comparable to the Alps in many ways, but with a climate that ranges from burning Mediterranean sun to a freezing wind that seems to come directly from the steppes. It may be that novelty over-stimulated my perceptions, but I thought it even more vertiginous than any mountain-land in Europe; I would swear that I rode for days without seeing a single patch of level ground large enough to graze a horse.

The agriculture of the region is a mixture of small mountain farms and pastures with herds of sheep and mountain goats. Some Turks retain their ancient nomad ways; I saw tribal bands on the backs of small, rugged ponies, driving their flocks from one highland pasture to another. These nomads were clad in rough but colorful woolen garb, with fur-lined hats pulled down low. Their chins were shaven but their moustaches were long and bushy, in the common Turkish style. Many had long knives and even curved swords tucked through their belts, but I judged them to be safe enough to meet in peace; even if some of them were not honest men, their herds kept them too busy for banditry, and the local pashas would often be cruel and unrelenting in pursuit of brigands, if the mood took them – which might be especially likely if a foreigner was harmed. And all that aside, all Turks hold hospitality in high regard, and can oftimes be persuaded to regard a foreigner as a guest.

The nomads rest and sleep in *yurts*, the ancient, traditional tents of the Asiatic nomad peoples. These are large, circular assemblages, consisting of a lightweight wooden frame – somewhat like a giant umbrella – supporting walls of heavy felt. From the glimpses that I caught, the interiors are decorated with a multitude of colorful rugs and carpets; carpet-weaving is, after all, the supreme decorative art of the region.

This is a poor country by European standards, backward in its economic development and limited in fertility. Furthermore, it has recently suffered a number of poor harvests; I saw signs of the beginnings of outright famine. In poorer villages, the peasants were gaunt and slow-moving in their rough wool rags, and their fields showed as many stones as leaves.

On occasion, I was obliged to stop in smaller villages, where “inns” were little more than the houses of slightly more prosperous villagers. In such places, I found the people reserved and cautious of foreigners; they would spend long periods asking me my name and business in the area, repeating the same questions over and over.

And yet they also displayed that legendary Middle Eastern hospitality; eventually, they would somehow become satisfied that I was no enemy, although I never was able to discern exactly when this acceptance came. Then they became vastly generous, serving me meals of grilled lamb and chicken, unleavened bread, vegetables, and sometimes intensely sweet honey confections. These were followed by tiny cups of the famously strong Turkish coffee, highly sweetened and sometimes flavored with spices.

(As good Muslims, these folk never touched wine or any other alcoholic drink; the decadently wealthy people of the cities might quietly disregard this ancient prohibition, but these country folk would not. I was told that some of the nomads preserve their ancient custom of consuming fermented mares’ milk; fortunately, none of this was ever offered to me.)

I judged that these feasts were more than the peasants could afford, and yet they often refused any form of payment, with signs of dismay that their generosity should have been misunderstood. However, I found that they would accept *gifts*, especially if these were offered to children, and some of the luxuries from my supplies – sugar, tea, and good coffee especially – were always welcomed.

The Turks are bound by ancient tradition in many things, and possess the jealous modesty of the Muslim East in full measure. I ate these meals in the company of the men of each household, while the womenfolk served the food in respectful silence. The Turkish view of the place of the Fair Sex would irritate the most old-fashioned European – although only the wealthiest of nobles and rulers maintain enclosed harems. The country-folk simply cannot afford such arrangements, and their womenfolk must perform many essential tasks for the maintenance of the household.

On the road, I occasionally encountered patrols of cavalry soldiers – surly fellows, albeit too nervous to make difficulties for me once they had established that my papers

were in order. These, I judged, were little more than competent hired ruffians in the pay of local overlords and tax-gatherers; they usually wore rich garb, but not true uniforms – white turbans wrapped around scarlet caps, green or blue *caftans* (light cotton robes – essentially long, belted shirts), baggy trousers, and boots of fine, soft leather. They carried scimitars, and usually had long, slender lances; some – a few – possessed firearms, which might be anything from European pepper-pot pistols to, in very truth, antique flintlock muskets. I even saw a few riders with fine, double-curved bows in leathern cases slung from their saddles. Their horses were generally good, graceful and high-spirited, with fine leather trappings often embellished with silver. From my little military experience, I judged that their riders might be courageous enough, in a wild sort of way – they carried themselves as Proud Turk Warriors, and this breed is not to be underestimated, I think – but I would say little for either their discipline or the reliability of their firearms.

Eventually, I reached the provincial city of Angora (which in the Turkish tongue is referred to as “Ankara”). Here is the origin of the fine goat’s hair wool that one sees by that name in the fashion-houses of Europe. Trade in this valuable commodity has made the city relatively prosperous.

On the city streets, one encounters many Turkish merchants – and some few European traders. The Turks were dressed, it first appeared, much like the leading peasants and nomads of the farm-lands, in heavy woolen tunics, trousers, and jackets, with robust leather boots and belts, and fur-lined hats. However, a second glance would pick out silk embroidery embellishing the wool, and highly colored silk shirts beneath the jackets. The wool might, of course, be the local product, fine and glossy, while the furs these folk wore would be of rarer and more exotic kinds – bear and even mink, rather than plain rabbit.

The “Europeanised” folk who I saw were often the most incongruous sights, as they mixed garments I found familiar with local garb. I saw long, heavy woolen riding-coats, embellished with silk, worn over even more colorful *caftans* – and under those were European shirts and bowties. I swear that one fellow had on full evening dress, along with nomad boots and hat, and a rich woven robe . . .

The Levant

Tom Olam Comments:

Eberhardt eventually came down out of the Turkish highlands, and started making his way down the Mediterranean coast. This is the Levant – so called because it’s where the sun rises, from a Mediterranean point of view – and in the Castle Falkenstein world, it’s a meeting-place of cultures, as traders from West and East meet here to haggle and organize, just as Marco Polo started out from here on his great journey, centuries ago. It’s also crawling with European exiles and expatriates – beyond the reach of European law and power, but still in touch with European life.

And so, completing my journey along the coast, I arrived in the city of Beirut. This is an ancient town, whose prosperity grows from maritime trade; hence, the wealth of the place has risen and fallen with this trade over the centuries. In our time, it has profited from the growth of Industry in Europe, for it is now the main port where the manufactures of the West arrive in the markets of the East. The mountains inland may occasionally suffer from feuds and private wars, but this merely causes peaceable traders to flee to the city, where they prosper, while the European powers take an interest in this market-place, and persuade the Ottomans to govern with a light hand – after all, there are profits enough for everyone here. I found it a bustling, cosmopolitan city, where dozens of nationalities meet to do business, and European missionary schools and local merchants desiring skilled employees unite to ensure a high standard of education.

Traveling inland, I came to Damascus, in Syria. This, too, is a city grown wealthy from trade, although it seemed less relaxed than Beirut; I am told that the local Muslims are prone to occasional excesses of fanaticism, and the Turks and their Arab subjects face each other here with barely concealed dislike. Indeed, this was where I first encountered the Bedouin Arabs of the desert, as they ride in on horse and camel to trade and to visit their urban cousins.

They are an impressive folk, as I saw when I encountered them on the streets of the city – although they are also clearly proud and, I think, dangerous to cross. The first time I met a band of desert-dwellers, they were riding in a loose array down the middle of the road, paying little attention to those about them; they swept past me in a flurry of white robes and fine horses. I confess that I stood, watching admiringly, until they were out of sight.

They stand taller than the Turks – although not above the common height of Europeans – and their tanned faces have strong, dark features, not the least of which are their stern, alert eyes. Their loose, enveloping garb protects them from the burning desert sun; against other dangers, they have only their skill at arms and their deep knowledge of the ways of the land and its creatures. That party was mounted on the fine Arab horses that draw many Europeans to this land; later, I would see others on camels – less-stylish mounts, but essential to the Bedouin's survival in the desert. But mounted or afoot, the Bedouin moves with the assurance of one who feels that he owns this land; their attitude to town-dwellers is often that of the free man to one who lives trapped in a box. Other Arabs do not share this view; the town-dwellers see themselves as more sophisticated, of course, and some traveling merchants will tell you that the site of a man's home is not the important thing. But all, I think, have some respect for the pure life of the desert, and even the proudest lord of a

Scenario Seed: Rivals for the Railways

As Eberhardt's observations suggest, the Prussians are insinuating themselves into the Ottoman Empire by offering to build railways. The Second Compact can't hope to match this, or to catch up with the Prussian diplomatic project by conventional means, but they might just be able to sidestep the issue.

Could Bayernese aeroliners replace those trains? Realistically, not really – certainly not for heavy freight or cheap passenger transport. But they might become the Empire's preferred luxury passenger system (anyway, this is the *Falkenstein* world, where style and ingenuity often count for more than brutal realism). So it might be worth setting up some services.

Of course, this will require determination, diplomacy, and engineering skills – and the people responsible may have to guard against Prussian sabotage . . . or worse. Sounds like a job for some heroic adventurers, doesn't it?

fortified town will carefully trace his ancestry back to some honored, wandering tribe.

I was not, as it happened, in Damascus for the time of *Hajj*. Once every 12 lunar months, when the great Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca falls due, a party of thousands of pilgrims assembles in Damascus for mutual support and assistance. Members of the group gather for weeks in advance to buy supplies, and when they eventually set out, they are traditionally led by some important ruler or religious scholar.

I had one other encounter in Damascus, the first of a series of similar experiences that were to concern me greatly over subsequent days. As I sat in a coffee-house in a part of the city favored by foreigners, I heard voices speaking in German.

"Yes," one was saying, "the valley leading south is fine. We can lay tracks all the way down to Jerusalem, and on to Suez. That is simply a matter of time and money. But can we trust those damnable desert barbarians not to interfere?"

The one to whom he was speaking shrugged. "What do they matter?" he demanded. "We will have the protection of Turkish soldiers, armed with good German guns. And," he sneered, "this railway will be designed to carry the heathens on their jaunt to their precious 'Holy City.' No true Muslim will dare to object!"

They laughed at this as at a great joke. Remembering the nature of my second, secret mission, I thought hard as I drank my small, dark coffee – and I hoped that I was successful in remaining inconspicuous as the Prussians departed.

From Damascus, I turned northward again, and followed a somewhat irregular course, sometimes through the valleys of Syria, sometimes turning a little to the west, back into the land of Lebanon, reviewing geography and geology as I went. On three or four occasions, I heard talk of Prussian survey-parties in the vicinity, under the protection of the Ottoman overlords, and although I avoided any meetings, I suspected that the small, gossip-prone expatriate community of the region must have carried word of my presence to them.

One brief diversion took me to the small Lebanese community of Djoun, where I paused for a bare hour to visit an old, ruined building, once a Christian convent. There was nothing to see in this place now, but my reading made me sentimental. For this was where the legendary, eccentric Englishwoman, Lady Hester Stanhope, held court, earlier in our century.

Lady Hester was high-born, related to a Prime Minister of her nation, but she departed that land when her family fell from power. She traveled the world with a small household, before seemingly deciding, while in the East, that she was the reincarnation, or perhaps the spiritual descendant, of Zenobia, the legendary Queen of Palmyra who defied Rome.

(Palmyra was one of the great trade-cities of its age, a provincial capital within Rome's lands; its remains lie in the desert by the Arab village of Tadmor, to the east of my own route. Zenobia attempted to capture part of Rome's territory for herself in the third century of the Christian Era, and was defeated; Arabs still look back to her as a heroine of their people.)

Inspired by her dreams, Lady Hester established herself as a political and social leader in the region, and was much talked of in Europe. Although her influence waned, I found local people who recalled her from their own childhoods.

I passed through the city of Homs, and then on to Aleppo, Syria's northern second city, another center of trade and weaving. Now, I had to turn east. I could have done so sooner, but – the requirements of my survey aside – this would have demanded a journey across the starkest of deserts – something requiring more skills than I possess.

Evil in the Desert

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

And so I hired a horse and a camel, and found a small, trustworthy caravan for company. The Euphrates River runs to within 50 miles of Aleppo, but those miles are burning desert – and, besides, I would have to journey a little farther than that to find the passage on a river-craft which I sought.

The travelers with whom I rode were Arab merchants, wise in the ways of the wilderness and used to dealings with foreigners; a Bayernese consul had vouched for their trustworthiness, and I ensured that we regularly shared bread and salt. (This can easily be done tactfully in the East, and only the most contemptible of Arabs would so much as think of betraying one thus qualified as guest or host.) They in turn assured me that the roads we were to travel were rarely threatened by bandits, and that they themselves were kin or friends to most Bedouin of the region, and hence immune to persecution. I myself rode only an indifferent horse, and had but small luggage; I was

probably not a tempting target for banditry, but every reassurance is pleasant.

As we rode one evening, pushing on through the early dusk in search of the pleasant *caravanseraï* that my companions assured me was nearby, my horse fell a little behind. I looked around the desert, and seemed to hear a voice calling. Turning my head, I saw a figure atop a nearby dune. Thinking that it might be another traveller, somehow lost, I turned my horse that way.

"Who is there?" I called out.

"Friend," came the reply, in a high, light voice. "Lost . . . help . . ."

I pressed closer, puzzled. How could a woman come to be lost out here? "Who are you?" I asked again.

"Friend" she repeated, and I saw a modestly veiled face, a graceful figure, with intensely curious eyes . . .

"*Effendi!*" A cry came from behind me. It was one of my traveling companions, a merchant named Muqla, riding up briskly, his hand on the hilt of his sword. I called out some greeting and looked back to the woman, to see her springing back, both her hands raised defensively, fingers spread and bent.

"There is no danger," I said, but she hissed like a cat.

"*Effendi!*"

The merchant cried again, and

I heard him draw his sword, "*Ghul!*"

I gaped uselessly while Muqla rode to my side, good steel in hand, and called out a Muslim prayer. The woman – the *creature* – screeched in rage, but staggered further back. Then Muqla spurred his unhappy horse forward, sword outstretched, and the Ghul, choking with fury, fell on all fours like a beast and scurried away into the growing darkness.

Muqla rode after her a few paces, but then paused. I understood his caution; night was drawing in, and human eyes could easily lose a dark and scurrying form – whereas *inhuman* eyes might locate a human rider more easily, and inhuman malice might change a flight to an ambush. The other merchants were as yet some way from us, and by the time that a cautious hunt could be mustered, the Ghul might be far away.

My rescuer sheathed his sword, and rode back to my side, his lip curled in a snarl. "A lowly man-eater," he commented, "but cunning. You are well, my friend?"

I nodded, feeling foolish. "I should not have permitted it to deceive me," I said.

"We should have warned a stranger and a guest better," Muqla replied. "Ah well – we shall all know now that caution is needful. Tonight, we will post guards with unsheathed swords. Those monsters fly before a blade, or the name of Allah."

"Yes," I said, "in my land, we have monsters that fear iron and prayers. I should not have been deceived. I should not have approached it."

"A lowly man-eater –
but cunning . . ."

LADY EXPLORERS

Tom Olam Comments: One striking – even startling – feature of New European contact with the Middle East is that, despite all the stuff about Muslim women being locked away in harems, and the belief that visiting New European women would be treated with contempt, a large number of very remarkable ladies have not only made the journey, but have thrived. For some reason, a lot of them seem to have been British aristocrats – but all would-be adventuresses of New Europa may take inspiration!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Although she died a century ago, in 1762, Lady Mary remains, in the 1870s, one of our major sources of information on Ottoman life, especially on women in the harem – something that even Eberhardt didn't see much of. She's mainly remembered as a brilliant letter-writer, but her husband Edward was British ambassador to Turkey from 1716 to 1718, and she made many friends among the local upper classes. It's her letters home that tell us so much. Among other things, she describes conversations with high-ranking Ottomans of both sexes, visits to the women's baths, and the detailed advantages and disadvantages of female dress in either culture.

Oh, and Lady Mary was also a reasonable poet and an early feminist, engaged in spirited literary disputes with some of the great writers of her day, and introduced smallpox inoculation to England from Turkey.

Lady Hester Stanhope

Herr Starkmann tells some of Lady Hester's tale. She was the daughter of an Earl, and niece of William Pitt, the Prime Minister of England. She managed Pitt's household for several years, and gained a name as a political and society hostess – then found herself thrown out of that position when her uncle died in 1806. So she left England, apparently in a titanic huff, and wandered off round the Middle East with a servant, a doctor, and a young lover, eventually meeting Mehmet Ali, the overlord of Egypt. Legend has it that he told her the story of Zenobia, which may have been a mistake. He was no doubt planning his assault on the Ottoman Empire by then, but Lady Hester shot off up the coast ahead of him, found the ruined convent at Djoun in 1814, and settled her household there.

She was the kind of born-and-raised aristocrat who so expects people to obey her that they often do, and she did indeed become quite a power in the region for a few years. Mehmet Ali carefully steered round her little kingdom when he launched his campaign. Later on, she hit money troubles, and started claiming that she was some kind of prophetess. Given her history, connections, and charisma, she gained quite a reputation in Europe as a living legend (and maybe just a little bit as a joke). She died in 1839. Eberhardt probably read about her in

something written by one of the curious Europeans who visited her.

Incidentally, Morrolan suspects that there may be a secret Magickal angle to all this. Lady Hester really believed that she was the reincarnation of Zenobia, or something like, and her father had a reputation as an eccentric but talented scientist-inventor. (He came up with calculating machines, a microscope lens, a steam carriage, and a new variety of cement, among other things.) All of this implies that the family may have been enthusiasts for Temple of Ra beliefs in mixing sorcery and super-science.

On the other hand, Lady Hester's father was also a political radical – a revolutionary, even. And her uncle and patron was Prime Minister (but no great radical). And she effectively ruled a portion of the Middle East for years. Well, the Illuminati are the political string-pullers, whereas the Freemasons have the social connections and Sufi Order tie-ups. Was Hester a renegade from one Order, working for another? If Morrolan knows any more, he's not saying – but even he can be cagey about Magick. (I wish we knew how old the Temple of Ra *really* is – could Lady Hester have been a founder-member, bringing them Masonic or Illuminati secrets to kick-start their research?)

Perhaps we ought to organize a team to go investigate all this. They'd probably have to start in England, looking into the Stanhope and Pitt families, then move on to Syria and see what they could find round the ruins at Djoun. Of course, they'd have to include scholars, sorcerers, and guards. Hmm . . . sounds like a job for an adventuring party, doesn't it?

Lady Anne Blunt

Now, in the 1870s, we're hearing about Lady Anne Blunt, and her husband Wilfred, an ex-diplomat turned poet, who are apparently planning an expedition into the depths of the desert. They already live in the Levant, and have both learned Arabic; those who know them say that she's a better linguist than he, and enough of a writer that they're looking forward to her account of any expedition.

Come to think of it, I wouldn't be surprised if any adventurers heading that way in the next few years ran into the Blunts; look out for a couple of pleasant English aristocrats riding round the desert with a small group of guides and the best Arab horses you'll see for a long way round. Although I've heard her called a quiet, meek-looking woman, Lady Anne has evidently inherited her family's intelligence and determination; I'm looking forward to her book myself.

(An Editor Remarks: In our universe, Lady Anne Blunt's book is called A Pilgrimage to Nejd. See the Bibliography.)

Muqla smiled. "Do not be ashamed, *effendi*," he said, "Ghuls are cunning, expert in shape-changing. Some can reach into a man's mind, and find shapes there which the other will trust. Doubtless this was one such."

"Cannot such monsters be exterminated?" I asked weakly.

"They lurk in the vast desert," Muqla said. "No governor has men enough to hunt them down, and the tribes lack the will. And they are rare enough. That one must be bold, or very hungry, to approach a busy road. We must pass word around the bazaars and caravanserais. Perhaps the Pasha will awaken for long enough to organise trackers and soldiers to find and slay it."

"He should," I said, "if he claims to merit his rank . . ."

Muqla shrugged that off. "Your lords may be stronger than the Turks," he commented, "but can even they slay all the monsters of your land?"

"No," I admitted. "Forgive me. I am still shaken."

"Did the creature find something in your mind?" Muqla asked.

"Perhaps," I said. "There did seem to be something familiar in its appearance."

"Do not let it poison your thoughts, my friend," he answered.

We rode on, with me restating my gratitude. That night, Muqla and I ate together by the fire in the courtyard of the caravansera, exchanging tales of our homelands. He was a merchant and a traveller, fascinated in a pragmatic way by accounts of foreign nations; he paid for such with the gossip of a hundred bazaars and tales of the proud accomplishments of a hundred generations of his tribe.

But as I settled down to sleep in that shelter, I found myself still puzzled and concerned by the events of the day. What if the creature had not *needed* to plunder my memories? Or, if it had, *what had it found*?

❧ THE LAND OF TWO RIVERS ❧

Down the Euphrates

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

My caravan reached the river-town of Dayr az Zawr, and there I parted from my companions, with many declarations of friendship on both sides. I believe that all these were sincere; when they take you for a friend, even if only for a handful of days on the road, the desert Arabs are among the truest gentlemen that one might hope to meet.

I, however, was to change my mode of travel; I took passage on a small river-boat. Somewhat to my surprise, this proved to be a well-built steam-launch of modern design. Enquiring about this of a fellow-passenger, I was told that such innovations were due to the influence of the governor of Baghdad, one Midhat Pasha, who showed much enthusiasm for such modernisation. This was of some interest to me, for I had reason to pay a call on this Pasha when I arrived in his city.

Now, as an amateur scholar, I felt that I was journeying into the very heart of history. For the river on which I traveled was the Euphrates, which – together with the Tigris, a hundred miles away – watered the fields of the earliest Great Civilizations: Assyria, Babylon, Ur of the Chaldees. However, I was soon reminded that this area had sore need of irrigation, as the steam-launch sailed steadily down into the great, sun-parched plain of Mesopotamia.

A system of canals links the rivers where they draw closest together, before they actually merge into the marshes above Basra, and one of these was just large enough to

permit the steam-launch to make its way to the city of Baghdad, on the banks of the Tigris . . .

A Thief of Baghdad

Baghdad – ancient city of Haroun al-Rashid, once Capital of the Caliphate, "City of Peace," is trapped between

Baghdad – ancient city of Haroun al-Rashid, once Capital of the Caliphate, "City of Peace," is trapped between its ancient glory and the modern world – but it favours the ancient.

its ancient glory and the modern world – but it favours the ancient. My first sight was of gilded domes and weathered walls, reflected in the waters of the canal; the screech of the launch's whistle cut across the scene, but as it faded away, I heard the distant sound of a *muezzin* calling the faithful to prayer, steady and undisturbed atop a

towering minaret.

It is not always easy to remember that this city has suffered terribly since its heyday; when it fell to the Mongols, it was burned to the ground, while the last Caliph of the Abbasid line was murdered. However, each dynasty that has captured it in the intervening centuries has sought to resurrect its glory, in order to justify some claim to the Caliphate, and it is said that certain unaging Djinn, bound by spells of command, have become expert in restoring its gilded domes and perfect courtyards to their precise original state.

To be sure, it has become more of a prize contested by Turks and Persians than a capital. Nonetheless, it retains much of its original elegance; the minarets of its mosques still tower above the great domes, and it is still crisscrossed by small canals, which themselves are spanned by a thousand bridges. The governor recently ordered the demolition of the city's ancient walls, including the circular citadel at the heart of the place, considering them nothing but a nuisance and an obstruction to new work – but they seemingly retain ancient reinforcing Magicks, for they have refused to fall . . .

Baghdad, it seemed to me,
was a town too set in its ways,
and perhaps too weary,
for the authorities to enforce
any rule rigorously.

After I had found the accommodation which the Bayernese consul had arranged for me, a room in a tiny hotel, decorated with the brass and rugs of the East, –but in a way that a European could find almost homely – I resolved to see something of the city. This seemed to me to be a more archaic sort of place than Istanbul; doubtless, the frequent, deliberate restorations have much to do with this, but so, I think, does the fact that the city lies further from the industrialised modernity of Europe. The heat of the Mesopotamian plain induces lassitude in natives and visitors alike; the crowds on the streets were a little thinner, and much less hurried, than those of the Ottoman capital, and sandy dust hung heavy in the air. I glimpsed many shady coffee-houses through low doorways, several with eloquent story-tellers in full flight before impassive audiences; in one or two, colourfully bedecked female dancers performed. Such displays might outrage conventional Muslim morality, but Baghdad, it seemed to me, was a town too set in its ways, and perhaps too weary, for the authorities to enforce any rule rigorously.

As I went about, I purchased a light repast of unleavened bread and dates from a street-vendor, and sat for a moment on the side of an antique fountain, in the shade of an olive-tree. At that moment, I heard shouting nearby, and a youth – little more than a child – came running round a corner and ducked behind the cover of the broken stonework. Within a moment, three pursuers appeared: Europeans, sweating in what I recognised as the uniforms of the Prussian Army Corps of Engineers. They halted in confusion, demanding loudly of passers-by – as much in German as in their poor Arabic – if any had seen “a thief.” None had, in fact, glimpsed the youth; I might have aided them, but my national prejudices overcame me, and I sat in silence. A moment later, they continued on their way.

Mechanical Wonders

Although the most widespread sorts of wonder in the *Falkenstein* Ottoman lands are magical, and the local technology is mostly well behind the New European norm, even visitors from the West may find themselves startled and impressed by the occasional locally made gadget. In fact, there's a tradition of these things.

As far back as Byzantine times, it is said, craftsmen in these parts were creating ingenious automata and mechanical conjuring tricks. When the Muslim empires were at their height, their craftsmen (Dwarves and humans both, in the *Falkenstein* world) were considered some of the finest in the world. As late as the 18th century, Turkey was seen in Europe as a source of clever devices. Today, although much of this tradition is lost, some survives, along with some of the ancient gadgets themselves. One never quite knows what one might find on an obscure stall in the bazaars of Baghdad or Damascus.

The thing for Hosts/GMs to remember about such devices is that they should always be hand-crafted rather than mass produced, and often are intricately decorated. They can involve fine metalwork (Dwarven alloys or Damascus steel) and, as some of these metals make excellent springs, they can incorporate powerful clockworks. Other designs use pneumatic or hydraulic systems. However, steam power is highly unlikely in even the largest and newest gadgets, and electricity is unknown. Likewise, creations using advanced chemistry (rockets, acids, etc.) are rare, although flash powders and incendiaries are possible (this is the part of the world which created “Greek Fire,” after all), and clever poisons or drugs derived from natural rather than synthetic sources are possible (fortunately, they are usually dried out and inert on old devices). Advanced optics are rare; local craftsmen make some use of lenses, but few can build telescopes or microscopes.

It should also be noted that, while some Ottoman gadgets are pretty toys – automata in the form of dolls or puppets – and others are harmless calculating devices, fairly simple but subtly ingenious, the region has an equally strong tradition of subtle assassination tools. Spring-loaded blades can cause quite a lot of damage, even if not coated in strange poisons.

And while elegant simplicity is the norm, there are exceptions to every rule. Some legends hint at ancient calculating engines or clockwork birds, while in our history, the Turks took to clockwork torpedoes with some enthusiasm. See some of the “clockpunk” ideas in *GURPS Steampunk* and *GURPS Steam-Tech* for possibilities.

I looked at the urchin, and informed him that he was safe.

"A thousand thanks, *effendi*," he said, "my life is yours."

I shrugged at his effusiveness. Then, finding the bread and dates more than I desired, I passed him a few fragments. He took them with some signs of awe. It occurred to me that I might indeed be encouraging dishonesty in the young.

"Are not thieves' hands cut off in this land?" I asked.

He looked unhappy. "I am no thief, *effendi*," he declared stoutly. "Those men offered me silver to guide them to the finest rug-shop in the city, but when I did so, they did not pay me, and one struck me. So, I thought that this shone like silver, and snatched at it . . ." And he produced what I recognised as a monocle. "Is it Magick?" he asked.

"No," I said, unable to restrain a laugh, but the boy wore an expression of seriousness.

"How may I repay you for your aid, then, *effendi*?" he asked.

"You may tell me what else you know of those Prussians," I said.

"Little enough," he replied, "but it is said that they are planning to make a road of iron, all the way from here to the cities of the West. Could that be true?"

"It is possible," I said, "and it may happen." The boy evidently found that answer enough.

"And now, I, Hassan of Baghdad, have eaten your bread. Where in the city may I guide you?"

I told him that the Palace of the Governor was my next destination. For I had a letter to deliver there, and I felt that I should not delay unduly. I was careful about following the youth, for he could indeed have been an untrustworthy rogue. And yet he made no attempt to betray me, but took me along a direct and open way. (Admittedly, this involved many cluttered, dusty streets, but these are the norm in Baghdad.) At length, we arrived before a solid, rectangular, stone building, its frontage embellished with countless abstract carvings. The front part of the ground floor consisted of an arched colonnade, and a pair of smart Turkish guards stood at attention in the shade; Hassan faded into the crowds at the sight of authority, but I was permitted free entry.

However, the visit proved fruitless, for the clerks of the Ottoman palace informed me that Midhat Pasha, Governor of Baghdad, had but recently departed the city, having business with the Sultan himself, in Istanbul.

And so I emerged, displeased with my luck, to find Hassan, withdrawn deep into the shadows – but waiting nonetheless, insistent that he would continue to serve me.

His insistence continued throughout my time in the city; it seemed that his sense of personal honor was as sharp as any desert Arab's. And indeed, he proved a useful guide, knowing the location of every building . . .



Hassan "al-Baghdadi"

Castle Falkenstein

Athletics Exceptional, Charisma Good, Connections Poor, Courage Good, Education Poor, Exchequer Poor, Fisticuffs Good, Perception Good, Stealth Great.

(In New European terms, Hassan has Poor Social Graces, but he is actually more than capable of a sort of politeness, and he pays attention to such things; his Tribal Etiquette Ability is considered to be Average.)

GURPS 100 points

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 16 [80]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 6.75; Move 8.

Dodge 7; Parry 11 (Brawling).

Advantages: Charisma +1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Cool [1].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Personal*) [-5]; Poor [-15]; Semi-Literacy [-5]; Status -1 [-5]; Youth (Age 15) [-6].

* Hassan's Code of Honor is a limited version of the Muslim code (see p. 26). He wouldn't double-cross a friend, takes hospitality very seriously, and tries to avenge insults – although much more by clever tricks than by violence.

Quirks: Basically honest, unless provoked; Doesn't like talking about family; Fascinated by foreigners; Nervous about authority figures; Somewhat impulsive. [-5]

Skills: Acrobatics-14 [1]; Area Knowledge (Baghdad)-14 [4]; Camouflage-11 [1/2]; Climbing-15 [1]; Fast-Talk -10 [1/2]; Filch-14 [1/2]; Jumping-16 [1]; Knife-15 [1/2]; Pickpocket-13 [1/2]; Riding (Camel)-14 [1/2]; Running-10 [2]; Scrounging-12 [1]; Shadowing-13 [2]*; Shortsword-14 [1/2]; Sleight of Hand-14 [1]; Stealth-16 [2]; Streetwise-11 [1]; Throwing-13 [1/2].

* Includes default from Stealth.

Hassan, who is vague about his family names (if he actually knows them), is a lower-class Arab youth. His parents died when he was a child, and he was brought up by a series of distant relatives, who were not actually cruel, but who were too poor to give a boy not their own much of a start in life. (In truth, Hassan has never been very likely to fit in with any chances for advancement that they might offer.) When Starkmann meets him, he is running errands for various bazaar-traders and petty criminals – although a combination of vague honesty and nervousness about the fierce Ottoman legal system keeps him from real crime. A moralist might say that all he needs is a good influence; Hassan would say that all he needs is a stroke of luck.

Hassan has sharp wits and some strength in his small frame, and is startlingly agile and quick on his feet. That is, after all, how he survives.

Meeting by Moonlight

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

... My first task, here as elsewhere, was to survey potential aeroliner docks, and the Bayernese Consul suggested some plausible locations a little way out of the city. Therefore, the day after my arrival, and briefly eluding my young guide, I hired a mule.

The Mesopotamian Plain is, as I have said, as harshly sun-baked, in summer, as any part of the desert, and only a little better watered; Baghdad is almost as dry and dusty as one might expect, although its sumptuous fountains and canals help a little. Arranging my efforts accordingly, I made my first reviews of sites in the morning, before the sun rose too high, rested for a while in the shade of a date-palm in a convenient village, and completed my work for the day when the sun's rays were no longer falling so directly. Having rested a little longer than was wise, I only began my return rather late, and I was still in open country when dusk fell. I felt no great fear – this region was near enough to Baghdad to be patrolled occasionally by its garrison, and was farmland, not Ghul-haunted desert – but I naturally found myself looking around with some caution as I rode.

Thus it was that I became aware of something in the sky above me. With a start, I identified the form; a human figure, riding on a flat, rectangular shape. Clearly, this was one of the legendary Flying Carpets of the East, a concept old as the legends of Solomon, but which I had always taken for myth. I confess that I paused and stared, although the silent, graceful flight of the carpet gave the scene a curious air of naturalness.

Furthermore, the carpet's rider clearly found me of interest, for the enchanted artifact came flying down to my vicinity. As it settled on the ground, its rider rose to a standing position. It was a woman, plainly dressed in the Turkish fashion, and veiled with a yellow shawl, which was held in place by a copper brooch in the form of a six-pointed star. Her eyes held mine, and I felt myself being assessed.

"How come you here?" I cried, "Why do you follow me?"

"Two questions," she observed. "Perhaps we should bargain, as if in the bazaar. One answer from you, for two of mine. An honest price, I think."

"Very well," I said, seeing no other way to learn what I might need to know.

"I come here upon this enchanted carpet," she said, "which I have but recently found in the cellars beneath the ruins of an ancient palace. But that is surely obvious, and no fair answer, so I will tell you that you are easy enough to find, for those who seek. Word of a traveling *Farangi* spreads swiftly through the bazaars. If you fear being followed, you should take more care. As to why I follow you thus; I wondered if you were one of those who plundered the palace ahead of me. So my question is this; what know you of the Palace of the Sunderer?"

"Nothing," I said, puzzled, "upon my honor."

For a long moment, she gazed at me. "I think you speak truth," she said at length, "You have brushed close to this matter, but you have never understood what you see, and I have wasted time." And with that, she snapped her fingers, and the carpet lifted away from the ground, its rider still standing upright, and began to float away.

"Wait," I cried, "what is this matter that so concerns you?"

She looked back upon me, and her eyes seemed both to smile and to be sad. "A question not paid for? Ah, I think that I like you well enough, *Farangi*," she said, "and so I would not draw you into such matters. Do not ask more. Do not seek to face the Sunderer."

An Absence

That night, I lay in my bed, considering my situation. The mysterious woman – who might be murderess or avenging angel, Ghul or sorceress – was of course first in my thoughts, but she had declared the belief that I had no future part in her story, and in truth, I had no reason to doubt this. She claimed to believe my honesty, and I found that I wished to repay her that compliment. Thus, I sought to banish her from my thoughts, and to bring them to bear upon a problem truly my own.

I naturally felt irate and frustrated at my inability to complete my secret embassy; it appeared that, as I had traveled down the Euphrates, Midhat Pasha had set out up the Tigris. Although my overt task would occupy me in Baghdad for a little longer, I thought that it might be desirable for me, in my service to my King and Country, to pursue the Pasha. (In fact, I wondered if I had already delayed intolerably.) And yet, it seemed that he had some days' start, and the transportation of an Empire to command; my chance of overhauling him was surely small, while the attempt would draw unacceptable attention to my secret mission. My best decision seemed to be to set out on the same road in due time, and to hope to encounter the Pasha in Istanbul, or on the road when he was returning.

And yet, this plan included too many possibilities of mischance and missed meetings. I went to sleep that night, and awoke the next morning, with my intentions still unsettled.

However, as I sipped coffee in a cafe in the European visitors' quarter, a solution seemed to present itself. A burly young Arab approached my table, bowed briefly, and presented me with a small note, then departed before I could read it. Indeed, as I took up the message, I was interrupted again, as Hassan slipped in from the shelter of the awning outside, looking over his shoulder nervously.

"What business had Ali ibn Ali with you, *effendi*?" he enquired.

"That fellow? He was but a messenger," I said casually gesturing with the paper.

"An unlucky message, I foretell," muttered Hassan, "Ali ibn Ali serves the worst buyers of bandit plunder in all Baghdad. Trust nothing he has touched, *effendi*! You should burn that paper unread!"

Amused by what I took for professional jealousy, I opened and read the note, which proved to be written in German.

"Ah, but I cannot ignore this, Hassan," I said.

For the message claimed to come from a clerk in the Governor's palace. It further claimed that the writer knew that I had a secret mission, but that he was not hostile to me, and might indeed be able to assist me; it also named a place where the writer and I might meet to discuss the matter.

"What can you tell me of the Market of the Damascus Gate?" I asked Hassan.

"It is where peasants from the fields to the west come to trade, when they do not wish to spend the day in the bazaar in the center of the city," he replied.

"So it would be busy enough the hour after the afternoon prayers?"

"There would be folk around – but *effendi*, do not trust that writing!"

"I have no choice," I said. For whether this was crude blackmail, or a genuine offer of help, or something else, I felt that I should learn more, and a public market in daylight seemed a safe enough place for a cautious man.

And so it was that I was standing, feeling conspicuous as the only foreigner there, in that market at the appointed time. Hassan had guided me, with several further gloomy warnings, but now he slipped away; I thought that he might still be somewhere at hand, but I had other matters to concern me.

A party of Bedouin rode toward me on camels, looking about themselves grimly. Then, as one man, they put their hands to their curved swords.

With Hassan's pessimism still in my thoughts, I needed no further sign; I turned on my heel and fled. I was armed, but I gave little for my chances against a massed and determined attack by these men. Behind me, I heard the Bedouin utter howling war-cries and spur their camels into pursuit.

All at once, the bustling crowds of the market-place erupted into chaos. Imprecations and prayers assailed my ears; worse, many of those present ran around wildly. Both I and my pursuers were obstructed at every step; I suffered from my unfamiliarity with these conditions, and found myself stumbling over baskets of chickens and bundles of vegetables, and forever contesting for space on the roadway with outraged peasants of both sexes and all ages. At any moment, I expected a curved sword to fall on my neck; when none did within a hundred paces, I chanced a backward glance.

"What know you of the
Palace of the Sunderer?"

A camel is larger than a man – and hence more easily obstructed. The Bedouin were ruthlessly, even cheerfully, kicking peasants out of their paths and waving their blades menacingly, but their mounts, with the innate perversity of their species, were less enthusiastic about this pursuit. I thought that this might be all that was saving me – but I noted that some at least of the riders had long-barreled rifles slung at their backs, and yet none of them were seeking to shoot me down.

At this moment, the main part of the pursuing pack burst free from the crowd into the open midst of the street, and with ululating cries of triumph, they came bearing down on me.

I had been looking for narrow alleys where mounted men could not follow; it had suddenly seemed to me that I was in the only part of Baghdad where all the streets were broad boulevards. I therefore took the best opening that I had seen, hurling a tall heap of baskets to the ground as I passed. The camels ploughed through these with little difficulty, but by then I had found a narrower way, which forced my pursuers to dismount.

I was almost through to the far end of the alley, well ahead of the pursuit, when I saw two camels arrive there, their riders grinning darkly over naked blades. Clearly, desert riders or not, these Bedouin knew this city well enough.

I saw that there was one other side-alley off this one, but the leading foot pursuers had used my moment of uncertainty to close with me. Swiftly, I drew my handgun, and menaced the men, who themselves paused in some confusion; clearly, they had assumed me to be easier prey than this. But I was still outnumbered, and I judged it best to continue in flight. I was pleased to find that the side-path led to a broader highway, occupied but not overly crowded; I preferred to claim the protection of crowds and witnesses than attempt evasion in alley-ways which my assailants knew better than I.

The street was becoming clearer, in the heat of the afternoon; hoping that the camel-riders would lose time in coming round and locating me, I ran hard. I saw but one figure ahead of me, an Arab, on foot, in clean and colourful robes, who I took for a bemused passer-by. But then he stared at me, and smiled an unpleasant smile, and spoke some unrecognisable words while gesturing with a fist full of dust that he scattered to the breeze.

I lost my footing. The road ahead of me, which had seemed smooth and passable enough, was now one vast pothole. The breath was knocked from my body, and I lost my hold on my gun.

Then the camel-riders were upon me. Two of them sprang from their beasts; the first of these men cuffed me with a fist that held some hard object, and I fell unconscious.



Kidnapped!

I recovered slowly, in what I judged to be natural darkness; clearly, I had been insensible for some hours. In that time, I had been brought from the city to some patch of date-palms on the edge of the desert, and I realised that I was being lifted from the camel-back. One of my abductors, noticing that I was recovering my wits, gestured at me meaningfully with a dagger, and I judged it best to remain silent.

It seemed that the pause was only temporary, and that I was merely being transferred to the guardianship of a larger party. Moreover, another prisoner appeared; a well-built Turk of perhaps 50 years was led, hands bound, threatened by blades and guns, from a nearby temporary shelter. Although his jacket, shirt, and Turkish trousers were all torn and travel-stained, they had the appearance of good quality. He looked a little surprised at seeing me; clearly, the situation was as mysterious to him as to me.

The brigands unbound his hands, still threatening all the while, and it became clear that he and I were to share a camel. We were therefore able to converse in whispers, and it became apparent that the Turk spoke tolerable German.

“Were you, too, kidnapped as you travelled by night?” he asked.

“No,” I said, “I was taken from the streets of Baghdad.”

He looked angrier at that. “I thought I had the city better looked after than this,” he declared. “My apologies, sir.”

“Why do you feel responsible?” I asked.

“Ah, forgive me,” he said, “I forget my Western manners. I am Midhat Pasha, Governor of Baghdad. I wish we could have met under more pleasant circumstances, sir. But who, in fact, are you?”

I gave little for my
chances against a massed and
determined attack by these men.

4. Notes on Arabia

Eberhardt got to see quite a bit on his travels – but he didn't get everywhere, and he didn't have unlimited time. So this seems like a good place to include a few notes here from other sources, and my versions of some things that may be needed or useful in games.

– T.O.



THE POLITICS OF ARABIA

Remarks by the Bayern Diplomatic Service

The Ottomans have nominally controlled Arabia for some few centuries, but in practice, their authority is weak; the governor of even a large city is regarded as strong if he can exert authority an hour from his gates, and most desert towns and oases are ruled as independent fiefs by tribal leaders.

These range from honorable chieftains, by way of Wahhabi religious fanatics (see p. 73), to fearful Shakespearean schemers, who live their lives in terror of poison and plotting against their own families. A somewhat typical, if especially powerful, bizarre, and important, example are the lords of the town of Hail, or Hail.

The Emirs of Hail

Hail is the capital of the region of Jabal Shammar. The story of its ruling house is, in fact, curious enough to make one suspect sorcery, and we suggest that agents be employed at some time to investigate the matter.

In 1834, a chief from Hail, Abdallah ibn Rashid, assisted the then leader of the Wahhabi, Faysal, in his struggles, and was made Emir of Hail as reward. His son, Talal, obtained more power, becoming overlord of northern Arabia; European visitors considered him an excellent and admirable ruler. However, he died by his own hand, in 1867, apparently in the belief that he was becoming mad. His son, Mtab, reigned until 1871, when he was assassinated by his own nephews, Bandar and Badr. One of the assassins seized the throne for a few months, until another of Talal's brothers, Muhammad ibn Rashid, slew him and ascended the throne. With the current weakness of the Wahhabi, this prince may hope to become the dominant power in Arabia.

One may well suspect magickal involvement in much of this family's history. Legend says that Abdallah was saved, when left for dead after a battle, by the miraculous intervention of a flock of birds and a swarm of locusts, which tended and shielded his wounds. Talal's self-murder is certainly curious, and Mtab was allegedly slain with a silver bullet because he was thought immune to mere lead. We have heard from Mr Charles Doughty (in his *Travels in Arabia Deserta*), whom our own Herr Starkmann encountered (see p. 76), on the matter of Muhammad ibn Rashid, who the Bedouins told him had "committed crimes which before were not known in the world," such as personally stabbing his own nephew, and cutting the feet off his cousins before leaving them to die:

A fearful necessity was laid upon Mohammed: for save by these murders of his own nigh blood, he could not have sat in any daily assurance . . .

Never prince used his authority, where not resisted, with more stern moderation at home, but he is pitiless in excision of any unsound parts of the commonwealth . . .

Fortune was to Mohammed's youth contrary, a bloody chance has made him ruler.

Similarly, we have heard a striking description of the Emir in *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* by Lady Anne Blunt (see p. 51):

His countenance recalled to us the portraits of Richard III, lean, sallow cheeks, much sunken, thin lips, with an expression of pain except when smiling, a thin black beard, well defined black knitted eyebrows, and remarkable eyes – eyes deep sunk and piercing, like the eyes of a hawk, but ever turning restlessly from one of our faces to the other, and then to those beside him. It was the very type of a conscience-stricken face, or one which fears an assassin. His hands, too, were long and claw-like and never quiet for an instant.

But the Emir's is a wealthy court; when receiving visitors, he looks a grand king, clad in purple and wearing gold-hilted daggers and a gold-hilted sword, while his stables are celebrated, his gardens hold gazelles and ibexes, and his armoury holds imported Western weapons. When he dispenses justice in the town square, as is the ancient Arabian tradition, 800 soldiers stand at attention. (Though we must not exaggerate the size of this state; in the event of a war, he can put perhaps 3,000 men in the field, many of them ill-armed Bedouin.) He rules with the assistance of his cousin, Hamud, who appears to be a more sophisticated and curious character, and his chamberlain and guard-captain, Imbarak, whom Doughty calls "a pleasant but fanatic strongman," risen through the ranks of his mercenaries.

If we do commission a party of adventurers to determine the true history of the family of Ibn Rashid, we must caution them not to be distracted by this spectacle. As Lady Anne observes, the city is a lion's den – however pleasant the lion.

The Role of the Sheikhs

Sir Richard Burton comments that, in the East, "there is a Shaykh for everything down to thieves;" this is, if you like, a hold-over from the days of tribalism. The Dervishes have their Sheikh-teachers; the villages have their Sheikh-headman; indeed, the city thieves possess *ad hoc* guilds with Sheikhs in charge; and the tribes are ruled by Sheikhs.

The word might be translated as "chief" or as "old man"; for the Arabs, in the way of tribal people, have vast respect for age and mature judgement. Yet Mr Doughty, who tells us that a great Sheikh should "bear himself as a nobleman," and with "mild impartiality," also remarks that "the dignity of a Sheykh in free Arabia is commonly more than his authority." With the right to rule given partly by birth, partly by charisma, and partly by ownership of a strong hand, Arabian politics can be unpredictable and chancy.

❧ BURTON'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA ❧

Tom Olam Comments:

Oh yes, Mecca. Every Westerner has heard of it, but very few have ever been there. That, of course, is because it is the Sacred City of Islam, barred to Unbelievers. On the other hand, every Muslim is required, as a religious duty, to visit it, during a particular month of the lunar year, at least once in a lifetime. Most also take in Medina, 300 miles away, which is almost as sacred. The whole southwestern coastal plain of Arabia is sometimes seen as a "Holy Land."

The history is well-known. Mecca has been a center of worship since ancient times, and it's where the Prophet Mohammed started out. Medina is where he and his followers settled for a few years.

Mecca is also the direction toward which all Muslims pray. At the heart of Mecca is a huge mosque; in the middle of the mosque is a rectangular, dark stone building, and inside *that* is a black stone which is said to have fallen from Heaven. The *Hajj* pilgrims visit that, and also do a lot of marching around and listening to sermons in the open. In the Arabian heat, that's a fair sign of devotion.

One can learn a bit about these places by asking Muslims – there's few great secrets involved – and some of the pilgrims are European converts, of varying degrees of sincerity. Even the sincere ones can have problems with xenophobic locals, and fakes are *really* living dangerously. Which is where Sir Richard Burton comes in . . .

Of all the Second Compact's allies, I *wonder* most about Burton. (Second to Auberon, that is.) Not that he's ever been anything other than a trustworthy ally, and his skills, as a sorcerer, swordsman, and explorer, are darned useful. But . . . In India, when he was starting out, his fellow officers used to call him "Ruffian Dick," and meeting him now, you can understand why. His trip through Arabia illustrates the point.

What he did was certainly impressive; he passed himself off as a Muslim Arab for several months, in which time he visited Medina and Mecca. Brave to the point of foolhardiness, that, not just because of what the Muslims would have done to him if they'd caught him – but because the more obscure corners of Arabia are full of really *strange* dangers, and Burton poked around those, too. But you could hardly call it tactful; yet Burton, who professes respect for all "natives" and all beliefs, just laughs everything off.

In fact, there's a rumor that one fellow-pilgrim *did* see through his disguise, and Burton took the only solution available. It's clear, from his accounts of other adventures, that he has no qualms about killing when he sees the need. He's also reckless in pursuit of magickal secrets; I don't think his book tells everything about his detours in pursuit of ancient lore. Somewhere along that coast, there are supposed to be whole ancient cities lost in the sands – "Ubar," or "Irem of the Pillars." They were like Sodom and Gomorra – destroyed by God for their sins. I doubt that the

Arabs would approve of anyone digging around them. I doubt that this would stop Burton.

But anyway, he certainly saw some interesting bits of everyday life along his way . . .

(Note: For more on "Ruffian Dick," see the *Castle Falkenstein* rulebook, pp.41, 169, and 202, or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, p. CF136. For more on Irem of the Pillars, see *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. PM46, or *GURPS Atlantis*, p. AT32.)

From Burton's "A Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah":

A Caravanserai: The "Wakálah," as the Caravanserai or Khán is called in Egypt, combines the office of hotel, lodging-house, and store. It is at Cairo, as at Constantinople, a massive pile of buildings surrounding a quadrangular "Hosh" or court-yard. On the ground-floor are rooms like caverns for merchandise, and shops of different kinds – tailors, cobblers, bakers, tobacconists, fruiterers, and others. A roofless gallery or a covered verandah, into which all the apartments open, runs round the first and sometimes the second story: the latter, however, is usually exposed to the sun and wind. The accommodations consist of sets of two or three rooms, generally an inner one and an outer; the latter contains a hearth for cooking, a bathing-place, and similar necessities . . . In the court-yard the poorer sorts of travellers consort with tethered beasts of burden, beggars howl, and slaves lie basking and scratching themselves upon mountainous heaps of cotton bales and other merchandise.

An Arabian Coffee-House: It was a building of artless construction, consisting of little but a roof supported by wooden posts, roughly hewn from date trees: round the tamped earth floor ran a raised bench of unbaked brick . . . In the centre a huge square Mastabah, or platform, answered a similar purpose. Here and there appeared attempts at long and side walls, but these superfluities had been allowed to admit daylight through large gaps. In one corner stood the apparatus of the "Kahwahji," an altar-like elevation, also of earthen-work, containing a hole for a charcoal fire, upon which were three huge coffee-pots dirtily tinned. Near it were ranged the Shishas, or Egyptian hookahs, old, exceedingly unclean, and worn by age and hard work. A wooden framework, pierced with circular apertures, supported a number of porous earthenware *gullehs* (*gargoulettes*, or monkey jars) full of cold, sweet water.

A Crossroads Town: The Shaykh or gentleman is over-armed and over-dressed, as Fashion . . . dictates to a person of his consequence. The civilized traveller from Al-Madinah sticks in his waist-shawl a loaded pistol, garnished with crimson silk cord, but he partially conceals the butt-end under the flap of his jacket. The Irregular soldier struts down the street a small armoury of weapons: one look at the man's countenance suffices to tell you what he

is. Here and there stalk grim Badawin, wild as their native wastes, and in all the dignity of pride and dirt; they also are armed to the teeth, and even the presence of the policeman's quarterstaff cannot keep their swords in their scabbards . . .

After sailing down the Red Sea Coast from Egypt, Burton travelled swiftly overland, and so reached Medina one morning:

Before us lay a spacious plain, bounded in front by the undulating ground of Nijd: on the left was a grim pile of rocks, the celebrated Mount Ohod, with a clump of verdure and a white dome or two nestling at its base. Rightwards, broad streaks of lilac-coloured mists, here thick with gathered dew, there pierced and thinned by the morning rays,

stretched over the date groves and the gardens of Kuba, which stood out in emerald green from the dull tawny surface of the plain. Below, distant about two miles, lay Al-Madinah.

And behind, in the most Easterly part of the city, remarkable from afar, is the gem of Al-Madinah, the four tall substantial towers, and the flashing green dome under which the Apostle's [Muhammad's] remains rest . . .

The Great Mosque at Mecca: There at last it lay, the bourn of my long and weary Pilgrimage . . . The mirage medium of Fancy invested the huge catafalque and its gloomy pall with peculiar charms . . . the view was strange, unique – and how few have looked upon the celebrated shrine!

≡ THE BEDOUIN ≡

Tom Olam Comments:

Even the most observant European visitors have mostly told us little about the lives of the desert tribes; most wander between towns, or, like Burton, tag along with large groups of urbanized travelers. Charles Doughty (see p. 76) has come closer to the real desert-folk than most, noting that their greatest virtue is "*es-subor*, a courageous forbearing and abiding of hunger." This is essential for a poor people who extract a living from an impossible environment.

Burton does describe Bedouin ways, saying that they "are free and simple . . . Yet their manners are sometimes dashed with a strange ceremoniousness. When two friends meet, they either embrace or both extend their right hands, clapping palm to palm; their foreheads are either pressed together, or their heads are moved from side to side whilst for minutes together mutual inquiries are made and answered . . . Usually they are a mixture of worldly cunning and great simplicity, sensitive to touchiness, good-tempered souls, solemn and dignified withal, fond of jest, yet of a grave turn of mind, easily managed by a laugh and a soft word, and placable after passion, though madly revengeful after injury." He often compares their ways to those of the "Red Indians" of America – with implicit admiration for both.

Raiding

Although leaders from Muhammad onward have tried to call a halt to it, the Bedouin regard raids, *ghazzu*, as a routine activity and frankly something of a sport, and theft and banditry generally is part of their lifestyle. Doughty tells tales of wealthy cattle-traders who still ride out on raids – and

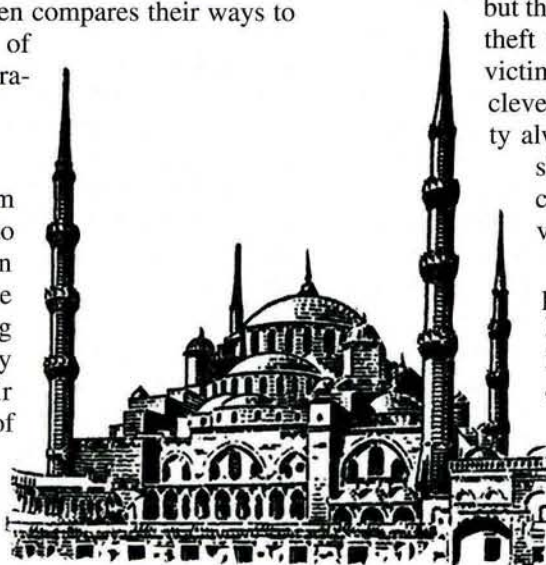
"The Sultan pays pensions in corn and cloth to the very chiefs who arm their varlets against him; and the Pashas, after purloining all they can, hand over to their enemies the means of resistance."

– Sir Richard Burton

sometimes get themselves killed trying to steal a single camel.

The Bedouin are serious about all this – they carry real weapons, and are prepared to use them – but that isn't the point of the exercise; a clever theft of horses or camels, undetected by the victim until you are miles away, is far more clever. And the rules of loyalty and hospitality always apply; a traveler who can demonstrate that he is a guest of some clan-chief can change, in an instant, from robbery victim to guest for coffee.

On the other hand, Burton, in company with a party of Muslims on their holiest pilgrimage, found himself under fire from Bedouin bandits who took cover on a rocky hillside and merely sniped away for as long as possible, killing 12 of the travelers to no profit or advantage.



The Empty Quarter

From the "Scientific Gazetteer and Steam Engineer's Almanac," 1872:

Readers may be aware that at the heart of the southern part of Arabia lies the *Rub al-Khali*, as the Arabs term the *Empty Quarter*, a region of true and ghastly desert greater in expanse than the nation of France, with sand-dunes towering 500 feet high. No Westerner – nay, probably, no human being – has ever crossed this land; even the few reports that we receive of our brethren in the *Explorers' Clubs* traversing the Peninsula from Persian Gulf to Red Sea describe expeditions in more northerly sectors.

And yet now, when even the bold determination of the Travellers quails before this Land of Burning Terror, we learn that this blot upon the honor of Science may be about to expunged – by the Power of Steam!

For it is reported that Doctor Hector Phiblin, formerly of the University of Paris, presently of Independent Means and dwelling in the great City of Birmingham (where he may converse with a body of Engineers unequalled in any part of the Globe), has all but completed construction of his great *Extended Endurance Desert Traversal Tractor*. This vehicle employs the most advanced principles of Steam Engineering, and has been constructed with Arabian climes ever in mind. Dr Phiblin asserts that his creation can bear, not merely a small, well-equipped party of Adventurers, but *also* sufficient fuel to complete the traversal of the Empty Quarter – and, indeed, that it has capacity to spare, as it may haul a full tender of highest-grade coals.

The *Tractor* employs specially forged broad-rimmed wheels, enabling its builder to laugh at the suggestion that it might sink upon the Sands of Araby, and an Ancillary Solar Thermic Energy Conversion system, focusing the rays of the sun on its own boiler – hence, it is claimed, the startling endurance of which it is capable. On other matters, Dr Phiblin remains, as yet, taciturn.

This true *Hector* of Science now proposes to demonstrate his *Tractor's* capabilities, by organizing an expedition across the *Rub al-Khali*. He confesses that some matters remain to be resolved for this plan to come to fruition; he will require a crew of fellow-scientists, engineers, and guards, while the patronage of some far-sighted Person of Wealth and Quality may be needed, not least to arrange transport of the vehicle to some appropriate port in Arabia. But there are, surely, bold Adventurers enough in Europe . . .

Banditry shades into tribal conflict, which in turn shades into the politics of Arabia; as Burton says, governments are too easily tempted to try playing one band off against another, which leaves them with a country full of armed, confident brigands.

CREATING CHARACTERS

The Arabs of the *Castle Falkenstein* world make interesting game characters. They should come across as a little alien to New Europeans but not incomprehensible, honorable but unpredictable, likeable when you get to know them, but with powerful motivations of their own. Playing them as Dramatic Characters demands that you develop a working understanding of Arabian culture, and prepare for difficult moments – especially if and when the campaign moves away from Arabia – but you'll be playing as tough and dramatic a hero as you could ever hope for.

Castle Falkenstein Abilities

Athletics: Bedouin tribesmen lead, to say the least, Healthy Outdoor Lives; even among the townsfolk, only the richest can afford to loll about on cushions getting fat. Furthermore, Arabs are legendary horsemen, and greatly admire the skill.

Charisma: The stereotyped Arab hero is the strong, silent type, implying Average Charisma or a *little* better. However, great leaders and sheikhs have to be able to inspire the tribe.

Connections: For an Arab character, this reflects acquaintance with sheikhs, tribal leaders, wealthy merchants, and noted religious leaders. As such, it's very useful in a tribal society – but it should rarely rise above Good, or perhaps Great at best, unless the character has traveled unusually widely.

Education: Getting more than an Average Education means spending time in a larger town or city.

Fencing: The Bedouin don't have fancy fencing styles, but they still carry swords, and you'd better believe they know how to use them. Rename this ability "Swordsmanship" for Arab characters, to get the "feel" just right.

Marksmanship: The typical Arab raiding-party carries a terribly dated assortment of firearms, including plenty of smooth-bore matchlock muskets. A lot of Bedouin can't afford *any* guns, but get by with swords and spears; rich chiefs may carry European rifles. Of course, learning with a handicap means that those matchlock-wielders who persist can get *very good indeed*.

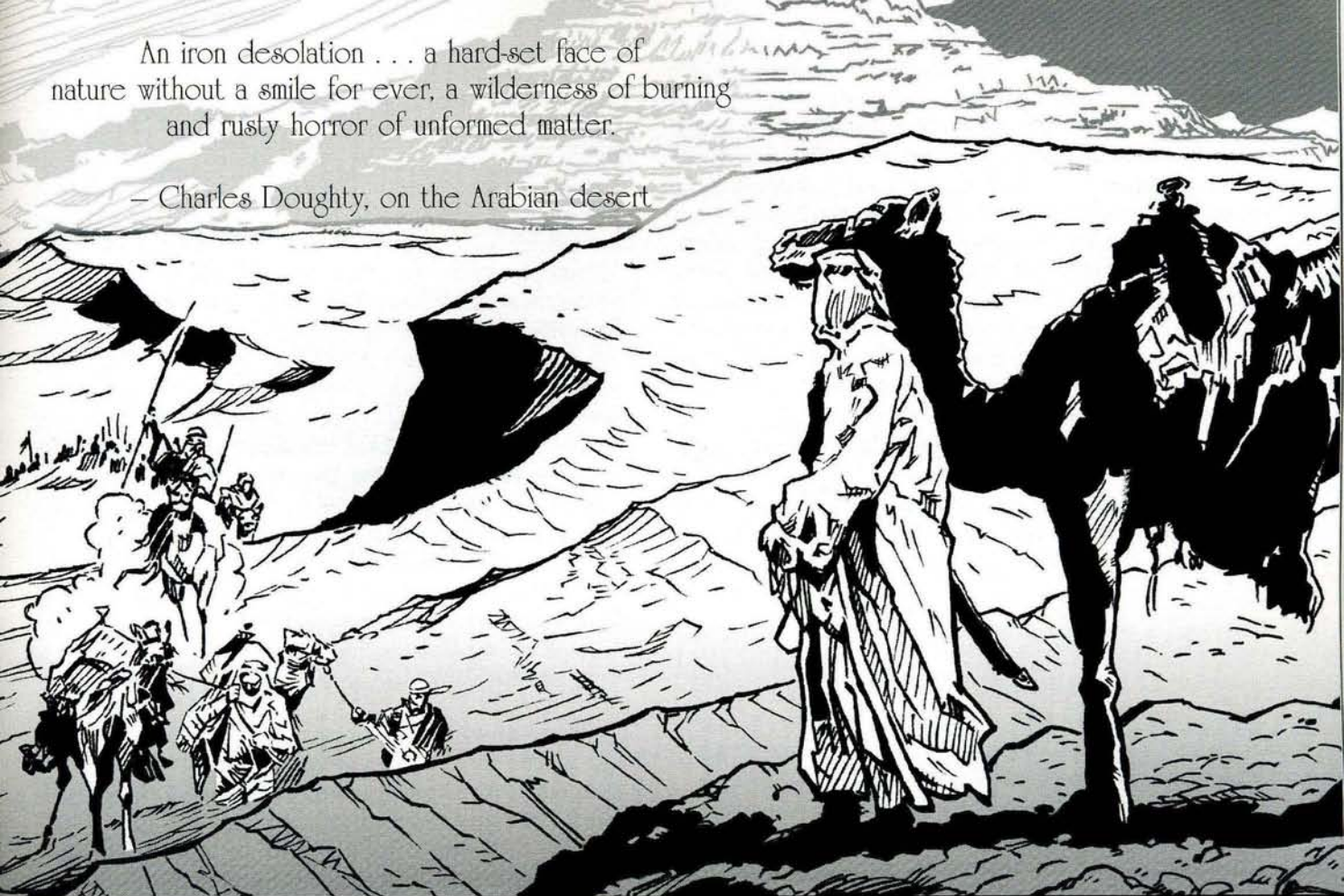
Performance: Tribal poets and coffee-house storytellers can be spellbinding talkers, and Arabs respect talented singers. However, they have no real theatrical tradition, and dancing is left to harem-women and some Dervishes. This ability should not be raised above Average without good cause.

Physician: Arabs are often downright Poor in this; see p. 22.

Social Graces: This is, in effect, replaced by *Tribal Etiquette* (below). An Arab transplanted to New European society starts with Poor Social Graces, although polite New Europeans will make allowances for ignorance, and the

An iron desolation . . . a hard-set face of nature without a smile for ever, a wilderness of burning and rusty horror of unformed matter.

— Charles Doughty, on the Arabian desert



visitor may well be seen as possessing a certain impressive natural dignity. Hosts should be generous to Arab characters with high Tribal Etiquette ratings in this situation, as they will probably learn the local rules, and hence improve their Social Graces, fairly rapidly.

(Arabs trying to operate in Ottoman society have similar problems with the *Ottoman Way* (see p. 23) – only worse. Few Arabs can summon any enthusiasm for learning Ottoman standards of politeness, and an Ottoman will often *define* gauche, backwoods behavior as resembling that of a subject-race Arab.)

New Abilities

Animal Handling (♥): This is an optional addition to the abilities list, but it can be appropriate to characters who spend time among the Bedouin. Such Arabs are famous for their horses, depend on camels for many essentials of life, and have a great fondness for falconry. Players may choose this as one of their Poor ratings when creating a starting Arab Dramatic Character.

Poor Animal Handling means that animals actively dislike you: horses try to throw you, camels are even more foul-tempered than usual, and falcons just won't return to your gauntlet. You are automatically Poor at any Riding activity, no matter what your rating in Athletics; you might manage a fancy leap into the saddle, but the horse will then try to get you off again. Average Animal Handling means that you don't bother animals, and they don't bother you; trained dogs and horses behave as they are supposed to

provided that you keep your cool, and you understand how a falcon should act, even if you haven't mastered the art of commanding it. With Good ability, you are clearly used to animals, or possibly unusually empathetic; you can make a horse stay calm under fire, a falcon returns to your fist first time, and camels only bite you out of habit. At the Great level, you are an expert with all furred and feathered things, capable of giving exhibitions on the stages of New Europa or working in the stables of the Sultan himself; horses obey your spoken commands, you could direct a falcon onto one hare in a field of half-a-dozen, and camels become mysteriously half-hearted about spitting. Excellent ability means that you can direct a horse through fire and storm, falcons actually seem to like you, and camels surprise themselves with their tolerance. Extraordinary Animal Handling means that you *don't* talk to animals, most of the time; they respond to your thoughts, or at least your subtle physical cues. Superstitious folk treat you like St Francis of Assisi.

Incidentally, the Arabs have no great liking for dogs, regarding them as unclean, but may use them in hunting. Great Arab rulers very occasionally acquire *cheetahs* and other large cats for the hunt; these are like falcons – they can't be tamed, only trained, and they are usually carried with eye-covering hoods to keep them docile until their prey is in sight. They are also virtually impossible to breed in captivity. (And they look amazing in "richly decadent Eastern court" scenes.)

Trader (♥): See p. 24. This is one ability for which Arabs and Turks both find uses!

Tribal Etiquette (♥): This is Arab society's version of Social Graces. It *does* apply to town-dwelling Arabs who don't live in explicitly "tribal" groups; even they tend to be aware of tribal allegiances, and use similar (flowery) greetings and courtesies. The ability involves knowledge of correct forms of address and the essential rules of hospitality, the precise form of obeisance, bowing, or hand-kissing appropriate to one of a given social standing, and a working knowledge of family and tribal relationships and enmities. Newcomers to Arab lands are automatically Poor to begin with, although a little study and tact will avoid the worst blunders – after all, a *Farangi* will not be expected to know everything, and won't have any specific tribal enemies to avoid, or allies to honor; adaptable New Europeans with better-than-Average Social Graces can often progress fairly quickly to an Average rating.

Arabs, Education, and Medicine

Arabia isn't the most advanced part of the *Falkenstein* world, and many Arabs are tribal desert nomads (who are all too often poor, illiterate raiders). But that doesn't mean that they're *all* barbarians. Lengthy formal schooling isn't available in the desert, but plenty of Arabs live in towns, some of which have mosque schools which provide solid, rote-based teaching with a local slant (Muslim doctrine, Arabic literature, and so on). For an Arab character, "the classics" means the magnificent Arabic and Persian literary tradition of heroic epics, love poetry, and mystical allegory.

Medical skills are a related issue. The magnificent medieval Muslim tradition of medicine evidently never reached the desert tribes, or they forgot anything they did learn. Arab characters – especially desert tribesmen – should take minimal medical skills, if any. (They tend to treat everything with hot irons.) Visiting Westerners (such as Charles Doughty, p. 76) can earn acceptance and funds in Bedouin society by demonstrating some basic medical knowledge.

Poor Tribal Etiquette implies crass ignorance of the most basic rules; you are likely to fail to honor even the most venerable of sheikhs, will mention an Arab to his enemies with admiration, and probably don't bow to anyone. Of course, being ignorant of the rules of hospitality and surrender, you are likely to suffer prompt retribution. Average ability implies a capacity for getting by in the tents or the bazaar, not giving any great offence when a guest, granting acceptable hospitality when required, and being able to offer surrender when at a disadvantage with the expectation that it will be accepted. Good ability is that expected of the fortunate, wealthy, or respected figure,

offering hospitality with instinctive grace and accepting it with modesty, while knowing enough of the web of tradition, obligation, and enmity that you can avoid embarrassment. Great ability is that of the famous sheikh and the wandering (sane) poet; others will turn to you for guidance in matters of tradition and family relationships, and your salutations and compliments will be models of finely judged pleasantry. Excellent Tribal Etiquette means that you seem to know everything about every tribe and family in Arabia; you can put anyone at their ease while convincing them of your honor with a bare phrase, or flatter them with a single reference. Extraordinary ability is the outward sign of the legendary hero or poetic ideal; your very appearance excites respect, you know more about family histories than the families themselves (and discuss such with perfect tact), and you gain a universal reputation for hospitality without even owning a tent.

Note: With the Host's permission, Arab characters might take this as one of their compulsory Poor abilities. That, however, is a *risky* proposition.

GURPS Considerations

Most of the remarks concerning Ottoman characters (pp. 25-27) are also applicable to Arabs; little as they like each other, the Ottomans and Arabs share a religion and much the same environment and technological background. Arabs are more likely to come from low-tech, backwoods regions, however, and hence to possess Animal and Outdoor skills, disadvantages such as Primitive or Uneducated, and so on.

Advantages

The Arabs are a tribal people at heart; hence, "social" advantages such as Ally or Patron can be very appropriate. However, few Arabs have useful connections running very high in Ottoman society. Wealth and Status tend to be closely linked; while Arabs do not by any means automatically respect riches, they are likely to be a little less snobbish about "new money" than Ottomans or Europeans.

Reputation can be very important to Arabs; they are a people who can bear grudges, and who take honor very seriously (whether or not they have full-blown Codes of Honor in game terms). Also, in a world where formal contract law is hard to invoke and the courts are often run by corrupt or disliked Turks, a good name can be essential for a trader.

Disadvantages

A tribal culture implies disadvantages as well as advantages. Wealthy characters especially are very likely to have Dependents; they will be expected to look after their own. The comments above on Reputation apply just as strongly to penalties, and a Reputation for meanness can be a real problem. Illiteracy (p. B33) and Uneducated (p. C179) are *possible* for Bedouin nomads, but by no means mandatory; see p. 66.

Skills

Firearms: Given their frequent use of archaic weapons, Arab characters are more likely to know Black Powder Weapons skill than Guns.

Medical Skills: Arguably, Arabs (especially Bedouin) should only take what few of these they do learn at TL2 or lower.

Savoir-Faire: As some of the accounts quoted earlier in this chapter should suggest, the Arabs have their own system of formal manners, which they take every bit as seriously as other nations take their own etiquette. This is *not* the same as the "Ottoman Way" – a character accustomed to one has a -2 unfamiliarity penalty (p. B43) with the other.

CHARACTER TYPES

Arabian Merchant

Let the *Farangi* think that all Arabs are nomad bandits; your people have been great traders for as long as they have been warriors. The Prophet himself, Peace Be Upon Him, was in his time a merchant. Furthermore, trade brings you into contact with folk from all across the world; you have visited the ports of the Levant and the Red Sea, and talked with sailors and imams, *Farangi* explorers and Turkish officials (little as you love the latter, with their accursed taxes). You probably have a cousin who has sailed to India, and seen the strange ways of the folk there – and the even stranger ways of their *Inglese* overlords. You have read the news-papers of Damascus, as well as listening to bazaar gossip; you can discuss not only the Mad Sultan of the Turks, but also the wars of the *Farangi*. For example, you know of the war between the Vizier Bismarck, with his Ifrit allies, and the Sultan Ludwig, whose mechanic-wizards have forged a fleet of flying ships!

You have not lost the wisdom of the desert; you can ride competently, and shoot if you must, you know a hundred oases and a thousand paths, and your family is large and loyal. But most of all, you enjoy the trading itself; you can happily spend hours in the bazaar, sipping mint tea as you shave a few *piastres* off the price of a fine Persian rug. You cannot keep all the wondrous goods that pass through your hands, for your livelihood depends on selling as well as buying, but you would not want to; to have seen and handled such things is reward enough. Provided that the son of a camel who runs that shop in Damascus doesn't swindle you again, of course.

In Your Diary: Detailed accounts of your trading (in a private shorthand, in case the tax officials get hold of them); notes on trade possibilities; names of contacts and family connections.

Motives: You are a merchant, and you go where the profit is – but that doesn't mean you lack honor or a sense of adventure. If you face an enemy, you can fight with steel or wits, and you are too sensible a fellow to turn down allies in such a conflict.

You are a merchant, and you go
where the profit is – but that
doesn't mean you lack honor
or a sense of adventure.

Furthermore, the *Farangi* seem an interesting band. Some of them may be rich, or they may be traders themselves; they might appreciate the silks and spices of your land. Their own machines and cheap fabrics are certainly worth trading for. Or perhaps trade has been poor lately, while these folk need a guide – and none know the lands and pathways of Arabia better than a professional traveler like yourself.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Charisma, Perception, Trader.

Possessions: Good-quality robes; a short sword; an out-dated but functional gun of some description; assorted trade goods.

GURPS Template

65 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Trading partners) [3]; Status 1 [5]; and 15 points from Charisma [5/level], Comfortable [10], Empathy or Sensitive [15 or 5], Language Talent [2/level], Reputation +2 (For fair dealing, among other merchants and traders) [5], Sanctity [5], Status raised to 2 [5], or Voice [10].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; and -15 points from Chummy [-5], Congenial [-1], Dependents (Family) [Varies], Extravagance [-10], Gluttony [-5], Greed [-15], Nosy [-1], Overweight [-5], Proud [-1], Responsive [-1], Selfish [-5], or Weak Will -1 [-8].

Skills: Accounting (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Animal Handling (M/H) IQ [4]-12; Area Knowledge (Trade Routes) (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14; Language (Turkish) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Merchant (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-15; Packing (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11; Riding (P/A) DX [2]-11; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [0]-14*; Survival (Desert) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; and any four of Acting (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Bard (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Chess (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Cooking (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, First Aid (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Guns (Rifle) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13**, Orienteering (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Streetwise (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, or Tactics (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10.

- * Free from Status.
- ** Includes +2 for IQ.

Customization Notes: A merchant can have skills reflecting interests in particular types of goods, or operations in a particular area. He may be somewhat of a rogue with some Thief/Spy skills and high levels of Fast-Talk, an experienced caravan operator with high levels in Packing and some combat skills, a brother to the desert tribes with Allies and Survival, or a plump and wealthy master-trader with Wealth, Contacts, and exceptional Social skills.

You have learned to ride,
to use a sword,
and to conduct yourself in peace,
on a raid, or at war.

Bedouin Warrior

You are an Arab born and bred – a *true* Arab, a Bedouin of the desert, not a soft town-dweller. You have learned to ride, to use a sword, and to conduct yourself in peace, on a raid, or at war. You are, most of all a free wanderer; your allegiance is given for honor and tradition, not because some distant foreigner demands it!

In Your Memory: Your family and tribal lineage for a dozen generations; the names of those with whom you have sworn blood-brotherhood, or on whom you have sworn vengeance.

Motives: Perhaps you are working for your tribe, opposing some villain who threatens them and who has also made enemies of these *Farangi*. (They may be infidels, but they seem honest enough, and they have abilities which will help you.) Or perhaps you have simply fallen in with these strange travelers after working for them as a guide or guard as they travel round the desert; having eaten their bread and salt, there is a bond between you and they, and you want to see how matters come out for them.

For that matter, there is no dishonor in working for hire. Your ancestors served the Caliphs (the true Arab Caliphs, not some Turkish pretender) for fair pay. You know the desert better than anyone, an Arab warrior is as fine a mercenary as any foreigner could wish, and this could be an interesting adventure.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Athletics, Swordsmanship, Tribal Etiquette.

Possessions: Bedouin robes; a plain steel sword; an antiquated long gun; a good Arab horse.

GURPS Template

65 points

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Strong Will +2 [8]; and 20 points from Absolute Direction [5], Alertness [5/level], Allies or Ally Group (Tribe) [Varies], Animal Empathy [5], Attractive [5], Charisma +1 [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Cool [1] or Composed [5], Danger Sense [15], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5], High Pain Threshold [10], Night Vision [10], Reputation (For honor, within the tribe, as a small group) [Varies], or more Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; Struggling [-10]; and -15 points from Bad Temper [-10], Bloodlust [-10], Careful [-1], Chauvinistic [-1], Compulsive Vowing [-5], Fanaticism (Own tribe) [-15], Hidebound [-5], Illiteracy or Semi-Literacy [-10 or -5], Impulsiveness [-10], Innumerate [-5], Intolerance (Turks and/or an enemy tribe) [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], Oblivious [-3] or Callous [-6], Phobia (Claustrophobia, mild) [-15], Primitive (TL4) [-5], Proud [-1], Sense of Duty (To friends, companions, and/or tribe) [Varies], Status -1 [-5], Uneducated [-5], or Wealth reduced to Poor [-5].

Skills: Area Knowledge (home region) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Black Powder Weapons or Guns (any) (P/E) DX+1 [1]-13*; Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-12; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2]-10; Riding (P/A) DX [2]-12; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12; Survival (Desert) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12. Add any four of Animal Handling (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-8; Bardic Lore (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-8; Falconry (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Fast-Draw (one-handed sword) (P/E) DX [1]-12; Intimidation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-12; Leadership (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Tactics (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-8; or Tracking (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-9; and add 1 to any one of the selections [1].

* Includes +1 for IQ; pick a specialization and TL to suit the specific character.

Customization Notes: The stereotyped Bedouin warrior is a formidable and clever fighter; high levels in combat-oriented skills (including Riding, Stealth, and Tactics) can always seem appropriate. Likewise, uncanny knowledge of the desert (reflected in Area Knowledge, Tracking, and Survival) is useful to those who dwell in such regions. Wise old war-leaders and sheikhs should have higher IQ, good Leadership and Tactics, and a little more Status and Wealth. Merchant is useful to those who engage in trade, and Poetry is a respected art among the tribes.



5. Meetings in the Desert



We rode through the desert night, watched by our unspeaking guards. Our captors looked around continually; clearly, they did not feel safe. As the sun rose, we reached our destination: a shattered outcrop of rock. A broken cleft in this led to what appeared to be an ancient ruin, although the stones were so sand-scoured that they might almost have been natural. A small encampment had been pitched here, with more Arabian ruffians milling about; however, to my swift assessment, this was all well-organized, with tents in almost military order, and horses and camels tethered in shade and neatly groomed.

After a moment, our captors jostled the Pasha and myself forward into the central tent, throwing us down on the sand. Thus it was that I found myself at the feet of their leaders.

The first, and evidently the lesser, was the sorcerer who had participated in the ambush, now clad in dark red robes. The second, and evident chief, was a tall, aristocratic figure, who I recognized with astonishment.

"Count Ignatyev!" I cried.

The Count smiled coldly. "Indeed, Herr Starkmann," he said, "and Midhat Pasha — our acquaintance is renewed."

I looked from one to the other in some confusion.

"We have met at diplomatic receptions," Midhat confirmed.

"Though we have never had the opportunity to talk for long," said Count Ignatyev. "A pity. I feel that we have much in common."

"I am flattered," said Midhat, "but I doubt that this outrage is intended to provide you with conversation."

"Why *have* you done this?" I demanded. "I never took you for an enemy."

"No," said the Count. "Doubtless you spent your time worrying about those Prussians one forever finds bumbling around Arabia."

"So what is your motive?"

"Did you take Count Ignatyev for a friend of Turkey?" Midhat Pasha interrupted with a bitter smile. "No. He is friendly with Mahmud Nedim Pasha. I think he pays the Grand Vizier well enough. But he is a Russian patriot, after all."

"As you are both patriots," the Count observed equably.

"And our nations have been at war many times," Midhat continued, "the last a bare few years since. I think that the Count feels that certain of our European provinces should belong to Russia."

"They belong to the Slavic people who live in them!" snapped the Count, with the first sign of true passion I had ever observed in him. The Pasha shrugged.

"You are the host here. However, I suspect that you have a simple idea, Count. *Divide and Rule*, as the English say."

The Count said nothing, but his smile was a proud acknowledgement. The Pasha continued. "I was travelling to Istanbul to expose this to the Sultan himself."

"I doubt that you had much evidence," the Count commented. "But I could not permit the attempt."

"If you kill me, others will take my place," said Midhat with cold fury. "Many of us recognize your schemes."

"Perhaps," said the Count, "but what if your faction is utterly disgraced?"

"That will never happen!"

"Oh, it will, when you are caught attempting to murder the Sultan himself in his own harem."

Midhat looked startled. "What joke is this?" he asked.

"A very fine joke!" said

Ignatyev. "May I introduce Javorr?"

He gestured to his sorcerous ally, who spoke seven incomprehensible words. At that, a huge and scowling Turk advanced on us from the back of the tent. I sensed Midhat start at my side, and heard his intake of breath.

"You are perceptive," Ignatyev told the Pasha.

"Merely well educated," replied Midhat. "But what makes you believe that you can bargain with such as this?"

"I make no bargains," said the Count. "I prefer to work from a position of strength. And he is a fine servant, is he not? Javorr; study, and learn."

The one named Javorr advanced on Midhat Pasha until his face was but six inches away, and then he paused. Then, I gave a gasp; for as I watched, Javorr's visage *changed*. His scowl vanished, to be replaced by a look of considered contempt; for his features became a mirror-image of those he faced. His build, too, shifted to match the Pasha's, and even his clothes were transformed.

"A Ghul!" I cried, "Ignatyev! Is there no limit to your devilry?"

"Accursed by Suleiman ibn Daud," said Midhat in a low, contemptuous tone that somehow had a ring of power to it. The creature facing him smiled horribly at that, and raised hands that, although seemingly human, were hooked as if it would use them as claws. I attempted to leap to Midhat's aid, but two of the Bedouin, who had remained in the tent as silent guards, held me back.

The Ghul reached for the Pasha's throat, its smile growing ever less human. However, at a gesture from Ignatyev, the wizard barked out a brief command. At this, the monster backed away from Midhat, albeit with every sign of unwillingness.

"I am a fastidious man, and Javorr lacks manners in his dining," the Count commented. "A fact I find surprising."

"That a Ghul be foul?" asked Midhat, ironically.

"Ah, but Javorr was not always a mere Ghul," said the Count. "Once, strange to say, he was counted among the

"A Ghul! Is there no limit
to your devilry?"

nobility of the Djinn. We stand among the ruins of his ancient palace. He still has somewhat of his old dignity. For example, he is not as easily driven away, by mumbled prayers or rusty iron, as that skulking thing that Herr Starkmann met in the desert recently." I doubtless looked surprised at that, and Ignatyev smiled slightly at his own cleverness. "Oh yes, I heard about that. My spies bring me bazaar gossip. But Javorr is something else. A great lord, brought low by ambition . . ."

"Ghul or Djinni, why do you think he is a fit assassination weapon?" asked Midhat. "The Sultan is forever surrounded by wardings and amulets."

"Not in his own palace," said the Count, "not while he takes his ease."

"That is because the walls of the Dolmabache are laden with protections," replied Midhat. "Every brick is stamped with the Seal of Solomon. No Djinni or Ghul can pass them."

"No?" The Count smiled his cold smile again. "Javorr is already within the palace."

Midhat looked puzzled, and the Count evidently found it amusing to explain. "As I said, Javorr was once a lord of the Djinn. Then, he was so foolish as to give offence to a human wizard – perhaps it was the legendary Abdhul the Mad himself. So the wizard took a special revenge. First, he bound Javorr, and all his servants, with the Seal of Solomon. Then, he wrenched away a part of Javorr's very life – the smokeless flame that serves Javorr for flesh. Nor was he a wasteful sorcerer. He bound that same magical fire up in a blade of iron, which was thus imbued with great power. Javorr was always called The Sunderer . . ."

I had remained silent throughout this exchange, restraining myself in order to learn as much as possible of the Count's perfidy, but at mention of that title, I started. The Count looked at me with interest. I did not wish to tell him how I had heard this word before, but there were other matters to which I could refer more safely. "The sword!" I cried. "Your gift to the Vizier!"

Ignatyev nodded. "Which he in turn presented to the Sultan. I am told that the Sultan was much taken with the blade; it lies in his armoury even now. Had he consulted with a *trustworthy* sorcerer, he might have been warned."

"Allow me a guess," I said, "I begin to understand your cold-blooded ruthlessness. The merchant Vaksoudian, who I was to visit, was a seller of antiquities and sometimes a spy. He somehow became aware of the sword . . ."

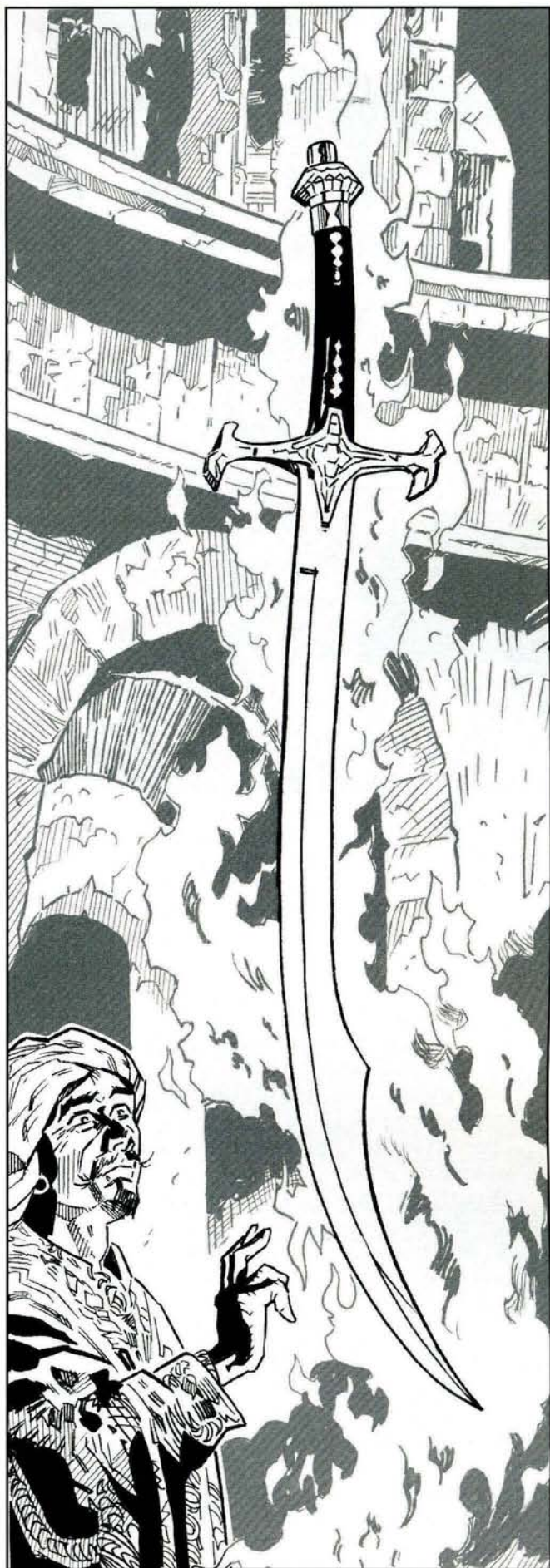
"And took an unacceptable interest," Ignatyev confirmed. "Perhaps I might have bought him off, but I could take no chances."

"So you had him foully murdered. And when first we met, you were not passing by chance; you were ensuring that your agents had completed their mission successfully."

"Naturally. Attention to detail is often profitable. You caught my attention, and when I later discovered you were seeking the Pasha . . ."

"You had me kidnapped."

"As a precaution. Now, I judge that it was probably superfluous, but . . ."





"Enough of this story-telling," Midhat interrupted, "what of this sword?"

The Count nodded, clearly wishing to return to the tale of his own ingenuity. "An excellent blade. I learned of its legend a little while since. I am no wizard myself, but a certain amount of expertise in scrying is available to my government. Having obtained some useful clues, I commissioned Dahir the Crimson here to pursue the matter. Javorr was easily found, and bound by his name and the Seal of Solomon. The sword took just a little longer. Now, Dahir will soon invoke a spell of sympathy, bringing Javorr together with his stolen fire . . ."

"So you send the Ghul to the sword," said Midhat, flatly, "wearing my shape."

"Exactly. His instructions are precise. He will stalk through the palace by night, be discovered, butcher a eunuch or two – then, when outnumbered, flee cravenly. We have even taught him what you would say . . ."

"Death to the Sultan! Death to the Enemy of Progress!" bellowed the Ghul, in Midhat's voice. The Count shook his head fastidiously at the noise.

"Yes. I think that should scare the weak-minded Sultan enough to ensure a few massacres, set your cause back a generation, and bring this joke of an Empire to the brink of civil war. Of course, I shall have to decide whether you disappear completely after this vile assault, or whether you will be turned over to the authorities by a reward-seeker. It

might be best to have you die after being discovered in public. I will think."

"But the European powers will never permit Russia to conquer Turkey!" I protested. The Count laughed at that.

"You are crude in your thinking," he said, "and clearly no politician. Russia could conquer Turkey within a month, if we but chose to spend a few soldiers – and indeed, as you say, if it were not for the other powers' fears. But our rivals can and will do little if Turkey destroys *itself*. That is not *diplomatic*. So that is what we encourage. And as the Slavic provinces see their chance of freedom, we will encourage them to grasp it. Quietly. Diplomatically."

"And then take them into your Empire," I said, "where they will be just as oppressed . . ."

"Where they belong!" snapped the Count.

"They will only be willing because they will be escaping the charnel-house that you are making of the Ottoman Empire," I said, struggling for a moment with my guards in my fury. "I think that they will realize their mistake soon enough, when they see what *fiends* they have accepted as their new rulers."

"Foreigners always exaggerate the power of the Leshye . . ." the Count began, but I actually laughed at that, and I was pleased to see that this puzzled him.

"No," I said, "I had forgotten your land's dark Forest-Lords. I was thinking of *you*, Count; you are the monster here!"

The Count shrugged. "You have no concept of destiny, Bavarian. Or of diplomacy. What shall we do with you?" He paused, and I was struck silent as I confronted this very question for the first time. "Ah, the ill fortune of the pawn who is captured with the knight. But – you are an agent of a power that I do not wish to see successful in this region. I am sure that we can include you in the Pasha's little tragedy."

I remained unable to reply, and clearly, Midhat Pasha could find no response either. Ignatyev signed to his hirelings, and we were dragged away, bound hand and foot, and cast down in another tent.

For some minutes, we discussed our situation in whispers, but it was clear that our situation was desperate. Then, as despair loomed over me, came a sound which I had not expected to hear.

"Effendi! What befalls?"

It was Hassan, my guide from Baghdad.

A Small Hope

*From the Private Memoirs
of Eberhardt Starkmann*

Hassan had wriggled under the edge of the tent, and was now crouching near my head.

"How come you here?" I asked.

"These bandits have no eyes," sneered Hassan, "when I saw you taken, I followed them, and leapt aboard the last of their baggage-camels. The beast started, but they did not think to look closely at its load. Forgive me for not finding you sooner, but I was thirsty, and had to find their water-skins."

"But why did you take the risk?" I asked.

"Effendi!" Hassan sounded shocked, "I had eaten your bread and salt! Do you doubt my honour?"

"No," I said, "I am grateful."

"Should I free you?" he asked.

"Perhaps not," Midhat interjected. Hassan scowled at him, but I could understand Midhat's thought. "We are not as small as you, honourable one, and our absence would soon be noticed. We would have to slip out, steal horses, flee across the desert ahead of these practiced bandits . . . Better to obtain more help."

"He speaks truth, Hassan," I said. "Can you perhaps go and find us rescue? But loosen these bonds first."

The boy nodded, and within seconds, he was wriggling under the side of the tent again.

"What think you?" I asked the Pasha, "Will he gain us aid in time?"

"We can hope," he replied. "But it is some ways to town, and who will believe a street-urchin when he gets there, or if he finds some caravan? We may have to make our own escape after nightfall, and hope not to be noticed."

But we did not have to wait that long.

It was two or three hours later when we heard signs of a new development. Suddenly, there was shouting and commotion without the tent; the Bedouin were crying out in Arabic, and I sensed confusion and argument in their tone. For all the regularity of their camp, I did not think that Ignatyev had made soldiers of them. Then there came a rattle of distant gunfire, which perhaps shook some sense into the arguing men; other shots rang out, closer to hand, in reply to the attacking salvo.

Midhat and I looked at each other and nodded. It took us but a moment to slip our loosened bonds. We crawled to the flap of

the tent, and cautiously peered out.

Our captors were still rushing to fetch rifles, and then to form defensive lines at the edge of the encampment. But it seemed that they were already too late; the attackers must have come upon them with exceptional speed and furious bravery, and were already among the tents. A loose melee was evidently developing; we heard the ringing of swords as well as the sharp reports of guns. With our captors thus distracted, Midhat and I were able to slip out of our tent, and peer cautiously around another.

Thus we obtained our first view of the attackers; a band of Arabs in plain white robes. They were mounted on swift horses, and rode with such skill that they were able to charge home against the defenders, even among the tent-ropes of the camp. They were stern-faced warriors, unsmiling in battle, yet clearly brave and well-practiced with their weapons.

"Ai!" exclaimed Midhat, "Wahhabi! Will the rescue be worse than the captivity?"

There was no time for explanations. "Quickly," I said, "we must stop Ignatyev and Dahir!"

We scurried through the camp, unnoticed by the defenders who were rushing to battle, until we found the leaders' tent. However, we were just in time to see Ignatyev, Dahir, and Javorr emerge, the former wielding a pistol. He saw us at the same moment, and fired a shot that caused us to duck back, while Javorr showed yellow fangs within Midhat's face.

As we paused and looked for cover, or weapons to use against the three, we saw Ignatyev apparently arguing with Dahir. He threatened the man with his pistol, at which Dahir began nervously to raise his arms and chant words that had the unmistakable note of sorcery.

Midhat and I sprang to our feet, but clearly, Ignatyev had terrorized the mage into expending his very life-energy in this cause. As the wizard slumped to the sand, drooling blood, the Ghul was engulfed in a dark flame, which leaped skyward and hurtled toward the West like a meteor.

"Too late!" I groaned.

Midhat Pasha shook his head. "Perhaps," he agreed.

Count Nikolay Ignatyev, Russian Diplomat and Secret Agent

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Athletics Good, Charisma Great, Comeliness Good, Connections Exceptional, Courage Great, Education Good, Exchequer Great, Fencing Great, Marksmanship Good, Ottoman Way Average, Perception Good, Social Graces Exceptional.

GURPS

239 points

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 6.25; Move 6.

Dodge 7; Parry 11 (Fencing).

Advantages: Attractive [5]; Charisma +2* [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Cool [1]; Claim to Hospitality (Russian diplomatic corps) [5]; Cultural Adaptability [25]; Diplomatic Immunity [20]; Luck [15]; Reputation +1 (Among Asian ruling classes, for usefulness, 10 or less) [1]; Reputation +2 (Among European diplomats, as a smart fellow, 10 or less) [2]; Reputation +1 (Among the Russian aristocracy, as a rising star) [2]; Status 5** [20]; Wealthy [20].

* Includes +1 from Cultural Adaptability.

** Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Duty (Diplomatic work, not dangerous, 12 or less) [-5]; Obsession (Building a Pan-Slavic Empire) [-15]; Proud [-1]; Reputation -2 (Among those who know about Central Asian affairs, for cold-blooded ruthlessness, 10 or less) [-2]; Secret (Past record of hidden tricks and scheming) [-10].

Quirks: Prefers human abilities to technology or magick, but uses whatever works; Secretly disdains non-Slavs; Utterly ruthless, but polite. [-3]

Skills: Administration-14 [1]; Area Knowledge (Asia)-16 [2]; Area Knowledge (Ottoman Empire)-15 [1]; Area Knowledge (Russia)-15 [1]; Dancing-11 [1/2]; Detect Lies-12 [1]; Diplomacy-15 [4]; Fencing-15 [8]; Guns/TL5 (Pistol)-15* [1]; Intelligence Analysis-13 [2]; Interrogation-12 [1/2]; Intimidation-14 [1]; Leadership-16 [1]; Riding (Horse)-13 [2]; Savoir-Faire-17** [0]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-15 [1]; Spear-12 [1]; Strategy-13 [1]; Whip-11 [1/2]. (All Social skills include +1 from Cultural Adaptability.)

* Includes +2 for IQ.

** Free from Status.

Languages: Arabic-15 [1]; Chinese-14 [1/2]; Farsi-14 [1/2]; French-15 [1]; German-14 [1/2]; Greek-14 [1/2]; Russian (native)-16 [0]; Turkish-14 [1/2]. (All include +2 from Cultural Adaptability.)

Count Ignatyev is one of Imperial Russia's most respected diplomats, currently serving as Ambassador to Constantinople. He is also one of the most formidable and deadly agents in the Game of Nations. Although barely 40 (he was born in 1832), he has already helped to advance Russian interests across the length and breadth of Asia.

After a brief army career, the Count joined his country's diplomatic service in time for the negotiations at the end of the Crimean War. He was then assigned to work in the East, where he negotiated treaties with the Khan of Bokhara, before his first master-stroke; traveling to Peking, he convinced the Dragon Emperor of China that the

Russians were friendly, negotiating an agreement that gave Russia control of huge swathes of border territory, reaching all the way to the Pacific. He then returned to Moscow to take up a government post, before receiving his present assignment in Turkey. Now, by a combination of bribery and social skill, he has gained influence over the Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha – allowing Russia to subvert the Ottomans without firing a shot.

Count Ignatyev pursues every opportunity he can for Russia's advantage, while always meticulously maintaining a smokescreen of denials. It is rumored that he has worked against the British in India, and he would love to gain enough power in Central Asia that he could lead an army of Russians and Asian mercenaries down through the passes to conquer Afghanistan and then the British domains. For now, he is aiming to turn Turkey into an enfeebled Russian puppet.

Ignatyev is brave, skilful, cool as ice, and well-trained as a soldier as well as a diplomat, but his chief weapons are intelligence and charm. He is so inhumanly efficient that some people think that he is half-Leshye, but his cold-blooded ingenuity has more of a human stamp. Although he is certainly working for his own glory, he is actually an idealist, and fiercely patriotic. He wants to build a Slavic Empire, from the Asian colonies to the Baltic and the Adriatic – ruled from Moscow, of course. This "Pan-Slavic" dream might lead him into conflict with the Leshye, one day, as the Russian Sidhe want to keep all humans – Slavs and everyone else – under their thumbs; but for now, Count Ignatyev is a loyal Agent of the Tsar.



A volley of shots echoed around us; looking back, I saw that the camp's defenders had broken and were in full flight. Even as I watched, I saw two men cut down with casual ruthlessness, their life-blood staining the sand. Count Ignatyev, too, scanned this scene briefly, then ran to a horse picketed nearby, leapt upon its back, and galloped away into the desert. More shots rang about him, but luck and horsemanship saved him. Dahir the Crimson was not so fortunate; recovering his feet, he attempted to run, but

three of the attackers were already at hand, bringing their horses to a halt as they took aim, and three rifle-bullets cut him down.

Midhat Pasha and I turned to face our rescuers. The Bedouin rode into the ruins as a loose band, but not without signs of discipline. Their leader drew rein before us, and I saw Hassan hanging on behind his saddle, his face remarkably unhappy for one who had so dramatically accomplished success.

❧ THE WAHHABIS ❧

Notes by the Bayern Diplomatic Service

The Bedouin Wahhabi sect of Arabia is one of the most formidable forces to be encountered in that region. Technically rebels against Ottoman authority, they in fact control considerable tracts of the country, and have on occasion stormed even the Muslim's Holiest of Holies – Medina and Mecca. Although their glory days, when they ruled much of Arabia, are past, it is still possible that their leaders, the House of Ibn Saud, might regain some local power.

The sect was founded in 1744, when the Beni Saud, rulers of a few towns, were converted by a travelling fundamentalist preacher named Abd al-Wahhab, who had been ejected from greater cities for controversial teaching. The Wahhabis believe in a pure, unquestioning form of Islam, in the literal and absolute truth of the Koran, and that any distraction from the worship of the one and only God is blasphemy (which they usually reward with death). They spread widely in the latter half of the 18th century, eventually capturing the Holy Cities – to the shame of the Ottomans, who claimed to be protectors of those places.

In 1815, the Wahhabis were challenged and defeated by the new, modernized armies of Mehmet Ali, governor of Egypt. A few years later, they regained a little territory, setting up their capital in Riyadh – but they have never repeated those early victories, for all that they rule much land to which the Ottomans lay claim.

The Wahhabis are not the best
disciplined or equipped troops in Arabia,
but they are the most determined.

The Wahhabis are still fiercely puritanical, and like most theocracies, rule strictly. The English Jesuit explorer Palgrave, who spent six dangerous weeks in Riyadh, has said that "the Wahhabi empire is a compact and well-organized government . . . whose mainsprings and connecting links are force and fanaticism." Furthermore, even in areas with more relaxed rulers, beyond the Wahhabi domain, one may find bands and congregations of Wahhabis, who represent a menace to the Western traveller.

For while the mass of Arabs are a hospitable people, a race of traders as well as raiders, who regard Christians as honourable "People of the Book," worshipping Allah in their own way, the Wahhabis are single-minded fanatics. Many travellers to the East have

returned with tales of Arab kindness, punctuated by threats and insults from Wahhabis. In time, perhaps, they will learn a little realism – but not yet.

And the war-lords of the Wahhabi towns command a formidable army. The Wahhabis are not the best disciplined or equipped troops in Arabia, but they are the most determined. They have no Magick, regarding that as yet another morally doubtful indulgence, but they wield guns and swords with consummate skill. Europe has seen before what Muslim armies can do when they do not fear death . . .

❧ SAVED BY A MADMAN ❧

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

. . . Our situation was only a little better now than it had been before. The Wahhabis had followed Hassan's directions out of curiosity, and had enjoyed defeating the bandits and foreigners they had discovered. They had seen the Magick fire burst upward from the camp, and they had slain the wizard responsible. But to them, we were but a strange *Farangi* and a hated Turk. (I feared most of all for Midhat Pasha.) We explained our situation, and Hassan spoke up bravely; at all this, they frowned in puzzlement.

They were not sure that an enemy's enemy was necessarily a friend.

Then a new voice rang out across the impromptu camp. "What is this? More *Farangi*? Might I have speech with them?"

The new arrival was a tall, well-built fellow, whose red beard clearly marked him out as no Bedouin – although he was as much burned by the sun as they. He came striding forward, though I saw the Wahhabi mutter and scowl behind his back, and spoke in English. "You were prisoners, sir? What passed here?"

"Our enemies were working Magick with a Ghul in these parts, and captured us," I explained, "my name is Eberhardt Starkmann, and this is Midhat Pasha of Baghdad . . ."

The man looked bemused. "The governor? What . . . Well, thou may give explanation later. I am Charles Montagu Doughty, sir. I am pleased to meet thee. Whence come thou?"

The man's manner of speech seemed archaic, even to one as unversed in the subtleties of English as I; later, I learned that he too was a fanatic, devoted to and steeped in the older works of his nation's literature. At that time, however, I merely answered simply. "Bayern, Mr. Doughty. I am a surveyor . . ."

"A fellow geologist?" His expression shifted to curiosity, and he challenged me with technical questions which I was able to answer. But it was clear by now that the Wahhabi were becoming dangerously concerned by this foreign speech, and Doughty turned and swore to them that I was as I claimed, another visiting scholar. This calmed them for a few minutes, and Mr. Doughty begged leave to converse with us a little longer, which was grudgingly given.

"Thou art unfortunate in thy rescuers," Mr. Doughty explained. "Most Bedouin would have taken pity on thy plight, but the Wahhabi have little warmth." He shook his head. "Now pray sir, what passed here, might I know?"

Midhat Pasha and I took some minutes to explain, as Mr Doughty's brow darkened. "A Dark Summonation? Magickal murder? Base villainy! And little is there that might be turned 'gainst this foul design."

"All may not be lost," said the Pasha, "for I recall what Count Ignatyev said of the instructions given the creature. It will strike in darkness . . ."

"It is already there!" I objected.

"Yes, but the Djinn are notoriously straightforward in their obedience."

"Indeed!" cried Doughty.

"What of it?" I asked. "Even if we could somehow reach a telegraph office, what message could we send to Constantinople that would possibly be believed?"

"Wait," commanded Doughty, and cross-examined us further as to what we knew of the Djinni-Ghul – little though that was. Then he spent some moments contemplating the broken stones around us in silent thought. At length, he spoke again. "How great is thy desire to take cold steel against these foemen?"

"I will be dead, or a renegade, if I do not," said Midhat Pasha.

"It seems essential," I said.

"There is a little hope," said Doughty, and walked off to speak with the Wahhabi leader. He returned, followed at a distance by a pair of Bedouin, and stared at us sternly. "If

mine art suffices, thou mayst be set on the trail of thy foe," he said, "but I place thee hereby at risk. If I could see a safer way, I would lay it afore thee. The Wahhabi will permit us this attempt; already, they see us for doubtful heathens, one and all, and this will but confirm their opinion. I think they anticipate hereby being rid of us, in one wise or another."

We both told him that we accepted any risk that was needful.

"But what of Hassan?" I said, "And what risk do you take?"

"I will part from this band's company straightways," Doughty said, "they will in sooth be joyful to see no more of a *majnun* sorcerer. And Hassan may accompany me, for his home-city is mine destination."

"I would come with you, *effendi*," Hassan began to me, but Doughty interrupted him.

"That might not be attainable, nor might it be well done," he declared, "and would one so young as thee take part in infidel sorcery, lad?"

Hassan said nothing to that, but I think he showed signs of relief. I reassured him that he had repaid all debts to me, and told him that he had the makings of a hero of legend, at which he laughed, and bade me return to Baghdad when I could, that he could show me more of his city. Midhat Pasha, with a serious face, declared that it was now he that owed a debt, and swore that it would be repaid if he survived this night.

But Mr Doughty was clearly becoming impatient. "Come," he commanded. We went a little way through the ruins, Doughty occasionally glancing at various ancient stones, until eventually he found one that somehow met his expectations. It was a great, dark slab of what I took to be basalt; looking closely, I saw that it had once been carved with some geometrical design, rendered all but invisible by the action of time. Doughty, however, seemed to find it satisfactory. He struck it with his walking-staff.

"Awake!" he commanded in Arabic, "Slave of Javorr!"

"Who would mock a bound slave?" The voice was faint but strong, and seemed to echo from within the very stone.

"A Son of Adam," replied Mr. Doughty.

"Leave me, Son of Adam. Have not thy kind done me enough injustice?"

"Didst thou not share thy master's crimes and folly?" Doughty said.

"I was a messenger, no more."

"So gravings on thy prison state. Dost thou then swear that thou committed no violence against the Sons of Adam?"

"Dost thou still mock me?"

"By the Seal of Solomon,
by thine own Name, and
by the Smokeless Fire, swear!"

"Wouldst thou be free once more?" Mr Doughty asked, evenly. The bound Djinn paused at that, then replied.

"I so swear."

"By the Seal of Solomon, by thine own Name, and by the Smokeless Fire, swear," Doughty ordered. There was another pause.

"I swear by all these Seals and Names and Powers."

Now Mr. Doughty paused, smiling a little. "Some Djinn might be desperate enough to forswear themselves," he told us, "but this one seems truthful, for yet he lives. Few of the servants share their masters' dark ways. They prefer a quiet living." Then he returned his attention to the stone. "And what think thou of thine old lord, Javorr?" he asked.

"Who caused the mortal wizard to entrap me? I owe him no loyalty."

"So thou wouldst aid a sortie 'gainst that one?"

"I will not fight him; he knows my names and bindings."

"No battle, then; but a simple task, and a small oath."

"Demand thy demands, Son of Adam."

"First, swear that, once enfreed, thou wilt make no assault, ever, 'gainst the Sons of Adam, but will retire in peace to the wastelands of the Djinn or through the Gates of Fire or into the Lands Beneath the Earth, and make no meddling in human matters."

"A small price. I so swear, by the Seal of Solomon."

"But first – on being freed, thou wilt take up these two Sons of Adam, one in each hand, and bear them in safety to the city and the palace where they direct thee, in the swiftest wise that thou art able. Swear thou to this task, by thine name and the Seal of Solomon?"

"I so swear, Son of Adam. By my name and all that binds me, I will bear them in the comfort of the cradle and faster than the winds. But only – Free – Me – Now!"

"In but one moment," Doughty promised. Then he turned to us, and smiled a little. "Prepare thyselfes, my friends, for once this is done, the task is thine." Then his expression became more serious. "I thought of joining thee, but no scholar puts himself too literally in the hands of a Djinni with whom he bargains.

These creatures are susceptible to temptation, in their way. And they mostly have but two hands."

And so, a few minutes later, as Midhat Pasha and I stood back and watched, Doughty stepped forward, staff in hand, spoke what was clearly a Word of Power, and smote the stone.

The stone split asunder. A great cloud of smoke, shot through with sparks, billowed forth and around all three of us, and arose into the desert sky. Then this cloud came together in the form of a figure that possessed the basic *shape* of a man. However, as I craned to gaze at its face, I realized that, even once it was fully coalesced, it was at least 12 feet tall.

The Djinni had chosen to appear powerfully muscled, smooth-skinned, and coloured

as polished bronze. It had the look of a being that could shatter the walls of a city with one blow of its huge fist, or rip through reinforced doors with its long, polished talons. I remembered what I had read of the ancient cities of the East, and their gargantuan defensive walls, and now, such things seemed utterly reasonable; I would not trust less even to delay such a creature. As I stared, awe-struck, at its

face, I saw that it was possessed of needle-sharp projecting fangs. It was seemingly clad only in plain, loose, black trews; its hair was bound in a simple top-knot. It laughed, a booming laugh that echoed across the desert, and stretched like a cat awakening.

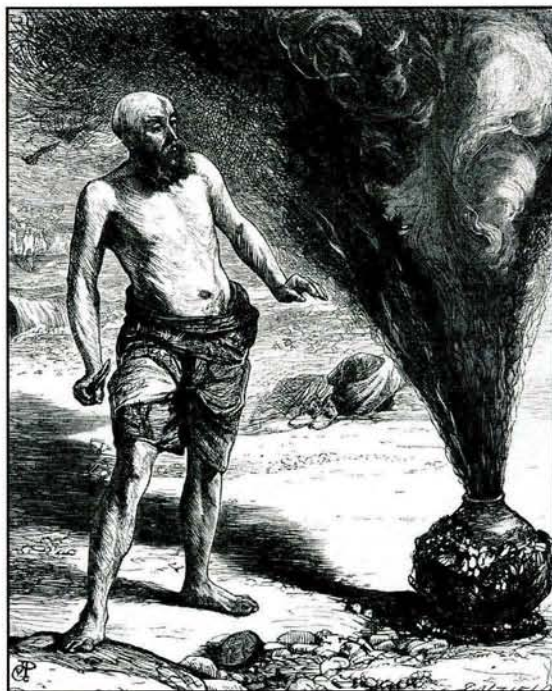
"Thy task," Mr Doughty reminded it.

"YES," it said, its voice now like thunder, and reaching forward with those gigantic, taloned hands, oversized even in proportion to its figure, it scooped up Midhat Pasha in its left, and I in its right.

Then it straightened, and I felt myself lifted away from the desert. With an easy motion, the Djinni sprang away from the surface of the Earth, and into the rich blue sky of the desert

evening. A howling wind blew up beneath us, and the Djinni flew with us toward the sinking sun.

With an easy motion, the Djinni sprang away from the surface of the Earth, and into the rich blue sky of the desert evening. A howling wind blew up beneath us, and the Djinni flew with us toward the sinking sun.



Charles Montagu Doughty, Traveler and Scholar of the Exotic

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Courage Great, Education Exceptional, Fencing Poor, Perception Great, Physician Good, Sorcery Good.

GURPS

114 points

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 10/13 [15].

Speed 5; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Magery 1 [15]; Sanctity [5]; Status 1 [5]; Strong Will +1 [4]; Unusual Background (Independent sorcerer) [10].

Disadvantages: Disciplines of Faith (Personal*) [-5]; Odious Personal Habit (Archaic style of speech and writing) [-5]; Pacifism (Cannot Kill) [-15]; Stubbornness [-5]; Truthfulness [-5].

* Doughty's "Disciplines of Faith" reflect his personal ideal of how a Christian Gentleman should behave. As well as regular prayer, this means that he will never deny his faith, even at risk to his life. He will always "turn the other cheek," which is also the basis of his Pacifism; he is extremely unlikely to start a fight, and will try to minimize the effects of violence at all times, but he is pragmatic enough to fall short of total nonviolence.

Quirks: Emotionally reserved; Studious; Thinks that the English language has been going downhill since 1550. [-3]

Skills: Anthropology-11 [1/2]; Archaeology-11 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Arabia)-17 [6]; Area Knowledge (Levant)-15 [2]; Area Knowledge (Mediterranean)-14 [1]; Bard-13 [1]; Diagnosis-11 [1/2]; Diplomacy-12 [1]; First Aid-13 [1/2]; Geology-13 [2]; Gesture-13 [1/2]; Hiking-8 [1/2]; History-12 [1]; Literature-14 [4]; Lorebook (Justification of the Philosophers)-11 [1]; Lorebook (Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud)-12 [2]; Orienteering-12 [1/2]; Physician-12 [1]; Research-13 [1]; Riding (Camel)-10 [2]; Riding (Horse)-9 [1]; Ritual Magic (Personal Style)-12 [2]; Savoir-Faire-16* [0]; Survival (Desert)-14 [2]; Theology-11 [1/2]; Writing-13 [1].

* Free from Status.

Languages: Arabic-14 [2]; Classical Greek-12 [1/2]; English (native)-17 [3]; French-12 [1/2]; Italian-12 [1/2]; Latin-13 [1]; Turkish-12 [1/2].

Charles Doughty, the son of an English parson, was born in 1843 and educated at Cambridge, London and Oxford; he began as a geologist, then switched his attention to early literature. (His writing style is downright pre-Shakespearean; as Starkmann says, he is actually

dedicated to restoring the English language to what he sees as its high point, that of early Elizabethan England.) He is a studious, somewhat reserved character, although capable of making the occasional small joke. He was making a scholarly sort of trip around the Mediterranean when he developed an interest in the ancient ruins of Arabia, and took to traveling with the Bedouin as he researched the subject. He survives in desert regions by selling medical skills; he carries a bag of remedies and ointments, which are better than most of what is available in those parts, but he is not a qualified doctor, and he is too honest to claim to be. (He might be treated as Struggling or Poor in this setting, but as a gentleman-scholar, he would have access to better resources back in England.)

Doughty is a big, rugged-looking, red-bearded fellow, but his travels in the extreme Arabian climate, often in conditions of poverty, have not proved compatible with his constitution, and his health sometimes lets him down; nor does he enjoy using physical force. He is much more of a scholar and a talker than he appears, but his pride, courage, and determination are impressive. So is his stubbornness; he is a devout Christian, and he admits this, and even emphasizes it, to virtually every Arab he encounters – including the Wahhabi. (If he also told them his opinion of Islam, he would certainly be dead by now, but even he is not *that* foolhardy.)

Doughty's approach is controversial; for example, Sir Richard Burton disapproves of the way he permits Arab ruffians to bully an Englishman. On the other hand, he knows the life and ways of the desert nomads better than any other European.

Doughty is also unusual as a New European in that he is an "independent" wielder of Magick. He has accomplished this by diligent study of a huge range of subjects, lengthy meditations in the Arabian desert – often while near starvation – and communion with *Sha'ir* and Dervishes. The Bedouin take him for a *Hakim* (Sage), a mystical madman-poet, or some warped sort of *Farangi* Dervish. Experience has attuned him to the powers of the desert, and scholarship has given him the skill to manipulate what he can sense.

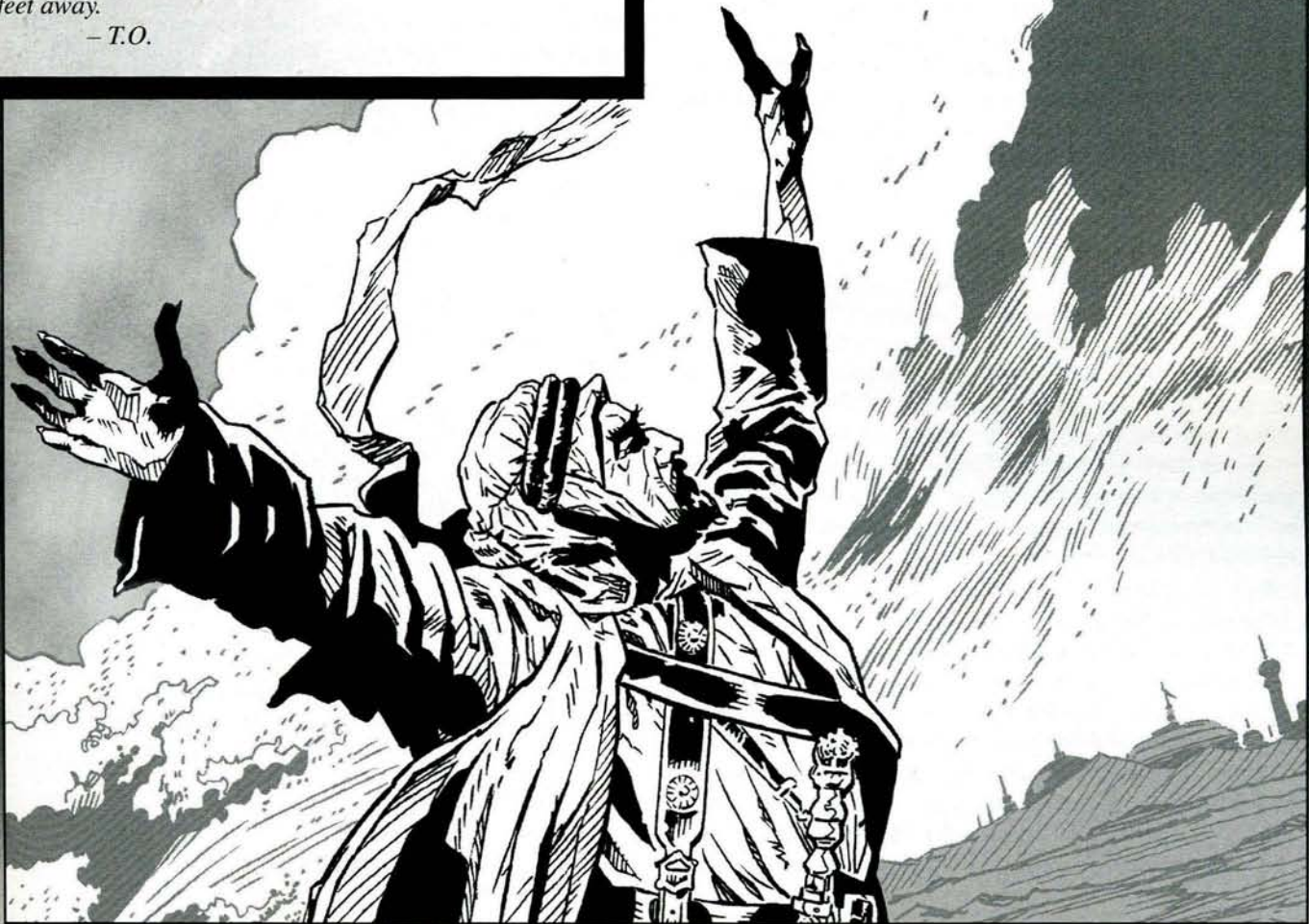
However, Doughty is not very broad in his abilities. He has studied few spell-books, and he lacks the *Sha'ir*'s ability to improvise poetic spells from first principles. He has effectively mastered, or can improvise, any effect in the *Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud* (p. 86) and he has spent a little time with *The Justification of the Philosophers* (p. 86) – but his abilities need much more training. However, his pride and moral code make it unlikely that he will ever pursue such studies.

6. On Arabian Magickal Arts

This is a set of notes prepared by Morrolan, with some assistance, for the Bayernese court and diplomatic services. I've added game mechanics.

The information it contains is mostly public knowledge, although some of it is a little obscure to non-specialists. Of course, some of it may be downright wrong; Arabian sorcerers are, Morrolan notes, "as adept as any in the arts of misdirection and dissimulation." And he says that with one of them staring at him from three feet away.

— T.O.





MAGICKAL ORDERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



A Caution

We of Europe are accustomed to thinking of Magick as being the business of societies and Orders, wrapped in secrecy, but still in essence akin to colleges. After all, Magick is in essence a scholarly pursuit, to be developed under the aegis of scholarship; even the tribal wizards of the American West have their brotherhoods and their "oral traditions."

And so, when we review the place of The Art in Ottoman lands, we find Dervish Orders and Ancient Societies, scholarly *Madrasahs* and Bedouin Brotherhoods, and we nod sagely and say, ah yes, we know the way of it. But that which we know is only one part.

For it is clear to me, after study, that the folk of Muslim lands have their own view of learning, which accords primary significance to the individual sage, and to a *personal* kind of tradition. This is not simply the tribesman's reverence for the shaman, although it may descend from that; it is a deep admiration for the surpassing wisdom of the great individual. These are, after all, the lands of the Prophets, the Law-Givers, and the first Saints. The old Bedouin went in awe of the *Sha'ir*, the Inspired Poet; the Bedouin's town-dwelling descendent admires the *Hakim*, the Sage.

Of course, there are few Sages in any generation, but not every expert need be such. For the Sage is, with everything else, a teacher. And the Sage's pupils, too, should be teachers. The words of wisdom are passed down the years, sustained and broadcast by dedicated pupils. And at times, that wisdom concerns The Art, and it is Magick which is passed from one to another.

Some may ask, What of This? For Sages and their pupils gather together in colleges and orders, and discuss the Lore like any European wizard – and indeed, they create books, likewise. But we must never assume that similarity is identity. The Arabian wizard's loyalty and power are owed, not to the college, but to the individual teacher, and to the tradition founded by a Sage.

Whether this is, in general, a good way to sustain learning, I will not say. It is quite possible that it is dangerous to the future of Progress and Growth in the Muslim lands; for our European industry and power is based on specialization, and a willingness to turn to many experts, each wise in some small aspect of a problem at hand. But it has certain consequences.

The Muslim Sorcerer is, I suspect, often more powerful than his or her European counterpart. (I make the qualification as to sex advisedly; the East, with its closed harems, has produced few female spell-wielders of repute, but those we hear of have been mighty.) That Eastern Sorcerer may also be unpredictable, wielding Powers and Effects passed down through some traditional line of which a European might be unaware. However, such a tradition has, like as not, forgotten or remained ignorant of many things. Furthermore, the Easterner may lack the support or aid of an organized Sorcerous Society, which gives even the least-expert European assistance.

Lastly; recall that Middle Eastern Wizardry is the art of the tribal shaman, the inspired poet, the eccentric Dervish, and the power-hungry Grand Vizier. Each such will most likely also have dealings with the Djinn Lords, who are mighty and

strange beings. We of The Art in Europe are prone to finding ourselves called Erratic, and even Mad – but compared to our Eastern counterparts, we are paragons of stability and calm. The Arab or Turkish Wizard is powerful and unpredictable; a tricky ally, and a dangerous but not unconquerable foe.

On a practical matter; all of the groups described hereafter may be assumed to hold copies of the book known as *The Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud*, as well as the specific volumes named. Any independent magician worthy of respect will also have acquired this work.

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Another View

Sir Richard Burton has sent us his own comments on The Art in Arabian lands:

"... Some clues might be obtained by perusal of the *Thousand and One Nights* (I direct members of the Second Compact who lack linguistic skills to my own translation). In tales such as those of Aladdin or Judar, the reader may observe the obsession of the Arabian mage; the quest for Hidden Treasure ... Practice of The Art is entangled with the hierarchy of Djinn, from the lowliest Ghoul to the Lords of the Ifrit ... Human wielders of power are, in general, those whom the majority of Muslims might disdain; the ragged Kalendari, the princess hidden in the harem, the slave ..."

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tradition founded by a Sage.

The Dervishes

The religious mystics and wanderers who we of Europe refer to as "Dervishes" or "Fakirs" are, in fact, adherents of the ancient Muslim theology of *Sufism*. Not all Dervishes are magicians; many, being devout folk, actually despise Magick as a worldly snare and a delusion. Travellers in the East should not casually enquire as to a Dervish's arcane powers, lest offence be taken.

However, many of the Sufi orders retain vast quantities of ancient lore, and many of the mightiest Arabian wizards, if not actually Dervishes themselves, have studied in Dervish *Madrassahs*. Furthermore, many of these Orders, sorcerous and religious alike, have great political influence; the diplomat should be as wary of them as should the mage.

(Incidentally, one must also not confuse Dervish magical skills with those perfectly explicable displays of sleight-of-hand which are known in Europe as "Fakir

Shows." No doubt there are some Fakirs who use legerdemain to emulate true Magick, and they may indeed be the origin of this appellation – but there are also "Fakirs" whose Magick is very real.)

So far as may be determined, the Sufis appeared in the centuries following the time of the Prophet Muhammad, when they somewhat resembled either the mendicant friars of Europe or the Buddhist holy men of Asia – mystical and eccentric wanderers, revered for wisdom by some, dismissed as frauds or heretics by others. However, with time, teachers emerged among them, and found themselves surrounded by pupils. Thus, some found it convenient to settle, and *Madrassahs* developed in forms much like the Christian world's

monasteries. Over the centuries, again like monasteries, some Orders acquired wealth and respect, and hence power; today, they exert influence in the highest levels of Ottoman government.

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Dervishes in GURPS

In *GURPS* terms, many members of the Dervish Orders have Disciplines of Faith (p. CI89), usually Mysticism, occasionally Asceticism or even Monasticism among those who withdraw permanently into *Madrassahs*. (Note that the region has many devout Muslims, so Mysticism in itself only earns a reaction penalty from a minority of people encountered – although a mystic who is also seen as a heretic or a rebel may have other problems.) However, dervishes do not conduct public religious ceremonies, so they do *not* qualify for Clerical Investment.

Some dervishes have a Duty or Sense of Duty to their Order, especially if they have learned Magick from it, but others are only loosely allied. The Orders themselves are too loose and informal to act as Patrons, but individual teachers and fellow-students may well represent Patrons or Allies.

Most dervishes have some level of Theology skill (often specializing in Islamic Mysticism), and the more respected among them have at least a point or so in Poetry. Fanaticism towards Islam is common among the Bektashi, and occasionally found among the Senusis. As more or less ascetic mystics, most dervishes are Struggling or Poor, and even a settled teacher will not have better than average Wealth unless it is accompanied by a good explanation, an Unusual Background, and probably a negative Reputation.

Any Bektashi who are open about their affiliation gain a -1 Reputation, among *loyal* Ottoman citizens, as political troublemakers (-2 points). Quite a few Ottomans have opinions about the Mehlevis, both good and bad, represented by +1 and -1 Reputations among all inhabitants of the region, both on 7 or less (worth +2 and -2 points respectively, and hence canceling out). Kalandari also have mixed Reputations: +2 for holiness with all Muslims on 7 or less (+3 points), and -1 as spongers throughout the Middle East on 10 or less (-2 points). Senusis are seen as wise and effective social figures by some of the Ottoman and Egyptian upper classes, a +2 Reputation among a large group on 10 or less (+2 points), but as tricky political independents among Ottoman government officials, a -1 Reputation among a small group on 10 or less (-1 point). Note that these values are all calculated for characters living and working within the Ottoman Empire; for a dervish character based elsewhere in the world, recalculate them with appropriately changed group sizes.

Kalandari who have learned Magick may have studied previously with either the Bektashi or the Mehlevis, and gained skill with one of those groups' Lorebooks. Alternatively, they may have studied *The Suns of the Lights* (and nothing else). Knowledge of any Lorebooks beyond this requires GM permission and the usual 5-point Unusual Background per book (p. CF93).



The Dervishes do differ from the monks of Christendom, not least in that they are, in general, far less restrictive. Aside from the fact that many of their Orders have "lay members" and simple associates, who may share in some of their lore, their full members often dispense with even the common general rules of Islam, claiming that they have a better understanding of the true Laws of God than those who blindly follow the letter of Tradition. Thus, they may be viewed, by the ordinary Muslim, with anything from respect for their wisdom, to contempt for their heresy.

This casual view of secular tradition has another consequence. To a Sufi, a human's sex is of little import; it is the soul that matters. There are noted women on the roster of Sufi saints. Knowing this, the mass of Muslims are sometimes shocked by the impropriety of a female rising in public life, sometimes simply respectful of any holiness.

As a footnote, one may note a peculiarity of Sufi thought; that they retain the eternal Arab love of *poetry*. Many of the greatest Muslim versifiers, including that Omar Khayyam recently translated so successfully into English by Mr FitzGerald, were in fact Sufi masters. An

Eastern philosopher-wizard may oft times prove to possess a mastery of poetics.

The following are some of the most noteworthy Dervish Orders, from a debatable list. (Each has its own Lorebooks noted. Some of these are described in *Castle Falkenstein*, pp. 199-202, and *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, pp. CF106-113; others are detailed later in this chapter.)

The Bektashi

This Order was once especially large and influential, but it has now been largely beaten down. The Bektashi hold a mixture of beliefs, combining a relaxed attitude to many of the traditions and laws of Islam with a total religious fanaticism. They permit the drinking of wine and social contact between men and women – and yet they proclaim themselves truly happy to die for their complete faith in Allah.

Bektashi beliefs were popular with the Janissaries, who doubtless appreciated the relaxed rules – but who also saw themselves as Warriors of Islam, and who were indeed often fanatical in battle. Thus, when the Janissaries were suppressed, the Bektashi fell also. However, it seems that both groups remain in existence – and are, no doubt, still allied. Unlike the Janissaries, the Bektashi sometimes move openly in public, although they remain somewhat disdained. They may be recognized by the wearing of caps of folded white cloth.

The roots of the Bektashi are obscure. They claim spiritual descent from one Hajji Bektash Wali, who is said to have both made the acquaintance of Othman himself, and to have assisted in the foundation of the Janissaries. Unless he also had found the Fountain of Youth, however, this is surely a myth, for it would require him to have lived for centuries. It seems more likely that they emerged in the 13th century from a blending of older Sufi traditions.

In the matter of Magick, the Bektashi include a number of experts, seeing this as a worthy tool in the promulgation of their creed. The order's *Madrasahs*, now often secret, are thought to have access to *The Treatise of Abu'l-Qasim al-Iraqi*, and the *Realm of the Unknown Mind*.

The Mehlevis

The Mehlevis were founded in the 13th century by the great mystic and poet, Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, and their name comes from their term for him – “Maulavi,” meaning “Our Master.” They use music, poetry, and other arts in their meditations, and one group of Mehlevis is famed in Europe as the “Whirling Dervishes” for their spinning dances.

This is, by its creed, a humanitarian sect, concerned with poetry more than with worldly power. However, they are reasonably popular with the masses, and Ottoman rulers have often chosen to support and even to join them

as a counterbalance to the Bektashis, who regard them as rivals. Thus, their lay members are sometimes deeply involved in politics, whatever their high-minded doctrine may say. Nor is the Sultans' respect for the Order infinite. One Grand Vizier, Halet Effendi, a lay member of the Mehlevis, was executed by order of the Sultan while in retreat in a Mehlevi Lodge, in 1822.

Although many Mehlevis regard Magick as crass and lacking in spiritual significance, the order produces scholars, and its libraries hold copies of *Agrivica Rexus' Realm of Illusion* (or a very similar tome) and *The Justification of the Philosophers*.

The Kalandari

The Kalandari Dervishes originated as an offshoot of the Bektashis, although they may be said to have reverted to an older Dervish style of existence; they are required by their vows to wander forever, never spending more than three nights in the same place

if they possess the option. They are a noteworthy sight on the streets of Ottoman towns, especially as they shave off their hair, eyebrows, and beards, and wear a distinctive costume, with a conical felt hat and a yellow or black shawl. Many Muslims see them as frauds and vagabonds, although others respect their holy austerity.

Obviously, the Order is precluded from gathering any great body of Lore, although some “Kalends” were trained in many arts in their prior lives, and some appear to have achieved strange mystical insights through avoidance of worldly ties. Some are past members of the Bektashi or the Mehlevis; a surprising number are experts in the spells described in *The Suns of the Lights*.

The Senusis

This is a more modern foundation, being the creation of the early 19th century leader Al-Senusi. Although it is considered to be a Dervish Order, and its members certainly espouse Sufi beliefs, it is in fact a worldly, militant sect.

The Senusis are based in North Africa, but have spread throughout the Muslim world. Although they are not overly exclusive, their ideals appeal to wealthier and more influential elements of society, making them a potent force; furthermore, they are adept at retiring into the desert when challenged, and thus remain stoutly independent. They influence Ottoman politics on their own terms, rather than being entangled in the manner of the Bektashi and Mehlevis, and they should be watched with caution.

As pragmatists, the Senusis have sought to master the magical arts, although a lack of ancient scholarship weakens them. They have acquired copies of *Osman's Tome of Physical Movement* and the *Entire Kashf al-Asrar of Al-Jawbari*, and would undoubtedly pay well or fight hard for other volumes.

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in the same place.

Secular Orders and Traditions

Despite the above-mentioned system of scholarly personal tuition, the Ottoman Empire does play host to a number of secular groups similar to the Sorcerous Orders of Europe. Some are associated with the Dervishes; others are scholarly “traditions” – groups of academics with similar ideas, who remain closely associated as they pass knowledge down through the generations. A few are conspiracies – often radicals or revolutionaries. One or two are practical “trade guilds,” made up of utterly secular, professional magicians. The following are groups which we have identified, and which may, I hope, represent the range of common types:

The Diwan of the Golden Road in GURPS

This is open only to trusted leading figures in the Ottoman government, who must therefore have very high Status and appropriate skills. (Wealth in turn goes with this.) In the highly unlikely case of a member going renegade or falling out with the rest of the Order, he would acquire a large Enemy, and probably not survive for very long.

The Diwan of the Golden Road

This is a department (*Diwan*), though not formally acknowledged, of the Ottoman government, and the means by which the Grand Viziers of the Empire ensure their continued predominance. It is reliably rumoured to have been founded by shamanic advisors to Othman, founder of the Ottoman dynasty. It functions as a committee of court advisors, under the authority of the Grand Vizier; its function is to deal with all matters of sorcery in the court and to administer the palace’s small but exceptional magickal library.

Thus, it grants the Grand Vizier, and a very few of his allies and associates, access to the *Libram of Mystic Transformation*, *Osman’s Tome of Physical Movement*, the *Book of Abdhul the Mad*, and the *Memorial Lessons of Dede Korkut*. (Note that many Viziers are also members in good standing of one of the Dervish Orders, and may thus have use of another set of magickal references.)

The Sisterhood of Roxelana

This is a secret society within the very harem of the Ottoman Sultan. It is alleged to have been founded by Roxelana, a Russian slave-girl whom Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent so loved that he formally married her. It was said by her enemies that she was a witch, and that she enchanted Suleiman; if so, his viziers were remarkably careless.

The group consists of concubines and serving-girls who combine magickal arts that they bring from their homelands with a variety of traditions passed down

The Sisterhood of Roxelana in GURPS

Harem women have some Status, but more important, Social Stigma (Valuable Property). Possession and use of Magickal powers within the harem is a Secret worth at least -10 points, sometimes -20, and often -30.

through generations in the palace. Because of this diverse set of sources, the Sisterhood lacks a formal, unified style of Magick, and some of its members may display completely unexpected powers while lacking other, elementary knowledge, such as correct use of the Seal of Solomon.

Obviously, it is hard to maintain a useful library in the harem, but *most* of the Sisterhood are taught a collection of effects from *Agrivicca Rexus’ Realm of Illusion*.

The internal politics of the harem can be bitter and complex, and the Sisterhood is torn by in-fighting; however, its main aim seems to be to ensure that *someone* from the harem is always in a position of power. Thus, it will usually support the Sultan, or at least protect him, and it may either aid or oppose the Diwan of the Golden Road. In the age when most of the harem slaves were captives from foreign lands, the Sisterhood was frequently split along national lines; today, its members are often interested in foreign ideas – the harem can be a very tedious place – but they have a conservative fear of any change that might cost them their behind-scenes influence.

The internal politics of the harem
can be bitter and complex,
and the Sisterhood is torn
by in-fighting.

The Brotherhood of Purity

The *Ikhwan as-Safa* traces its origins back to 10th-century Baghdad, when, they claim, their order was the first to master the art of truly scholarly Magick. Certainly, a semi-secret academic society of that name *did* exist in that place and time, and created a lengthy and intricate Encyclopaedia of practical, scientific, and mystical lore. But whether there is a genuine, continuous chain of tradition to the modern group is unknowable; the original Brotherhood disappeared after one generation, and the modern group loves secrecy far too much, apparently for its own sake. Most likely, *this* Brotherhood was organized

in more recent centuries in emulation of the original – but no European scholar can be certain. Allah alone, Muslims wisely remark, knows truth.

The Brotherhood is primarily an academic society, albeit with a definite mystical bent. Its members often affirm Sufi ideas, and may have links to a number of Dervish groups. However, they are more materialistic and pragmatic than any truly devoted Sufi, and even more outrageous, being wont to flirt with atheism and pantheism. The Brotherhood's main project is the accumulation and collation of all knowledge into apparently disorganized books – Encyclopaedias which may be as scrambled as they appear, or which may possess some subtle structure, incomprehensible to outsiders. The Brotherhood also share the Sufi belief that truth may only be perceived by discarding all preconceptions and assumptions; the "Purity" of their name is that of Absolute Truth, the Pure Light of Knowledge.

If this makes the Brotherhood sound harmlessly scholarly, then it may be misleading. For one thing, no outsider knows what the Brotherhood might *do* with its knowledge if it ever found everything it seeks. For another, the group's rejection of preconceptions and "old ideas" can make individual members dangerously unpredictable. For a third, the

group's hunger for knowledge is overwhelming – and ruthless. And finally, there is evidence that the Brotherhood has ties to certain European mystical groups who also seek knowledge, such as the Temple of Ra and the White Lodge, and that some exchange of ideas occurs. (Quite how any-

one can ally with *both* these sworn enemies is impossible to conceive. But a Brother of Purity would doubtless say that this merely proves that one is too concerned with meaningless preconceptions.)

Members of the Brotherhood

wear no symbols or distinctive garb; apparently, they can identify each other, if necessary, by subtle verbal and intellectual cues that no outsider could ever recognize. Their secret libraries hold copies of the *Manuscript Universal Alchemic*, the *Justification of the Philosophers*, and the *Suns of the Lights*.

No outsider knows
what the Brotherhood might do
with its knowledge if it ever
found everything it seeks.



The Brotherhood of Purity in GURPS

This hidden group has a -2 Reputation among knowledgeable, devout Muslims for dubious philosophies. This would be worth -5 points, and would often be accompanied by other problems; hence, membership of the Order is a -5 or even -10-point Secret. Members often have strange Obsessions regarding the pursuit of knowledge. The group may provide Allies, and may sometimes also impose Duties.

The Wielders of the Balance

This is the most pragmatic and materialistic of Ottoman magickal groups, having developed as a trade guild for bazaar magicians and alchemists. Even its name has a straightforward origin; the society used to present itself to market authorities and trade administrators as a trustworthy professional body which would ensure that mercenary wizards gave fair measure.

However, as the group continued to meet socially, its members realized that there were other advantages in the association. They were mostly weak as individuals, but by sharing knowledge and ideas, they could stand up to some of the most powerful solitary wizards. The Wielders' libraries became very popular, and the membership took to price-fixing and joint debt collection.

The Wielders of the Balance in GURPS

There are no fixed disadvantages to membership in this group, although quite a few Wielders suffer from Overconfidence or Megalomania. More attractively, they may have -5 or -10-point personal Codes of Honor regarding fair dealing and respect for contracts. Its members represent Allies or Contacts for each other at least as often as those of most Sorcerous Orders, simply because they have to cooperate – no one else entirely trusts them.

This led in turn to greater ambitions, which were restrained only by the superior power of the Viziers, and the occasional public-spirited Dervish mystic or academic. So the Wielders learned subtlety and bitterness.

Today, the group has become a slightly bumbling, intermittently dangerous secret society, given to pursuing short-term advantage without thought to long-term consequences. Its members love to think that they pull the strings behind the scenes, but usually become entangled in their own webs. They typically use over-powerful spells for every task, then become exasperated with the limitations of their own abilities and resort to hired ruffians and bribery. They would probably ally with any force, however dangerous, if it promised them power; however, they retain a warped, confused set of “merchant’s ethics,” meaning that

they rarely betray an ally or break a contract – making them even more vulnerable to their own ill-chosen friends. Some European powers have had dealings with them, with mixed success.

The Wielders' libraries contain copies of the *Libram of Mystic Transformation*, the *Manuscript Universal Alchemic*, and the *Entire Kashf al-Asrar of Al-Jawbari*. However, not every guild-house has all three books.

The Assassins

(Fedayin of the Second Hasan)

The fabled sect of *Nizari Isma'ilis* – the Assassins – was destroyed by the Mongols in 1256, but it left a scattering of survivors, and the religion quietly endured. Today, the main body of the *Isma'ilis* are found in India, where they have become a peaceable, law-abiding, and reasonable faith. However, one breakaway faction has survived elsewhere in secret; the devout followers of Hasan II, an *Isma'ili* ruler whom many historians believe was insane.

These “Fedayin” apparently believe that the End of the World is near, or perhaps that it can be engineered, and that this would be a good thing – or perhaps, according to some readings of their arcane theology, that *it has already happened*, and the world is now just a shadow of reality, which should be brought closer to “the light of the true paradise that is all that truly exists.” As a result, they hold that the laws of Islam no longer apply – at least for the true faithful, by which they mean themselves. However, they are not self-indulgent; on the contrary, they commit their entire lives to their cause.

These “Fedayin” apparently believe that the End of the World is near, or perhaps that it can be engineered, and that this would be a good thing – or perhaps, according to some readings of their arcane theology, that it has already happened.

Quite how they propose to accomplish their aims is unknown, but they have *not* abandoned their ancient skills of assassination, subversion, and terror. Some of the group, known as *da'is*, are expert magicians.

The Fedayin recruit from the disaffected, the morally confused, and the quietly mad. They recognize few rules save necessity, and will take any members – but they make sure of their recruits' dedication by demanding that each

There are even rumours that they have spread their tentacles across the world, and that they have followers in the very courts of Europe and the governments of the Americas.

new full member performs some violent and hideous task. Many of them then return to normal society, often rising to positions of power and influence (helped by a lot of mysterious or “natural” deaths among their rivals); others vanish, being trained as faceless killers – or wizards. The group’s leaders are obscure, secretive, and magickally powerful.

Few inhabitants of the Middle East have even heard of the Fedayin of the Second Hasan, and many who have, try to forget what they know; the group assassinates anyone they perceive as a threat. Occasionally, however, a brave ruler will attempt to destroy them; many have *claimed* success. There are even rumours that they have spread their tentacles across the world, and that they have followers in the very courts of Europe and the governments of the Americas. Most experts call this nonsense – while keeping their fingers crossed.

The group has use of the *Ghayat al-Hakim*, and probably also *Agrivicca Rexus’ Realm of Illusion* and *Osman’s Tome of Physical Movement*.

The Assassins in GURPS

Membership of this faction demands Fanaticism (or even Extreme Fanaticism), implies a Duty, and represents a major Secret (with value depending on the character’s current social position). However, the Magick-wielding *da’is* are rarely wasted on suicide missions; it is the crazed lesser members who suffer from Extremely Hazardous Duties. In fact, useful, competent minions can take the Assassins as a Patron; the Order often assists its members in acquiring positions of power and influence.

❧ MAGICKAL BOOKS & SOURCES ❧

“New European” Books

Some of the volumes known to the major sorcerous Orders of New Europa are also known in the Middle East, albeit sometimes in variant forms; others are lost, or known only in partial form.

Agrivicca Rexus’ Realm of Illusion: The Fedayin of the Second Hasan, the Sisterhood of Roxelana, and the poet-wizards of the Mehlevi Order study either a copy of this or something very similar.

Megron’s Realm of Dreaming: This work is of Middle Eastern origin. However, a number of Muslim groups have decided, at various times, that it is especially blasphemous or objectionable, and to have deliberately sought out copies and destroyed them. None are currently locatable in the Ottoman Empire.

Realm of the Unknown Mind: Almost all of the spells in this book are known to Muslim wizards, but no complete copy of the book has ever been located in their lands. The Bektashi Dervishes probably have access to most of its contents.

Libram of Mystic Transformation: This is, of course, of Islamic origin, and copies are still available to some

Islamic scholars. One is held by the Diwan of the Golden Road; others are in the hands of guild-houses of the Wielders of the Balance.

Manuscript Universal Alchemic: Muslim alchemists knew and admired the work of Hermes Trismegistus, and clearly had access to this book. Today, copies are held by the Brotherhood of Purity and the Wielders of the Balance.

Osman’s Tome of Physical Movement: Muslim scholars claim that “Suliem the Djinn” taught “Osman” the spells in this book, in order that human sorcerers should be enabled to achieve certain feats without perpetually harassing his kind for aid. It has often been thought in Europe that many copies were available in the Middle East, but recent scholarship suggests that many of the Muslim’s fabled flying carpets are, in fact, empowered by bound Djinn – suggesting that Osman’s lore has been subject to control by the court wizards.

At least one copy certainly exists in the hands of the Diwan of the Golden Road. Others are found among the Senusi Dervishes, and one or two stories tell of the Fedayin of the Second Hasan using such spells.



Thaumic Cost Summary

(Note; these are costs for new effects only. See the main rulebook for effects which are also known to New European wizards.)

The Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud

<i>Ward the Djinn</i>	4 ♠
<i>Bind Flame to Form</i>	4 ♦
<i>Exorcism of Fire</i>	4 ♥
<i>Solomonic Vision</i>	4 ♥
<i>Solomon's Command of Truth</i>	6 ♥
<i>Circle of the Seal</i>	4 ♠
<i>Diminish the Flame</i>	8 ♠
<i>Shatter the Seal</i>	4 ♠

The Justification of the Philosophers

<i>Warn of the Terrible</i>	8 ♣
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The Entire Kashf al-Asrar of Al-Jawbari

<i>Sense Traps</i>	4 ♦
<i>Search Out the Magick</i>	4 ♠
<i>False Trigger</i>	4 ♦
<i>Lock Mechanism</i>	6 ♦
<i>Stasis of Enchantment</i>	8 ♠
<i>The Spade of the Philosopher</i>	8 ♦
<i>Test the Value</i>	4 ♦

The Ghayat al-Hakim

<i>The Oracular Head</i>	16 ♦
<i>Speak With the Oracle</i>	4 ♠
<i>Worm in the Bud</i>	4 ♦
<i>Guise of Shadows</i>	6 ♠
<i>Read the Finest Book</i>	6 ♠

The Suns of the Lights

<i>Conjure the Servitors</i>	8 ♠
<i>Distant Audience</i>	6 ♠
<i>The Daughter of the White King</i>	12 ♠
<i>Banish the Summoned</i>	6 ♠

The Treatise of Abu'l-Qasim al-Iraqi

<i>The Seekers</i>	6 ♠
<i>Water Walking</i>	6 ♦
<i>Mental Communication</i>	6 ♥
<i>The Curse of the Unclean</i>	6 ♦
<i>The Curse of Confusion</i>	4 ♦

The Memorial Lessons of Dede Korkut

<i>Lock the Limb</i>	4 ♦
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Other Volumes

The Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud

This "book," attributed to the biblical Solomon (Suleiman), actually represents instructions for the creation and use of the Seal of Solomon (see p. 19), and an accumulation of variations, extensions, and minor adaptations of the original "Solomonic" lore. As such, it is available to virtually every sorcerous order in the East, and copies are also in the hands of a great many individual wizards and other scholars. However, some copies are incomplete or incorrectly transcribed – which can be lethally dangerous.

The *Transcendent Wisdom* usually consists of a collection of bulky papyrus scrolls, faded and musty, heavily annotated in a variety of handwritings and languages. In addition to the basic theory and design of the Seal, it provides some "derived" spells. *Ward the Djinn* causes one or more Djinn to refrain from approaching the caster any closer than at the moment of casting, and from attacking the caster or anyone else the caster indicates. *Bind Flame to Form* prevents Djinn from changing shape, passing through walls, or using any other aspect of the *Etherealness* ability. *Exorcism of Fire* instantly and utterly cancels any kind of mental control, influence, or possession exerted on any human by any Faerie (not just Djinn). *Solomonic Vision* cancels and negates any Faerie illusion or Glamour (again, not limited to Djinn). *Solomon's Command of Truth* obliges a Djinni to answer any question fully and truthfully. *Circle of the Seal* creates a circular barrier which no Djinn can cross – in or out. *Diminish the Flame* reduces any or all of any Djinni's abilities by one level. (Each ability counts as an "element" for Spell Definition purposes; up to four abilities are "a few elements.") Lastly, *Shatter the Seal* enables the caster to break open any vessel or container that has been closed with the Seal of Solomon, releasing any Djinni held within. (This last can often be accomplished by a trivial action, such as pulling a cork out of a bottle, but sometimes, more dramatic effects are required; see Doughty's freeing of the Djinni Servant on pp. 74-75 for an example.)

The Justification of the Philosophers

Authorship of this book is credited to the 12th-century Spanish-Arab philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd), who wrote it to demonstrate the benefits to humanity of the study of all aspects of science and philosophy. As such, it is full of anecdotes and snippets concerning medical techniques, mechanical devices, automata, and theological arguments designed to confound non-Muslims. It is both intensely practical and frustratingly disorganized. Some Muslim scholars consider the disorganization to be proof that all existing copies are corrupt or incomplete, and dream of finding the original text.

The book consists of five linen-paper scrolls, usually carried in a plain wooden case. Copies are held by the Mehlevi Dervishes and the Brotherhood of Purity. In addition to all the anecdotes and philosophy, the book contains

A TYPICAL OTTOMAN WIZARD NPC

Typical “urban” wizards in the Ottoman empire are shrewd, versatile, egocentric characters, who are used to the idea that their powers should command respect. (Of course, the members of the more secretive Orders cannot always show off those powers, but when they do, they expect any observers to be suitably dumbstruck.) Magick is widespread and fairly commonplace in these lands, but that doesn’t make it any less powerful, and “untalented” individuals who *know* that it works should be doubly careful of it. Of course, wizards still have to earn their livings, but they can do so from stalls in the bazaar or by taking comfortable jobs with powerful men – and so they do. And many of them are very good at their work.

For example, a typical freelance wizard or member of the Wielders of the Balance might look as follows:

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Good, Courage Good, Education Exceptional, Exchequer Good, Fisticuffs Poor, Marksmanship Poor, Ottoman Way Good, Perception Good, Sorcery Great, Stealth Good.

GURPS

110 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 4 (Shortsword).

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Colleagues) [2]; Comfortable [10]; Contact (Business, effective skill 12, 9 or less) [1]; Fearlessness +2 [4]; Magery 2 [25]; Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Mercantile Fair-Dealing) [-5]; Odious Personal Habit (Boasting) [-5]; Proud [-1];



useful spells: versions of *Restraint through Magic Circles*, *Wards or Talismans*, *Strengthen the Life Bond*, *Psychic Bond*, and *Break the Binding*, as found in the Order of St. Boniface’s *Ritual Writing of Psychic Binding*; *True Vision*, as found in Agrivicca Rexus’ *Realm of Illusion*; *Cast Out The Other* (see *Realm of the Unknown Mind*); *Banishment* (*Libram of Summonation*); and an otherwise-unknown spell, *Warn of the Terrible*, which tells the caster of any naturally-occurring disasters that will befall in its area of effect in the near future. (“Disasters” include any storm, earthquake, tidal wave, or avalanche serious enough to harm shipping or buildings; use the spell’s Duration element for the period covered by the prediction. The caster will learn the general nature and location of the disaster, but no very precise details – just enough to save any lives at stake.)

and one of Bad Temper, Bully, or Overconfidence [all -10].

Skills: Archaeology-10 [1/2]; Augury-10 [1]; Camouflage-12 [1/2]; Chess-12 [1/2]; Detect Lies-11 [1]; Fortune Telling-11 [1/2]; Hidden Lore (Secrets for home city)-11 [1/2]; History-11 [1]; Intimidation-13 [2]; Literature-11 [1]; Lorebook (Entire Kashf al-Asrar of Al-Jawbari)-14 [12]; Lorebook (Libram of Mystic Transformation)-14 [12]; Merchant-12 [1]; Riding (Camel)-8 [1/2]; Ritual Magic (Arabian)-14 [12]; Savoir-Faire-15 [0]*; Shortsword-8 [1/2]; Sleight of Hand-8 [1]; Stealth-11 [4].

* Free from Status.

Languages: Arabic-12 [1]; Farsi-11 [1/2]; Hebrew-11 [1/2]; Pahlavi-11 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-13 [0].

This wizard has spent years burrowing through musty scrolls, but hasn’t (yet) parlayed this power into much wealth or social advancement – but even so, the populace at large realizes that he is someone to take seriously.

A Vizier or other Court Wizard would, of course, have rather more connections, wealth, and social skills; a bazaar conjurer might be weaker in some areas, and perhaps downright mediocre at magick (albeit with more “streets” skills). A sorcerer with a practical bent might turn out to have a surprisingly narrow non-mystical education; even a Master of Magick only has time to do so much!

It is interesting to note the similarities between the spells in this book and those in the *Ritual Writing of Psychic Binding*. It seems certain that the Order of St. Stephen of Malta had access to at least a partial copy of *The Justification of the Philosophers*.

The Entire Kashf al-Asrar of Al-Jawbari

The *Kashf al-Asrar* is a 13th-century Egyptian manual describing the profession of the *mutalib*, or treasure-hunter, who sought fortunes in the tombs and lost cities of that land. The rare *full* version of the book includes an appendix describing magickal techniques – especially methods for defeating the traps and defenses that such sites might possess. Its author, Al-Jawbari, was clearly a pragmatic fellow; the effects it contains are mostly low-powered and highly specific, but effective. (It is also an excel-

Playing Ottoman Wizards

It's perfectly possible to play an Ottoman wizard, but the Host/GM should beware; these characters tend to be melodramatic and egocentric as well as powerful. Some players may enjoy playing them *too much*...

You have mastered the Arts of Magick, the names of the Djinn, and the scribing of the Seal of Solomon – and even the Infidel admit that few sages can match the wizards of the Ottoman Empire for power! Now, you are going out into the world; after all, the great scholars of old often wandered from city to city, and the lands of men hold little that a Master of the Lore need fear.

In Your Diary: Notes on the places you visit (admiring or disdainful); ideas about possible names and natures of legendary Djinn; arcane symbols and notes.

Motives: Associating with infidels and wanderers? You are evidently a little strange – but then, the ignorant always say that about magicians! Perhaps you are an idealist reformer in your field, seeking to combine the best of the Empire's old traditions with Western ideas, and prepared to learn even from infidels. Or perhaps you have discovered, by study or divination, that some artifact of power has fallen into European hands – recovering it is worth putting up with the company of crazy *Farangi* for a while.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Courage, Perception, Sorcery.

Possessions: A set of impressive Turkish-style garments, a short sword and dagger, and several heavy finger-rings, some of them carrying the Seal of Solomon.

GURPS Template

70 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Magery 1 [15]; Status 1 [5]; and either Comfortable [10] or 10 points from Fearlessness [2/level], Language Talent [2/level], or Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: -20 points from Attentive [-1]; Bad Temper [-10]; Code of Honor (Muslim, "Pirate's," or personal) [-5 or -10]; Easy to Read [-10]; Glory Hound [-15]; Greed [-15]; Oblivious [-3], Callous [-6], or Solipsist [-10]; Odious Personal Habits [Varies]; Overconfidence [-10]; Overweight [-5]; Proud [-1] or Selfish [-5]; Reputation (Usually from group membership, or just as a shady character) [Varies]; Skinny [-5]; Staid [-1], Nosy [-1], or Curious [-5 to -15]; Trademark [Varies]; Uncongenial [-1]; or Unfit [-5].

Skills: History (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; two Lorebooks, each (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Merchant (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Riding (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Ritual Magic (Traditional Ottoman) (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+2 [0]-15* [0]; and any four of Archaeology (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11, Augury (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-10, Fortune Telling (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12, Hidden Lore (City secrets) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12, Intimidation (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12, Languages (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12, Literature (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11, Philosophy (Muslim) (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11, Physician (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11, Poetry (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12, Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX-2 [1]-9, Stealth (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10, or Thaumatology (M/VH) IQ-2 [1]-11**.

* Free from Status.

** Includes +1 for Magery.

Customization Notes: Most such wizards speak (and read) more than one language; Turkish for convenience in the modern world, Arabic (including its older forms) both for ventures into Arab-dominated regions and for study of early texts, and Hebrew, Pahlavi (classical Persian), and quite likely Classical Greek for scholarly purposes. In fact, feel free to add as many skills from the optional list, possibly at much higher levels, as point allocations permit. A good wizard character will have some entertaining quirks; most also have at least a few hobbies, interesting associations, and rivalries. See pp. 82-85 for notes on character features appropriate for the various secular Orders.

lent reference for use of several Cantrips.)

The full *Kashf* consists of a varied number of scrolls or, occasionally, a leather-bound volume, but the magickal section is usually separate, in a single large scroll, carried in an airtight brass case. Copies are available to the Senusi Dervishes and the Wielders of the Balance. It describes the following effects: *Sense Traps* identifies the location of any life-threatening traps or pitfalls, magickal or otherwise (but not their precise nature); *Search Out the Magick* similarly locates any "passive" enchantments that may be awaiting some kind of activation, without "analyzing" them; *False Trigger* causes such "waiting" enchantments to "go off" as though their triggering condition has been met; *Lock Mechanism* causes machinery to jam solid for the spell's duration or until dismantled and reassembled (a far more useful effect in the Steam Age than when the book was written!); *Stasis of Enchantment* causes a magickal object or spell to cease movement, although other functions endure (for example, a flying carpet or mage simply remains stationary in mid-air, but does not crash – its "Levitation" function remains effective; *The Spade of the Philosopher* moves earth, soil, loose, light rubble, or sand aside from its Definition area, up to about six feet deep; and *Test the Value* tells the caster if something that appears to be gold or silver is genuine or not.

The Ghayat al-Hakim

This 11th-century book, whose title means "The Goal of the Sage," was traditionally said to be the work of a scholar named Al-Majriti. However, modern students doubt this accreditation; the author is now usually referred to as the "Pseudo-Al-Majriti."

Certainly, most people would wish to disclaim any responsibility for this volume, which is a gruesome treatise on the dark arts of Necromancy. Heavily "watered down" versions, describing effects but not techniques, are to be found in a number of libraries, and are tradi-

tionally used to instruct benevolent wizards in the dangers posed by their enemies. *Full* copies are said to be held by some solitary magicians – the most twisted and power-hungry – and the Fedayin of the Second Hasan (although people will believe *anything* of that last group, if they believe in it at all). Copies usually take the form of compi-

Full copies of the Chayat al-Hakim are said to be held by some solitary magicians – the most twisted and power-hungry – and the Fedayin of the Second Hasan.

lations of hasty notes on a mixture of paper and papyrus sheets, roughly bound between black leather covers.

The spells found in this volume include *The Oracular Head*, a technique that transforms a murdered man's head into a source of information; *Speak With the Oracle*, which then causes that same head to speak truthfully on any subject (apply Spell Definitions to the location of the subject of the question); *Worm in the Bud*, which causes inanimate organic matter (such as food, drink, or cut flowers) to rot or sour; *Guise of Shadows*, which permits the caster to move at double speed in dark or heavily shadowed areas and increases their capacity for stealth at the same time (**Castle Falkenstein**: increase Stealth ability by one level; **GURPS**: +2 to Camouflage, Shadowing, and Stealth skills); *Read the Finest Book*, which enables the caster to view events prior to an intelligent being's death by dissecting its corpse (use the Duration Definition modifiers for the time which the caster looks back); *Create Blinding Pain* as also found in the *Manuscriptum Mentallis*, *Nightmares and Erotic Dreams* as in *Megron's Realm of Dreaming*, and *Draining of the Life Force* as in the *Dark Libram of Necromancy*.

The Suns of the Lights

This Medieval book was written by a wizard named Ibn Al-Hajj, and is primar-

ily concerned with high-power Djinn-summoning. It usually has the form of a single volume, bound in highly decorated covers ornamented with silver; copies are held by a number of solitary magicians and the Brotherhood of Purity, and a striking number of Kalendari Dervishes seem to have studied the work.

Spell effects to be found in the book include *Conjure the Servitors*, which summons one or more Djinn Servants (see p. 106), who are automatically willing to perform one single, simple task for the caster – usually either delivering a message to a fixed location, or guarding some spot against all comers (assassinations and most other duties are too complex, although ingenious wizards can make simple commands lead to complex results; the Servants will automatically disappear at the end of the spell's duration); *Distant Audience*, which permits the caster to converse mentally, at whatever range, with a single named Djinni of any power level, which will talk politely (though not necessarily obey requests or agree to bargains); *The Daughter of the White King*, which will summons a single, powerful female Djinni Lady (p. 107), who will be very friendly to the caster, although again, her assistance is not automatic for difficult tasks; and *Banish the Summoned*, which caus-

A Typical Dervish Wizard NPC

Dervishes make crazy, crankish wizards, with deeply mystical interests; remember, for a Dervish, Sorcery ability may well just be a side-effect and a distraction. When running such a character, bear in mind that Sufi training emphasizes non-rational, intuitive ways of seeing the universe; the Dervish should spend half the time seemingly distracted and completely out of touch, and the other half exhibiting flashes of weird inspiration. A typical example might be:

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Athletics Good, Comeliness Poor, Courage Great, Education Good, Perception Great, Performance Good, Physician Good, Sorcery Great, Stealth Good.

GURPS

130 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Order's Madrassahs) [3]; Cool [1]; Intuition [15]; Magery 2 [25]; Strong Will +2 [8].

Disadvantages: Disciplines of Faith (Mysticism) [-10]; Poor [-15]; Sense of Duty (Sufi Order) [-10]; Unattractive [-5].

Skills: Augury-10 [1]; Bard-13 [2]; Camouflage-12 [1/2]; Detect Lies-11 [1]; Diagnosis-11 [1]; Hiking-10 [1]; History-12 [2]; Holdout-12 [1]; Literature-13 [4]; Lorebook (As for Order)-14 [12]; Lorebook (Second for Order)-12 [4]; Physician-11 [1]; Poetry-12 [1]; Riding (Camel)-10 [1/2]; Ritual Magic (Dervish)-14 [12]; Stealth-13 [4]; Survival (Desert)-12 [1]; Theology-15 [8].

Languages: Arabic-12 [1]; Turkish (native)-13 [0].

A Reputation is probably also appropriate, according to the Dervish's Order; see p. 79. Some Orders, notably the Mehlevis, use dances or chanting as meditative aids, implying Dancing or Singing skill.

es any summoned creatures (not just Djinn) to vanish back to their place of origin.

The Treatise of Abu'l-Qasim al-Iraqi

The 13th century was a golden age for Arabian sorcery, and Abu'l-Qasim was one of its leading figures. He mastered the art of Djinn-summoning, and allegedly extracted instructions from them for more direct forms of Magick. His *Treatise* is actually more of an anthology, disorganized but full of useful effects, consisting of a collection of papyrus scrolls held in a medium-sized cedar-wood chest, carefully protected by the Seal of Solomon (to prevent irritable Djinn from depriving humans of these techniques). Copies are found in the libraries of the Bektashi Dervishes and a few, particularly lucky or powerful solitary wizards.

Spell effects available to the reader of this book include *The Seekers*, which summons one or more Djinn Servants (see p. 106) who will search for one specified item to the limits of their innate ability, bringing it back to the caster if possible and if so asked, otherwise returning with details of its location; *Water Walking*, enabling the subject to walk or run on any liquid surface; *Mental Communication*, enabling the caster to “speak silently” to other intelligent beings through any barrier; *The Curse of the Unclean*, which gives its victim the head of a dog; *The Curse of Confusion*, which can only be cast on a female subject – and which gives its unfortunate recipient a beard; and *Knowledge of Flight*, as found in *Osman's Tome of Physical Movement*.

The Memorial Lessons of Dede Korkut

This book is, literally, unique; the only copy is held at the heart of the secret library of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, and access to it is restricted to the Grand Vizier and a few trusted members of the Diwan of the Golden Road (plus whoever the current Grand Vizier wishes to bribe or assist). It consists of a huge bound volume with papyrus pages, and wooden covers with massive brass and iron fastenings; the whole is too heavy for a normal man to lift.

This volume is a compendium of shamanic Magicks, dating back to the days when the Ottomans were a small tribe of nomadic warrior-herders. Their tribal wise-men were magickally competent, even then, and this was part of the secret of their rise. When the tribal leaders settled in cities as the rulers of an empire, a particularly shrewd shaman realized that his people would need reliable access to these powers, and set to work recording them on papyrus. (This shaman was *not* the real Dede Korkut, a legendary figure dating back to the nomadic era.) Since then, the Empire's viziers have used, annotated, and extended the book.

The *Memorial Lessons* contains instructions for every effect in *Burton's On The Raised Forces of Nature* and in the *Manuscript of Paranormal Divination*, along with *Entrancing & Beguiling*, *Create Blinding Pain*, and *Mental Barrier* effects equal to those in the *Manuscriptum Mentallis*, and *Lock the Limb*, which causes any one of the target's muscles or joints to be paralyzed. (See *Castle*

Falkenstein or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* for details of these other books and effects.)

The Book of Abdhul the Mad

This masterly work on the science of artifact enchantment, also known as the *Kitab al-Abdhul* or the *Kitab al-Majnun*, is described elsewhere (pp. 116-123). Copies are fairly rare; there are several in the Topkapi Palace, for use by the Diwan of the Golden Road, and some in solitary wizards' libraries. However, because even a potent wizard may feel cautious about binding a Djinn to service, the book's users frequently recruit others to assist their work – which means that some of the Wielders of the Balance and a few Dervishes have learned more than may be healthy of its contents.

Cantrips and Wards

Unsurprisingly, Eastern wizards appear to have full knowledge of all common Cantrips and Wards (See *Comme Il Faut*, p. 91, or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, pp. CF113-114). Ottoman wizards are generally very adept with Wards in particular, using versions that incorporate elements of the Seal of Solomon. In addition, they have developed the following additional Cantrips:

Create Coffee is useful for impressing one's visitors. It does not, strictly speaking, *create* the beverage, as the caster must know the exact location of suitable coffee beans, water, sugar, and cups or glasses, and must be within 20 feet of these components; the spell then instantly combines and transforms them into up to six small cups of perfect Turkish coffee. [♦/8 TER]

Flare is a showman's Cantrip; it creates an instantaneous flash of light and cloud of smoke, about seven feet high, within six feet of the caster. This is not powerful enough to cause harm, or even to dazzle, but it *can* startle. At the Host's option, it may increase the caster's effective Charisma (by one or even two levels in *Castle Falkenstein*, by +1 or +2 in *GURPS*) – but only for purposes of startling or confusing others, and only if the “target” wasn't expecting it. Furthermore, a quick caster may be able to duck unnoticed through a nearby doorway or behind cover at the moment of the flash (*Castle Falkenstein*: Make a Feat Check; the wizard's Stealth against the best observer's Perception; *GURPS*: Roll a Quick Contest of the wizard's Stealth against the best observer's Vision roll). [♣/9 TER]

Sinister Aspect makes the caster briefly more impressive, purely in a frightening or disconcerting way; his face seems darkened by shadows, his stare seems to pierce to the very soul of whoever meets it, and his voice becomes sibilant and heavy with obscure menace. In *Castle Falkenstein*, this has the effect of increasing one appropriate ability (usually Charisma, but possibly Performance or others) by one level, but only for purposes that can be served by worrying another, or frightening them into submission; in *GURPS* it gives +2 to Intimidation, and to Interrogation or any other skill that could plausibly benefit from scaring its target. The effect lasts for about 10 seconds. [♥/8 TER]

PLAYING DERVISH WIZARDS

If "urban Ottoman" wizards are power-crazed, their Dervish counterparts are just plain strange. Some players may enjoy this; others may not even want them around.

Your interest in the supernatural is subtle and complex; your prime interest is in attaining an understanding of the nature of Allah, which is nothing to do with Magick. However, your studies of ancient lore, poetry, and mental disciplines have given you – as a side-effect – certain skills which the foolish think are important. Now, while you would rather continue your religious studies, you find that you must sometimes act in the secular world.

In Your Sheaf of Notes: Speculations on the Divine; Rich, ecstatic, metaphorical poetry; completely inexplicable ramblings.

Motives: You Have Your Reasons, which the unenlightened may find confusing. Perhaps you have decided that studying the ways of a strange and alien culture would help you discard some dangerous preconceptions about the world; perhaps you have had a mysterious vision that suggests that these folk may be involved in important events; or perhaps you just enjoy their company.

On the other hand, the Dervish Orders have their political connections and entanglements; even if you would rather be contemplating the Divine, it may be that some friend or teacher has asked you to pursue some matter – and these foreigners seem to be on the same path. You can always argue theology with them as you go.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Courage, Performance, Sorcery.

Possessions: A bizarre and shabby set of robes; a battered traveling-staff; a sheaf of scrawled notes mixed in with some treasured scrolls and books.

GURPS Template

75 points

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Order's Madrassahs) [3]; Magery 1 [15]. Add 20 points from Acute Vision [2/level]; Alertness [5/level]; Allies (Fellow dervishes) [Varies]; Animal Empathy [5] or Beast-Kin [15]; Autotrance [5]; Awareness [15]; Cool [1]; Composed [5]; Fearlessness [2/level]; or Unfazeable [15]; Disease-Resistant or Immunity to Disease [5 or

10]; Empathy or Sensitive [15 or 5]; Fit [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Intuition [15]; Less Sleep [3/level]; Pitiability [5]; Sanctity [5]; Single-Minded [5]; Strong Will [4/level]; or Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Disciplines of Faith (Asceticism) [-15] or Disciplines of Faith (Mysticism) [-10] and Sense of Duty (to others of the same dervish group or Madrassah) [-5]; Struggling [-10]. Add -10 points from Attentive [-1]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Undiscriminating [-1]; or Intolerance (Religious) [Varies]; Clueless [-10]; Humble [-1]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Nosy [-1] or Curious [-5 to -10]; Oblivious [-3]; Odious Personal Habits (Unwashed, fond of paradoxes, preaches all the time . . .) [Varies]; Shyness [Varies]; Skinny [-5]; Truthfulness [-5]; Unattractive [-5]; or Wealth reduced to Poor [-5].

Skills: Two Lorebooks, each (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Ritual Magic (Dervish) (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Theology (M/H) IQ [4]-13; plus any three of Augury (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Autohypnosis (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Bard (M/A) IQ [2]-13, Calligraphy (P/A) DX [2]-11, Dancing (P/A) DX [2]-11, Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Dreaming (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Hiking (P/A; HT) HT [2]-11, History (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Hypnotism (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Literature (M/H) IQ [2]-12, Meditation (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Naturalist (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Physician/TL4 (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Poetry (M/A) IQ [2]-13, Psychology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Singing (P/E; HT) HT+1 [2]-12, Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-11, or Survival (Desert or Urban) (M/A) IQ [2]-13.



Customization Notes: See pp. 82-85 for guidance on Reputations and other features appropriate to the various Orders. A Sufi Sheikh will have higher Theology and Poetry skills, Teaching skill, and probably a

Reputation within his Order for wisdom and insight. Some Dervishes may be given to spying on rival factions or evildoers (take Stealth skill and add Holdout, Shadowing, and Camouflage); others may be more academic (with a wide and surprising range of Scientific skills, albeit not usually from the "hard sciences"), may have Outdoor skills reflecting wanderings in the wilderness, or may function as bazaar conjurers (perhaps with Fire Eating, Juggling, Holdout, or Sleight of Hand added to Bard).

The Bedouin Tradition: Sha'ir

The Bedouin are, as a people, deeply suspicious of Magick – but that does not mean that they lack experts in the field. The puritanical Wahhabs reject all such Arts, but other groups retain their inspired poets and tribal lore-masters – the *Sha'ir*.

A Typical Sha'ir NPC

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Charisma Good, Courage Great, Education Poor, Perception Great, Performance Great, Sorcery Great, Tribal Etiquette Great.

GURPS

ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 12 [20].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 7 (Fencing).

Advantages: Awareness [15]; Charisma +1 [5]; Fearlessness +2 [4]; Magery 2 [25]; Reputation +2 (Within local tribes, as a poet and a helpful supernatural talent, 10 or less) [2]; Unusual Background (Sha'ir poetic tradition) [10].

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; Loner [-5]; Odious Personal Habits (Cryptic utterances and/or Casual rudeness) [-5]; Primitive (TL4) [-5]; Reputation -2 (Within local tribes, as an uncanny supernatural madman, 10 or less) [-2]; Struggling [-10].

Skills: Area Knowledge (home region)-15 [2]; Bard-15 [2]*; Bardic Lore-13 [2]; Detect Lies-12 [1]; Fencing-11 [2]; Hiking-11 [1]; Orienteering-13 [1]; Poetry-14 [2]; Riding (Camel)-10 [1]; Ritual Magic (Sha'ir poetic rituals) -14 [8]; Savoir-Faire-15 [2]; Survival (Desert)-14 [2].

* Includes +1 for Charisma.

Notes

This represents a fairly highly-rated “tribal lore-master,” well accustomed to commanding the attention of men and Djinn; however, he has learned that it is often wiser to remain silent. A younger or more hot-headed Sha'ir might place more emphasis on charisma than perceptions; one who has made a living as a traveling poet and story-teller might focus on the skills associated with that; a really famous individual might have excellent social connections (tribal overlords and local kings) and an even better grasp of tribal etiquette.

A *Sha'ir* is a brilliant artist with insights into the spirit-world (and as a game character, must have abilities to reflect this – in *Castle Falkenstein*, at least Good Sorcery; in *GURPS*, the Magery advantage). However, greatness in such fields is often closely related to madness, and many Sha'ir are also considered *Majnun*, or madmen. In fact, there are also obvious lunatics who possess some, apparently spontaneous, magickal powers – a worrying thought. (Nor is it safe to kill such a *Majnun*, as his power, madness, or curse, may well somehow settle on the slayer. Details of this effect are left to the Host/GM.)

It should be noted, incidentally, that in addition to Sha'ir, the Bedouin frequently encounter wandering Dervishes and independent wizards. The tribes don't draw much distinction between these categories – all are more or less *Majnun*.

Sha'ir Magickal Techniques

Sha'ir study no books (many of them are illiterate), and not all of them find teachers – although those who do have a much better chance to survive to reach significant levels of power. Rather, they meditate on the desert landscape and sky, then weave poetic invocations that generate magickal effects. Because their Magick relies on this intimate connection with the land, it seems certain that only someone born and raised

a Bedouin, dwelling in the desert and listening to the tribe's store of eloquent Arabic poetry, can ever become a true Sha'ir. Furthermore, no Sha'ir can ever learn magic from books.

Castle Falkenstein: Sha'ir should simply take Good (or better) Sorcery, and gain the powers detailed below.

GURPS: Sha'ir must have Magery 1 or higher, Ritual Magic skill (with the specialization “Sha'ir Poetic Rituals”), and a 10-point Unusual Background (“Sha'ir Poetic Tradition”). Most also have Awareness, although this is not actually mandatory. Instead of buying Lorebook skills (which are actually forbidden to them), they use Ritual Magic skill for all their spellcasting; as with other magick-workers in the setting, their Ritual Magic skill cannot exceed 10 + (twice their Magery level). Sha'ir gain several “forms” of magickal expertise:

Command of the Djinn: This is functionally equivalent to the spells in *The Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud*. The verbal components of Solomon's Magick have been woven into the region's poetic tradition; a Sha'ir can instinctively extract the relevant formulae and use them, usually to guard the tribe against Ghuls and suchlike.

Heroic Inspiration: This is the ability to “motivate” anyone who under-

stands your language, by improvising impressive and heartening poetry. In game terms, it increases the subjects' abilities or skills; treat it as a “Mental” spell effect. **Castle Falkenstein:** Raising any one of Athletics, Charisma, Courage, Fencing (Swordsmanship), Fisticuffs, Marksmanship, Physique, or Stealth is treated a single element; any three of these are “a few elements,” and raising more than that is treated as requiring the subject to perform “multiple tasks,” as it verges on giving the subject a whole new personality. The base Thaumatic Cost of 6 for a one-level increase, 16 for two levels. **GURPS:** The technique can raise any Physical skill not requiring fine manipulation (Combat/Weapon skills, Stealth, etc., are permitted, but Woodworking or Sleight of Hand are not), or Bard, Intimidation, or Leadership. Raising any one skill counts as

“a single element,” any three are “a few elements,” and raising more than that is treated as requiring the subject to perform “multiple tasks,” as it verges on giving the subject a whole new personality. Each +1 to skill has a Thaumatic Energy Cost of +3; no skill can be improved by more than +5.

Satiric Assault: This effect enables the Sha’ir to diminish the abilities of an opponent (who doesn’t even have to understand the language involved) by contemptuous poetic mockery. Treat it as a “Mental” spell effect. **Castle Falkenstein:** The effect has a base Thaumatic Cost of 8 for a reduction of one level, 16 for two. The effective complexity of the spell, and the Abilities that can be affected, are exactly as for *Heroic Inspiration*. **GURPS:** The effect can reduce any category of dice rolls; categories include attack rolls, defense rolls, or damage rolls in combat, Will rolls, Sense rolls, rolls against any one attribute, or specific noncombat

skills. Reducing any one category counts as “a single element,” any three are “a few elements,” and reducing more than that is treated as requiring the subject to perform “multiple tasks,” as it verges on giving the subject a whole new personality. Each -1 has a Thaumatic Energy Cost of +3; no roll can be reduced by more than -5.

Sense Magick: Finally, a Sha’ir can or other supernatural forces in a place or object, without conscious spell-casting. In *Castle Falkenstein*, this is normally a Good Feat of Perception (Hosts may make it harder or easier, depending on the phenomena); it generally requires physical contact, although it may be consciously attempted at a distance with +2 Difficulty per five yards of range. On a High Success, the Sha’ir gains a vague idea of the nature and significance of whatever has been sensed. In *GURPS*, this is covered by the effects of the Magery and Awareness advantages.

PLAYING SHA’IR

Fitting a Sha’ir into an adventuring party could be very hard work – but nothing is impossible . . .

You have spent your life learning tribal lore and ancient epics. You have stared into the heart of mystery and the pure glory of the desert, and you have not blinked. You have the inspiration of the true poet, and the wisdom of the sage. You are a *Sha’ir*.

Now, something is taking you away from the lands and the tents of your tribe. Unknowable is the Will of Allah!

In Your Excellent Memory: Thousands of lines of eloquent Arabic poetry; the names of those with whom you have sworn blood-brotherhood, or on whom you have sworn vengeance.

Why You’re Here: Perhaps you fell out with your tribal chief, because he didn’t like your honest advice – and you’d rather wander off with a band of infidels than stay around and watch the tribe slip into disaster. Or perhaps you have sworn brotherhood with some courageous European, who shares your people’s hatred for the Turks, and now you wish to assist his quest. Or perhaps you are seeking some means to defeat your enemies, and inspiration tells you that it may lie beyond the desert. Your destiny is clearly complex and subtle – but only a fool questions fate.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Charisma, Sorcery, Tribal Etiquette.

Possessions: Bedouin robes; a plain steel sword; some strange fragments of inscriptions from ancient ruins.

GURPS Template

105 points

Attributes ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 12 [20].

Advantages: Awareness [15]; Magery 1 [15]; Unusual Background (Sha’ir poetic tradition) [10]; and 15 points from Absolute Direction [5], Animal Empathy [5], Charisma [5/level], Intuition [15], Ally Group

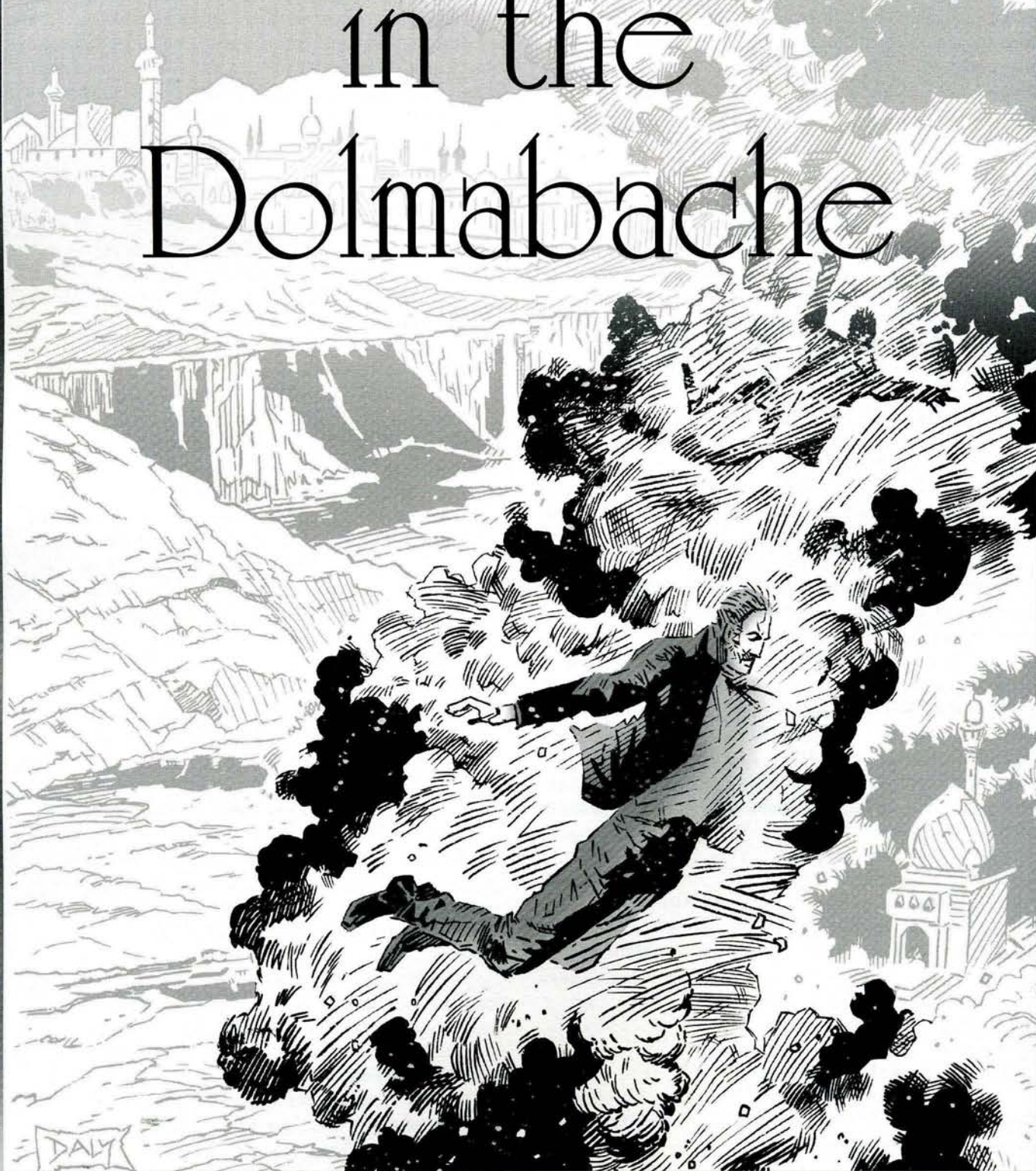
(Admiring tribesmen) [Varies], Fearlessness [2/level], Fit [5], Pious [5], Pitiable [5], Reputation (In local area, as a poet and/or a helpful supernatural talent) [Varies], Sensitive [5], Status 1 [5], Versatile [5], or Voice [10].

Disadvantages: Struggling [-10]; and -20 points from any of Absent-Mindedness [-15], Broad-Minded [-1] or Undiscriminating [-1], Clueless [-10], Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10], Compulsive Vowing [-5], Imaginative [-1], Impulsiveness [-10], Lunacy [-10], Oblivious [-3], Odious Personal Habits (Crazy behavior, casual rudeness, etc.) [Varies], Primitive (TL4) [-5], Proud [-1], Reputation (In local area, as an uncanny supernatural madman) [Varies], Semi-Literacy [-5], Sense of Duty (To tribe) [-5], Short Attention Span [-10], Skinny [-5], Status -1 [-5], Truthfulness [-5], Uncongenial [-1] or Loner [-5], or Wealth reduced to Poor [-5].

Skills: Bard (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Bardic Lore (M/H) IQ [4]-13; Poetry (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Ritual Magic (Sha’ir) (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-12; Survival (Desert) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; and any three of Appreciate Beauty (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Area Knowledge (home region) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14, Augury (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Dreaming (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11, Fencing (P/A) DX [2]-11, Hiking (P/A; HT) HT [2]-12, Naturalist (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2]-13, Riding (Camel) (P/A) DX [2]-11, or Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14.

Customization Notes: See the “Bedouin Warrior” template on p. 66 for ideas as to the skills appropriate to a Bedouin tribesman generally. A manipulative Sha’ir might add “con-trick” skills such as Fast-Talk and Fortune Telling, bolstering his supernatural image without the risks of actual spell-casting; one who was strongly attuned to the supernatural might have features in common with Dervish wizards (see pp. 79-81).

7. Confrontation in the Dolmabache



From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

And so, Midhat Pasha and I were swept up by the Djinni, and whirlwind-borne those many hundreds of miles, back to the city of Constantinople. I carried a pistol, salvaged from the battlefield, and a Bedouin sword, which Hassan found for me – I had not inquired too closely where. But I could not venture to guess how well these would avail me.

We swept towards the city as darkness drew in, and I looked upon the lanterns of the wealthy Turks' houses reflected in the Bosphorus.

I found this mode of travel unnerving, naturally, but I eventually recovered some of my composure. Having, on occasion, travelled in my employers' craft, I had some experience of seeing the world passing far beneath me. Midhat Pasha clearly preferred not to look down, but he

remained unflustered; we of the West can teach the Muslims little of dignified calm. The Djinni simply gazed ahead as it flew, seemingly uninterested in the feelings of smaller beings.

We swept towards the city as darkness drew in, and I looked upon the lanterns of the wealthy Turks' houses reflected in the Bosphorus; then the Pasha was giving the Djinni instructions, and we descended in a courtyard adjacent to a vast and sprawling series of buildings by the water's edge.

"The Dolmabache," stated the Pasha.

"My task is done," declared the Djinni. "I can take you no further, for these walls are warded with the Seal. Now I shall fulfil the second part of my vow, and retire to the Lands of the Djinn. Fare thee well against mine old master, Sons of Adam!"

And with that, a whirlwind sped away across the darkening sky, and we two were alone.

I looked at my companion. "Can we enter safely?" I asked.

"We can, here," said Midhat. "Come . . ."

He led me through a small door, and along a narrow, darkened corridor which suddenly opened out into a scene that glittered, even in the scarce moonlight that came through the windows. We had found a vast ballroom, dominated by the largest mirrors I had ever seen and a gigantic chandelier. The extravagance of the new palace has not been exaggerated in reports.

"Follow," Midhat whispered.

❧ IN THE DOLMABACHE ❧

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

The Pasha and I slipped through the gloomy palace corridors, seeking the treasury or the Sultan's quarters. Twice, we paused when we saw other shadowy figures, at the far ends of long passages, going about unknown errands of their own, but it was clear that the palace was so vast, and housed such an intricate organization, that even if we were glimpsed, we were taken merely for unknown servants from departments other than those of the folk who saw us.

Midhat confessed, in a whisper, that even an officer of government such as he was not permitted entry to such sections of the building in the normal way of things, and so we were dependent on that which he had heard mentioned in passing, and what he could deduce.

Thus it was that we blundered upon the harem. I glimpsed a long, narrow corridor, lit by one dim lamp, leading away between rows of small, plain doors, for all the world like a block of cells in a prison-house. But of course, the Harem of the Grand Turk is not left without protection, by day or by night.

Each of the two guards there stood a head taller than I, and each was naked to the waist, thus displaying physiques suitable for any circus strong-man. Each had a great,

curved, intricately adorned sword tucked through a broad silk waist-sash.

Unfortunately, we were too close to them, and too blatantly out of place, not to be recognized as intruders. Both took a moment to return from their reveries and to take in the unlikely sight that we presented; then they howled with outrage and charged, drawing their blades as they came.

By then, however, Midhat and I had fled.

We ran through a string of rooms, each illuminated by one oil night-light. Even in that dimness, even as I ran, I saw that these chambers were decorated with an outlandish, rococo miscellany of European and Eastern ornaments and furnishings. Polished brass has an uncanny look in such lighting, its yellowish sheen reduced to a dark brown at the edge of human perception – and there was much polished brass here.

We hurled chairs and pulled down silk hangings in our wake to slow the pursuit. In one room, I saw a great cast-iron and gilt table, plainly of French manufacture, conveniently placed; I paused for a moment to push it across the doorway. The door shook for a moment, and then a broad, curved blade smashed through its solid wood panelling, stopping an inch short of my face. I turned again, to find that Midhat was now out of sight; I set out to catch him up through the doors that I saw still swinging.

MIDHAT PASHA

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Exceptional (primarily in the Ottoman Empire; treat as Good in New Europa), Courage Good, Education Great, Exchequer Good (with access to government funds), Ottoman Way Great, Perception Good, Social Graces Average, Sorcery Good, Tinkering Poor.

GURPS

116 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 10/12 [10].

Speed 5; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 6 (Fencing).

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Ottoman bureaucracy and reformist nobles) [5]; Comfortable [10]; Composed [5]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Magery 1 [15]; Reputation +1 (Among Ottoman reformers, as a possible ally, 10 or less) [1]; Reputation +1 (Among people he has governed, for good government, 10 or less) [1]; Status +5 [25]; Strong Will +1 [4].

Disadvantages: Chauvinistic [-1]; Duty (Government official, 12 or less, not dangerous) [-5]; Enemy (Court faction, medium-sized with formidable individuals, 9 or less) [-30]; Sense of Duty (the Ottoman nation) [-10].

Quirks: Ambitious, and believes himself to be Turkey's best hope; Honorable, within pragmatic limits; Likes technology, but doesn't bother mastering the details; Neglects to build long-term alliances; Thinks that Magick is outdated and slightly ludicrous. [-5]

Skills: Accounting-9 [1/2]; Administration-15 [8]; Area Knowledge (New Europa)-12 [1]; Area Knowledge (Ottoman Empire)-15 [6]; Area Knowledge (The world)-11 [1/2]; Diplomacy-9 [1/2]; Economics-9 [1/2]; Fencing-9 [1]; History-14 [8]; Intelligence Analysis-13 [6]; Law-11 [2]; Literature-10 [1]; Lorebook (Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud)-12 [8]; Philosophy (Traditional Islamic)-9 [1/2]; Riding (Horse)-8 [1/2]; Ritual Magic (Ottoman Court style)-12 [8]; Savoir-Faire-14 [0]*; Savoir-Faire (Military)-11 [1/2]; Stealth-8 [1/2]; Strategy-11 [2]; Theology-9 [1/2].

* Free from Status.

Languages: Arabic-12 [2]; English-10 [1/2]; French-11 [1]; German-11 [1]; Greek-10 [1/2]; Pahlavi-10 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-12 [0].

Midhat Pasha is the son of a high-status, conventional Ottoman family. Born in 1822, he demonstrated his intelligence early, learning the Koran by heart at the age of 10. He has risen through the Civil Service, alternating work on the central councils of state with provincial governorships. Sometimes, he has been given "impossible" tasks through his enemies' schemes, such as controlling rampant banditry in a Balkan province, only to accomplish successes that actually advanced his position; he has attained the rank of junior

Vizier. He has also traveled in Europe, studying and making contacts.

He is becoming increasingly concerned for his nation. He is a reformer because he thinks that reform is necessary for survival, not out of romantic idealism. He is prepared to work with the present Sultan, but he is also prepared to contemplate a coup if necessary.

Midhat has enough magickal aptitude and training to be accepted in the Ottoman court, but he is not as skilled as most Viziers. Part of his problem is that he does not really like Magick, regarding it as archaic and faintly ludicrous; at heart, he would rather use technology. If spells *have* to be cast, he prefers to leave the task to friendly or hired specialists. Furthermore, he has never built up much of a relationship with any Dervish or secular Order, so his training in spell-effects is limited to the *Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud*. However, if he has time at the Sublime Porte, he may review the library held by the Diwan of the Golden Road.

(At the Host/GM's option, Midhat might have a little more knowledge than this. He has traveled in the West, and he believes in improving government by taking power for himself. He seems a natural member or ally for the Bavarian Illuminati . . .)

Midhat also has a number of dangerous flaws. To begin with, he is only a moderately skilled politician; he lacks allies in government, and his popular following is based on his practical achievements. Typically, he has no very strong friends within the "reformer" movement, because he has never bothered to build a power base outside the bureaucracy.

Second, his ambition is intense, and often all too visible to those around him. (Some people think, wrongly, that it is his only strong emotion; he displays few others.) He genuinely has his country's best interests at heart – but he also genuinely feels that these interests will best be served by *him*. He recognizes two ways of approaching tasks: his way, and the stupid way. Combined with his lack of political charm, this can be disastrous. He may also disregard "details," such as minority groups, while pursuing his Big Ideas.

And last, his fondness for "progress," on a Western model, is not always very well thought through. He is not very adept with machinery, and he does not always *understand* technical schemes – but he tends to approve them anyway, on principle. Some of his civil engineering works in Baghdad were costly failures, and he is in fact very enthusiastic about the Prussian railway proposals.

However, Midhat *is* fiercely brave, essentially honest, and determined to pull his nation out of its moribund state. His intelligence and social position make him a useful ally – assuming that his enemies do not undermine him, or play too cleverly on his weaknesses.

(*Note:* The details above depict Midhat Pasha as Governor of Baghdad; see p. 25 regarding the Legal Enforcement Powers in the **GURPS** version. Following the events described in this book, his Connections/Status and Exchequer/Wealth will both increase.)

But I had mislaid my ally. Doors in this palace might swing in the breeze, through failures of their catches. One, when I stepped through it, led on to a long corridor, where a band of guards, seeing me, gave a cry of triumph. I fled once more, and was saved for a moment by the discovery of a twisting maze of corridors leading from these day-quarters to another part of the building.

A gang of enraged eunuch guards came into sight around a far corner; by their cries, I realized that they had sighted me the moment before I fled to one side. My peril was great; I doubted that my gun would suffice to slay all of them before they overcame me in their screaming fury. I had to flee

further, but, ignorant of this place, I knew not where; I found that there were many locked doors and closed chambers wherein I might be trapped.

And then, as I scurried uncertainly through the shadows, stumbling over mounded silk carpets, I heard a quiet but insistent call, and saw a delicate hand gesturing to me from behind a tapestry hanging. Responding instantly, I found myself being drawn into a narrow corridor – clearly a servants' passage, hidden from the delicate sensitivities of the mighty. Even if the eunuchs knew of it, they would surely not expect me to discover the entrance.

AZIYADA THE CIRCASSIAN

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Courage Good, Marksmanship Poor, Perception Great, Performance Good, Ottoman Way Good, Sorcery Good, Stealth Great, Tinkering Poor.

GURPS

100 points

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 15 [60]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 5 (Knife).

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (Mehlevi faction) [2]; Magery 1 [15].

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Nosy [-1]; Primitive (TL4) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Close friends and companions) [-5]; Social Stigma (Second-class citizen – Ottoman woman) [-5]; Weak Will -1 [-8].

Quirks: Believes in trading questions for questions; Fair, and pays her debts; Vengeful. [-3]

Skills: Acting-14 [1]; Appreciate Beauty-11 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Ottoman palaces)-16 [2]; Bard-13 [1/2]; Camouflage-15 [1]; Dancing-11 [1/2]; Fortune Telling-14 [1]; Holdout-15 [2]; Knife-12 [1/2]; Lockpicking-13 [1/2]; Lorebook (Justification of the Philosophers)-12 [1]; Lorebook (Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud)-12 [1]; Make-Up-14 [1/2]; Meditation-11 [1/2]; Merchant-14 [1]; Musical Instrument (Lute)-12 [1/2]; Needlecraft-11 [1/2]; Poetry-13 [1/2]; Riding (Camel)-11 [1/2]; Ritual Magick (Mehlevi Dervish style)-11 [1/2]; Ritual Magic (Traditional Turkish style)-12 [1]; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-15 [1]; Shadowing-14 [1]; Sleight of Hand-10 [1/2]; Singing-12 [2]; Stealth-15 [8]; Theology-12 [1/2].

Languages: Arabic-14 [1]; Turkish (native)-15 [0].

Aziyada truthfully told Eberhardt the key parts of her history. She was born in the Caucasus, and sold to a “slave farm” in her infancy by her desperately poor parents. (Charitably, they may well have felt that a life as a palace slave would actually be preferable to existence as a girl-child on a marginal, backwoods farm.) Fortunately, the slave-trainers realized that reasonable treatment produced

more suitable harem-fodder. They also followed an old set of ideas which said that some men preferred concubines who were entertaining conversationalists.

From there, at adolescence, she was sent to Istanbul, but the *Kislar Agha* judged that she was suited only to “below stairs” service. However, she did fall in with some members of the Sisterhood of Roxelana (p. 82), and studied the rudiments of magic. She also learned that her best chance of survival in the palace might be to avoid being noticed, at which she became *very* good.

Then, one day, the Grand Vizier Mahmud Nadim Pasha addressed her with insulting contempt when demanding that his shoes be cleaned. Her hot temper, which the slave-farm had never crushed, got the better of Aziyada, and she slipped a *Simple Illusion* Cantrip past his defenses, making his turban look shabby and torn. He soon realized what had happened, and this led to his twisted revenge.

However, the old Dervish took a paternal liking to the slave he had never requested, and, as a scholar of Magick, also recognized her potential. Like many Sufis, he had an outrageous disregard for what might be “appropriate” for a given sex. Unfortunately, he died before he could more than begin to unlock Aziyada’s power. He freed her on his deathbed, leaving her as an independent agent; as the nearest thing he had to an heir, she also received his few savings and assorted odd possessions.

Aziyada is a competent sorceress, with a number of other skills that can be useful around a harem – but no great experience of such basic European topics as machinery or guns. She has studied the *Transcendent Wisdom of Suleiman Ibn Daud* and the *Justification of the Philosophers*, and she knows most Cantrips and Wards.

Until she took it upon herself to investigate the mystery of the Sword of the Sunderer, she was living as a bazaar fortune-teller and wise-woman, and occasionally associating with a small band of Mehlevi who respected her late master. When she had to travel, careful choice of clothes and a flair for acting enabled her to pass as a woman with friends and contacts in high places, and this, combined with her forceful personality, meant that she could move fairly freely.

I turned to whisper thanks to my saviour, and was startled by what I saw. This was a woman in the silken garb appropriate to the setting, with veiled face – and yet the eyes above the veil were familiar to me. She moved to a shelf whereon she had deposited a lamp, and as she raised the same, I once again recognized a yellow woollen shawl, fastened at the throat with a copper brooch.

“My thanks,” I said, and then, feeling foolish even as I spoke, “How did you know of this passage?”

“I used to be a servant in this palace,” she replied.

Her eyes showed a flash of amusement at my undisguised startlement. “And – what are you now?” I could not refrain from asking.

“One who seeks justice,” she answered.

By now, she had led me to another door, and she raised her hand for silence, and peered through a spy-hole, doubtless designed to enable servants to avoid disturbing their superiors at inconvenient times. Then she drew me three paces back down the corridor.

“There are three guards talking,” she explained. “They will be gone soon. Best we wait a moment.”

“Who are you?” I persisted, “And how do you come to be here?”

“My name is Aziyada,” she replied, “And I came here by disguising myself as a dress-maker from Pera, offering my wares to the harem. Now, I have answered four of your questions, *Farangi*; I claim replies to but three of mine own. What is your name, and what can persuade you to come with but a sword and a small gun into the place most forbidden to such as you in all the world, and what know you of the Djinni who walks within this place?”

“Three well-chosen questions,” I acknowledged.

“Have they answers?” Aziyada demanded.

“To the first; I am Eberhardt Starkmann, of Bayern,” I said, “and to the third, the Djinni has been sent by my

enemies, who disguised him as a good man, to make that good man seem a murderer and a traitor. As to the second, I could not let this happen unopposed, so the good man and I have come here to prevent it.”

“You are a hero or a fool,” she said.

“I hope that I am a gentleman,” I replied. “Now, I have but one question in my turn. How know you of the Djinni?”

“The best question of all,” she said, “for the answer would be the tale of my life. I was raised to be a slave, and served here, washing clothes and cooking rice and listening to tales told by old serving-women. Then I caused offence to Mahmud Nadim, and he, for revenge, caused me to be presented as a gift to an old Mehlevi Dervish. For the Sultan wished to show his piety, and the old man was said to be worthy of honour. Mahmud Nedim thought to demean me and reduce me to poverty, but he was a fool for all his cunning. The old man gave me respect and honour unknown in this palace, and taught me many truths. Then, he was taken up by Allah, and I returned to the city, seeking other wise folk. There it was that I chanced to see a sword with the bound power of an ancient Djinni Lord, and I learned that it was to be placed in the hands of my enemy. So I asked questions concerning this sword, and found little; and then I came to the palace, and found a strange sight indeed. For here was a *Farangi*, more foolish than myself.”

“One who shares your quest,” I said, “for the Djinni serves one allied with your enemy.”

We had been speaking in whispers; now Aziyada gestured me once more to silence, and moved forward, quiet as a cat, to the spy-hole. “They are gone,” she said, “so we must save the Sultan from his own slaves, it seems.”

“You should wait in safety . . .” I began. She interrupted me with a scowl and a contemptuous expression. “As yet, it is I who have protected you,” she reminded me.

❧ THE SUNDERER ❧

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

With Aziyada’s knowledge of its geography, we made our way swiftly and unmolested through the palace. I soon had no doubt that her claim to have served here as a maid was true, for she knew every secret passage-way and undecorated short-cut in the place. The route we took twisted and turned and involved many narrow places, and little lighting, but it was swift.

We came to a corner, and Aziyada peered round, signalling me first to caution, then to look as she did.

I nodded, then led us both on, for what she had seen was Midhat Pasha, halted and peering at a large, brass-bound door. Seeing me, he looked pleased, and he accepted my reassurance as to Aziyada’s friendship.

“The Sultan’s gift-room,” my guide whispered, indicating the door.

Midhat nodded. “Next to his quarters, that he might come and gloat over whatever tribute he receives from the Empire, or bribes from his courtiers, or fripperies from Europe.”

“Locked, no doubt,” I said.

Aziyada snorted disdainfully, drew a narrow blade from within her costume, slipped it into the space adjacent to the lock, and used it to work a bolt back. “Where would a servant be, sent to clean the palace, if she had to forever run to the eunuchs for keys?” she asked as she worked.

“A poor lock,” I noted. It was a large but ill-forged iron mechanism, so loosely made that Aziyada’s blade was indeed pushing the bolt back with little difficulty.

“One could no doubt buy better from Europe,” said Midhat, “but the Sultan never spends money wisely. And the palace is not supposed to lack guards.”

“Where are they?” I asked, “They were pursuing us furiously enough.”

"Doubtless searching every room in the harem," said Midhat, "that is what those who saw us were set to guard, and so there is where they look."

But the Sultan's quarters had been guarded, as we saw when we pulled the door open. For a moment, Aziyada gasped, and I could understand this, for what we saw first was the mirror-image of the man at my side, dressed more grandly. However, the figure's silk shirt was stained with blood; for Javorr the Sunderer had slain the sentry posted within this room, and had occupied the time since in the manner of any hungry Ghul. The rich furnishings of the gift-room were horribly befouled with blood and gore.

Then the monster cast the man's severed arm aside, and began to advance, smiling his fanged smile. I drew my pistol and fired repeatedly. The impact of two of the bullets staggered the creature for a moment, but then it sprang back.

"Lead bullets," noted Midhat Pasha, glancing at my gun. I cast the weapon aside as he chanted a prayer in Arabic.

"No use," said Javorr, "I am a Djinni Lord." It threw a backhand cuff that knocked the Pasha to the floor. "Must not let them find you looking like *me*," it continued, smiling, and raising its hand curled as a claw.

Javorr's posturing gave me the moment I required to draw my sword, and I swung the blade wildly, scoring a line across Javorr's flank that bled flickering sparks. The creature howled and turned on me. "Iron!" it cried, and

swung its fist to deflect the blade, numbing my sword-hand. Then it lurched forward with startling speed, forcing me to bring the sword round again and again in desperate shadow-parries to deter it from landing a killing blow. Beyond it, I glimpsed Midhat Pasha, crawling across the room in search of a weapon.

Then Aziyada was standing in the doorway, her hands crossed in an arcane gesture as she chanted, swift and high, in Arabic – or perhaps some older tongue. She had swept her shawl aside, so the words came clear and pure. Javorr paused, then turned as if to attack her, then lurched away, placing its back to a nearby wall. I looked in confusion at her and then at Midhat Pasha, who was back on his feet, a sword in his hand.

"Javorr is strong, and a blasphemer," he said calmly, "but he is surely bound by the Seal and Invocations of Solomon."

"How long can she hold him?" I said, stupidly.

"Not long. She has woven a minor spell, but even that costs her." Indeed, I saw Aziyada's face furrowed in furious concentration, blood at the corner of her mouth, as her hands and words sought further energy in the elusive aether. "So we must complete the task," the Pasha commented calmly, and lunged, the dark sword he had found gripped in both hands.

The thrust took Javorr full in the chest, and the blade passed through that dense, inhuman flesh. I realized that it must have embedded itself in the wall beyond.



CHARACTERS OF THE SUBLIME PORTE

Sultan Abdul Aziz

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Athletics Good, Connections Extraordinary, Exchequer Extraordinary, Ottoman Way Good, Physique Exceptional.

GURPS 217 1/2 points

ST 15 [60]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 6 (Fencing).

Advantages: Claim to Hospitality (World's rulers) [5]; Contacts (various, throughout his Empire and New Europa; somewhat reliable; 12 or less) [10]; Filthy Rich w/Multimillionaire x3 [125]; Status 7 [20]*.

* Includes +3 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10]; Chronic Depression (Limitation: Only after major setbacks, -50%) [-8]; Edgy [-5]; Extravagance [-10]; Gluttony [-5]; Overweight [-5].

Skills: Carousing-12 [2]; Fencing-10 [1]; Riding (Horse)-12 [4]; Running-9 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-13 [2]*.

* Bought up from Status default.

Languages: Classical Arabic-8 [1/2], French-8 [1/2], Turkish (native)-10 [0].

(Note that his levels in many skills he really should have for his job, such as Accounting, Administration, and Politics, are merely at default.)

Born in 1830, Abdul Aziz is the most impressive-looking Sultan for 400 years, weighing in at 230 pounds, sociable and expansively short-tempered. Unfortunately, that is the best that can be said for him. His idea of government is to borrow money from the West to modernize the state, spend it on building extra palaces, then borrow more money to pay the interest. He has a child-like fondness for impressive sights; his tour of Europe, a few years since, led him to order both solid gold cutlery for his palace and ironclads for his fleet, and when the Prussians let him review their troops and land-fortresses, he came away with even more ideas (which are, perhaps fortunately, proving *completely* impractical).

The Sultan is not a complete fool; he realizes that some of his ministers are dangerously ambitious. However, this has just made him more nervous, and he insists that anyone reporting to him prostrates themselves on the floor. He has also decreed that any official who happens to be called "Aziz" must change his name, and that no one can wear spectacles in his presence without permission; on bad days, he is likely to order that all official documents be rewritten in red ink rather than black. His idea of fun includes chasing chickens around the palace, then awarding them medals, and games of soldiers with real soldiers. (In **GURPS** terms, he is moving from Edgy to Paranoia, gaining Callous, and developing a whole list of quirks.) Defeat is likely to send him into near-suicidal depression. For now, he is still functioning as head of state, but this may not last for many more years.

Incidentally, Abdul Aziz is nominally a member of the Mehlevi Dervish order (p. 87). However, he has no detectable magickal talent; this is an honorary and political position.

Prince Murad (Heir to the Throne)

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Exceptional, Courage Poor, Exchequer Great, Ottoman Way Good, Perception Poor.

GURPS 22 1/2 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 8 [-15]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Heir [5]; Status 6 [25]*; Wealthy [20].

* Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Alcoholism [-15]; Combat Paralysis [-15]; Edgy [-5]; Unfit [-5].

Skills: Area Knowledge (New Europa)-7 [1/2]; Literature-11 [10]; Riding-10 [2]; Savoir-Faire-12 [4]*.

* Bought up from Status default.

Languages: Classical Arabic-6 [1/2]; French-6 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-8 [0].

The present Sultan's nephew, who was born in 1840, was once seen as a potential reformer and a clever, thoughtful character, but he is already failing to live up to this early promise. Having been brought up in seclusion, and being watched by Abdul Aziz because of rumors that he is friendly with the Young Turk movement, he is growing terrified that he will be murdered. As a result, he has become an alcoholic, and his once good mind is collapsing. The reign of "Murad V" will probably last about three months.

In our history, it is said that the young Murad was inducted into the Freemasons by his Greek doctor. If the same is true in the *Falkenstein* world, the implications could be distinctly interesting.

Prince Abdul Hamid (Second Heir)

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Exceptional, Courage Good, Education Good, Exchequer Great, Ottoman Way Great, Perception Great.

GURPS 113 1/2 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.50; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 6 (Fencing).

Continued on the next page ...

CHARACTERS OF THE SUBLIME PORTE

(CONTINUED)

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Cool [1]; Reputation +2 (The nation's hope, among Turkish progressives) [5]; Status 6 [25]*; Wealthy [20].

* Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Careful [-1]; Proud [-1].

Skills: Diplomacy-13 [6]; Fencing-10 [1/2]; Literature-11 [2]; Riding (Horse)-12 [2]; Savoir-Faire-15 [2]*; Theology-10 [1].

* Bought up from Status default.

Languages: Classical Arabic-10 [1/2]; French-10 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-12 [0].

Murad's younger brother, Abdul Hamid, was born in 1842, and is regarded as a quiet, serious character and a loyal Ottoman. With Abdul Aziz clearly a disaster and Murad visibly weak-minded, Abdul Hamid is widely seen as the Ottoman Empire's last best hope.

Unfortunately, judging by his counterpart's performance in our history, where he became Sultan in 1876, "Abdul the Damned," the "Red Sultan," will be the worst of all. In one sense, he will modernize the Empire; he will turn it into a modern police state. Having been helped to the throne by Midhat Pasha, he will turn against the reformer, and murder him, then slip into superstitious paranoia, running his Empire through spies and massacres while losing more provinces and wars by the year. It is to be hoped that things may turn out differently in the *Castle Falkenstein* universe.

Abdul Hamid is lightly built, with a large, hooked nose and staring eyes . . . a gift to cartoonists. But he should not be underestimated; he is hard-working and shrewd, and will cleverly combine traditional authority with modern control and surveillance technologies such as photography and the telegraph. (In **GURPS** terms, if and when he becomes Sultan, he will rapidly learn Administration, several Area Knowledge skills, and Intelligence Analysis.)

Mahmud Nedim Pasha

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Charisma Good, Connections Exceptional, Courage Good, Exchequer Exceptional, Ottoman Way Exceptional, Perception Good, Sorcery Great, Stealth Good.

GURPS 175 points

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Charisma +1 [5]; Claim to Hospitality (Conservative Ottoman pashas) [3]; Cool [1]; Magery 2 [25]; Reputation +1 (Among Ottoman conservatives, as an ally) [2]; Status 6 [25]*; Very Wealthy [30].

* Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Greed [-15]; Reputation -2 (Among Ottoman reformers and the public, as a duplicitous schemer) [-10]; Selfish [-5].

Skills: Accounting-11 [1]; Acting-12 [1]; Administration-12 [1]; Area Knowledge (Ottoman Empire)-13 [1]; Chess-13 [1]; Detect Lies-11 [1]; Diplomacy-12 [2]; Holdout-12 [1]; Intelligence Analysis-12 [2]; Intimidation-12 [1]; Law-10 [1/2]; Literature-10 [1/2]; Lorebook (Book of Abdhul the Mad)-9 [1/2]; Lorebook (Libram of Mystic Transformation)-11 [2]; Lorebook (Memorial Lessons of Dede Korkut)-14 [12]; Lorebook (Osman's Tome of Physical Movement)-14 [12]; Politics-13 [2]; Riding (Horse)-10 [1]; Ritual Magic (Traditional Ottoman)-14 [12]; Savoir-Faire-16 [2]*; Stealth-12 [4].

* Bought up from Status default.

Languages: Classical Arabic-12 [1]; English-12 [1]; French-12 [1]; Russian-11 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-13 [0].

The corrupt (and currently deposed) Grand Vizier is pretty typical of his breed down the centuries; a conservative, a sorcerer, and a full time schemer. He is personally unpopular with the public and the Court, but his faction sometimes catches the prevailing mood. He was born around 1818.

He is shrewd enough to cover his tracks, and will likely survive his current setback. According to our universe's history, he will eventually regain his post for a while, shortly before Abdul Aziz is deposed.

Pertevalé (The Queen Mother)

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Exceptional, Exchequer Exceptional, Fisticuffs Good, Ottoman Way Good.

GURPS 54 1/2 points

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.25; Move 4.

Dodge 4; Parry 8 (Brawling).

Advantages: Status 6 [25]*, Very Wealthy [30].

* Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages: Extravagance [-10]; Overweight [-5]; Social Stigma (Second-class citizen) [-5].

Skills: Brawling-13 [4]; Diplomacy-8 [1]; Intimidation-13 [8]; Knife-11 [1]; Politics-8 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-14 [4]*; Sex Appeal-8 [1/2].

* Bought up from Status default.

Languages: French-8 [1/2]; Turkish (native)-10 [0].

Continued on next page . . .

CHARACTERS OF THE SUBLIME PORTE

(CONTINUED)

Originally a palace bath-house attendant named Besma, who caught the eye of a former Sultan, Pertevalé changed her name on becoming Queen Mother, or "Validé Sultan." Since then, she has spent her time managing the harem and scheming to keep herself in the heart of power; Abdul Aziz is the second of her sons to become Sultan. However, she is not as clever a politician as many a previous Validé, and she lacks magical talent; the Viziers ignore her.

Pertevalé's exact age is unclear, but she has been a fixture of the court for decades. She is seriously extravagant, wearing huge and intricate dresses of pure silk. She was beautiful in youth, but 50 years of harem luxury have not been kind to her figure. She disapproves of alcohol, believing that it killed her husband, but she encourages her sons in any other pleasures that she thinks will keep them docile; she also has a screaming temper when seriously roused (and she is a vicious infighter).

Mihri Hanoum (Favorite Concubine)

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Comeliness Exceptional, Connections Great, Exchequer Great, Performance Great, Physique Poor.

GURPS 103 points

ST 7 [-20]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 10 [0].

Speed 5.25; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Ally (Brother, 9 or less) [5]; Patron (Abdul Aziz, 15 or less) [25]; Status 4 [15]*; Very Beautiful [25]; Voice [10]; Wealthy [20].

* Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages: Combat Paralysis [-15]; Proud [-1]; Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10]; Unfit [-5].

Skills: Dancing-12 [4]; Savoir-Faire-12 [0]*; Sex Appeal-17 [12]; Singing-15 [8].

* Free from Status.

Mihri is one of the Imperial Harem's countless beautiful blonde Circassian concubines, but she has been lucky; the Sultan has become fascinated with her after hearing her singing in the palace garden. She is taking advantage of her luck, and the Sultan is rumored to have spent a million pounds on gifts for her. However, she has little experience of the world, and her only political effect has been to distract the Sultan. She does have a brother who is an army officer, giving her some links to the outside. Her exact age is undocumented, but she is definitely still young.

The Kisklar Agha

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Connections Exceptional, Courage Good, Education Poor, Exchequer Great, Fisticuffs Good,

Ottoman Way Good, Perception Good, Physique Great, Stealth Good, Swordsmanship Good.

GURPS 126 points

ST 14 [45]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 13 [30].

Speed 6.0; Move 5.

Dodge 5; Parry 8 (Brawling).

Advantages: Ally Group (Personal following among eunuchs; 12 or less) [20]; Legal Enforcement Powers (Complete authority within court) [10]; Status 5 [25].

Disadvantages: Bully [-10]; Callous [-6]; Greed [-15]; Illiteracy [-10]; Overweight [-5]; Reputation -2 (For cruelty and corruption) [-10]; Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10]; Uneducated [-5].

Skills: Brawling-13 [4]; Broadsword-13 [8]; Carousing-12 [4]; Holdout-11 [1]; Intimidation-14 [6]; Savoir-Faire-12 [0]*; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-12 [4]; Stealth-13 [8]; Wrestling-11 [2].

* Free from Status.

The chief black eunuch of the Ottoman Court holds an ancient position with countless official and unofficial financial privileges, such as (in theory) the right to derive income from pilgrimage mosques in Mecca and Medina. He is one of the Sultan's most trusted servants, and hated for his cruelty and corruption. His age is unclear, but time and self-indulgence have definitely told on his broad, fleshy body.

Eunuch Guards

Castle Falkenstein

Abilities: Education Poor, Fisticuffs Good, Physique Great, Swordsmanship Good.

GURPS 56 points

ST 14 [45]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 13 [30].

Speed 6.25; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 8 (Brawling).

Advantages: Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: Dull [-1]; Eunuch [-5]; Fanaticism (The court is all they know) [-15]; Illiteracy [-10]; Involuntary Duty (To harem, 15 or less) [-20]; Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10]; Uneducated [-5].

Skills: Brawling-12 [1]; Broadsword-13 [4]; Intimidation-13 [8]; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-12 [4].

Enslaved and maimed in childhood, the typical harem guard is trained for bulk and threatening effect more than anything else. Such a character probably has only two concerns; not angering his master, and acquiring a little wealth or influence. Some become fond of the concubines they guard, or get entangled with politics at some level, but most spend their time standing around with scimitars looking fierce, and very occasionally demonstrating that they mean it.



For a moment, Javorr looked down at the hilt and the pommel, which was made of one great, dark, red gemstone. The ruby flared with an unnatural light, casting new, lurid shadows throughout the room. I saw the creature smile once more, with teeth as long as my thumb and needle-sharp.

"No," I cried, "that is the blade . . ."

Then Javorr exploded.

Or rather, he *transformed*, into the dark, smokeless flame which we had seen in the desert; but instead of speeding away, it burst outwards with a soft, deep roar, scorching the painted wallpaper and sending Midhat Pasha staggering. The dark sword came free at that moment, and as it fell, I saw that it was broken; the tip, which had struck the wall, was shattered into iron splinters.

And then there was silence.

"The blade?" Midhat commented conversationally, picking up the hilt with six inches of damaged metal attached. "Yes, I guessed. But I judged that Javorr was too clumsy to take his power back before the iron slew his body, if he ever could. And furthermore," he gestured at the damaged wall, "every brick in this palace is stamped with the Seal of Solomon."

Then, as Aziyada stepped across the room to me, I realized that we had a spectator. A huge and striking figure stood in the doorway, clad in masses of expensive silks, with a nervous, surly face that I had seen once before, in this same city, behind a screen of feathers.

Midhat fell to one knee, bowed his head, and presented the broken sword, two handed, hilt upwards, like a knight in a picture-book. "My Emperor," he declared, "your enemies' weapon is destroyed . . ."

I became aware of Aziyada at my side. When I looked at her, I saw that she was rearranging her shawl across her face, which I found that I regretted, for that visage, if not suited to a Sultan's concubine, was surely wise, and exotic, and utterly unique. "Come," she murmured, "the guards will be here soon, and we will be hard for that courtier to explain."

"But he may be in danger . . ." I began.

"I think that the Sultan saw enough," she said, "and I am sure that the Pasha can be persuasive when he has to be. If he is not proclaimed Grand Vizier in the morning, he is too great a fool for us to help."

And so we slipped away.

From the Private Memoirs of Eberhardt Starkmann

We moved quietly through that palace, a luxurious maze fit to be compared with Castle Falkenstein itself, but far gloomier for all its decoration. Once, we came to a store-room, and Aziyada raised her lamp to a bookshelf.

The Tragedy of Mihri Hanoum

In our history, the tale of Mihri Hanoum (p. 102) was a disastrous tragedy of obsession. Stories say that, when Abdul Aziz was deposed in 1876, the plotters entered the palace to find him in his nightshirt, clutching a drawn sword, with the pregnant Mihri hanging onto him and weeping. (While they were talking him into surrender, Pertevalé attacked in a screaming rage, dropping the War Minister with a kick to the stomach.)

Five days later, Aziz died, apparently cutting his own wrists with scissors. (Dark rumors hinted at murder.) A few days later, Mihri died in childbirth, leading to mass mourning throughout the capital, led by her brother Hassan, the army officer. The War Minister then ordered Hassan posted to Baghdad to get him out of the way, but Hassan, a crack shot, decided on revenge instead. He burst into a cabinet meeting armed with four pistols, and assassinated the War Minister, the Finance Minister, and several attendants before being captured. He was hanged the next morning. The whole incident doubtless contributed to Murad's rapid mental collapse.

Preventing this bloody soap opera from playing itself out again in the *Falkenstein* world could be an interesting challenge . . .

"Hai," she murmured, "three copies of that book? And none opened in centuries, by the look of it. The Viziers would not take the risk . . ." She took one of the volumes down, and it vanished into the folds of her robe. "A small payment," she murmured, and we continued on our way.

"Where will you go now?" I asked her.

"It would be wise for us both to be far from here, I think," she said. "Better not to test the gratitude or the protection of the Sublime Porte."

"Let us go to the Bayernese Embassy, then," I said. "I am sure that they will offer you their protection."

"Better not to test that, either." I heard dark humour in her voice. "In fact – can I help you depart this city at best speed?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

We had come through another ornate door into a small courtyard, lit only by the stars. Aziyada reached behind a pillar, to draw out a long bundle. "I found this when I searched Javorr's palace," she said, "a useful toy, and large enough for two." She spread a carpet on the dusty tiles.

"My thanks," I said. "How far can it take us?"

"Home, if you wish." She shrugged. "I would rather be elsewhere than here."

"Then I accept," I said, "and I will offer you the protection, not of the Bayernese Embassy, but of Bayern itself, and a Prince who we *can* trust."

Without a word, she stepped onto the carpet, and gestured for me to follow. "Very well," she said, "direct us."

From Tom Olam's Journal

When I first met Eberhardt Starkmann, I took him for the quiet, unassuming type. Perhaps I should have listened to my mother; it is the quiet ones you've got to watch out for.

I'm staying at Falkenstein just now, unwinding with the King and Morrolan after our last little excitement. I was having a lie-in and reflecting on the unwisdom of mixing brandy and champagne, when one of the place's resident brownies crashed in, squawking "Master Thomas! The Sky!" before diving down what I'd always taken for a mouse-hole. So I grabbed a dressing gown and a sword, and ran for the nearest tower, wondering if Robur had gone over the top.

But no, it was just – **just** – a fully functional flying carpet, carrying our quiet young engineer, a young lady who says very little (and all of it in Turkish) but who clearly takes everything in, and the inside scoop on the recent shake-up in Istanbul.

After we pried Morrolan away from the rug, Ludwig dragged everybody down for breakfast. When the young lady realized she was expected to eat with the rest of us, and when she'd seen two maids wander through with bare faces, she got rid of her veil with a shrug, and settled down to her share of the bread and coffee, occasionally handling a technical query from Morrolan with Eberhardt as interpreter. She is, clearly, adaptable; I think she'll go far around here. Eberhardt says that she's a Dervish, and hence above trivial things like differing ideas of modesty, but she certainly wasn't above that breakfast.

They told us their story, which culminated in a quiet night-time exit from the palace of the Sultan of Turkey himself, and Ludwig summoned a secretary to make sure that our diplomats there made the most of the goodwill we should have established with this Midhat Pasha character. (The telegraph wires are buzzing still.) This pair have apparently spent the last day or so flying over Eastern Europe, trying to avoid embarrassing attention from customs officials and the odd dragon. (Better not tell Verithrax about that carpet; he'd only want it for his collection.)

I think that Eberhardt wants to get back to his desk job, or at least to file a report on potential aeroliner facilities out East. I think he'll be begging at least one favor from his bosses in the Luftschwansa; I gather he promised Aziyada a trip in an aeroliner in repayment for the carpet ride. **She** is still looking round the place, and I think that Morrolan wants to talk shop for a month; I'd worry about her, but I get the impression that she can handle it. "Consulting Sorceress" was apparently her last paying job description.

In fact, I think we may have a Happy Ending. Aziyada apparently saved Eberhardt's hide at least twice, which always does strange things to a man's judgment, and I suspect that she's got him pegged as sincere, honest, and in need of some sensible guidance. And they **did** fly off into the sunset together, sort of. But I'll leave that up to them.

8. Concerning the Djinn



OF SOLOMON AND THE BOUND ONES

Remarks by Auberon of Faerie

It can hardly be a secret from humankind that we beings who Europeans know as Faerie are divided among ourselves. The supreme division is, of course, between the "Seelie," my own people, and the "Unseelie" servants of the being known as the Adversary. However, the importance of this division should not cause one to disregard other factions and hierarchies.

One observance that
the Djinn have oft preserved
is a refinement in the art
of Shape Changing. All of
our kind have some potential in this,
o' course, but the Djinn view it
as a science in itself.

I have written elsewhere of the disputation that sent the Djinn a-building palaces and petty kingdoms in the lands of Araby. They were a brash and arrogant folk, acting as monarchs rather than the barons that they truly were, but their overlords chose to disregard this, feeling that there was room enough for all ambitions on this globe, and those with a lust for power saw the Ifrit as future-times allies and pawns. Many of 'em were already arrayed with the Unseelie – but in truth, the point was rarely raised. The Djinn went their own way.

Pride, a wise human has observed, generally precedes a fall, mostly because it makes one forget that one's power is not infinite. The Djinn oft times despise humans, and have paid little attention to the growth of human art. Still, 'twas an understandable error; many of us would love to know whence Solomon derived his lore.

The Classes of the Unclassifiable

One observance that the Djinn have oft preserved – in their habitual Faerie way – is a refinement in the art of *Shape Changing*. All of our kind have some potential in this, o' course, but the Djinn view it as a science in itself, whereas most of us find a shape they like or inherit, and stick to that as their Habit. (Many Djinn are bound to one shape, though, courtesy of King Solomon – I'll talk of Iron Bracelets further on.)

This makes classification of the Djinn a tricky science, for who can pin a name on that which has no fixed shape? But that said, one may discern a few categories, or maybe ranks:

The greatest of the breed are the *Noble Djinn*, lords and masters, builders of palaces, with some wit in deciding what to do with their powers. This nobility are further divided into the *Ifrit*, creatures of great malevolence, and the kindlier, less selfish crew who are sometimes simply termed "Djinn."

The Ifrit are by basic nature equivalent to the Dark Lords of the Unseelie, and just as loveable to men, and by nominal allegiance similarly bound to the Adversary. However, recall that these are the most potent and selfish of a band who went into exile rather than remain in the society of their own kind. I doubt that even the Adversary can be sure of their instant obedience, and I'm sure their vows to him had weasel words to spare. They are, to the good fortune of others, bound by both his vows in the First Compact, and spells woven by Solomon; thus, they rarely seek to harm the Sons of Adam directly, unless they forget themselves in a rage, or they can provoke a fool to assault, or they think a little murder would not be noticed. (To open an ancient brass bottle on the shores of Araby is oft unwise.)

The other Noble Djinn are a gentler folk, and less danger to men – but yet they are aloof, or whimsical, or both. They prefer not to be bothered with "mortal" affairs. That said, they are just, in their way, and that does not remove their whimsy; there are tales in those lands of human unfortunates receiving sudden and startling boons from powerful Djinn who take pity on their plight.

In the courts and palaces of the nobles, you may find their *Djinn Servants*, who are sometimes referred to as *Jann*. These are powerful folk, even by the standards of Faerie, but they are also narrow in imagination, even by the standards of Faerie. They enter service, less out of loyalty or even compulsion than because it's become their habit, and because it gives 'em a way to spend their time. They may be evil or kindly, but they rarely act on their natures unprovoked. They make most useful minions to the Nobles. Some of this class are unattached, having seen their overlords trapped or retired from this world, and wander the fringes of human city life, or lurk in wells or cisterns or ruins, looking to exert their natures. This is whence comes Djinn-kind's great reputation for whimsy; if a Jann should hear of some happening amongst the Sons of Adam that catches his humour, he'll quite possibly help hunt down a criminal, or take a complaining husband a thousand miles from the wife he's called a scold, or present a feast to a beggar – or drop an unfortunate stroller in a pool, to see how humans accomplish this swimming business.

It may also be remarked here that Djinn can adopt male or female shapes, but like most faeries, they usually stick to one sex or the other. We've caught habits of

thought from you humans, remember, and you tend to take this matter terribly seriously. The greater number of Djinn take male shapes, but it's not a universal rule. There's a particular type of *Djinniya* – female Djinni – who appears in a lot of Eastern stories. The tales show 'em as attractive, intelligent, and tending more to subtlety than raw force. Some of these "Ladies" are good-natured and helpful, or feature in what I'll politely call "romantic" tales for male audiences; others are more likely to appear in the worst sort of dark male fantasy.

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Last, least, and nastiest are the renegades and bullies of Djinn-kind, the *Ghuls*. The English writer Edward William Lane says of these, "The Ghools are said to appear in the forms of human beings, and of various animals, and in many monstrous shapes; to haunt burial-grounds and other sequestered spots; to feed upon dead human bodies; and to kill and devour any human creature who has the misfortune to fall in their way" – which sums 'em up, I think. They may be Jann, or even Nobles diminished by Magick, or they may be crude monsters, akin to the Ogres and Trolls of European Faerie. Whatever its history, a Ghul lives the life of the predator and scavenger, with an especial fondness for human flesh. There are, of course, two regular ways to obtain this, one disgusting, one violent.

Appearances

Arabian sages describe the Djinn as being created of "Smokeless Fire," which is as good a definition of Faerie-nature as any. Most folk in those lands believe that the shape in which they are most like to see a Djinni is as a desert whirlwind or a water-spout at sea, and indeed, those are fine and dramatic ways for a brash Djinni to fly. Which said, however, one may pass some comment on their other appearances.

Despite their shape-changing, most Djinn do have particular forms in which they habitually rest or converse among themselves. Some, like European Faerie Animals, take four-footed shapes, but that's too inconvenient and undignified for most. Others may adopt human form, which their breed sees as a sign of refinement. It's not that they find humanity especially handsome; it's that, on the one hand, creating a disguise that humans themselves will believe is proof of some skill in self-sculpture, while on the other, the Djinn are not all immune to the attractions of human creativity and wit, and practice in the art of human shape-taking hints that a Djinni is a versatile aesthetic

sophisticate. Thus, one may hear of Djinn lovers of either sex, oft times unrecognised at first; one may also recall the *Arabian Nights* tale in which the hero is ferried across a lake by a Djinn with the head of an elephant and the body of a lion, to meet a whole horde of monstrous Djinn – whose king alone resembles a handsome young man.

However, some lowly Djinn are capable enough in passing for human; it helps 'em if they are required to perform service among human-kind, wherein they oft times adopt a plausible guise, such as that of a well-built guard when stationed to defend a door. Some make one error; their eyes open and close sideways, instead of up-and-down. Others are more traditional, and take a bipedal, two-armed shape with a few apt embellishments; green skin, great size, lengthy fangs or claws, glowing eyes, or other such fripperies.

Constraints Upon Djinn-Kind

On occasion, the Djinn show some of the same arbitrary problems as European elf-kind, such as "marriage prohibitions," or others of their own, such as a hatred of the smell of sulphur. However, they have two great and consistent limits; the Faerie dread of iron, and the peculiar binding laid on 'em by Solomon.

Djinn and Metal

Mr. Lane tells us: "To defend themselves from a Jinee . . . the Arabs often exclaim, 'Iron! Iron!' . . . or 'Iron! Thou unlucky!'"

Like other Faerie, the Djinn are
vulnerable to iron, and may indeed
be deterred from casual malice
by the mere threat of the stuff.

Like other Faerie, the Djinn are vulnerable to iron, and may indeed be deterred from casual malice by the mere threat of the stuff. However, they are a sturdy folk, and rarely *greatly* hurt by the mere presence of the plain metal, if they have cause to remain in its presence. Still and nonetheless, a blow from a Cold Iron sword will likely slay 'em, and surely cause great pain. If they choose to wield weapons, they disdain the fine silver of Faerie-rapiers, thinking it flimsy and frivolous; they prefer a kind of brass of their own alloying, which they can make hard as all but the best steels. (My dwarven friends mutter that it's brittle, but acknowledge that it serves.) This stuff polishes up well, too, and glows in the Arabian sun.

The Gifts of Solomon ben David

The ancient King of Israel who put paid to the wilder tyrannies of the Ifrit left his legacy to his own species in the shape of the Seal of Solomon. This is not simply the six-pointed "Star of David," made of two triangles, that still serves as a Jewish emblem; the full seal is surrounded and embellished by inscriptions and invocations. These were, of course, originally written in Ancient Hebrew; today, they are as likely to be Arabic, and work no less for that, thanks to the efforts of Arabian wizardry. (My friend Magister Morrolan is attempting, as an exercise, to recreate 'em in modern English or German; doubtless he'll succeed eventually. Ask me not how he proposes to *test* his translation.)

Of Solomon, Mr. Lane obtained tales with some taste of plausibility; "No man ever obtained such absolute power over the Jinn as Suleymán Ibn Dáood . . . This he did by virtue of a most wonderful talisman . . . It was a seal-ring . . . partly composed of brass and partly of iron. With the brass he stamped his written commands to the good Jinn; with the iron . . . those to the evil Jinn. . . Over both orders he had unlimited power; as well as over the

birds and the winds, and, as is generally said, over the wild beasts."

To some Djinn, Solomon left imprisonment – a Brass Bottle was his container of choice, though his followers have varied things somewhat; to others, he gave Iron Bracelets. These are as they sound; they are marked with Solomon's seal, and the Djinn is bound, by the power of that seal, not only to retain them, but to oppose and flee from any attempt to remove them. These seems to be a form of perpetual parole, imposed on the less *actively* evil Djinn, especially Jann-servants of Ifrit; their effect is to bar the Djinni from most uses of the powers of Etherealness or Shapeshifting. The small quantity of plain iron does not cause the wearer actual injury by its presence, and doubtless the Djinni becomes accustomed to the unceasing sense of *wrongness* it must induce.

The essential part of all this, o'course, is that Solomon left a basic teaching of his Lore behind him, which remains in the hands of practically every wizard in his home region. This is one reason why the Djinn are far less of a nuisance to human-kind than might be expected.



Religion and the Djinn

It is not my policy to pass comment on human religion. 'Tis no secret that some of the Faerie turn away in fear from its trappings, from the Cross, and the tolling of a church bell – but a human free-thinker would doubtless note that there are Faerie who'll turn and flee from a coat turned insides-out, or from salt. See such habits as you will. If we don't, as a rule, join you in church of a Sunday morning, assume nothing of our moral senses.

To some Djinn, Solomon left imprisonment
– a Brass Bottle was his container
of choice, though his followers
have varied things somewhat;
to others, he gave Iron Bracelets.

In the lands of the Djinn, though, things are different again. Most of the Ghuls, and many o' the servant-class, flee the prayers of a Muslim. (It might be worth the saying to recall that this is a religion with no great love of "Holy Symbols" or of pictures; to the Muslim, the Word is all-important, so it's maybe no surprise that it's prayer rather than symbols that affrights the Djinn.) More potent evil Djinn – Ifrit – will disregard such things, though I doubt they'll happily lay hands upon the written Koran; they see themselves as blasphemers, and glory in it. Others of the Djinn-kind, though, take a different view; they treat the words of Islam with respect, for they are good Muslims.

If this seems surprising – well, forgive me one remark on human faiths here; Islam is tolerantly all-encompassing, in its own way. Those as will speak the Avowal of the Faith are Muslims yet, whatever their birth. While there are Djinn who swear to being Muslims, the Faithful will not dare gainsay 'em.

Not that these are the Djinn a human is most like to meet. Being Muslim, and thus dedicated to virtue, they *certainly* refrain from murder and the cannibal habits of the Ghul, and also feel that it would be an unkind thing for them to wander 'mongst the "Sons of Adam," as they call you. For they have their own mosques, underground, or far away in the wilderness, or in stranger realms yet, and they see no need to share those of humans. It would be, they say, an unmerciful thing to walk amongst humankind, where their nature provokes fear. Apart from which, human sorcerers are forever trying to enslave 'em, and resisting that may involve

'em in actions they don't enjoy – so they avoid all human-folk, for safety.

But the faithful Muslim Djinn can be met, by accident or adventure; treat such with courtesy, and they'll likely recall that the Prophet enjoins compassion and mercy, saving all of you trouble and distress. Invoke a Muslim prayer to them, and they'll nod in agreement, and salute you as a co-religionist – but not be driven off.

One other matter to mention here. The Lord of the Unseelie is, o' course, named *The Adversary*. Now, there have been faiths in the East who've believed in One God, who was faced and opposed by a great foe; the Muslims call that foe *Iblis*, the Christians, *Satan*. Others have talked of such a being as, simply, the *Adversary*. Now, I'd debate and deny that the Unseelie's chief was ever a fallen angel or servant of the Almighty, although he's not short of diabolical malice. If he's become confused with something in the scriptures of human religion – well, it might serve his purposes, or just amuse him.

Tom's Game Notes: At least three out of four Ghuls and half of the non-Muslim Djinn Servants one meets will actually be driven away by an avowal of the Muslim faith; if in doubt, the Host can cut cards or roll a dice to decide. The words used must **sound** sincere; this might work for a non-Muslim who's practiced the formula – Burton swears it saved his neck once or twice – but if nothing else, it's a little disrespectful of others' beliefs. Passing Muslims may take offense on their own account, or suggest that, having claimed the protection of Islam, you should continue to obey the rules of the faith.

As to whether Christian symbols are effective against Djinn, even Auberon isn't sure. In theory, they might be; if it's the mere symbolism that carries the power, well, they're symbols, and if it's the religion itself, remember that Muslims see Christ as an authentic prophet. It may literally be a matter of **convincing** the Djinn that this is holy – presenting it strongly while making the point in words, loud and clear. This is best left as a matter of the Host's judgment and good role-playing.

Djinn Sorcery?

If one believes certain tales, a few Djinn Lords have displayed more than what Mr. Olam has named "Kindred Powers;" they have flaunted effective skill in actual Sorcery. This may be so, though I very much doubt it; the stories are uncertain. If true, it would make these a remarkably pure-blooded, and likely ancient, clan of Faerie, close in birth to the Fomori (or Tuatha). But the fact is, Faerie powers can pass for scholastic Magick easily enough, to an untrained audience.

It's also likely that there are Peri in the Persian lands, and mayhap beyond, who possess powers of *Raising Nature* close to those of the Lake Ladies, and other such versatile aptitudes. All of which said, I'd value more first-hand tales of such matters.



❧ TOM OLAM'S NOTES: DJINN IN PLAY ❧

The Djinn are a natural part of any games set in the Ottoman lands, but (like any Faerie) they require a little care in the handling; they are both extremely powerful and peculiarly vulnerable.

The classic, *Arabian Nights* use of Djinn is not as simple monsters to be fought; it's as plot devices and components of puzzles. For example, in the tale of "The Fisherman and the Djinni," the Djinni is released by accident, is clearly able to slaughter the human fisherman out of hand, but succumbs to trickery – after which it provides various effects and favors that enable the fisherman to make his fortune. Similarly, in the tale of "Aladdin," the Djinni makes the hero rich and important – but the interest of the story lies in Aladdin's relationship with the princess and her family, while the humor comes from the moments that the Djinni is required to cut loose at full power, or from Aladdin's mother's reaction to the situation.

Typical Djinn in Castle Falkenstein

Ifriti

Abilities: Athletics Good, Charisma Good, Courage Good, Etherealness Good, Fisticuffs Good, Glamour Good, Know Mortal Desire Good, Physique Exceptional, Shapeshifting Great, Survive and Endure Great, Swift Flight Great, Swordsmanship Great, Tinkering Poor.

"Friendly" Noble

Abilities: Athletics Good, Be Unseen Great, Charisma Good, Courage Great, Etherealness Great, Glamour Average, Obtain from Elsewhere Average, Perception Good, Physique Great, Shapeshifting Good, Survive and Endure Great, Swift Flight Great, Swordsmanship Good.

Djinni Lady

Abilities: Charisma Good, Comeliness Great, Courage Good, Etherealness Good, Glamour Great, Know Mortal Desire Great, Obtain From Elsewhere Good, Perception Great, Performance Good, Physician Good, Shapeshifting Great, Stealth Good, Survive and Endure Average.

Jann (Djinni Servant)

Abilities: Athletics Good, Comeliness Poor, Etherealness Average, Fisticuffs Great, Glamour Poor, Physique Great, Survive and Endure Average, Shapeshifting Good, Tinkering Poor, plus one of the following at Great level; Perform a Great Work, Obtain From Elsewhere, Swift Flight, or Swordsmanship. Reduce Etherealness and Shapeshifting to Poor if the Djinni wears Iron Bracelets.

Gbul

Abilities: Athletics Good, Etherealness Poor, Fisticuffs Good, Glamour Poor, Know Mortal Desire Good, Perception Good, Physique Great, Shapeshifting Average, Stealth Good, Survive and Endure Poor.

Conversely, if you want to use Djinn as monsters, make sure that the Dramatic Characters are up to the fight. In the *Arabian Nights*, there is at least one very spectacular shape-shifting duel between a sorceress and an Ifriti, while in Bedouin folklore, Ghuls serve the same function as Ogres in Europe – formidable opponents for tough and clever sword-wielding heroes. A wizard who has studied the lore of Solomon can make a huge difference; a quest-style plot for New European characters might involve a Djinni who is too powerful to fight at first, forcing a wizard to search out the spells that will restrain it for long enough for the Dramatic Characters to slip past or defeat it

Djinn Powers

As Faerie, all Djinn have the standard Abilities of *Etherealness* and *Glamour*, along with *Shapeshifting* if the rules from *The Memoirs of Auberon of Faerie* or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* are being used (see *Castle Falkenstein*, pp. 160-161, and *The Memoirs of Auberon*, pp. 14-17, or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, pp. CF84-86), to at least some extent. They may also have one or more "Kindred Powers" of their own. As habitual shape-shifters, they tend to rate especially high in that ability – *unless* they are one of the large number who have been obliged to wear the Iron Bracelets forged by Solomon, which restrict them to minimal (Poor/Level 1) power in this and *Etherealness*. Above-average *Glamour* is a rather rarer accomplishment, usually being restricted to Djinn Lords and a few "specialist" servants.

(Note: *Castle Falkenstein* hosts who are *not* using *The Memoirs of Auberon of Faerie* should set the *Etherealness* of Djinn described in this book to the better of their listed *Etherealness* or *Shapeshifting* ratings.)

Other common Powers:

Be Unseen

Some Djinn share this ability with some European Fetches (*Castle Falkenstein*, p. 174, or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, p. CF84). It enables them to avoid the notice of humans, unless they do anything to attract attention (such as speaking out or entering combat), or unless an observer specifically looks for them and overcomes its power by an effort of concentration. (In *Castle Falkenstein*, make a Perception check against the Be Unseen power; in *GURPS*, roll a Quick Contest between the *worst* of the observer's sight or hearing rolls and the faerie's Stealth skill.) It also grants complete immunity to detection magick. However, it provides no defense against mechanical forms of detection, including photography. It is popular with more benevolent Djinn, especially the Muslim believers, who prefer to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca, and other observances, undisturbed by startled humans.

TYPICAL DJINN IN GURPS

The 121-point set of standard Faerie abilities may be found on p. CF88; other Faerie powers are detailed on pp. CF84-86 and in this book. Also remember that some Faeries may roll against Will-5 to overcome a Dread, as explained on p. CF80.

Ifriti 610 points

ST 17 [80]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 15 [60].

Speed 7.0; Move 7.

Dodge 7; Parry 8 (Brawling).

Advantages: Etherealness 3 [65]; Glamour 3 [40]; Know Mortal Desire 3 [30]; Shapeshifting 4 [14]; Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Survive and Endure 4 [70]; Swift Flight 4 [120].

Disadvantages: Bully [-10]; Dread (The Koran and the Seal of Solomon, Uncommon; 1-hex radius; Limitation: Can be overcome, -10%) [-9]; Dull [-1]; Primitive (TL3) [-10]; Sadism [-5].

Skills: Brawling-12 [1/2]; Broadsword-15 [8]; Intimidation-14 [6]; Leadership-10 [1/2]; Two-Handed Sword-14 [4]; Wrestling-13 [2].

Languages: Arabic (native)-12 [0]; Turkish-12 [2].

"Friendly" Noble 694 points

ST 15 [60]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 15 [60].

Speed 7.0; Move 7.

Dodge 7; Parry 6 (Broadsword).

Advantages: Be Unseen [40]; Charisma +1 [5]; Etherealness 4 [82]; Glamour 2 [18]; Obtain From Elsewhere 2 [60]; Shapeshifting 3 [12]; Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Survive and Endure 4 [70]; Swift Flight 4 [120].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; Dull [-1]; Primitive (TL4) [-5]; Vow (Respect Islam and the Koran) [-10].

Skills: Broadsword-13 [2]; Intimidation-11 [1]; Leadership-11 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-14 [4]; Stealth-14 [4].

Languages: Arabic (native)-12 [0]; Farsi-10 [1/2]; Turkish-12 [2].

Djinni Lady 672 points

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 5.75; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Be Unseen [40]; Beautiful [15]; Charisma +1 [5]; Etherealness 3 [65]; Glamour 4 [60]; Know Mortal Desire 4 [40]; Obtain From Elsewhere 3 [75]; Shapeshifting 4 [14]; Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Survive and Endure 2 [25]; Swift Flight 4 [120].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; Dull [-1]; Primitive (TL4) [-5]; Vow (Respect Islam and the Koran) [-10].

Skills: Acting-11 [1/2]; Bardic Lore-11 [1]; Dancing-13 [8]; Physician-13 [4]; Savoir-Faire-15 [4]; Sex Appeal-13 [4]; Singing-13 [2]; Stealth-13 [8].

Languages: Arabic (native)-13 [0]; Farsi-12 [1]; French-11 [1/2]; Turkish-13 [1].

Jann (Djinni Servant) 498 points

ST 15 [60]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 9 [-10]; **HT** 14 [45].

Speed 6.5; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 10 (Wrestling).

Advantages: Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Etherealness 2 [48]; Glamour 1 [8]; Obtain From Elsewhere 2 [60]; Shapeshifting 3 [12]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Survive and Endure 2 [25]; Swift Flight 4 [120].

Disadvantages: Dread (Prayers, religious inscriptions, the Koran, and the Seal of Solomon, common; 3-hex radius; Limitation: Can be overcome, -10%) [-22]; Hidebound [-5]; Primitive (TL3) [-10]; Ugly [-10].

Skills: Brawling-15 [8]; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-10 [2]; Wrestling-15 [16].

Languages: Arabic (native)-9 [0]; Turkish-9 [2].

Customization Notes: If a Janni wears Iron Bracelets, his Etherealness and Shapeshifting drop to level 1, a net loss of 40 points for a new total of 458 points. Additionally, many Jann have Perform a Great Work 4 [90] or Obtain From Elsewhere 4 [90] instead of Swift Flight, and may supplement this with three more Combat/Weapons skills at 15.

Gbul 233 points

ST 14 [45]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 9 [-10]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 6.0; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 8 (Brawling).

Advantages: Alertness +4 [20]; Etherealness 1 [20]; Glamour 1 [8]; Know Mortal Desire 3 [3-]; Shapeshifting 2 [10]; Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Survive and Endure 1 [10].

Disadvantages: Distractible [-1]; Dread (Prayers, religious inscriptions, the Koran, and the Seal of Solomon, common; 3-hex radius; Limitation: Can be overcome, -10%) [-22]; Hidebound [-5]; Odious Racial Habit (Cannibal) [-15]; Primitive (TL3) [-10]; Sadism [-15]; Semi-Literacy [-5].

Skills: Brawling-13 [2]; Camouflage-11 [4]; Stealth-13 [4].

Languages: Arabic (native)-9 [0]; Turkish-9 [2].

Attribute Modifiers: ST +4 [45]; DX +1 [10]; HT +2 [20].

Racial Advantages: Etherealness 2 [48]; Glamour 1 [8]; Shapeshifting 3 [12]; Standard Faerie Abilities [121]; Unusual Background (Broad choice of Kindred Powers) [10]; and at least 30 points in any Djinn Powers from this chapter.

Racial Disadvantages: Dull [-1]. Good Djinn have a Vow (To respect Islam and the Koran) [-5]; evil Djinn have a Dread (The Koran and the Seal of Solomon, occasional; 1-hex radius; Limitation: Can be overcome, -10%) [-9]. Either of these last may be varied in individual cases, but usually only to increase the disadvantage level; all Djinn have *some* kind of strong response to the outward signs of Islam, and show at least cautious respect to the Seal of Solomon, and many of the evil sort can be driven off by a simple Muslim prayer, which would count as a "common" effect (doubling the cost of the Dread to -18 points). (Remember also that, as faeries, djinn can suffer permanent death if they break a vow.)

Note: Unlike most Faerie races, Djinn have a choice of several options when determining their Kindred Powers. As this is an advantage from a player's point of view, it is treated as an Unusual Background.

It costs 298 or 294 points to play a Djinni, depending on whether the creature is virtuous or malevolent. Many have powers at a higher level than the package grants; quite a few also have more severe disadvantages, especially Dread regarding Muslim symbols, iron, or similar. The most powerful sorts of Djinn are very rare these days, however.

Iron Bracelets: If the Djinni wears Iron Bracelets, reduce both its Etherealness and Shapeshifting powers to Level 1, and add a special Phobia, regarding the possibility of having the Bracelets removed, worth -5 points. This reduces the cost of the racial package by 45 points, to 253 or 249. In effect, this is a "package disadvantage," which could possibly be bought off with experience (and with the GM's explicit permission). Of course, finding a power strong enough to remove the bracelets, and overcoming the compulsion in the Djinni's mind to keep them, could be an adventure in itself.

If designing Djinn as characters in *GURPS*, this power costs 40 points. (This is based on the cost of Knack versions of spells that would achieve similar result, slightly reduced to reflect the power's limitations.) Most faeries who possess it also buy their Stealth up to fairly high levels.

Know Mortal Desire

This is primarily a Ghul ability, although Ifrit also use it (rather more subtly). It involves the ability to probe a mortal mind, and determine what the victim loves or desires; the Djinn then uses other powers to mimic the desired thing and thus attract the victim to their doom.

As a rule, Poor/Level 1 ability in this extracts only the most basic form of the victim's desires: food, a partner of the appropriate sex, the admiration of others, and so on. Average/Level 2 ability finds some details, such as a taste for romance with blondes or a fondness for sherbet or coffee. Good/Level 3 ability picks up subtleties; build as well as hair color, praise for the character's wit and wisdom, and so on. Great/Level 4 ability detects what the subject *really* likes – the smell of fresh coffee, perhaps, or an image of some first love who has haunted the person's deepest dreams. An Exceptional/Level 5 rating means that the Djinn extracts many clear details, perhaps surprising or even disgusting the victim, if they ever have

the chance to *think* about the things that were displayed to them. A Djinn with Extraordinary/Level 6 ability in this is frankly a sadist, even if he should somehow mean well in his use of it; a human who sees that which they display is rarely happy with real life ever again.

Castle Falkenstein: Match the Djinn's level in this ability against the victim's Perception; a success for the Djinn comes up with something that will attract the victim, and a *High* success enables it to come up with an image that will overcome all logic and sense, at least for a moment.

GURPS: Roll a Quick Contest between the Djinn's "skill" of 6 + twice its level in this power, and the intended victim's IQ. If the Djinn wins, it comes up with something

that will attract the victim; if it wins by 5 or more, it comes up with an image that will overcome all logic and sense, at least for a moment. Note the descriptions above for guidance as to the degree of detail it obtains. For each attempt, the Djinn must concentrate for 10 seconds; the victim is unaware of the attempt unless the Djinn rolls a critical failure.

GURPS Costs: This power costs 10 points per level. (This is very loosely based on the cost of a Knack with the Mind-Search spell, p. M29, modified to allow for the variable skill roll and limited applications.)

Many Djinn appear to know
of great hordes of "lost"
treasure . . .



Obtain From Elsewhere

This Ability gives the Djinn the power to obtain goods or materials from elsewhere in reality, and present them to whoever asks. (Technically, this might be theft, but it's very hard to detect or prove; many Djinn appear to know of great hordes of "lost" treasure, reducing the potential for embarrassment.) Of course, a Djinni with *Swift Flight* might achieve the same result openly, but with this power, the Djinni doesn't have to move (except possibly extra-dimensionally – but leave that question to the metaphysicians). Note the implicit limitation with this power; the Djinni *might* obtain almost anything, but the thing must *already exist*, somewhere in the world. Furthermore, this power is useless if the Djinni is currently being restrained by the Seal of Solomon or related magick (which evidently restrict Djinn activity in *every* dimension). Thus, a Djinni cannot use the power to obtain the means to break out of a brass bottle or other enchanted prison. Iron Bracelets may leave a Djinni free to use the power, reduce it to Poor/Level 1, or suppress it entirely, as their maker chose; sometimes, it is useful for a controlled servant to have such abilities, but sometimes it is just too dangerous, or the maker may have wanted to punish the creature by denying it such advantages.

With Poor/Level 1 ability, a Djinni can find general categories of item that are commonplace in the near vicinity, and will fit in one hand – money, a little food or drink

of an unspecified kind, or a knife, say – and the fetching usually requires an hour or two. With Average/Level 2 ability, the goods can be a little more specific, and the Djinni's "reach" extends for several hundred miles, if necessary; thus, the beneficiary can request a hot meal, coffee, silver coins, or a plain sword, all within 10 minutes or so. At the Good/Level 3 rating, the power can obtain goods in no more than 2-3 minutes, and they can be almost any common thing that might be located on the same continent and that can be carried two-handed; a bag of gold coins, a fine meal or an impressive sword, or a gun. (Djinn of lesser power find requests for "high-tech" items confusing, and rarely obtain the desired results; *any* Djinni is likely to be hopelessly bemused by over-specific requests for modern products.) A Great/Level 4 ability is the minimum required to obtain living animals, such as a dog, cat, or chicken, or anything else that may be moving around unpredictably; otherwise, it can obtain most items that can be seen publicly somewhere in the world and lifted by normal human strength, in about a minute. With Exceptional/Level 5 Ability, the Djinni can produce rare and exotic items of no more than human size in a few seconds. With Extraordinary/Level 6 Obtain From Elsewhere powers, the Ability can instantly find pretty well any item, even if it is unique, provided that it could pass through a doorway.

Notes: After much argument, Muslim legal scholars have decided that taking advantage of this power *is* theft, unless the Djinni's source is somehow identified, but that it may be forgiven in emergencies or if used with a great deal of restraint. GMs may choose to ban PC Djinn from taking this power, at least above Great/Level 2, as it may be too easily abused; friendly NPC Djinn who happen to possess it should preferably be played as whimsical and easily confused.

GURPS Costs: Points values for this power, if designing Djinn as characters, are 30 points +15 points/level; that is, 45 points at level 1 up to 120 at level 6. (This is loosely based on the cost of the Snatcher advantage, p. CI45.)

Perform a Great Work

As for the Brownie (*Castle Falkenstein*, p. 174 or *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, pp. CF88-89). This ability is typically possessed by minor Djinn Servants.

You should be careful
how you act; on the one hand,
you don't want to frighten anyone,
and on the other, you don't want
some nervous sorcerer trapping
you in a brass bottle for a
thousand years!

Survive and Endure

Most Djinn can use *Etherealness* to adopt a form that can survive in any environment, but many also have this ability, which enables them to make their physical bodies adapt to environments that should roast, drown, or crush them. (The Djinni will probably *prefer* more normal temperatures and regular meals – but this can be a matter of whim, and some enjoy swimming in boiling oil.) It cannot be used to resist injury from attacks, which use “shock” effects – just to survive continuing conditions. (A Djinni with high levels of Survive and Endure which was somehow unexpectedly thrown onto a bonfire while in material form could not *instantly* adapt its body, and so would take damage as for an instantaneous attack – but if it survived that, it could subsequently stand comfortably amidst the flames.) It is absolutely *no* use against the effects of iron.

Poor/Level 1 Survive and Endure permits the Djinni, in human-like form, to wander through the Arctic or the tropics in the same clothes without discomfort, or to remain underwater for several minutes. Average/Level 2 ability means that the Djinni looks comfortable in any conditions that a human can endure for brief periods, and can breathe water like a fish. With Good/Level 3 ability, the Djinn faces near-boiling or icy conditions with equanimity, and doesn't have to bother about oxygen as such. At Great/Level 4 ability, the Djinni can live in a baker's oven, breathing the flames and nibbling the hot charcoal, stroll around on the floor of the deepest sea, or use a vat of boiling oil as a bath. With Exceptional/Level 5 ability, the Djinni can live full-time in a vat of molten steel or liquid nitrogen, or survive the pressures in the center of the Earth. In its Extraordinary/Level 6 form, the ability would permit the Djinni to travel through the vacuum of space in material form and walk on the surface of the sun, or dive to its heart.

GURPS Costs: Level 1 is equivalent to 3 levels of Breath-Holding (p. CI21) and 4 levels of Temperature Tolerance (p. CI30) [total 10 points]. Level 2 equates to Gills (p. CI56), 5-point Pressure Support (p. CI63), and 10 levels of Temperature Tolerance [total 25 points]. Level 3 is 20 points of Temperature Tolerance, Doesn't Breathe (p. CI53), and 5-point Pressure Support [total 45 points]. Level 4 is 40 points of Temperature Tolerance, combined with Doesn't Breathe and 10-point Pressure Support [total 70 points]. Level 5 is a 75-point Invulnerability (p. CI59) to prolonged extremes of temperature, Doesn't Breathe, and 15-point Pressure Support [total 110 points]. Level 6 is the same as Level 5, with the addition of +5 DR [total 125 points].

Swift Flight

Many Djinn (mostly nobles and messenger-servants) are even faster in flight than their *Etherealness* would imply, and can fly in fully solid form (always useful when carrying mortals around or fetching and carrying), unlike many Faerie who must become mist-like or shape-change into a bird to achieve full speed.

Castle Falkenstein: This ability grants flying speed of 50 mph (73 feet/sec) at Poor level, *doubled* for each level above that (i.e. 100 mph at Average, 200 mph at Good, up to 1,600 mph at Extraordinary). Hosts may rule that even the supernatural Djinn have difficulty braking and maneuvering at speeds in the hundreds of miles per hour.

GURPS Costs: This power is bought as Flight (p. CI56), plus one level of Super Flight (p. CI67) per level of Swift Flight. Note that a Djinni with base Move 7 can thus fly at 28 yards per second (56 mph) with Swift Flight at Level 1, 112 yards/second (224 mph) at Level 3, and 996 yards/second (1,992 mph) at Level 6. This has a total cost of 60 points at Level 1, 80 at Level 2, 100 at Level 3, 120 at Level 4, 140 at Level 5, and 160 at Level 6.

PLAYING DJINN CHARACTERS

For a player to take the role of even a minor Djinni is a fairly extreme idea, and should only be pursued with the Host's specific permission – but there is no reason why a skilled player shouldn't take such a part. After all, a minor Djinni need not be any more powerful or game-unbalancing than a Dragon or a Daoine Sidhe. The following templates represent a fairly playable character of this type, good-natured enough to associate with most humans.

Castle Falkenstein

Strong Suits: Etherealness, Perception, Physique.

Kindred Power: Choose one from those discussed in this chapter. Alternatively, choose *two*, but neither may be taken at better than Average power, or *three*, of which two must be Poor and one Average. (Hosts should be warned that Djinn characters can nonetheless be very powerful!) A Djinni whose Etherealness and Glamour are both Poor may be assumed to wear Iron Bracelets.

Possessions: Baggy silk trousers; heavy silver jewelry; a scimitar of Djinn Brass.

GURPS Template

293 points

Attributes: ST 14 [0]; DX 11 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [0].

Advantages: Djinn Racial Package (with "Good" option, p. 112) [298]. Spend 15 points on improving one or more Kindred Powers [Varies]; improved Appearance [5 or 15]; Charisma [5/level]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Pious [5]; or Toughness (DR 1) [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points from reduced Appearance [Varies]; Bad Smell [-10]; Bully [-10]; Clueless [-10]; Code of Honor (Muslim) [-10]; Compulsive Generosity [-5]; Distractible [-1] or Short Attention Span [-10]; Disturbing Voice [-10]; Gullibility [-10]; change Dull to Hidebound [-4]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Lecherousness [-15]; Loner [-5]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Oblivious [-3]; Primitive [-5/level]; Truthfulness [-5]; or Weak Will [-8/level].

Skills: Any five from: Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; Flight, Stealth, Wrestling, or Two-Handed Sword, all (P/A) DX [2]-11; Savoir-Faire (Servant) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-11; Acting, Intimidation, or Languages appropriate to the Djinni's home area, all (M/A) IQ [2]-10; History (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-9; and Sex Appeal (M/A; HT) HT [2]-12.

Note that a Djinni who wears Iron Bracelets is 45 points cheaper under **GURPS**, which might make the character more affordable. A Djinni with reduced Appearance has a "normal form" which humans find unattractive (or terrifying) and other Djinn mock as unstylish; even if he also has Shapeshifting at a high level, the GM is entitled to require an IQ roll for him to adopt a more appealing shape, however temporarily, or may simply rule that all his shapes somehow come out ugly, despite his best efforts.

You are a Djinni. Not one of the Lords or Ifrit, to be sure, but a little above the run of Jann. You have enough initiative to go out and experience adventures on your own. Perhaps you are a lesser member of the aristocratic caste, or a superior sort of servant – in truth, the distinction is somewhat blurred. It's not as if Djinn have families, in that strange human sense, to make such hierarchies permanent.

Perhaps you have recently been released from a prison sealed with the Seal of Solomon. Of course, you were never malicious enough for that wise human king to think you should be closed away – but other human wizards have studied his lore, and not always applied it with as much justice. Or perhaps you served an evil Ifriti in Solomon's time, and when Solomon defeated your master, he recognized that you were not truly evil, but bound your power with Iron Bracelets as a punishment for serving evil. Now, you sometimes look at them, remember why they are there, and wander the world seeking to redeem yourself.

Then again, perhaps you are simply a masterless, harmless sort, who has lived for the past few centuries in some remote ruin. Now, you have decided to go a-wandering once more. Or perhaps you are the sort who lives in an organized community with others of your kind, and it's some duty that has led you to have dealings with the Sons of Adam. In that case, you should be careful how you act; on the one hand, you don't want to frighten anyone, and on the other, you don't want some nervous sorcerer trapping you in a brass bottle for a thousand years!

In Your Diary: Notes on the strange ways that the world has changed in recent years; snippets of information on the world beyond your homeland (humans are evidently traveling further and faster these days); philosophical thoughts on the nature of human and Djinn desire.

Why You're Here: If you were recently released from imprisonment, perhaps it was these modern folk who released you, and you have sworn to accompany and aid them for as long as it takes to pay this debt – or perhaps you have an ancient vow to accomplish, and these humans are going to same way. On the other hand, perhaps you were never trapped, but are a good Muslim who has recently discovered a vile plot by some Ifrit, which these folk are opposing, and you feel it is the duty of all Djinn-kind to oppose such evil. Or you could simply have gone on the *Hajj* pilgrimage, invisible or disguised as a human to avoid problems, and then decided to see some more of the world while you are out and about.

Then again, perhaps it is simply the old Faerie problem; boredom. You may be a lesser relative of the Djinn aristocracy, tired of the Faerie Veil – even in the lush, exotically oriental form into which your kind can shape it – and you are determined to search out new experiences in the mortal world. In that case, you may well feel that these *Farangi* have more new and exciting ways of thinking and acting than the conservative folk of the Ottoman Empire.

Appendix:

The Book of Abdul the Mad

On her way out of the Dolmabache, remember that Aziyada picked up a book? Her comments at the time suggest that she viewed it as fair payment for services rendered, and I suspect that Eberhardt just thought it was light reading and not worth arguing over.

*Well, Morrolan took one look at it, staggered, and moaned gently; it turned out that this was a complete copy of something called, promisingly, **The Book of Abdhul the Mad**. Morrolan then disappeared into his study, calling as he went for us to send out for a bunch of his friends and a*

clutch of professors of Arabic. After that, we didn't see him for a week. Aziyada asked Eberhardt if he thought Morrolan was sane, and when Eberhardt said yes, she just shrugged and said that in that case, he wasn't likely to do anything too foolish.

*However, when Morrolan reappeared, he **did** present us with a summary of what he'd learned. I've condensed this a bit, and appended some game rules.*

— T.O.

ON THE REVEALED NATURE OF ARABIAN MAGICK

Extracted from Notes by Grey Morrolan

There is much for a European scholar to learn from this book, but just as important is that which is confirmed.

Previously, we of the West have observed fragments of the Arabian style of the Art; the binding of Djinn, the creation of Items of Power, the rituals of the Dervish Orders, and so on. Now at last, we may understand how each of these fragments forms part of a coherent and logical unity.

The Art of Binding

As my friend, Lord Auberon of Faerie, has told us (see pp. 106-109), the Djinn are Faerie of considerable power, who are nonetheless susceptible to a particular category of binding invocation. We have always assumed that the power of this "Seal

of Solomon" was related to the well-known Faerie inability to break the letter of a vow, and I still believe this to be essentially correct.

However, it now appears that the peculiar potency of the Seal may derive from the precise geometrical forms inscribed, and invocations spoken, when it is used. The Seal of Solomon is, it would appear, a great and subtle abstract enchantment in its own right — a spell of compulsion, but most of all, of binding . . .

We can now see that the peculiar genius of "Abdhul the Mad" lay in his comprehension of this, and his ability to encompass its implications. His Book is the most complete

introduction to the Magick of Binding and Compulsion on Earth.

The Seal of Solomon
is a great and subtle abstract
enchantment in its own right —
a spell of compulsion,
but most of all, of binding.

≡ THE ENCHANTMENT OF OBJECTS ≡

The Muslim world has always been noted – among European wizards no less than among the masses – for the number and variety of *enchanted artefacts* to be found there. These are not merely the sources of raw power which we occasionally wield, and which a European savant can, with lengthy application and care, recreate; they are objects which perform useful tasks of their own – effects comparable to the mightiest spells, yet of the device's own nature. Woven, patterned cloth, as one might say, and not mere spools of thread.

Now, with this volume in our possession, we may comprehend the nature of these creations, and categorise them in a logical manner.

The Nature of Enchanted Matter

In the past, the relatively numerous artefacts of enchanted power existing in the East seemed to fall into

two very distinct and divergent categories; those empowered by bound Djinn, who were obliged to obey the possessor's will, and those whose power was innate, lacking sentience of its own. This led some of my colleagues to outraged jealousy; for the Muslim world to have mastered *one* form of enchantment was galling enough, but to think that these folk employed *two* such Arts defied belief. Now, however, we may begin to see that all these creations have a common nature.

In every case, *Life Force* is bound into the artefact. In some cases, the being in question retains its sentience and free will; in others, energy plain and simple is thus taken and used, either transforming creature into artefact, or leaving that creature free but weakened. In all cases, I have cause to pray, the creature thus *used* is a Djinni. The binding Magicks used are derived from Solomon's great work.

≡ CATEGORIES OF ARTEFACT ≡

Djinn Prisons

While fascinating, these brass bottles and such should detain us least in this discussion. Essentially simple applications of the Seal of Solomon (see p. 108), they embody no power save that of the Seal. However, I must reiterate: these are the most dangerous artefacts of all, especially for the unwise or ignorant.

The lore of Abdhul the Mad
enables an expert to bind
a Djinni to personal service,
without disruption of its psyche.

Each contains an imprisoned Djinni, whose temper and behaviour are unpredictable. Even one of the servant caste may have the power to rout an army of human soldiers; the Lords of the Djinn have the capacity to menace the entire Race of Man.

To be sure, a Djinni might be able to speak from within its prison, and may offer services and wealth beyond imagining to the mortal who frees it; moreover,

such creatures are just as sternly bound by their own sworn word as any European Faerie, especially when they swear by the Seal of Solomon which has power over them all. However, many of them possess a quite diabolical cunning, and may twist and redefine oaths to their own advantage; and this they *will* do, for they oft-times bitterly resent serving any mortal. Even the most friendly and benevolent may possess its own tastes and values, and may seek to enforce these on any human who crosses its path.

The great majority of, but not all, such prisons, are said to date from the days of Solomon. His jails are all or mostly brass bottles, the size of a man's hand, corked and sealed with wax, stamped with the essential Symbol. However, the lore of Solomon remains in the hands of men, and other Djinn-prisons may be encountered – not just bottles and flasks, but blocks or pillars of stone into which an Ethereal Djinn has been forced, or wells whose lurking denizen cannot now emerge. Fond as I am of the old pantomime-tale, I have never heard in reality of a djinn bound in a lamp – but a lamp *is* a container. Which said, Aladdin's discovery (if it existed) might more easily belong in our next category.

"Servant-Artefacts"

The lore of Abdhul the Mad enables an expert to bind a Djinni to personal service, without disruption of its psyche. This power is enforced through a Seal of Solomon, which is a material thing – so the Djinni is, in actuality, bound to a material artefact.

The vast majority of such bonded Djinn are of the servant caste – potent but unimaginative, with little capacity for boredom or ambition – and as such, useful aides. It is, in theory, possible to bind a Djinni Lord in the same way, creating a versatile and awe-inspiring artefact – but the effort and skill involved would be vast, and the dangers, horrific. Abdhul hints that he did accomplish such a binding, at least once; I am not convinced that this is not mere braggadocio.

Servant Artefact Game Mechanics

Bind to Service is a magical effect with a basic Energy Cost determined as follows:

Castle Falkenstein: The cost is equal to the total Face Values of the Djinni's Courage and Etherealness, ♠.

GURPS: The cost is equal to the Djinni's (Will-6) plus twice the level of its Etherealness power, ♠.

So the base cost to Bind a typical Jann (see pp. 110-111) is 7-8 ♠, whereas a Noble costs 16 ♠, plus Definitions. (For a Ghul, it's only about 5-6 ♠ – but that's like taking a rabid dog as a house pet.) If the caster gives its Duration Definition enough energy to make any normal spell last for a year (+8), it becomes effectively permanent. The caster may either require specific actions from the Djinni, or more general service; each type of action counts as one "Element" – so binding a Djinni into a quiver to replenish the arrow supply whenever needed (using its *Obtain from Elsewhere* Ability) is "One Element," whereas binding it to do anything that the item's user requires is "Multiple Tasks." The Range Element is considered to be the *sum* of the distances from caster to Djinni and caster to artifact.

Most artifacts have simple operating methods – rubbing a lamp, twisting a ring, a word of command. More complex operations might add to casting cost (as extra Elements), at the Host's option.

Oh, and most Djinn are equivalent to Faerie for spell-casting purposes, adding +2 to the casting cost. People who equate Ifrit to Demons are exaggerating. Probably.

In any event, there is another complication. Before binding a Djinni, one must have the Djinni to hand. If the creature agrees to be bound to service, then much is simplified – but why should it? Perhaps it might be bribed, although it is hard to think with what; alternatively, it might be cajoled, or commanded by its Djinni overlord. (It appears that some Djinn Lords know something akin to this magic, and occasionally bind their underlings to tools or toys.

Although they cannot wield the Seal of Solomon themselves, doubtless they possess symbols of their own

authority.) Or the power of the Seal of Solomon might be used to hold the creature in place.

The magician must also have the artefact to be used, in or under his hands. It should be complete and undamaged, although it may appear relatively mundane; it should ideally be robust. It should not contain any iron in its substance. The magician then casts the spell described by Abdhul, named *Bind to Service*, defining in the process the conditions and operating methodology of the service . . .

Empowered Items

It is possible for a magician to use another spell of Abdhul's creation, *Carve the Flame*, to draw off some or all of a Djinni's personal energy, and implant it in an object. By and large, Djinn take this somewhat amiss; although, as creatures of pure energy, they can survive the experience, they regard it as an imposition. In fact, they *may* be more likely to tolerate being entirely bound up in an object than "lending" part of their power; they may prefer keeping themselves in one place to being divided up. Djinn servants, often having little personal initiative, may decide that being turned into a sword or a crown is no worse than any other way of life!

Enchanted objects *can* be made of iron. Djinni-energised weapons are as effective against Faerie as steel or iron – whatever their metal. This even applies to the Djinni whose energy was used to create the weapon.

If all of a Djinni's being is placed within an artefact, its mentality becomes quiescent, or at least detached, like that of a sleeper. That "sleeper" may either be deep in slumber, unaware of all that passes, or dozing, dreaming, reacting a little to surroundings, occasionally murmuring as dreams pass by.

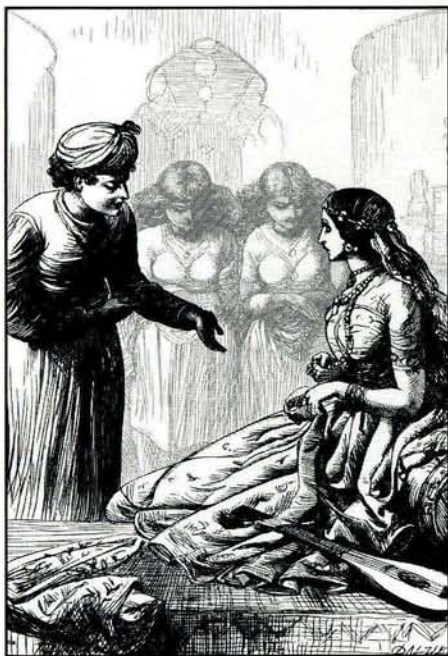
Such a mind may be reached by certain Magicks, "awakening" the Djinni just enough for conversation.

One Djinni, Many Items

One rather flamboyant application of *Carve the Flame* is to bind the full energy of a single Djinni into multiple items. This is a little harder than working with a single item; the sorcerer must manipulate and direct the forces of the enchantment in many diverse ways at once. The items must be somehow similar or related; a suit of armour and matched weapons, a set of carpets

of similar design, or a full dinner-service would each be fit subjects.

The enchantments placed upon such a set of artefacts may be distributed as the artificer sees fit. However, enabling a multitude of wielders to employ the same power demands that more energy be drawn from the Djinni. Typically, some powers are only available to someone with the “full set” of items.



One curious side-effect of this is that no element of the set may, in general, be destroyed unless the entire set be annihilated. Someone wishing to destroy the set must gather its pieces together and work out some way to apply destructive force to all of them at once. Yes, this means that individual items can prove astoundingly indestructible on their own. However, if the force applied to one part of the set is truly overwhelming or magical, it occasionally spreads through the ether and causes the entire set to break simultaneously, wherever the parts may be. This is rare, and there no clear rules can be determined as to when it will happen.

(Tom Olam comments: Yes, this is something for Hosts/GMs to use on whim, as a plot device. Especially if PCs abuse the indestructibility of a part of a set to produce overly weird results. And no, even “indestructible” armor doesn’t provide infinite protection. After all, it can certainly deform, and even suffer minor punctures, without actually being destroyed.)

Empowered Item Game Mechanics

Castle Falkenstein

Carve the Flame reduces one or more of the “donor” Djinni’s Abilities by however many levels the caster specifies, and provides a number of “Enchantment Points” to the item equal to the reduction in the Face Values of the abilities. Energy can be taken from Athletics, Charisma, Courage, Etherealness, Glamour, Physique, Shapeshifting, or, in theory, Sorcery. No ability may be reduced to less than Poor; if all of the listed abilities are reduced to (or start at) Poor, the caster can obtain another eight “Enchantment Points” by transferring the Djinni’s entire being into the object.

The spell has a base Thaumatic Energy Requirement equal to half the “Enchantment Points” being extracted, with a spiritual (♠) Aspect. Duration, Element, and Range Definitions work as for *Bind to Service*. If the enchantment is being divided among multiple items, add 50% to the base requirement for up to five items, or double it for more than that.

The enchanted item may be imbued with any of the following advantages from the Djinni’s energy:

1. The wielder’s own abilities may be increased by one level for 4 Enchantment Points. This should be one of the same abilities that the Djinni had reduced in the casting. Only abilities that the user possesses in some form already can be enhanced.

2. A single *specific* function of the item, or some task for which it is specifically used, can be increased by +1 in Feat Resolution for every Enchantment Point used. For example, a sword can have bonuses in attack, or a pair of gloves could increase Athletics ability for purposes of Climbing only. The Host must decide what is or is not appropriate here; a borderline case might be a robe which increases the wearer’s effective Charisma for dealings with the aristocracy.

If a melee weapon is defined to give +2 in “Attack” and also +2 in “Parrying,” that’s equivalent to an extra level of ability in Fencing, Swordsmanship, or whatever, when using the Dueling rules. (You’ve got to have both, or your combat “style” is too unbalanced and erratic to be safe to use in a formal duel.)

3. A weapon can have the damage it does on a *Full* or *High* Success (but *not* on a Partial Success) increased by +1 for the cost of two Enchantment Points. No weapon can be given more than +2 points of extra damage this way.

4. A suit of armor or other protection can reduce damage from all incoming attacks by one for every two Enchantment Points used.

5. Any of the Djinni’s innate powers (*not* complete Abilities) can be implanted in the item for a cost of 4 Enchantment Points. This gives the Ability at Poor level; it can then be increased for four points per level, up to the Djinni’s own original level. For example, most Djinn can fly; the classic Flying Carpet has a Djinni’s flying power woven into it (but not any other aspects of the Djinni’s Etherealness).

6. Any spell that the caster knows can be incorporated into the item, in a form that is pre-set for Definition purposes. This costs four Enchantment Points for a spell that the item’s holder can use if they have magical training, eight for a spell that anyone can use. The user must obtain the full Thaumatic Energy cost of such a spell in the usual way; this can be reduced by committing Enchantment Points when the item is enchanted, on a one-for-one basis.

7. Each extra person that can benefit from any one of the object’s powers or spells costs another four Enchantment Points. This applies both to multiple items which each carry the same power, and to single items which can function for several people at once.

Continued on next page . . .

EMPOWERED ITEM GAME MECHANICS

(CONTINUED)

GURPS

Note: As with most *Castle Falkenstein* Magick, these rules are relatively loose, adaptable guidelines rather than hard-and-fast absolutes. In the unlikely event of a PC capturing a Djinni and binding its energies into an artifact, the GM should be prepared to double-check the player's ideas and veto anything too abusive. Or, worse, PCs clever enough to learn this style of Magick *and* to capture a Djinni, and arrogant enough to exploit all this, should be faced with the attentions of countless curious colleagues, nervous enemies, acquisitive governments, inscrutable secret societies, and angry, nervous, volatile Djinn.

Carve the Flame taps the "donor" Djinni's energies by reducing its attributes, Charisma (if it has any), or the Faerie Powers of Etherealness, Glamour, or Shapeshifting. It provides a number of points for the item equal to the amount by which the Djinni's points value as a character has been reduced.

No attribute may be reduced to less than 8, and no Faerie Power may be reduced to less than level 1. (If they are already at or below these values, no points can be obtained from this aspect of the Djinni's energy.) However, if all values are reduced to these minima, the caster can obtain another 25 points by transferring the Djinni's entire being into the object.

The spell has a base Thaumic Energy Requirement equal to total points extracted, divided by 20, with a spiritual (♠) Aspect. Duration, Element, and Range Definitions work as for *Bind to Service*. If the enchantment is being divided among multiple items, add 50% to the base requirement for up to five items, or double it for more than that.

The enchanted item may be imbued with any of the following advantages from the Djinni's energy:

1. The wielder's own ST or HT may be increased by up to +3 each, at a cost of 15 points per +1. This should be one of the same attributes that the Djinni had reduced in the casting. The caster may also be given levels of Charisma, at the usual 5 points/level.

2. When using a single *specific* function of the item, or some task for which it is appropriate, skill or attribute rolls can be increased by +1 for every 8 points used. For

example, a pair of gloves could give bonuses to Climbing. The GM must decide what is or is not appropriate here; a borderline case might be a robe which gives bonuses to the wearer's Diplomacy skill for dealings with the aristocracy. Weapons and combat skills are a special case; see below.

3. A weapon can give +1 to attack rolls for a cost of 8 points, +1 to Parry rolls for 16 points, or have its base damage increased by 1 for 4 points. Likewise, a shield can be given +1 to Block for 16 points. No weapon can get more than +6 to attacks, +4 to Parry (or Block), or +4 points of extra damage in this way. Attack and Parry bonuses are treated as aspects of a single power, but damage bonuses represent a separate power.

4. A suit of armor or other protection can have +1 DR for every 5 points used.

5. Some specific supernatural ability possessed by the Djinni can be implanted in the item, using as many points as it would cost to buy it as an advantage. (This may require a certain amount of judgment and some GM rulings. An artifact *cannot* be substantially more powerful than the Djinni from which its energy was taken.) For example, the classic Flying Carpet has a Djinni's flying power woven into it, bought as the Flight advantage for 40 points. This permits flight at Move 10, twice

a normal unencumbered human's Move of 5. Carpets woven with the energy of swift Djinni can also have Super Flight at 20 points/level. (Flight and Super Flight together are considered parts of the same power.)

6. Any spell that the caster knows can be incorporated into the item, in a form that is pre-set for Definition purposes. This costs 20 points for a spell that the item's holder can use if they have magical training, 40 for a spell that anyone can use. The user must obtain the full Thaumic Energy cost of such a spell in the usual way; this can be reduced by spending extra points when the item is enchanted; every 5 points spent reduces the Thaumic Energy cost by one.

7. Each extra person that can benefit from any one of the object's powers costs another 15 points. This applies both to multiple items which each carry the same power, and to single items which can function for several people at once.



EXAMPLES OF EMPOWERED ITEMS

The Flying Carpet

The Carpet which Starkmann and Aziyada flew back to Bayern on has the entire energy of one of Javorr's more annoying servants woven into it:

Castle Falkenstein: The servant had Good Athletics, Average Charisma, Good Courage (he was stronger-willed than most Jann, and hence more irritating to a wizard), Good Etherealness, Poor Glamour, Great Physique, Poor Shapeshifting, and Poor Sorcery; reducing all of these to Poor provided 20 Enchantment Points, plus 8 for weaving the Djinni into the thing for a total of 28.

Giving the carpet the power of Flight cost 4, and raising that to Great (the Djinni's own level in Swift Flight) cost another 12. However, flying isn't much use unless one can ignore the high winds and thin air; as the Djinni had Average Survive and Endure ability, the caster gave the carpet's riders one aspect of that, at Poor level, for another 4 Enchantment Points. Last, the carpet was large enough for two people; extending both powers cost another 8 Enchantment Points. This balances out nicely to 28.

GURPS: The servant had ST 14, DX 12, IQ 9, and HT 13 (it was an unremarkable Jann); reducing all of these to 8 provided 145 points. It also had Etherealness 3, Glamour 1, and Shapeshifting 1; reducing the first of these to level 1 gave another 45 points. Adding 25 more points for weaving the Djinni into the thing brought the total to 215.

The Djinni had Level 4 Swift Flight, so the carpet was given an equivalent power: Flight [40] and 4 levels of Super Flight [80], giving it a move rate of 32 times the "pilot's" base Move. However, flying isn't much use unless one can tolerate the conditions while in flight; the Djinni had the Faerie Power of Survive and Endure, which the caster was able to adapt to give the carpet's riders the advantages Doesn't Breathe [20] and Temperature Tolerance 30 [30]. Lastly, the carpet was large enough for two people; extending the powers of Flight, Doesn't Breathe, and Temperature Tolerance to another person cost another 45 points. This balances out to 215 points.

By the **Castle Falkenstein** version of these rules, the caster faced a base Thaumic Energy cost of 14 (28/2); by the **GURPS** system, the cost comes to 11 (215/20). Making it permanent added +8, and we may assume he had the Djinni paralyzed and the carpet on hand, which means he only took +1 for touch range. This is a two-element enchantment (the Flight and the high-altitude

survival), so add +2 for that. Then there's +1 for a single Subject, +2 for working on a Faerie Subject, and we'll assume that he'd studied the Djinni a little, so add +2 for "Barely Knowing" the Subject. Total Thaumic Energy requirement for the working; 30 or 27 points.

The Sword of the Sunderer

This was made by reducing Javorr's Abilities to those of a Ghul; he was originally an Ifrit.

Castle Falkenstein: Charisma and Courage reduced from Good to Average, Etherealness and Glamour reduced from Good to Poor, Physique from Exceptional to Great, and Shapeshifting from Great to Average. (That left Javorr still dangerously powerful in some ways, so the sorcerer imprisoned him, too. This was *personal*.) The total Enchantment Points from all that comes to 18.

The sword, in turn, raises its wielder's effective Charisma and Physique by one level each (+8 Enchantment Points – it not only enhances the wielder's strength, it looks infernally good too), gives +4 to Feat Resolution in *both* Attack and Parrying (total cost +8; equates to +2 levels of Swordsmanship in a duel), and does +1 damage on a Full or High Success (+2). This uses up 18 Enchantment Points, and makes for a dangerous toy.

GURPS: The enchantment reduced Javorr's ST from 17 to 15, DX from 13 to 12, IQ from 12 to 9, and HT from 15 to 14 (leaving him slightly superior to most Ghuls, but not much). It also reduced his Etherealness from level 3 to level 1, Glamour from level 3 to level 1, and Shapeshifting from level 4 to level 2. The total value of all of this is 176 points.

The sword grants its wielder ST+3 [45], HT+3 [45], Charisma +1 [5], +4 on attack rolls [32], +2 to Parries [32], and +4 damage [16]. This uses 175 points; the spare point is written off.

The Base Thaumic Energy Cost for this casting is 9 according to both the **Castle Falkenstein** and **GURPS** versions of the rules. Making it permanent adds +8, and we may again assume that the Djinni was paralyzed and the sword was on hand, so that is +1 for touch range. This is a four-element enchantment (the sword enhances charisma, physique, combat ability, and damage done), so add +3 for that. Then there's +1 for a single Subject, +2 for a Faerie Subject, and the wizard had a long history of enmity with Javorr, so add +1 for knowing the Subject well. Total Thaumic Energy requirement for the working; 25 points.



Game Mechanics

Restoration of the Sundered Flame has a basic Thaumic Energy Requirement of 8 ♠, or 12 ♠ to restore a fully bound Djinni to normal action, and it usually requires that the caster have some appropriate way of breaking the item. For a Djinni to reclaim its life-energy without this spell is hard; any kind of injury or magical interference will usually prevent it, and some kind of Courage test may be required, given that the process involves stress and psychic pain. Details are left to the Host/GM.

Uniting the Flame has a basic Thaumic Energy Requirement of 4 ♠, but Range Definitions are based on the *total* distance between all the separated parts of the Djinni's life-force, plus the distance from the caster to the nearest one. For example, in the case that Eberhardt witnessed, the Definition would have been "in another country," for +5.

Gaze On the Inner Fire has a basic Thaumic Energy Requirement of 6 ♠; treat each piece of information sought as an "Element" for definition purposes.

Energy from more than one Djinni can *never* be implanted in a single item. Clearly, the Djinn, creatures of pure spirit though they be, retain a degree of individual integrity, and can no more be merged than two human bodies could be.

Freeing and Manipulating Bound Energy

It is possible to release energy bound into an item, but it is not simple. Destroying the artefact will not suffice; rather, if it be truly destroyed, the energy is usually dissipated and forever lost. However, enchanted items are hard to damage; they are *always* more robust than they would be without enchantment, and the task may require iron – or even Cold Iron. (The Seal of Solomon may also assist, as it serves to disrupt all the activities of Djinn-kind.)

The *Book of Abdhul the Mad* provides a spell-like technique for safely accomplishing the task of returning a Djinni its full spirit; this is termed *Restoration of the Sundered Flame*. The act invariably destroys the artefact. Otherwise, if a Djinni is in direct contact with an artefact containing his own energy at the moment of its destruction, he *might* reclaim that energy – unless he himself is physically injured at the same moment, or some restraining force, such as the Seal of Solomon, is present.

Fully Bound Djinn

When a Djinni is completely bound into an object, destroying that object kills the Djinni, *permanently*. However, such items are *especially* hard to shatter (which may sometimes be useful in itself).

(Tom Olam comments: Exactly how hard it is to break one of these things varies with the material, the power of

the Djinni, the details of the enchantment, and for all I know, the phase of the moon. But it's safe to assume that most such items, even if they don't have some of the Djinni's energy deliberately applied to reinforcement, are at least as robust as if they were made of fine-quality steel. In game terms, even those made of flimsy cloth or fragile glass have at least double the usual stats for withstanding damage, and are likely to be completely immune to normal fire or chemicals – although dragon breath and such may be another matter. And yes, in the great tradition of these things, hurling them into major volcanoes will probably work. As before, this doesn't mean that Djinni-empowered armor is automatically perfect, though; it can buckle, dent, and be driven into the wearer's flesh. Alternatively, Hosts/GMs can just say that these things only break when it's dramatically appropriate – but then do so with lots of great special effects.)

Fully bound Djinn are also especially hard to release, as they must reclaim their ability to form a body. They must be aware of the intention and the moment, and the sorcerer casting *Restoration of the Sundered Flame* must be in communication with them.

"Re-Association"

A minor but interesting aspect of the book's enchantments is the ability to draw a Djinni's life-energies back together, as used by the plotters in Herr Starkmann's narrative.

The spell involved is termed *Uniting the Flame*. It requires that the sorcerer have some knowledge of the nature and location of each item, and of the Djinni itself. When it is cast, the caster may send or draw each and every part to the location of one. Wards and mystical barriers are of little use against this, as some part of the Djinni's life-force must, by definition, already be within any barrier.

Analysing Enchanted Items

Lastly, it may, of course, be desirable to study the nature of an artefact, and analyze the Djinni-fire bound within. For this purpose, Abdhul created a spell named *Gaze on the Inner Fire*, which permits a wizard to examine the innermost nature and function of an artefact, to determine if all or but part of a Djinni's life-energy be therein, and so on.

Use of Faerie or Human Life Force

All of the enchantments discussed heretofore employ the life-energies of a Djinni. There are good reasons for this; firstly, the Djinn, as has been noted, are essentially beings of pure



energy, and matter is not an essential part of their existence on this plane; and secondly, “Abdhul the Mad” was extending and adapting the ancient lore of Solomon, who created or discovered, in the Seal of Solomon, a set of techniques for binding and controlling the Djinn.

However, I should note – with some discomfort – that this restriction may not be absolute.

In the first place, the Djinn are but a category of Faerie. The oaths and bindings that the Seal embodies are not sovereign against others of Faerie-kind, but the underlying principles are general. My friend and colleague Auberon may not wish me to mention this, but it is possible that a wizard of exceptional skill and ruthlessness could conceive and refine spells to perform similar operations on, for example, a European Sidhe. Indeed, some brief examination of ancient Irish legend suggests that such techniques may have been known to the Tuatha De Danaan, who put “something of themselves” into their master-works.

Perhaps worse, I am not convinced, as a practical student of metaphysics, that the life-energy of the Faerie or Djinn is entirely different in kind from that of a human

being. In other words, it is conceivable that a human enchanter could place some of his own life-force in an object – or *steal that of another*. This latter would be a truly vile act; unlike the Djinn, a human being cannot re-knit its energy when that is eventually released from its prison, so the theft would be permanent. Furthermore, technical considerations suggest that the enchanter would probably be most likely to succeed if the victim were, quite specifically, murdered in the course of the Work.

This may be merely a theoretical possibility. However, there are, I believe, legends in the East of swords made fine and deadly by being quenched in the living bodies of human victims. If my speculations are correct, then I hope that the relevant lore is now safely lost; I can state with certainty that the benevolent Orders of the West would view it as equivalent to the human sacrifice that we have opposed so often and so vigorously in the past.

However, these possibilities certainly exist. For this reason, I must ask that this book remain a secret for the moment, securely under guard in the Royal Library.

≡ THE MAD AUTHOR? ≡

Abdhul, codifier of this strange craft, is forever remembered as “The Mad.” Perhaps this merely represents the jealousy and incomprehension of the untalented towards the scholar-mage, but now, contemplating his accomplishments, I begin to feel that the term may be merited.

Abdhul mastered vast powers,
at the cost of binding entities
far more potent than himself,
and often vastly malicious. To tear
away spoonfuls of the life-force
of such a being, and to weave it
into rugs and saddle-bags,
is an act of impressive hubris.

For Abdhul mastered vast powers – at the cost of binding entities far more potent than himself, and often vastly malicious. To bind a Djinni is not the act of a cautious man. To tear away spoonfuls of the very life-force of such a being, and to weave it into rugs and saddle-bags, is an act of impressive hubris.

The history and eventual fate of this author is obscure, even by the secretive standards of Magick. It would appear that enchanted artefacts were known in the Arabian Golden Age of Haroun al-Rashid, implying that Abdhul predates this reign; however, his scholarship, and the style of his Arabic, place him only a little earlier. I suspect that he was a product of that first flowering of Muslim genius, when the Armies of the Prophet seized the libraries of Alexandria and Ctesiphon. As for his fate: there are vague legends of a similarly named sorcerer slain by invisible Djinn in the very streets of some city. The Djinn can have loved him little. Which said, he was clearly methodical, and a genius of the Art, and his protections and evasions must both have been potent. I for one assume nothing.

The Book

Given the nature of this lore, it should not surprise us that Abdhul’s book has achieved only limited circulation. I understand that other copies survive in the Topkapi library, and I have no doubt that some individual Eastern wizards and their “traditions” conserve such volumes. It does not appear to be widely available to any other major factions in the Ottoman Empire, or perhaps most find it of limited use; with the Djinn mostly lost, entrapped, or withdrawn from human company, few new items can be manufactured in this age. To scholars in lands where the Seal of Solomon has less power, it is of largely theoretical interest.

In conclusion, I thank our new friend for bringing us this work. It certainly explains a great deal, and it made fascinating, if sometimes worrisome, reading.

Respectfully,
Morrolan, Magister.

≡ Editorial Afterword ≡

And there, Tom Olam's latest message ends – happily for its hero and heroine. And it's perfectly possible that the Second Compact will be able to ensure that Turkey continues along a path of enlightened reform, retaining the best of ancient glory, throwing off the habits of ancient despotism.

Well, that's how a New European would put it. But from a practical point of view, nothing is finished – or certain – yet.

It's easy enough to look up what happened in Turkey in our history. Midhat Pasha did indeed become Grand Vizier in 1872 (presumably without the aid of Magick) – but only for three months. He was just too much of a reformist for Abdul Aziz. On the other hand, he was also too competent to ignore, and he retained some influence.

The empire got into a complete mess in 1876; apart from the fact that its finances were collapsing, it had faced a revolt in the Balkans, and the troops sent in to suppress that resorted to rape and massacre. So, with Europe baying for Turkish blood and demanding reform, Midhat organized a coup. The trouble was, the only heirs available were Aziz's nephews; Murad, the feeble-minded one who had to be deposed himself after six months, and then Abdul Hamid. Meanwhile, Aziz had killed himself.

Abdul Hamid ruled for 30 years, and turned out to be vicious *and* smart. He got rid of Midhat Pasha, first exiling him, then calling him back with promises of safety before having him charged with Aziz's murder. After a blatantly rigged trial, Midhat was imprisoned, then murdered by the Sultan's agents. Turkey *was* modernized, in a way, at this time – it became a modern autocracy, complete with secret police. Things only started to get a little better after the First World War.

It wouldn't be hard to imagine all of this repeating itself in the *Falkenstein* world, especially with Prussia and Russia interfering in events. On the other hand, the Second Compact are on the case; they can hope to expose Ignatyev's machinations, while working to convince the Young Turks that Prussian efficiency isn't the best thing that New Europa has to offer.

So, frankly, Tom Olam and his friends have got their work cut out – although they've made a good start. But it certainly looks like there'll be plenty of opportunity for adventure in that part of the world – and plenty of need for heroes.



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As usual with Tom Olam's messages through the Veil, it's interesting to research some of this background independently, from the point of view of our own history. The following books should give some feel for the history and nature of the Ottoman Empire, and related matters. However, do remember that the two worlds are different in some very important ways.

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Freeth, Zahra, and Winstone, H.V.F. *Travellers in Arabia* (George Allen & Unwin, 1978).

Arabian Magic and Mysticism

Burton, Sir Richard (translator). *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night* (Heritage, 1934).

Dawood, N.J. (translator). *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights* (Penguin, 1973).

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Lewis, Geoffrey (translator). *The Book of Dede Korkut* (Penguin, 1974).

Titely, Norah M. *Dragons in Persian, Mughal and Turkish Art* (British Library, 1981).



Other Game Books

Blackwelder, Kraig. *Lost Paths: Ahl-i-Batin and Taftani* (White Wolf, 2001). A slightly darker image of Arabian magic in the modern world.

Cambias, James L. *Arabian Nights* (Iron Crown Enterprises, 1994). Adapts ICE's *Rolemaster* system to the world of the *Nights*.

Masters, Phil. *GURPS Arabian Nights* (Steve Jackson Games, 1993). The standard *GURPS* treatment of the setting. This and the preceding might seem anachronistic when dealing with the Victorian Ottoman lands – but then, the Ottoman Empire was stuck in a medieval rut, especially in the universe of *Castle Falkenstein*.

Fiction

There's a lot of "Arabian Nights" fiction of various sorts around, although most of it tends to have a specifically medieval feel and setting. Watch for:

Fraser, George MacDonald. *Flashman at the Charge* (Granada, 1973). Deals with the Crimean War from a European viewpoint, and with activities in Central Asia, beyond the Ottoman borders. On the other hand, it features swashbuckling secret missions among Muslim tribes and, most important, Count Ignatyev.

Powers, Tim. *Declare* (William Morrow, 2001). Rather late in period, but it does have Djinn, espionage, and the endgame of the Anglo-Russian Great Game.

Shwartz, Susan (editor). *Arabesques* (Avon, 1988) and *Arabesques 2* (Avon, 1989). A good assortment of modern Arabian fantasies, with an excellent bibliography.

Cinema

The following can be used to gain a "feel" as to how an Ottoman scenario should be run – if *not* as sources of reliable information.

Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942). The setting is 70 years too late, and African rather than Arabian – but it has the sense of intrigue, and the high-minded hero, for a true *Falkenstein*/Ottoman game, and the villains have the proper Prussian mindset. Round up the usual suspects.

Grass (Merian C. Cooper, 1925). A silent documentary with images of nomad life at the time of the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Lawrence of Arabia (David Lean, 1962). Also the wrong period, but otherwise essential. A European hero teams up with Bedouin warriors to battle corrupt Ottomans, blowing up railways along the way.

Pascali's Island (James Dearden, 1988). The setting is a little late for *Castle Falkenstein*, and the mood is a little downbeat. But the central triangle – European Anti-Hero, Ottoman Spy, Female Expatriate – are wonderful character models.

The Thief of Baghdad (Raoul Walsh, 1924). The title has been used for four completely different movies, all set rather early for *Falkenstein* purposes, but all relevant as sources of specific ideas. The first, a classic silent starring Douglas Fairbanks Sr., is perhaps the most interesting.

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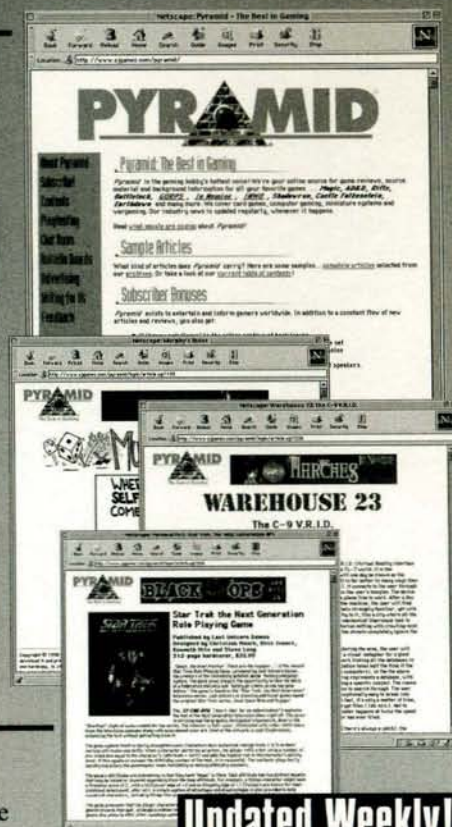
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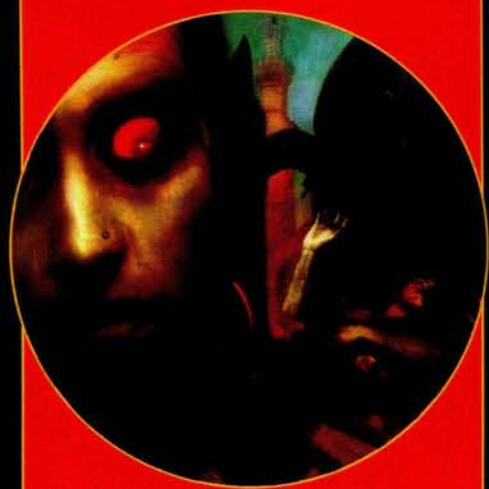
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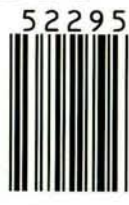
Written by
Phil Masters
Edited by
Andrew Hackard
Cover by
Christopher Shy
Illustrated by
Paul Daly

FIRST EDITION, FIRST PRINTING
PUBLISHED JUNE 2002

ISBN 1-55634-575-5



9 781556 345753



SJG02295 **6722**

Printed in
the USA