

G U R P S[®]

WHO'S WHO 1

52 OF HISTORY'S MOST INTRIGUING CHARACTERS



COMPILED BY PHIL MASTERS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

REAL CHARACTERS

Only a few individuals really stand out in all of history. People who ruled the known world. People who changed the known. People you would like to have known. People you'd pray to avoid.

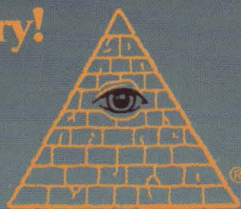
GURPS Who's Who 1 makes it easy to introduce dozens of these stand-outs into your campaign. Match tactics with Julius Caesar, cross blades with Harald Hardradi, or share dance moves with Mata Hari. This collection of descriptions and statistics for 52 of history's most intriguing people allows players to benchmark their characters against the best the real world had to offer.

It also provides a cornucopia of adventure seeds that are stranger than fiction. From the *real* Dread Pirate Roberts to a roistering aristocratic astronomer sporting a silver nose, from a doctor so brilliant that his foes ran him out of town to a king

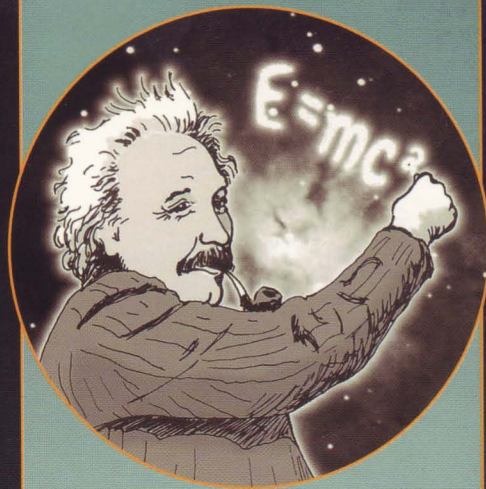
with 1,200 wives but no heir – every writeup offers enough inspiration to launch its own campaign. Each one also offers alternative “What If?” scenarios for time-traveling or fantastic settings.

Drawn from every continent and 3,500 years of history, the figures in *GURPS Who's Who 1* offer something for every area of interest. You also get notes on using historical figures in games, and on converting your own research into a *GURPS* character sheet.

Make History!



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
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GURPS Basic Set and *Compendium I: Character Creation* are required to interpret the character statistics in this book. *GURPS* GMs may wish to use this supplement in conjunction with *GURPS Time Travel*, but the biographical information in this book is not tied to a specific setting or set of rules, and can be used to enhance any campaign.

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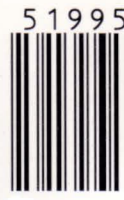
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to what we intend to be the first in a series of books presenting noteworthy historical figures in *GURPS* terms, for use in games.

Historical and time-travel fiction often include appearances by historical figures, in anything from cameo appearances to starring roles, and it is therefore logical for these kinds of RPGs to do the same. Historical figures can also make interesting role-models. However, working such ideas into games requires a certain amount of information, and ideally a prepared character sheet, which can represent a lot of work for a GM. This book reduces that work, and introduces some fascinating real-world figures for game use.

A single writer would face a titanic task in preparing these 50-odd character sheets and biographies. Fortunately, however, we had a lot of keen and scholarly *GURPS* fans, and the Internet. The figures presented here are the work of a number of contributors. These folks worked for the love of *GURPS* and of history, and only rather limited reward. The book is therefore dedicated, unusually but appropriately, to its own creators.



ABOUT THE COMPILER

Phil Masters was born into a middle-class British family in 1959. His education included a degree in economics from Trinity College, Cambridge – the same institution previously attended by Sir Isaac Newton and, closer to Masters' time, by Prince Charles. While still at university, Masters produced his first professional work in the roleplaying industry – an article which appeared in *White Dwarf* magazine in 1980. Over the next few years, he developed a dual career as a seemingly unremarkable computer programmer and as an RPG writer. He also married (his wife worked as an engineer in the aerospace industry) and settled in a small town in south-east England.

In 1993, it emerged that Masters had forged links with Steve Jackson Games, who published his *GURPS Arabian Nights*. Masters went on to claim joint credit for *GURPS Places of Mystery* and *GURPS Discworld* before taking a supervisory role on *GURPS Who's Who*; he also freelanced for other companies including White Wolf and Hero Games.

Time travelers will find Masters mostly typical of his period and cultural background, if slightly eccentric; photographs show him to be a little under six feet tall, clean-shaven, and wearing glasses. In the event of combat or other violent excitement, he will probably freeze up or run away.

ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *AD&D*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other SJ Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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 Web site (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, and updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and AOL. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

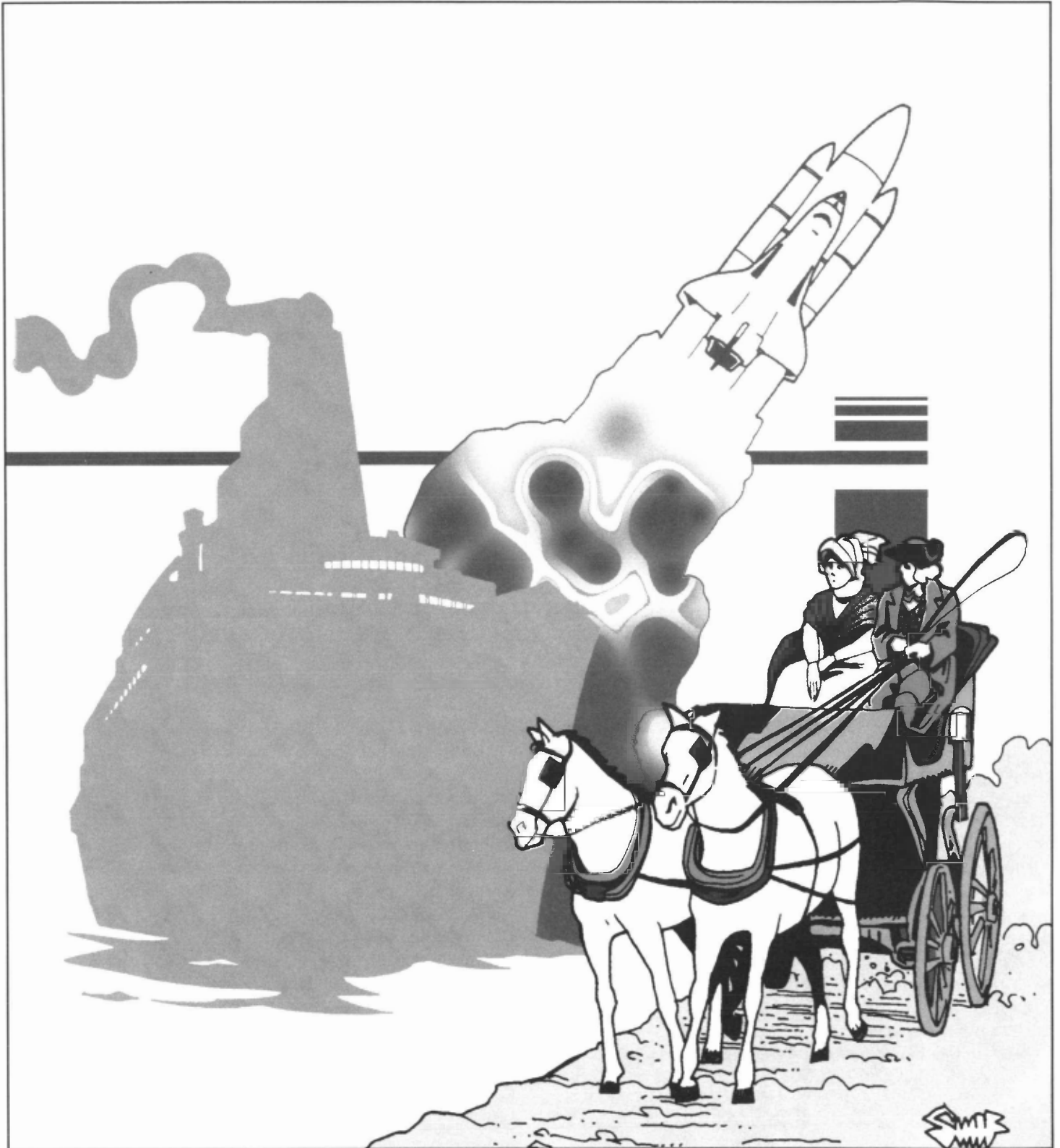
GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to: www.io.com/GURPSnet/www.

The *GURPS Who's Who 1* web page is at: www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/whoswho1

PAGE REFERENCES

See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, CII to *Compendium II*, AN to *Arabian Nights*, and TT to *Time Travel*.

Birth, Luck, and Genius



Before we meet the characters in this book, it's worth taking a look at the place of "great" individuals in history, and hence in historical and time-travel games.

Kings, Saints, Generals, and Poets

To begin with; this is a book about people in history. It includes artists, philosophers, and writers, as well as conquerors and kings. The latter doubtless have more immediate and obvious impact, on more lives, than the former (aside from anything else, they tend to *terminate* more lives), but there are several good reasons to look at a wider range of individuals for game purposes.

HISTORICAL IMPACT

Put it this way; what makes an individual important to history?

That's actually a tricky question. If time is "Chaotic" (see the sidebar, p. 9), *everyone* is "important." Changing the lives of conquerors and kings may have bigger effects sooner, but the real difference is small. This is a logical idea, but it's a poor basis for games. It's better to take the same viewpoint that people living *within* history generally take for practical purposes: that certain things and people are more significant than others.

So – what makes for "significance"? To start with, some artists and thinkers may have at least as much *long term* significance as rulers and generals. Philosophy and mathematics contribute to science, which can lead – however indirectly – to technological developments; poetry can inspire political ideas, ranging from dynamic imperial expansionism to dreams of equality and democracy; the rise and fall of religious belief can influence people's every act across centuries. Without Greek philosophy, the science that built the modern world, and the democracy that dominates much of it, might not have been able to develop. Without Shakespeare's combination of brilliant poetry and Tudor propaganda, would Britain have displayed quite such extraordinary self-confidence for so many centuries? It is perhaps harder to trace the influence of such people than it is that of rulers, but it is very real.

As the sidebars explain, our selection criteria for this book were based far more on interest value than on power. We wanted people who PCs would find interesting (or frightening, or confusing) to meet. Some of them, in fact, could make rather good models for PCs; we deliberately looked for characters who might pass as RPG "adventurers." These included warriors, but also spies with barely a combat skill to their name, witty rogues, and traveling doctors. Because of all the dungeon-plundering, RPGs sometimes take a simplistic, violent definition of what makes an adventurer; looking at history provides alternatives.

Frankly, conquerors and kings can be a little too similar to each other. There are only so many skills that they actually need, and so many motivations for their actions. What's more, they are likely to spend much of their time wrapped up in layers of administration, and not concern themselves with the quirky activities of adventurers. (There are some exceptions and examples in this book, though.)

Also, time travel games can involve research as well as battles for control of the time-stream. Even if the PCs are all fighter-spies, they may get sent in to retrieve some careless researcher who got caught up in the court of the Borgia popes while trying to study Leonardo's early years. For that matter, these famous folk often represent an interesting route into the world of the great and good; being a noteworthy thinker, or hanging out with one, can be a good way to get into the highest social circles.

And – heck, these are *games* we're talking about. When characters find themselves adventuring through the courts of 18th-century Europe, the odd encounter with Voltaire or Casanova is *fun*.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The characters detailed in this book are not "the most important people in history"; they are simply characters we decided would be interesting for PCs to meet – including criminals, artists, and thinkers as well as conquerors and kings. They are mostly historically significant in *some* way, but not necessarily first in their fields; we would always choose a flawed artist, tavern brawler, and part-time spy over a more perfectly creative individual who never got out of the house. First and foremost, these are potential patrons, enemies, role-models and drinking-buddies.

We also restricted ourselves to individuals whose character sheets could be at least 50% verifiable against sources, and preferably 75%. Any competent GM can make up obscure, under-documented historical figures from whole cloth.

And we had a very short list of characters we *wouldn't* include; the founders of the world's great living religions. This was partly a matter of not giving offense; we don't mind annoying readers a bit, but not to the point of spoiling the book for those who take their faith seriously. More to the point, such figures are inevitably wrapped up in too much debate. Bluntly, they are viewed by different modern folks as anything from vessels of divine power to self-deluding nutcases. Any character sheet would therefore be debatable, and we didn't have space to cover all the possibilities. If you want to include such characters in your own games, go ahead – but note that your players may take issue with your versions.

Oh, and being a provincial English bourgeois himself, the compiler despises Baconians. Fnord.

GAME MECHANICS

Note that our contributors were given a rule about game mechanics; attributes are rated relative to the character's own era. Arguably, historical changes in standards of diet and hygiene could lead to marked differences in some areas over time – but we preferred to keep it simple, with 10 in all attributes and Average appearance as the universal baseline. GMs bent on realism can adjust these scores as they see fit.

Note also that skill costs allow for defaults, and also for modifiers from advantages. (For example, high-Status characters have Savoir-Faire at IQ+2 for free.)

THE 104 MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN HISTORY?

The characters in this book (and subsequent volumes of *GURPS Who's Who*) were chosen for their interest value, and for all sorts of other arbitrary reasons. But who, in absolute terms, were the truly most important people in history?

That's a matter of personal judgement and highly controversial criteria. But after all the thought that went into this project, the compiler will, briefly, stand up and suggest the names that *he* thinks *might* have made up *GURPS Who's Who*, volumes 1 and 2, if our criteria had been based on raw importance. No correspondence will be entered into . . .

Continued on next page . . .



GREAT MEN AS NPCs

The snag with all this, from a GM's point of view, is that the famous figures may be tricky to roleplay. Many are geniuses, and most are strong characters, of whom the players may well have clear mental images and a fair amount of knowledge. Conveying greatness can be hard work.

Furthermore, game considerations may demand that certain things happen – or don't happen – around these NPCs. If the "Observer Effect" (p. TT45) or the plot demand that they survive (or die), then that's how it must be.

There's no simple rule to this; getting stuff to happen right, without blatant fixing, is just part of the skill of GMing. One thing that will usually be useful, however, is prior research; if you know your NPCs in detail, playing them is that much easier – and if you know *why* things happened as they did, making sure that they happen that way, despite the PCs, is often simplified.

Encountering the Eminent

When roleplaying these encounters, the best idea is probably to avoid making them feel *too* momentous. Relatively few of the famous walk round with visibly glowing auras. Conquerors and kings have their retinues, their uniforms and bodyguards, and some big names build their fame on personal charm and charisma, but many may seem extraordinarily ordinary at first glance. And spending a few minutes swapping tavern chat with a nervous fellow just up from the country, only to have him mention on the way out that his name is Shakespeare, or discovering that the amused-looking gentleman in the bazaar of Abbasid Baghdad was in fact Haroun al-Rashid, proving as fond of incognito strolls as his legend claims, are classic time travel story "bits."

But, amusement aside, there should be some *point* to encounters. The simplest possibility is a mission to protect the NPC, or to block his or her plans, or to intervene in or observe some incident in which the character was personally involved. The converse, in a time-travel game, might be a seemingly straightforward mission, unencumbered by any worries about keeping history straight or any "Observer Effect," which suddenly turns complicated when a Big Name appears on the scene.

In secret-history or conspiratorial games, the famous have an extra potential significance: they may hold some of the secrets. Deciding which noteworthy figures are as ignorant as anyone else, which are partly informed catspaws, and which are mages or Illuminati, is generally up to the GM. This can make for a lot of fun, although it's probably better not to get too carried away; making every consumptive poet a secret vampire mastermind just gets tiresome after a while.

As to conveying greatness when depicting characters – the trick is probably not to try too hard. It's a fallacy to assume that genius is automatically accompanied by charisma and a burning gaze; in every field, it's quite often down to Edison's 99% perspiration. On the other hand, the 1% inspiration is rarer; the sudden flash of insight, the turn of phrase or perfect timing, can suddenly show why somebody made the history books, if the GM can convey it.

Borrowing Characters

There is another possible use for this book; historical figures can be borrowed, with adjustment, for use in fantasy or SF games.

This may work best with rulers and leaders. Suppose that a GM has a kingdom in his fantasy world, and the PCs start taking an interest in local politics. The personality of the ruler can be very important. Now, one *could* simply throw in the usual "wise old monarch" or "vicious tyrant," but the players might spot that and yawn. So why not borrow from history? He or she could be a neurotic conqueror like Shih Huang Ti, a pious, methodical soldier like Saladin, or a hulking, opinionated progressive like Peter the Great. Or perhaps the place is actually run from behind the scenes by a sickly, brilliant Cardinal Richelieu, or a determined Catherine di Medici.

The trick also works for other social positions, of course; why have *just* a rebel leader when you could base the character on the avenging Boudica or the theoretic-

cian Che Guevara? Why merely have faceless hangers-on round the court, when visiting PCs could face the terrors of a Sei Shonagon witticism, or the indiscretions of a Lola Montez? Will players believe that the rambunctious aristocrat with the silver prosthetic nose is actually the great scientist they are looking for, unless they happen to know about Tycho Brahe?

One should not become too obsessed with this approach; sometimes, a great academic is just a quiet fellow in tweeds. Also, the character must fit the context; Guevara operated in a world of complex ideologies, indirect international politics, and high-powered firearms, unimaginable to a medieval revolting peasant, while a modern Boudica might fight to have her story heard by the international press as well as butchering the hated occupier. But re-editing the character sheets in this book for use in nonhistorical games is as good a use for them as any.

GREAT MEN AS PCs

One other option with historical figures is to use them as player characters. This may sound strange, but actually, it can make sense.

To begin with, a fair amount of historical fiction takes real, well-known figures as its central characters. Mostly, these books use their subjects' careers as plots, but plenty find gaps and uncertainties which allow for some surprises and a bit more action; playing up the adventurousness of a character's early life is a particularly common trick. (There is even a small sub-genre of historical detective stories, giving Shakespeare or Dr. Johnson secondary careers as sleuths.) There are also "secret history" stories, in which famous figures become entangled with strange events; for example, Tim Powers' *The Stress of Her Regard* pitches a swashbuckling Lord Byron (among others) against some weird vampires.

And then there are a whole range of SF and science-fantasy stories that take such people completely out of their historical context and suggest how they'd react in a very different world. One particularly spectacular example is Philip José Farmer's "Riverworld" series (see *GURPS Riverworld*), wherein human beings from throughout history are reborn on an artificial world with strange local ground-rules. However, there are also alternate histories such as Gibson and Sterling's *The Difference Engine*, in which Lord Byron became prime minister of Great Britain and Karl Marx ended up as leader of New York, and straightforward time travel tales. Games might involve time-traveling agencies recruiting "the best possible agents" – people whose talent is a matter of historical record – from alternate timelines; those who died relatively young of now-curable causes might even be recruited from their deathbeds, with a simulacrum left in their place.

If a historically based game is going to cleave to known facts, then well-documented individuals make poor PCs; the Game Master would have to control the plot to avoid changing history, and the players would feel that their freedom of action was badly limited. On the other hand, slightly more obscure characters, and more melodramatic games, allow for more fun; Paracelsus, say, could be transformed into an adventurer in a swashbuckling game, while a courtier like Sei Shonagon could become involved in various supernatural or espionage plots that she would consider too unbelievable to mention in her diary. Of course, in alternate history, and settings such as the Riverworld, limitations are far looser (although players should always check with the Game Master before playing a historical figure).

If historical individuals are deployed as PCs, then some adaptation will be necessary. To begin with, the chances are that they will not have exactly the right starting point totals. Rulers and leaders make particularly difficult cases, because they tend to have very high totals, largely spent on Status and Rank; given that they also tend to have full-time jobs ruling and leading, they are generally poor choices all round. Less powerful figures are easier to use, but even they may have wildly divergent ratings.

THE 104 MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN HISTORY? (CONTINUED)

Abraham Lincoln, Adam Smith, Adolf Hitler, Albert Einstein, Alexander Fleming, Alexander Graham Bell, Alexander the Great, Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, Archimedes, Aristotle, Asoka, Augustus Caesar, Babur, Baibars, Benjamin Franklin, Buddha, Cardinal Richelieu, Charlemagne, Charles Darwin, Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, Christopher Columbus, Confucius, Cyrus the Great, Edward Jenner, Enrico Fermi, Ernest Rutherford, Euclid, Ferdinand Magellan, Francis Bacon, Francisco Pizarro, Galileo Galilei, Genghis Kahn, Gregor Mendel, Guglielmo Marconi, Henry Ford, Hernán Cortés, Homer, Isaac Newton, James Clerk Maxwell, James Watt, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jesus Christ, Johannes Gutenberg, Johannes Kepler, John Calvin, John Dalton, John Locke, Joseph Lister, Joseph Stalin, Julius Caesar, Justinian I, Karl Marx, Lao-tzu, Lenin, Leonardo da Vinci, Leonhard Euler, Liu Pang, Louis Daguerre, Louis Pasteur, Mahatma Gandhi, Mahavira, Mani, Mao Tse-tung, Marie Curie, Martin Luther, Max Planck, Menes, Michael Faraday, Michelangelo, Moses, Muhammad, Napoleon Bonaparte, Niccolò Machiavelli, Nicolaus Copernicus, Nikolaus August Otto, Orville and Wilbur Wright (joint entry), Otto von Bismarck, Peter the Great, Plato, Pope Urban II, Queen Elizabeth I, Queen Isabella I, René Descartes, Roger Bacon, Saladin, Sigmund Freud, Simon Bolivar, St. Augustine, St. Paul, St. Thomas Aquinas, Sui Wen-ti, Thomas Edison, Thomas Jefferson, Ts'ai Lun, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Vasco da Gama, Voltaire, Werner Heisenberg, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen, William Harvey, William Shakespeare, William the Conqueror, Zoroaster.



“Only those of a certain mental toughness find it easy to accept the plentiful evidence that history is usually a random, messy affair; that blunder, misjudgment and ignorance often play a far larger role in it than design.”

– Mark Twain

Game Masters can handle this either by disregarding character points, or by requiring the players to tweak the chosen characters a little to bring their points into line. The latter also has the advantage that the character can often be made slightly more suitable as a protagonist; it's usually not too unreasonable to suggest that someone might have learned a few combat skills, or possess a better IQ or DX than history happened to mention. (“Secret history” games might even give important figures magical powers, used only out of sight of the public.) Of course, it's easier to increase than decrease point totals this way, and Game Masters may wish to start games involving “historical” PCs off at a higher base than usual.

In games where such people are torn from their positions of power and dropped into strange new situations, their game-mechanical form should change to reflect the new context. Powerful folk may lose their excessive social advantages, and disadvantages such as poverty or Primitive may suddenly become appropriate. Exposure to new conditions may also bring advantages; for example, a historical figure kidnapped to the future by time travelers may have diseases and other health problems cured.



Playing Variations: Changing History

“Great Men” are people too. They have as much free will as the rest of us (however much that may be). Thus, even before things start to go wrong, time-travel scenarios involving them can consist of more than simple assassination or bodyguard missions or passive observation, and game plots involving them can become interestingly complex.

ASSASSINATION

Let’s start with the crude and simple stuff. Great figures are remembered for what they achieved, and it is pretty certain that *somebody* will wish that they hadn’t achieved it. The reflex response, among a certain class of extremists, will be to remove the problem – violently.

Of course, some individuals may represent more tempting targets than others; even “nice” time travelers may feel an urge to get rid of Hitler or Stalin, while Buddha or St. Francis of Assisi might be relatively safe. But even pacifists might become targets – for, say, time travelers who wish to disrupt the cultures they influenced, or ruthless, “tough-minded” types who believe that peace weakens society, or people with carefully worked-through or wildly intuitive theories that prove that their targets actually had a *bad* long-term influence.

Time-traveling hit men will likely strike during a target’s more vulnerable early years (GMs can portray them as particularly nasty by having them attack during the target’s childhood). This approach has obvious advantages for the assassin. The more of the victim’s life that can be erased, the less chance he’ll have to influence history. Those with adventurous early careers are especially vulnerable; a junior soldier struck by a stray bullet, or a traveler felled by a sudden tropical fever, will rarely raise suspicions of foul play. Assassins who wait for their target to attain greatness will likely have to contend with friends, bodyguards, the crowds that naturally surround important people, *and* a strenuous investigation of the victim’s death.

It may not, however, be possible to travel back as far as the target’s youth. The target’s personal history may be obscure enough to make locating him hard, or the assassin may wish to make a dramatic point at a climactic moment. Superior technology can make attacks on even the well-guarded and famous very feasible – though not necessarily certain. Famous people and their bodyguards are often alert and adaptable, and once one has seen a gun fired, it doesn’t take a genius to identify it as dangerous. Assassins may favor high-tech poisons or biological agents, which leave the death looking like a natural disease; these can be harder to deliver, but also extremely hard to defeat.

Assuming that they are in the business of protecting history, PCs are likely to become involved in this sort of plot as bodyguards – perhaps unknown to the person being protected. Alternatively, if the ‘laws’ of time travel permit, they may first have to act as detectives, working out who committed a murder, then travel back through time to prevent it. “Local” law enforcement, funeral customs, and superstitions can all work to make this sort of mission difficult. And such adventures become doubly tense and tricky if both attackers and defenders have to keep their activities secret from the “natives.”

Less brutal time meddlers may take up an alternative to murder: abduction. The future world-shakers can be kidnapped and either dropped in some context where his greatness is less likely to emerge – an impoverished foster-home, a remote island, or even a *more* happy family, if an unpleasant upbringing seems to have twisted his personality – or brought to the time traveler’s home era. The kidnap victims may even be brainwashed or brought up to work for the kidnapper’s cause – which the kidnapper may regard as poetic justice, or a way to turn great potential to good.

MALLEABILITY RATINGS AND THE GREAT

GURPS Time Travel discusses the practicalities of time travel under several headings; see p.TT40-43.

Plastic Time: Meetings with historical figures must be handled carefully, as almost any such dealings may change the future. In the extreme case of *Chaotic Time*, so much as breathing the same air as them is guaranteed to send events spinning off in new directions – and the subsequent behavior of the historical figure may be the first visible part of the change. Even given *Plastic Time with High Resistance*, meetings should be a matter of extreme caution; human beings are complex and unpredictable, and a relatively small stimulus *may* trigger changes to their behavior, which *may* be the one thing that can divert history.

Fixed Time: Operations around historic figures are fairly safe; they are mostly well-documented, so things that might affect them will tend to be blocked by the universe. On the other hand, this blocking process may be actively dangerous for PCs – and if somebody succeeds in, say, doing them serious injury, the subsequent balancing can make for headaches all round. Likewise, *Paradox-Proof Time* turns famous people into walking booby-traps; anything that might change their biographies is likely to lead to travelers being bounced home preemptively. (On the other hand, historical information – even when documented – is rarely as bullet-proof as historians are wont to imply.)

New Timelines: Interacting with major figures is safe enough, but may spin off the most radically different histories. PCs who find this sort of thing amusing can take this as an excuse to assault, chat with, or freak out the famous, but it’s likely to be ultimately unsatisfying; assassinating Hitler may represent a big favor for another universe, but it doesn’t actually save *your* grandpa.

Parallel Worlds: Again, actions won’t affect one’s home; the most interesting thing about the local versions of the famous is that small differences in their names or biographies may hint at local differences in history. (“You mean *Senator* Henry Ford?”) Research into “local” personalities is less valuable for itself – their behavior may not tell you much about their counterparts in your history – but may have its interest.

GREAT MEN OR IRRESISTIBLE FORCES?

There are two extremes in the way one can look at history. The “Great Man” model sees it as shaped by brilliant individuals. At its most simplistic, this “heroic” view reduces history to a string of disjointed biographies. On the other hand, the “Irresistible Forces” model says that circumstances shape events – The Hour Calls Forth The Man, perhaps, but really, it’s the overwhelming weight of economics that counts. Nations which have rich resources and good communications create strong armies, and sooner or later go looking for someone to conquer, while ideas emerge from past thought and common experience, rather than springing out of nowhere.

(This second attitude is sometimes associated with Marxism, which idealizes the mass of workers over the elite few. But there’s nothing really “left-wing” about it; the crucial forces may be, say, the market, leading to Capitalism Triumphant. Likewise, the political right often seems to think of history as a string of heroic entrepreneurs and strong-willed monarchs who epitomize the right of the elite to govern – but communist states are just as prone to idolize their leaders.)

This book is, on the face of it, dedicated to “Great Men.” If none of these folks really shaped events, then there wouldn’t be much point to the thing, would there? But in fact, the compiler personally takes a middle view.

Continued on next page . . .

Dealing with time-kidnappers is much like dealing with assassins, from the PC point of view, save that the situation may be a little less desperate, and the opposition slightly less vicious. On the other hand, it can lead to all sorts of interesting complications, including persuading the kidnap victim to forget some very strange experiences; a paradox-heavy campaign could even have an alternate, brainwashed version of the victim as one of the enemy group . . .

SAVING LIVES AND EXTENDING LIFESPANS

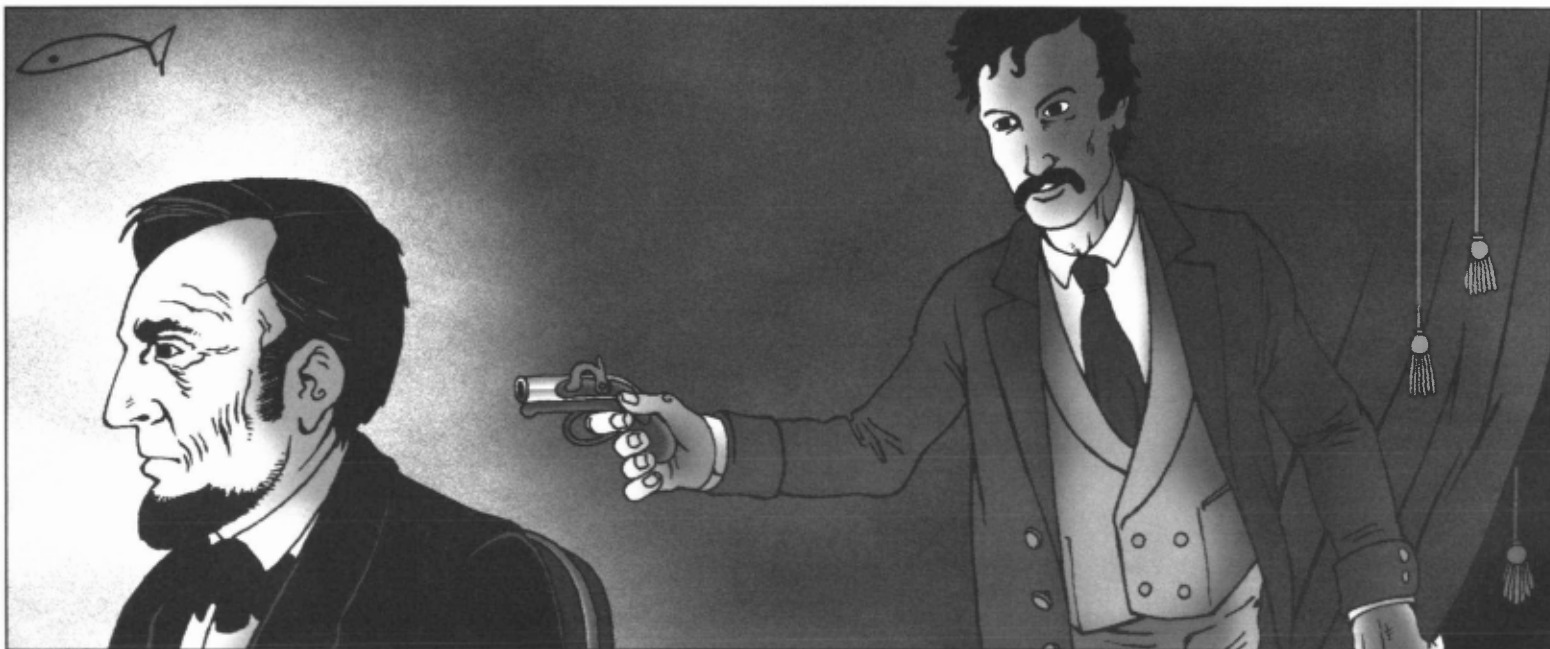
Conversely, a slightly more subtle (and humane) approach might involve extending the life of some significant individual. This is most obvious for those who died at the peak of their career. If Lincoln had avoided Booth’s bullet, might he have helped better reconcile the South to defeat? If Saladin’s health had not given way, could he have followed his military victories against the Crusaders with a political campaign to reinforce the fragile unity he had forged in the Muslim world?

As these examples suggest, there are generally two categories of action that may be required for this sort of thing; preventing assassinations (probably a fast, combat-oriented mission) or repairing the “target’s” health and saving him from some fatal illness (tricky in detail, but conceivably not hard for time travelers with advanced medicine). Similarly, meddlers may seek to restore the health of a person who became sick and weakened without actually dying.

Foiling such meddling, if that’s the PCs’ job, can make for some emotionally fraught, angst-laden scenarios – being sent back in time to save a dictator would be bad enough, but being asked to make sure that Julius Caesar met his appointment on the Ides of March could feel unpleasantly like murder.

DIVERSIONS AND DISTRACTIONS

Some time-meddlers may prefer to be more subtle than the assassins and guardians discussed so far; ethics aside, less dramatic interventions may be easier to pull off or harder to detect. One subtle way to make a large difference might be to divert a major figure into alternative interests. This is most obvious with certain thinkers: Could Newton have accomplished more if he hadn’t spent years fiddling with alchemy? (There’s a flip-side to that question in a universe where magic



works.) Could Leonardo have become a practical engineer rather than a doodler of unworkable ideas, or a more productive artist if he'd stopped doodling? But it also works fairly well with kings and generals: should Napoleon have concentrated less on conquest and more on strengthening his rule at home? Would Saladin have created a stronger Islam if he'd crushed the Crusader fortresses utterly when he had the chance? And sometimes, a thinker applies his philosophy rather directly; persuading St. Bernard to pray more and intervene in worldly affairs less would have an interesting effect on the history of Europe.

This makes for interesting, character-based play, and executing or preventing such a change may require thought and roleplaying. Agents should be selected for their social skills and at least minimal knowledge of the target's interests (although a few escorts may be sent along in case the mission also turns out to need muscle or other talents).

DROPPING HINTS

Interventions may actually be very subtle indeed. Sometimes, great figures suffered dramatic reversals through some simple but understandable mistake, or achieved success through some inspired, uncertain guess. The clever meddler might thus be able to make a huge difference with a very small intervention – perhaps literally just a word or two at the right moment.

This is most easily seen in military history; every American seems to know that orders-wrapped-round-cigars anecdote from the American Civil War. But it works in the arts and sciences too, though it would have to be handled right; it might be possible to keep the Dutch invention of the telescope away from Galileo for a while, and it *might* be possible to transfer knowledge of the Viking discovery of the Americas southward before Columbus – but a lot of science and technology depends on prior inventions and available materials, so it's not always simple.

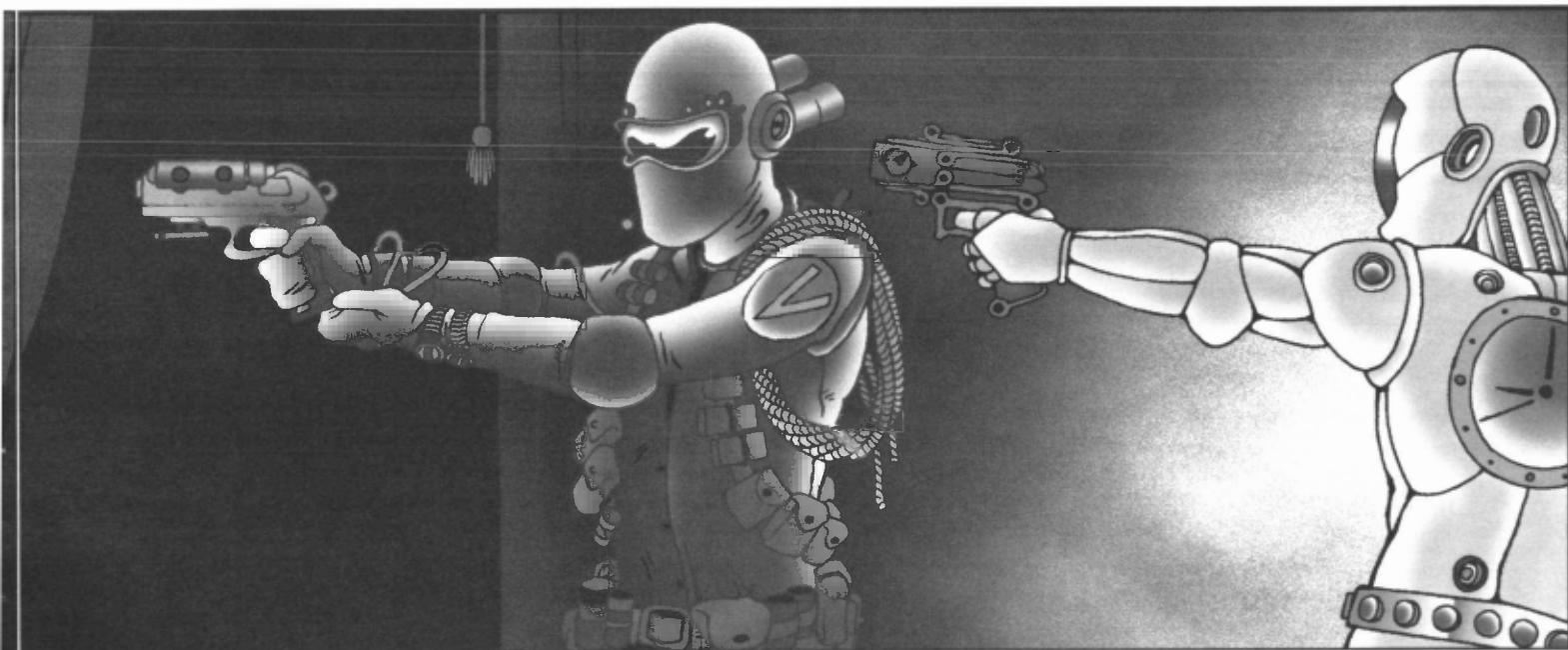
The meddlers should also be careful of the opinionated stubbornness that sometimes comes with power or brilliance. Explain modern physics to Aristotle and you would likely be laughed out of his school; tell the astronomer Tycho Brahe that the heavens are not unchanging before he saw a nova for himself and he'll damn you as a blasphemer. And remember, science and art both proceed by evolutionary stages, spurred by the occasional hard-fought revolution; travelers should not delude themselves into thinking that modern ideas will automatically convince intelligent people in the past.

GREAT MEN OR IRRESISTIBLE FORCES?

(CONTINUED)

For example, it's entirely possible that the Persian Empire was crumbling just as the Greeks were hitting their peak, and that some kind of conquest from the west was inevitable – but with a less inspirational, megalomaniac leader than Alexander the Great, would the invaders have carried on as far as India? Similarly, while Charles Darwin was certainly a genius, the theory of evolution was an idea whose time had come – but maybe Darwin's combination of observation, accomplished writing, and social position ensured that it spread faster.

This actually makes for more interesting plots. Games which revolve around Great Men are *unstable* – one bullet can throw an empire into chaos – and the PCs may become bored because their actions are secondary to those of a Napoleon or an Archimedes. On the other hand, irresistible forces make for even more boredom, as PC victories can only be temporary and local, if that. A middle view gives the time-travelers real challenges; they must decide when to fight the forces of change or inertia, and when to ride them.



The Ancient World and Dark Ages



The historical figures detailed in this chapter come from periods between the rise of the first literate, urban civilizations and the point where the greatest ancient European empire – Rome – transformed itself into something different. Because this book deals with reasonably well-documented, historical figures, it cannot go too far back; as it is, the first few entries may well have a little myth mixed in with the history.

The end date for this chapter is arbitrary, of course, but not illogical. Justinian and Theodora took what seemed to be a fading Roman Empire and made a good attempt at rebuilding it from the ground up. However, in the process, they established that Rome was not what it had been. Europe was evolving a feudal system; Persia was faltering, and would soon fall to the new power of Islam; in the East, China and India had both gone through several cycles of imperial glory and collapse.

WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

This book is dedicated to characters who really existed. However, in time-travel and alternate-history games, it can be just as interesting to imagine characters who *didn't* exist, but who might, barring some childhood accident or the nonmeeting of a couple of gametes, have made the world very different. A few examples are scattered through the book. For example:

Lamachos of Syracuse

Born in 501 B.C., Lamachos of Syracuse rose from poverty through intelligence and hard work. At some point, he became interested in philosophy, and traveled to the Pythagorean Academy at Croton, southern Italy. However, he soon became bored with Pythagorean mysticism (although he never abandoned its belief that “All is Number”), and traveled on to Greece, where he encountered traditions of open, educated discussion.

He returned to Italy, and began to propound his own philosophy, based on logic, mathematics, and the importance of discussion. This led to his persecution by Pythagoreans, and he was forced to flee north, into the relatively uncivilized Etruscan lands. He spent some years in newly republican Rome, others wandering.

Romano-Etruscan science, with its methodical peer review and scrupulous measurement, owes much to Lamachos. The flagship of the steam fleet that crossed the Atlantic in 54 B.C. was aptly named after him.

– Phil Masters

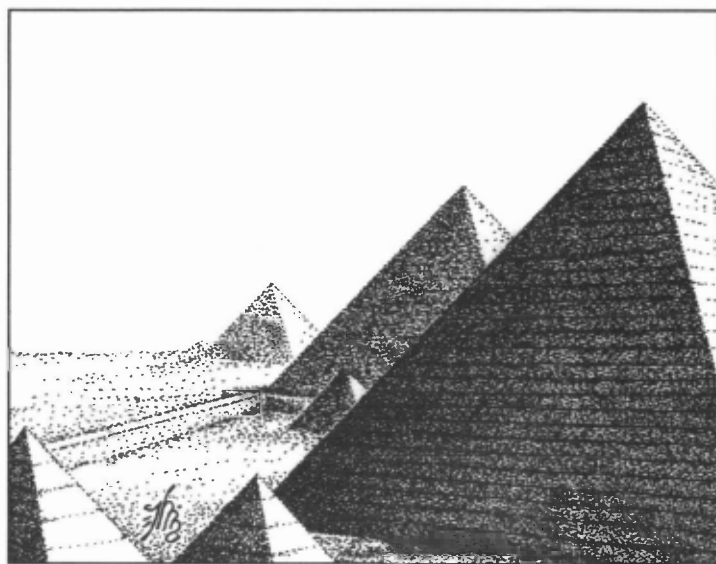
Balsalam of Canaan

Though many of his fellow rulers were ambitious, Balsalam had will to back his ambition. He treated, warred and bought his way from king to emperor in the land of Canaan. The resulting empire, continually threatened by outside powers and internal rebellion, was fragile even at its strongest. Balsalam saw both the threat of destruction and chance for salvation in the increasing waves of foreigners streaming into Canaan.

Seizing on their heterodox monolatry of the minor god El and the popular fear of displacement by outsiders, Balsalam led a campaign of genocide against the settlers. Though the focus on this goal was relatively brief and insufficient to save Canaan from violent dissolution a decade later, the effects on the victims were pronounced. In the face of unreasoning prejudice and mass killings, the few remaining “Hebrews” returned to Egypt or escaped into the desert, where they faded into an obscurity breached only by a few of Balsalam’s royal decrees found centuries later in the library at Nineveh.

But those who found those ancient tablets lived in a world where the Hebrew eccentricity was long forgotten – a world still ruled by countless gods, their laws contradictory, their powers unstable.

– Alexander Shearer



St. Novatian the Builder

Quintus Lollius Novatian (320-396) was a well-born Roman citizen from Cillium in North Africa. Like many ambitious young men, he converted to Christianity to win imperial favor; but then his new religion unexpectedly became a passion. Inspired by the journeys of St. Paul, Novatian assumed the self-appointed role of apostle to the African barbarians at age 23. He spent half a century traveling the camel routes across the Sahara, founding dozens of small Christian communities and (so the story goes) personally building some 40 shrines. The cities built up around Novatian’s legacy made western Africa an equal partner in Latin Christendom, trading off leadership with the western European kingdoms. Indeed it was the coastal kingdoms of Africa which first took the lead in sea exploration, discovering the New World in 1409. Europe was first into the scientific and industrial revolutions two centuries later, and it took the Africans some time to catch up. But by modern times the six allied countries of the African Union were key supporters of the North Atlantic Federation in the long, twilight conflict with the Eurasian Dominate, and are today leaders in biotechnology.

– Craig Neumeier

Born c.1388 B.C.; died c.1362 B.C.

Age 20; 5'6", about 130 lbs.; a deformed Egyptian man with thin limbs, prominent hips, breasts and paunch, an elongated skull, thick lips, and a jutting chin, usually wearing a diaphanous robe.

ST: 8 [-15] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 4.5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 8 [-15] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Ally (Nefertiti, 15-) [30], Filthy Rich with Multi-millionaire x2 [100], Literacy [10], Religious Rank 8 [40], Status 8* [10].

*Includes +3 for Wealth and +3 for Religious Rank; grants the equivalent of Scribal Powers (p. EG80).

Disadvantages

Callous [-6], Edgy [-5], Fanaticism (Atenism) [-15], Laziness [-10], Odious Personal Habit (Blatantly speaks his mind) [-5], Reputation -4 (Among traditional Egyptian priests, as a heretic) [-7], Reputation -2 (Among foreign leaders; a coward and poor leader) [-3], Sense of Duty (To family) [-5], Ugly Appearance [-10], Weak Will -2 [-16].

Quirks

Enjoys basking in the sun and requires ceremonies to be performed in sunlight; Especially close to his mother; Has a weakness for flattery; Loves nature; Mild religious intolerance. [-5]

Skills

Animal Handling-12 [2], Area Knowledge (Akhetaten)-21 [16], Area Knowledge (Egypt)-15 [4], Artist-12 [2], Bow-7 [1/2], Calligraphy-11 [2], Law-11 [1], Literature-13 [4], Poetry-15 [6], Politics-12 [1], Sacrifice-12 [2], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Sculpting-10 [1½], Teamster (Chariot Horses)-12 [1], Theology-22 [22], Writing-14 [4].

Languages

Egyptian (native)-13 [0], Akkadian-12 [1].

The above represents Akhenaten just after the relocation of his capital to Akhetaten. Dates given here may not agree with those in *GURPS Egypt*, but follow the sources used; Egyptological chronology suffers from a great deal of controversy! As with many powerful monarchs, he may well have personal bodyguards constituting an Ally Group.

Several theories have been presented for Akhenaten's appearance. The above represents him as just plain ugly, but the GM may wish to consider the following: He had



Marfan's syndrome, a genetic disease of the connective tissue that causes elongation of the limbs and face, growth of the jaw, and weak eyesight; add Bad Sight. He had Froelich's syndrome, a disease of the pituitary that prevents the secondary sex characteristics from developing and causes fat build-ups; add Sterile and figure out where his children came from. He was a woman; add Secret and account for the children. He was castrated in youth; add Eunuch and possibly Secret; again, the children must be accounted for. Some of these might have had other side-effects; it has been suggested that he was prone to severe migraines.

He also spent money profligately and was fond of naturalistic art, but these are as much consequences of fanatical Atenism as distinct disadvantages or quirks.

BIOGRAPHY

The man who would become Akhenaten was a sickly child, expected to die young. This, coupled with his deformities, kept him out of the spotlight in the court of his father, Pharaoh Amenophis III, even after his appointment as co-regent around 1377 B.C. Amenophis IV, as he was now called, took to religion and the arts, joining the growing cult of the Aten (Disc), a sun god. Sometime during this period, he was married to the beautiful Nefertiti.

Around 1368 B.C., Amenophis III died. Amenophis IV's support was weak, so he celebrated a Jubilee, a reaffirmation of the pharaoh's right to rule usually reserved for the 30th year of a reign. Several major reforms followed. First, obeying Atenism's emphasis on truth, he fostered a revolution in the arts that emphasized naturalism instead of idealism. The first images of the pharaoh with all his deformities appeared at this time. Next, he declared that the Aten was the only god. He didn't suppress the other gods (yet), but he redirected funds from the old temples to support Atenism. The priests of Amun were furious. The theological break became official when Amenophis IV changed his name to Akhenaten (Useful to the Aten). He then began an ambitious project; a new capital called Akhetaten (Horizon of the Aten) in Middle Egypt. He also appointed new officials, few of whom had connections with the old nobility.

Akhenaten now immersed himself in theology, ignoring foreign affairs. His inaction allowed the Hittite King, Suppiluliumas, to crush Egypt's ally Mitanni and encroach on Egyptian territories. Akhenaten had failed to fund his army or police properly, allowing his northernmost vassals to rebel, only to be captured by Suppiluliumas. Meanwhile, Azira of Amurru began seizing lands in Sumeria. Akhenaten's mother talked him out of his inaction, but his foreign policy remained ineffective.

Meanwhile, Akhenaten's brother, Smenkhare, moved to the capital and was appointed co-regent. Akhenaten became fast friends with Smenkhare (some say lovers), despite the fact that Smenkhare was a follower of the cult of Re. Possibly because of her husband's betrayal of Atenism, Nefertiti (now called Nefer-neferuaten) moved to a palace in the northernmost portion of Akhetaten with her daughters and Tutankhaten, possibly another of Akhenaten's brothers. Several members of Akhenaten's court soon died, possibly from a plague, including Smenkhare. Grief-stricken, Akhenaten unleashed a fierce suppression of the ancient gods. Soon after, he himself died.

Tutankhaten now succeeded as pharaoh, with Ay as regent. Atenism survived for a while, but Tutankhaten (who changed his name to Tutankhamen) and Ay reinstated the old gods. After Tutankhamen's early death, Ay took the throne; his death marked the end of Akhenaten's bloodline. The next pharaoh, Horemheb, purged all references to Akhenaten's reign, and Akhenaten became known as "That Thief," if he was known at all.

Encountered

Akhenaten is easier to meet than many rulers because of his insistence on openness. He enjoys basking in the sun, and often parades his six daughters before his subjects. Those who meet him may find him obnoxious because of his bluntness and apathy; his insistence that all ceremonies be held in the hot sun does not endear him to foreign dignitaries. He is likely to ignore any requests for aid unless some benefit to himself, his family, or the Aten is demonstrated.

— Brian C. Smithson

Further Reading:

Aldred, Cyril: *Akhenaten, Pharaoh of Egypt*.
 Bille-De Mot, Eléonore: *The Age of Akhenaten*.
 Redford, Donald B.: *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*.

WHAT IF?

Akhenaten's reign was disastrous for Egypt; it lost several key territories, and would never regain the pinnacle it had once attained. If time travelers could somehow influence the development of Atenism, the movement might become more popular; it had no mythology, and was therefore slow to spread. A more popular Atenism might lead to a more popular Akhenaten, and eventually might awaken him to foreign affairs. Eliminating Akhenaten from history completely would probably preserve Egypt at the pinnacle of its power for much longer than in our timeline.

EXODUS

Akhenaten is one of the first identifiable monotheists in history; this makes him popular with conspiracy theorists and believers in supernatural influences who choose to

look this far back. For example, he has been associated with the mythology of the shadowy Rosicrucians. Fringe theorists have also tried to link him with Moses and the Biblical Exodus. Though he may have influenced the Hebrews, this connection was probably indirect, since their exodus *probably* occurred over a century later. However, Egyptological dating is a debated art at best; tweak a few calendar interpretations, and one can argue a more *direct* connection.

Akhenaten's father corresponded with a slave trader named "Mose." Is this the Biblical Moses? The Hebrews *were* Egyptian slaves, after all; Moses might have had a more checkered early career than the Bible chooses to mention. Later, during Akhenaten's reign, a nomadic people called the "Hapiru" were rampaging through Canaan. Were these actually the Hebrews? What of Akhenaten's role in all this? Was Mose/Moses a member of his court who was converted to monotheism?

And what if Akhenaten was the Biblical Pharaoh? Several members of his family died of what seems to be a plague — who's to say it wasn't a plague of locusts or water-turned-blood? And if Smenkhare was actually the son of Akhenaten, as some historians have suggested, he *would* be the first-born son . . . Akhenaten's mummy has yet to be found. Maybe he was lost in the Red Sea.

STRANGE GODS

And if any GMs want to get *really* strange, Akhenaten's image looks suspiciously similar to the "Grays" of modern UFO lore. The sacred Aten is certainly shown as a disc in the sky . . .

King David ben-Jesse

Total Points: 255½

Born c.1040 B.C.; died c.968 B.C.

Age 40; about 5'8", 150 lbs. A handsome, ruddy-complexioned man in the robes of a Middle-Eastern leader and with a circlet of gold on his head (boiled leather and bronze body armor in battle), with long curly hair and a thick beard.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 6

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 7 **Block:** 7

Advantages

Attractive [5], Charisma +2 [10], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [10], Musical Ability +2 [2], Status 6* [25], Voice [10].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Overconfidence [-10], Sense of Duty (to family) [-5].

Quirks

Believes himself chosen by God; Devoted father; Devout; Has an eye for women; Selfish. [-5]



Skills

Administration-12 [2], Animal Handling-12 [4], Area Knowledge (Israel)-14 [4], Bard-15 [1], Bow-12 [2], Brawling-13 [1], Diplomacy-14 [4], Law-11 [2], Leadership-13 [1], Musical Instrument (Lyre)-15 [6], Poetry-16 [10], Politics-14 [2], Savoir-Faire-15 [2], Sex Appeal-14 [2], Shield-14 [2], Shortsword-14 [4], Singing-14 [½], Sling-15 [16], Spear-13 [2], Staff-12 [1], Stealth-12 [1], Strategy-13 [6], Survival (Desert)-13 [4], Tactics-14 [8], Theology-12 [4].

Languages

Hebrew (native)-12 [0], Philistine-12 [2].

This is a "polite nonsupernatural" view of David around 1000 B.C., right after he took Jerubim. It assumes that he is genuinely capable, rather than merely flattered by later accounts, but that he doesn't actually receive overt divine aid. Some of his quirks could well be inflated to Lecherousness or Compulsive Behavior.

His rule straddles the Bronze and Iron Ages (TL1 and TL2); his relevant skills are at TL1. He had his enemies; Saul early in his life, Absalom later. Conversely, Samuel and Jonathan at one stage represented a Patron and an Ally respectively.

BIOGRAPHY

According to the Bible, David ben-Jesse (son of Jesse) was born in Bethlehem, southern Israel, in 1040 B.C., youngest of eight sons and several daughters. As a boy, he tended his father's sheep. To combat the loneliness of shepherding, he learned to sing and play the lyre. His musical talents were brought to the attention of King Saul, a man with incipient paranoia and fits of depression, which David's music could soothe.

According to legend, young David proved himself in the war with the Philistines. Israel's soldiers were stymied by a mighty enemy champion, Goliath. David accepted Goliath's open challenge to single combat, facing the "giant" with his shepherd's staff and sling, and no armor. While Goliath was probably still laughing, David laid him out with a slingstone, and then chopped off Goliath's head with his own sword. The shocked Philistines fled.

David certainly became an officer in Saul's army. He married the king's younger daughter, Michal, and rose through the ranks. Saul's eldest son, Jonathan, became his friend. His fame rose to the point that the people said "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands." These successes turned Saul's incipient paranoia into terror of usurpation, and he attempted to assassinate David, who fled. David spent ten years in the wilderness as an outlaw, while Saul fought the Philistines. David became a bandit king, stealing from the rich of Judea while championing the poor. Like many rebels, he received aid from the kingdom's enemies, becoming a vassal to the Philistines of Gath.

David was not present at the battle of Gilboa in 1010, when Saul and all his sons were slain. Saul's grandson build a capital on the east bank of the Jordan, calling himself King of Israel. The Philistines propped David up as "King of Judea," in Hebron. David launched a civil war, completing the ousting of Saul's heirs by 1004 B.C. In 1003, he captured the Jerubites' hilltop city, Jerubim, sneaking in with a troop though an underground stream, then opening the gates for his army. He renamed it Jerusalem and made it his capital, linking northern and southern Israel.

After this, David reorganized the semi-nomadic religion into one better suited for an agricultural society. He allied with the Hittites and Phoenicians, possibly securing the secret of iron. He took advantage of the Philistine preoccupation with an Egyptian attack on Gaza to revolt, destroying them and ending a 500-year threat. This was the last time he would personally lead troops.

Afterward, he turned to the other Canaanite tribes, forging an empire from Tyre to Mesopotamia and the Negev to the Assyrian border. As the wealth poured in, he became hedonistic, spending much of his time with his harem, once even sending a man (Uriah) to be killed so he could add his wife (Bathsheeba) to his collection. The people of Israel became discontented, leading to the revolt of Absalom, David's second son, when David was in his sixties. After killing his older brother, Absalom rebelled. David fled Jerusalem while Absalom was marching on it. After about a year, David's forces defeated Absalom in battle; Absalom was killed in the fight, supposedly after his hair was tangled up in a tree, and David regained power. But he never sat easily after that, and at the age of 70, he abdicated in favor of his teen-age son Solomon. He died about two years later.

David in History

David is one of the few figures we know in any detail from the Bronze Age. Many once considered him apocryphal, but archaeological evidence has been found to support the story. (On the other hand, it isn't indisputable; some would rate David as about as "historical" as King Arthur.) While the Kingdom of Israel only survived one more generation, his descendants ruled Judea for 400 years. He is a hero of the Bible, and an ideal which Diasporic Jews associate with their conception of the Messiah. His Psalms are among the oldest collections of poetry in the world.

Viewed otherwise, he could be a local despot with a good press. He did preside over the final transformation of the Hebrews from nomads to agriculturists, symbolized in the plans for a permanent Temple.

Encountered

David is ruthless, yet charming; he is competent in politics and battle. He is a product of his times, and faced with displays of magic or high technology, would suspect sorcery. He is also a poet, with a sense of wonder at creation. He attributes his good fortune to God.

– David Walker

Further Reading

Old Testament: *Psalms, 1st & 2nd Samuel, 1st & 2nd Chronicles.*
 Bosch, Juan: *David: Biography of a King* (trans. John Marks).



And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

– Acts 13:22, KJV

WHAT IF?

WITHOUT DAVID

Whenever a historical change occurs *this* far back, its consequences would surely expand vastly down the years. Without David, it's likely that the Sauline monarchy would have ruled ancient Israel, but it would probably have been slowly absorbed by the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Philistines, and others. Without David and Solomon as symbols to rally around, Judaism would likely have died out in the conquests. While history up to Rome might conceivably only change relatively slightly, the impact of Judaism on Rome (where nearly one in ten practiced the faith around A.D. 50) and in the development of Christianity means that we would likely not comprehend the post-Roman world that develops.

KEY MOMENTS

Shepherd, warrior, general, bandit, king; if the biblical account is even partly historical, David is one of the most fascinating figures of the Bronze Age, and his story has several key moments. The problem is, no one knows exactly when any of these events occurred – even in the most optimistic view, we only know within two or three years, a rather broad target for time travelers. The first stage of any program involving this period would have to be observation and analysis (hopefully without storing up too many problems for later with the Observer Effect).

DIVINE POWER?

David's triumphs against the Philistines, from the fight with Goliath to the later massed battles, verged on the improbable. Obviously, if he really *does* receive divine assistance, the character sheet could be changed somewhat. In a game where his and the Bible's view is literally true, Blessed, Destiny, or possibly Divine Favor would be appropriate advantages. Other GMs can explain his career using whatever powers and talents are appropriate to their games; on a lower level, high combat skills, Luck, Fearlessness, and an Ally Group (his old guerilla band) would render him more cinematic. Incidentally, his son and successor, Solomon is a *really* major figure in the mythology of magic, freemasonry, and other fringe-theory favorites.

Cyrus the Great (Kurush)

Total Points: 286

Born mid-6th century B.C.; died 530 B.C.

Age 35-40; 5'6", 150 lbs. Persian man with well-groomed but plain hair and beard, both kept shorter than is typical at the time. He wears fine but simple clothes of imperial purple, preferring functional garb over Median excess.

ST: 12 [20] **DX:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 5.75

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 7 **Block:** 7

Advantages

Ally (Harpagus, 12-) [10], Charisma +2 [10], Combat Reflexes [15], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire x2 [100], Literacy [10], Reputation +2 (Across the known world; respects the beliefs and practices of the conquered) [10], Status 8* [25].

*Includes +3 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Sense of Duty (the security and peace of the Persian empire) [-10].

Quirks

Curious; Has little patience for excess; May believe his own propaganda; Thinks hard work builds health and character. [-4]

Skills

Administration-13 [2], Area Knowledge (Persian Empire)-12 [½], Bard-13 [½], Bow-12 [4], Brawling-11 [½], Diplomacy-13 [4], Leadership-17 [6], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-13 [4], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Shield-12 [1], Shortsword-13 [4], Spear-12 [2], Spear Throwing-13 [2], Strategy-15 [8], Theology-10 [½].

Languages

Persian (native)-13 [0], Aramaic-12 [1]

This is Cyrus at the height of his empire. Though his abilities are largely the same during his earlier conquering period, he may drop a level of Status, his Reputation, and one or more levels of Wealth. It is intended as an understated version; one more in line with the praise of his followers and Xenophon's view would include a few more points in attributes and at least Attractive appearance.

BIOGRAPHY

Hereditary king of the nation of Anshan, servant to the Median empire, Cyrus grew to be the greatest conqueror the world had ever seen to that date. Tradition held that he was given to a servant to dispose of after the Median emperor Astyages had a disturbing dream predicting the loss of his empire at Cyrus' hands. He was then either raised by a wild dog or peasants before returning to his now-sorrowful grandfather. Historically, he was born to Astyages's daughter



Mandane and King Cambyses (Kumajiya) of Anshan, but his actual childhood went largely unrecorded.

Once he succeeded to the throne of Anshan, Cyrus was a loyal servant of Astyages until an opportunity arose to better himself. This came when Nabonidus (Nabu Naid) secured the throne of a resurgent Babylon and began to retake lands conquered by the Medes. In alliance, Nabonidus and Cyrus waged a two-front war against Astyages. Though initially outnumbered, Cyrus twice swelled his ranks when Astyages' armies, the first under the leadership of Astyages' mistreated general, Harpagas, turned traitor. By 550 B.C., five years after the commencement of his reign, Cyrus ruled the Persians and the Medes. The alliance with Babylon was over.

Prompted by Lydian adventurism under the doomed King Croesus, Cyrus ignored Babylon and turned against the Asian Greek kingdom of Lydia. After some opening battles, Cyrus pressed his advantage and caught Croesus before his allies could gather. Heeding Harpagas' advice to use camels to spook the famous Lydian cavalry, Cyrus routed the Lydians, capturing Croesus later in the siege of Sardis. According to the History, Cyrus ordered Croesus burned on a pyre, only to see him saved by Apollo, thus prompting the acceptance of Croesus as a trusted adviser. Other legends stated that the failed king escaped to mythic lands far to the north. It is likely that he simply burned himself to avoid capture. Cyrus followed this victory with a sweep through cities on the Greek mainland, taking many in peaceful conquest.

After defeating the Lydians, the only major powers remaining were Egypt and Babylon. Following a campaign in the east to clean up several minor powers, Cyrus turned his attention toward the failing Chaldean monarchy in Mesopotamia. Nabonidus, enthralled by visions of restoring an obscure temple to the moon god, had placed his son Belshazzar (Bel-shar-usur) over Babylon itself. Angered by this tremendous act of neglect and the shirking of the important New Year ceremony, the citizens and powerful priesthood of Babylon were ready for a new ruler. The Jewish expatriate community in Babylon, always prophesying the imminent destruction of their captors and a return of Zion, saw Cyrus as a possible savior. From 540-539 B.C., the Persian army marched across Babylonia, as Nabonidus retreated, taking the gods from each city along with him. In 539, with their king fled to Uruk, the populace of Babylon opened its gates to Cyrus.

As King of Kings, Cyrus was a decent ruler to all his conquered subjects. Medes were rarely treated differently from Persians, as evidenced by the Greeks' tendency to call any Persian a Mede. Cyrus was especially interested in being seen as a religiously devoted king, regardless of the gods in question. He distributed declarations announcing that Marduk, ruler of the Babylonian pantheon, had chosen him to replace the weak, evil king Nabonidus. He returned the images of gods that had been placed in Babylon during the earlier retreat, as well as shipping statues of gods stolen during earlier Babylonian conquests back to their original owners. He returned the temple items of the Jews and ordered the temple in Jerusalem rebuilt. It is impossible to say whether Cyrus believed any of this, but he was an expert in satisfying the masses.

Cyrus slowly expanded his empire until his death in 530, adding Phoenicia and several eastern regions. He was killed fighting the rebellious Massagetae in the empire's northeast.

Encountered

Probably a bit plainer than many subjects expect, Cyrus is a man of intelligence and pragmatism. He is keenly aware that the easiest path to victory is giving people what they want, and he's smart enough to take the advice of others when he plans. His interest in intriguing things and people, as exemplified by the Croesus story, should be evident to anyone who spends time around him.

— Alexander Shearer

Further Reading:

Herodotus: *The History*.

Xenophon: *Cyropaedia*.

WHAT IF?

A WORLD WITHOUT CYRUS

It is quite likely that any reasonably ambitious king of Anshan would have jumped at the chance to ally with Nabonidus against Media. For anyone other than Cyrus, however, further conquest would have been a much greater leap. Unthreatened by a strong Persia on its borders, Babylon might have had time to get its act together and recover from poor rule. More likely, the Greeks would have rolled over Mesopotamia and eventually dominated the ancient world, much as Alexander would centuries later.

FOR WANT OF A MAN

The easiest way to give Cyrus a significantly shorter career is to keep Harpagus from turning traitor and taking the first Median army with him. Pragmatists would want to eliminate Harpagus, while kind souls could remove his motivation by changing history so Astyages did not kill his son. Deprived of Harpagus' aid, Cyrus would have either lost or been stalemated in his first battle. The net result is total defeat or lingering war, each resulting in a weakened Persian state that is no match for the Lydians when Croesus comes knocking.

Assassinating Cyrus at a later date would send his empire into chaos, unless a clever successor could hold things together. Conversely, a Cyrus who lived through Massagetae might have fulfilled his ambition of conquering Egypt and the rest of Greece. The latter conquest would be the most important in preventing the eventual defeat of Persia by Greece and the development of Western culture as we know it.

BELOVED OF THE GODS

Cyrus made a point of emphasizing his special role relative to the gods of his subjects, and many of them agreed. The priests of Babylon supported him, and the Babylonian Jews even believed he had been appointed by God to rescue them (Isaiah 45). Apollo's oracles universally gave him their support, even going so far as to mislead poor Croesus about his fate. What if there really was something to all of this?

Cyrus could be the beloved of one or all of the gods (or some other superhuman power), destined to rule the world in messianic peace. Looking at some of his early victories, one could believe in a bit of divine intervention. What does it mean, then, that Cyrus died when he did? Maybe the gods of Egypt, rejecting the others' plan, worked a subtle alliance with minor Central Asian deities . . .

Xenophon

Total Points: 141

Born 431 B.C.; died c.351 B.C.

Age 30; 5'9", 150 lbs. A handsome Greek man, in simple clothes without ornament, or in military gear.

ST: 12 [20]	DX: 11 [10]	Speed: 5.75
IQ: 10 [-]	HT: 12 [20]	Move: 7*
Dodge: 6	Parry: 7	Block: 7

*Includes Running bonus.

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15], Comfortable Wealth [10], Handsome Appearance [15], Literacy* [0], Military Rank 5 [25], Status 3** [5].

*Free from Status; see p. GR72.

**Includes two free levels for Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Athenian gentleman) [-10], Overconfidence [-10], Stubbornness [-5], Vow (Get the Ten Thousand back to Greek territory) [-5].

Quirks

Admires Socrates; Conservative and disdainful of democracy; Fond of hunting; Gets along well with Spartans and Persians; Neat, punctilious about sacrifices. [-5]

Skills

Acrobatics-8 [½], Administration-9 [1], Agronomy-8 [½], Animal Handling-11 [6], Area Knowledge (Athens)-10 [1], Bard-11 [4], Carousing-11 [1], Cooking-9 [½], First Aid-9 [½], Hiking-12 [2], History-8 [1], Leadership-12 [6], Literature-9 [2], Musical Instrument (Lyre)-7 [½], Net-8 [½], Packing-8 [1], Philosophy-7 [½], Politics-9 [1], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-13 [8], Running-10 [1], Sacrifice-8 [1], Savoir-Faire-12 [0], Savoir-Faire (Military)-10 [1], Scrounging-9 [½], Shield-12 [2], Shortsword-10 [1], Singing-12 [1], Spear-12 [4], Spear Throwing-10 [½], Stealth-9 [½], Strategy-8 [1], Tactics-9 [2], Tracking-8 [½], Wrestling-10 [1], Writing-9 [1].

Languages

Greek (native)-10 [0], Persian-8 [½].

Equipment

As a Greek citizen with the associated military training, Xenophon would always be sure to have armor, shield, spear, and sword available if he might need them. During the expedition that developed into the March of the Ten Thousand, he brought several horses.

This is Xenophon during the March of the Ten Thousand, early in his life but his most memorable adven-



ture. His skills reflect his education as an Athenian aristocrat, a student of Socrates, and a veteran of the cavalry; he will learn more through this adventure, and his literary skills will be higher later in his life. Contemporary accounts describe him as notably handsome, and his meeting with Socrates, who had an eye for male beauty, supports this.

BIOGRAPHY

Xenophon was born near Athens in 431 B.C. into a prosperous family, and served in the Athenian cavalry during the war with Sparta of 431-404 B.C.. While in Athens, he met Socrates on the street, and Socrates invited him to become one of his students on the spot, though Xenophon never became part of the inner circle that discussed deep philosophical questions. He was a supporter of the antidemocratic

party in Athens and became entangled in its excesses, to his later regret. As a result, when democratic government was restored in 401 B.C., he found it necessary to leave. He was not present for the trial and execution of Socrates in 399 B.C., though he later wrote three books about them.

Like many Greeks, Xenophon found employment as a mercenary soldier in the Persian Empire. He was part of a force recruited by Cyrus, the younger son of Darius the Great, to seize the throne from his brother Artaxerxes. When the two met, Cyrus led a charge against Artaxerxes, hoping to kill him personally, but was himself killed. Artaxerxes hesitated to attack the Greek mercenaries, whose hoplite tactics his Persian cavalymen found difficult to overcome. Instead he first negotiated a truce under which the Greeks would march out of the Persian Empire, and then invited the Greek leaders to further negotiations and had them seized and killed. But Xenophon took charge, rallied the Greeks, and led the survivors – the “Ten Thousand” – on a march from Mesopotamia through Kurdistan and Armenia to Trapezus, a Greek city on the Black Sea, reaching it in 400 B.C. This exploit formed the basis for his most famous book, the *Anabasis*.

Returning to Greece, Xenophon continued his military career, serving with Agesilaus II of Sparta. During renewed conflicts between Sparta and Athens, he was officially banished from Athens. After the death of Agesilaus, he moved to Corinth in 371 B.C. and was then allowed to return to Athens in 365 B.C., where he became an author. His sons served in the Athenian cavalry, and one died before him in battle, evoking his famous comment, “I knew my son was mortal.” His last book, written 355 B.C., proposed a political and legal basis for lasting peace between the Greek cities.

Xenophon in History

Xenophon had little *direct* impact on history. Though he was admired in the ancient world, he was neither a great military commander nor a great historian; the *Anabasis* survives because its straightforward style and the interest of the events it recounts make it an ideal book for students of Greek. The March of the Ten Thousand is one of the memorable adventures of history; it *did* once again demonstrate the effectiveness of Greek troops against anything the Persians could throw at them, a lesson not lost on the likes of Alexander the Great.

Encountered

Xenophon is interested in intellectual matters, but is not intellectually brilliant. He could be a prototype for the Roman and British elite who grew up learning Greek from his books: practical, competent, and conservative, taking it for granted that the customs he grew up with are proper and decent, and with few contemplative or speculative interests. He judges people by their character and worships the gods without thinking much about them. Despite his good looks and aristocratic manners, he usually knows how to get things done. This version does not have the Common Sense advantage, but he should be played that way. If PCs are under his command, he will make sure they do their duty, by example if possible, by punishment if necessary.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Anderson, J. K.: *Xenophon*.
Xenophon: *Anabasis*.

WHAT IF?

If Xenophon had been killed before the March of the Ten Thousand, would someone else have stepped in to lead the Greeks to safety? There were other potential leaders among them, some more experienced than Xenophon. On the other hand, the Greeks were on the edge of surrendering to Artaxerxes. Had they done so, the West would have lost one of its great examples of the military virtues and of victory over the East, one that Roman senators and English army officers were raised on. Could the loss of one inspiring story hold back the rise of the West?

AMONG THE VICTORS

If Cyrus' daring attack on Artaxerxes had worked, Xenophon would have found himself on the winning side. Cyrus had promised the Greek commanders that he would remember their help with rewards and offices. Xenophon might have had a longer career as a mercenary in Persia, or even been appointed to the staff of a Greek satrap in Cyrus's service, helping to create a Helleno-Persian cultural synthesis comparable to the Hellenism that followed Alexander's conquests. Xenophon's own writings express an extravagant admiration for Cyrus; perhaps he might have become the principal Greek propagandist for the Persian Empire.

On the other hand, that admiration might not have lasted so long if Cyrus had lived. If political exigencies had prevented Cyrus from rewarding the Greeks as he promised, an embittered Xenophon might have gone back to Greece to stir up anti-Persian feeling. Alexander might have found it even more difficult to bring the Greeks and Persians together with such a cultural background.

A DIFFERENT EMPIRE

Science fiction is full of outer-space empires and mercenaries, and the Ten Thousand were not the last mercenaries to be stranded far from home with an expired contract. A merc force in *GURPS Traveller*, for example, might find themselves half a continent away from the only starport on a planet, and need to fight their way to transport home. A few changes of skills, and they could have a young, handsome staff officer stepping into the place of their murdered commanders, determined to rely on their own weapons and combat skills rather than trust the local authorities.

Born 384 B.C.; died 322 B.C.

Age 50; 5'9", 100 lbs.; A Greek man with skinny legs, a slight lisp, and a reserved manner, usually dressed in expensive clothes and wearing jewelry.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5

IQ: 17 [100] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Comfortable Wealth [10], Literacy* [0], Reputation +1 (Learned man) [5], Status 1 [5].

*Free from Status; see p. GR72.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Hellenic Gentleman) [-10], Intolerance (Non-Hellenes) [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Reputation -3 (among Greek patriots, as pro-Macedonian: 10-) [-4], Sense of Duty: family [-5], Skinny [-5], Social Stigma (non-Athenian) [-5].

Quirks

Admires Plato; Book collector (interested in natural history); Fancy dresser; Lisps; Loyal to his native town, Stagiros. [-5]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Athens)-17 [1], Astronomy-15 [1], Bard-16 [1], Literature-17 [4], Mathematics-15 [1], Meteorology-16 [1], Naturalist-19 [8], Philosophy-21 [12], Physician-15 [1], Physics-17 [4], Physiology-17 [8], Poetry-15 [½], Psychology-17 [4], Research-16 [1], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-9 [1], Savoir-Faire-19 [0], Shield-9 [½], Shortsword-8 [½], Spear-8 [½], Teaching-17 [2], Writing-15 [½].

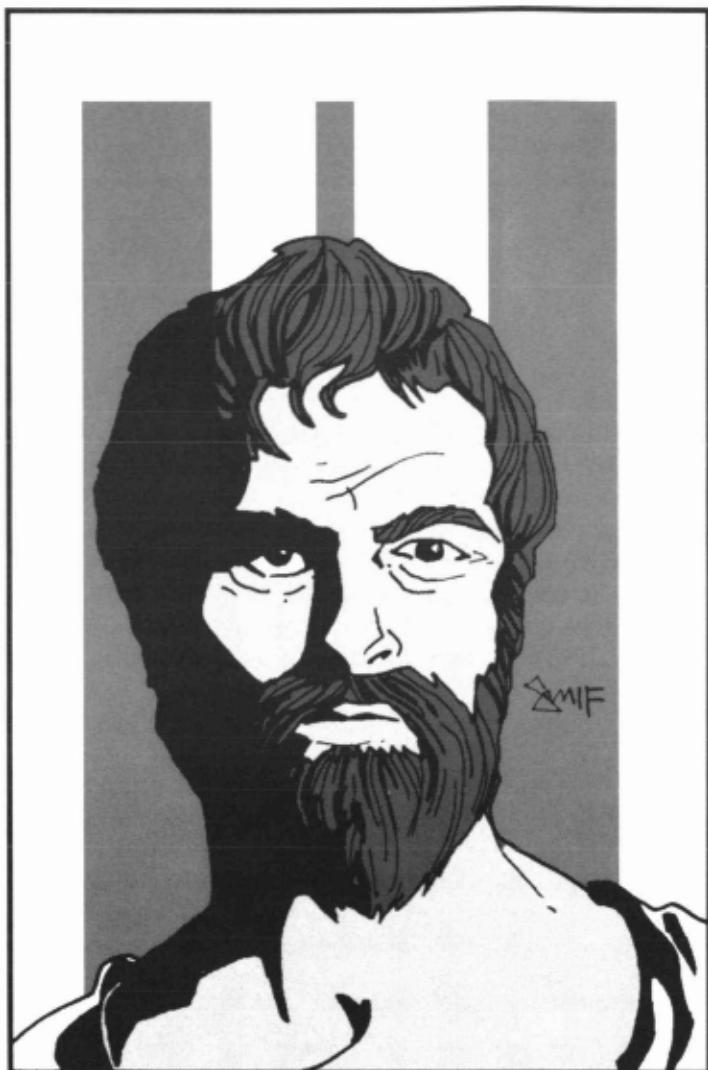
Languages

Greek (native)-17 [0].

Equipment

Aristotle's most prized possession is his large library.

Aristotle is less well known than we think. Even his philosophical works aren't purely his, but were put together after his death from lecture notes. He lectured on nearly every field of knowledge of his time, including some that he was the first to study systematically. Some of his personal life is visible in documents such as his will (which provided generously for his second wife but asked that he be buried with his first). A few fragments of his literary works show some of his feelings about his friends. Some records, but not all, support this description of his appearance.



"Anyone can become angry – that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not easy."

– Aristotle

His skills are learned at TL2, and his mathematical knowledge is also that of his era. Note that much of this "knowledge" would appear odd to modern scientists, to put it politely, and its predictive power is limited. On a successful skill roll, he will produce an answer that is correct on his era's terms; on a critical success, it might even be useful or innovative.

As a Greek citizen of his time, Aristotle would have received at least rudimentary training in hoplite weapons – spear, sword, and shield – but he would not usually go armed. His Status could arguably be higher, given his connections with the Macedonian rulers; the faculty of his school might well constitute a small Ally Group.

BIOGRAPHY

Aristotle was born in Macedonia, in the Greek colony of Stagiros; his father, Nicomachos, was court physician to Amyntas III, later to be the grandfather of Alexander. At 17, not long after his father's death, Aristotle went to Athens to study with Plato in the Academy. He remained there for 20 years, until Plato's death, writing dialogues and other literary works.

In 347 B.C., he moved to Assos, a Persian client state ruled by a Greek soldier, Hermeias, who had brought in several students of Plato as teachers. That same year Aristotle married Hermeias' niece Pythias, though she died fairly soon and he later married a woman named Herpyllis. He spent the next few years in Assos and on the nearby island of Lesbos, where he studied natural history.

In 342 B.C., Philip of Macedon invited Aristotle to tutor his son Alexander, then 13 (see the next entry). Tragically, this led to the torture and death of Hermeias, suspected of supporting the Macedonians; Aristotle wrote a verse epitaph in his honor. Aristotle's teaching of Alexander focused on the *Iliad*, in the hope that Alexander would emulate the Greek heroes and gain Greek civilization its rightful mastery of the world. Despite Alexander's victories, he and Aristotle became estranged by Alexander's treating the Persians as equals and by his executing Aristotle's nephew, Callisthenes – though Alexander did rebuild Stagiros, which Philip had destroyed.

In 335 B.C., Aristotle returned to Athens and, supported by the Macedonian governor Antipater, founded the Lykaion, his own school. (The character sheet depicts him at this time.) Aided by his best students, he taught courses on numerous subjects until 322, when Alexander died and he found himself under political attack once again. He retired to Chalcis, turning the Lykaion over to Theophrastus, and died not long after of a stomach ailment. His will asked that his first wife's bones be buried with him, in accord with her last wishes.

Aristotle in History

Aristotle was, as Dante called him, "the master of those who know," for many centuries – for the ancient world, for Islam, and for Europe after 1200. The subjects in his curriculum, some of which he created himself, became the principal sciences of later centuries. Unfortunately, his later followers turned his ideas into a rigid system that became an obstacle to the growth of knowledge. Aristotle contributed to this by his overwhelming intellectual confidence, but he was willing to admit ignorance and his successors at the Lykaion felt free to point out his errors, so the fault isn't all his. Even today, he stands as one of philosophy's two or three greatest figures.

Encountered

Aristotle will typically be encountered at the Lykaion, where he spends much of his time teaching. He will be somewhat formal, and will regard non-Greeks with condescension at best. A reasoned argument or well-phrased question will stir his interest in a visitor, though. Books or specimens of unusual animals will also interest him. He praises friendship as the greatest reward of virtue, and has a few close friends who deeply influence his life. Greek men do not treat their wives as equals, but a visitor who gets to know him well will realize his devotion to his wife and children and his pride in his background.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Ackrill, J.L.: *Aristotle the Philosopher*.

Barnes, Jonathan (Ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*.

Brentano, Franz: *Aristotle and His World View*.

Farrington, Benjamin: *Aristotle: Founder of Scientific Philosophy*.

Garfinkle, Richard: *Celestial Matters* (a hard SF novel in a world where Aristotle's scientific theories are true).

Lloyd, G.E.R.: *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought*.

WHAT IF?

THE ECLIPSE

Removing Aristotle from history would leave it almost unrecognizable. The curriculum of his school set the pattern for education for two thousand years, not least in his insistence that the educated man had to know about all aspects of the world. His philosophy provided the intellectual basis for that pursuit; a Western civilization whose sole great philosopher was Plato would look much more like India – preoccupied with otherworldly mysticism and with the abstractions of grammar and mathematics, but with no basis for natural science. If Islam had still arisen somehow, it would have lacked its greatest intellectual stimulus to scientific activity, giving medieval Christendom no source from which to adopt the idea of rational inquiry as a worthy activity in its own right. Technical advances might have taken place, but more slowly, on a purely empirical basis without theory; the West would have remained one among several world civilizations, with the Industrial Revolution delayed or prevented.

Why would anyone want to bring this about? It might make sense to a time traveler from a future where technology had ruined the world, or to a mystic who saw the rise of reason as an evil to be aborted. Then, too, the rise of the West had a price tag, paid by much of the rest of the world: colonial empires, slavery, and the infiltration of Western ideas into traditional cultures. Perhaps a sufficiently fanatical time traveler might think the destruction of his own future was a bearable price for aborting Western dominion.

THE SECOND SOCRATES

A traditional story says that Aristotle was facing trial by hostile Athenian citizens when he fled to Chalcis, saying that Socrates's martyrdom was enough. A prouder or less perceptive Aristotle might have refused to leave. At that point, time travelers could face the challenge of getting him out of Athens alive, either as agents of the Macedonian government or as Athenian citizens fearing Macedonian vengeance for his death. Maybe this wasn't even a change in history, but the true story behind Aristotle's escape!

THE MYSTIC

Many Aristotelian ideas survive in magical traditions – ideas such as the four earthly elements and the quintessence of which the heavens are made. But what if Aristotle had lived in a world of magic? In his youth he was a Platonist, preoccupied with immortality. Might his investigations have brought order to magical knowledge?

Alexander the Great

Total Points: 278½

Born 356 B.C.; died 323 B.C.

Age 28; 5'4", 150 lbs.; a muscular, dark-blond man with mismatched eyes and a smooth, ruddy complexion; always richly but practically dressed; if armored, wearing a brightly polished silver helmet with a white plume.

ST: 12 [20]	DX: 12 [20]	Speed: 6.5
IQ: 14 [45]	HT: 14 [45]	Move: 8*
Dodge: 7	Parry: 7	Block: 7

*Includes Running bonus

Advantages

Attractive [5], Charisma +4 [20], Combat Reflexes [15], Hard to Kill +1 [5], Literacy* [0], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire ×1 [75], Reputation +3 (Among his troops and other soldiers who know his record: military genius); [7], Status 8** [30], Strong Will +2 [8].

*Free, from Status; see p. GR72.

**Includes +2 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Alcoholism [-15], Delusion (Son of Zeus-Ammon) [-10], Duty (King of Macedon) [-15], Fanaticism (self) [-15], Megalomania [-10], Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks

Holds grudges; Identifies with Achilles; Flamboyantly brave in combat; Generous; Releases any Theban prisoner. [-5]

Skills

Astrology-11 [½], Bard-16 [½], Bow-11 [2], Boxing-11 [1], Climbing-11 [1], Engineering (Combat)/TL2-11 [½], History-11 [½], Leadership-18 [2], Literature-12 [1], Musical Instrument (Lyre)-12 [1], Lance-12 [1 ½], Naturalist-12 [1], Philosophy-12 [1], Physician/TL1-12 [1], Politics-12 [½], Riding (Horse)-14 [8], Running-14 [4], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Shield-12 [1], Shortsword-12 [2], Spear-13 [4], Spear Throwing-13 [2], Strategy-22 [20], Survival (mountains)-12 [½], Tactics-16 [0], Tracking-12 [½], Wrestling-11 [1].

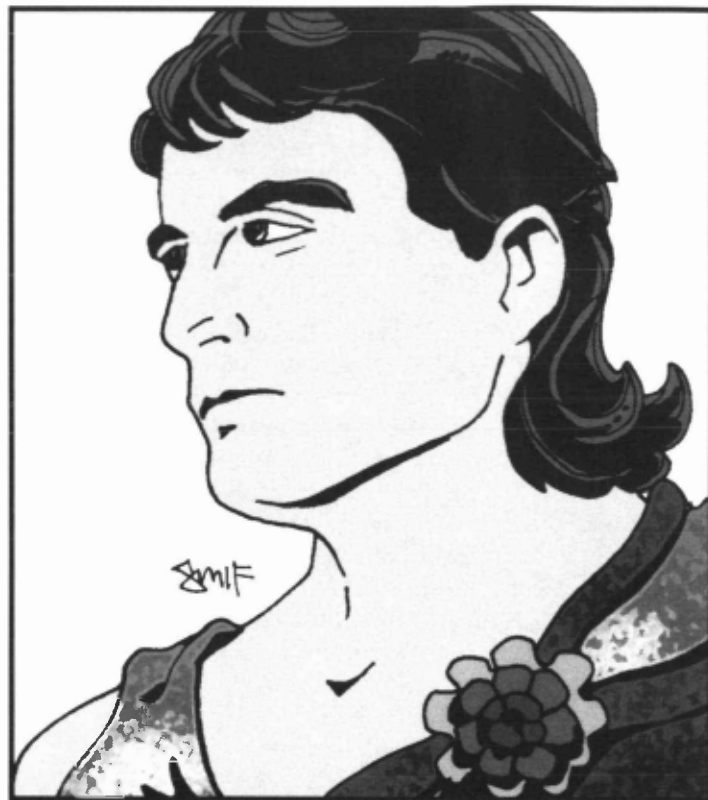
Languages

Greek (native)-14 [0], Persian-12 [½].

Equipment

Alexander carries a shortsword at all times, but his real weapon is the spear. He probably usually favors a short, handy stabbing spear rather than a long cavalry lance.

The above represents Alexander in March, 327 B.C. It is a rough compromise, weighted toward realism, between the



“Noble Alexander” and the “Tyrant Alexander,” two views going back to the earliest histories. For the Noble Alexander, remove Alcoholism and replace Megalomania with Destiny or Higher Purpose (Unify mankind). The noble Alexander traditionally has a Code of Honor calling for the protection of women and tolerance of all races. For the Tyrant, adding Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Callous, Manic-Depressive, and Paranoia recreates a sociopathic mass murderer. The Delusion can occur in either version, or be removed as propaganda. Both versions agree that Alexander possessed unequalled military skills. Both also agree that Alexander became harsher and less well-balanced after hard campaigning in the East broke his stamina; in addition to any personality changes after 326 B.C., remove Hard to Kill and reduce HT to 12.

Arguably, his personal bodyguards, staff, and friends represented an Ally Group of medium size, with formidable members, present almost all the time. Alexander earns no character points for game sessions in which he orders the execution of, or drunkenly murders, any members of this Ally Group.

BIOGRAPHY

The son of King Philip II of Macedon and Olympias of Epiros had much to live up to. His father created the greatest army in Greek history and turned Macedon from a barbarian backwater into the master of Greece. Alexander inherited this when the nobleman Pausanias (almost certainly in conspiracy

WHAT IF?

If Alexander had never been born, it is quite possible that Philip would not have been assassinated; without an heir to protect, Olympias would have had no leverage at court. Philip's invasion of Persia would have been longer and less dramatic, but Macedonian military superiority would surely still prevail; by 323 B.C., Macedon might have controlled Anatolia and Syria, allied with an independent Egypt against the Persian Empire. Such a powerful Macedon might have held off Rome, or the struggle of three great powers might have devastated Hellenistic civilization.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Alexander's career can be cut short at any time if one of the wounds or illnesses he sustained kills him. Time travelers might also wish to extend Alexander's empire, most likely by curing his fatal illness in Babylon and lengthening his life until Alexander IV (his son by Roxane) can succeed him. Depending on the drama of the intervention, time travelers could also persuade Alexander to turn west rather than continue to India; Livy to the contrary, Rome would have fallen to Alexander's genius. Somehow preventing the mutiny on the Beas would allow Alexander to conquer northern India, bringing Buddhism and higher mathematics into the heart of Western civilization. Toynbee even suggested that a longer-lived Alexander might have marched up the Silk Road, intervened in the conquests of Ch'in, and added China to an empire reaching from Peking to the Pillars of Heracles.

A more subtle way of preserving Alexander's empire is ensuring that Alexander marries and produces an heir before leaving Macedon. Assisted by the greatest general staff until Napoleon, even an average king could surely hold on to Alexander's conquests, cementing the empire and dynasty for generations.

GODS AND MONSTERS

Elements of the supernatural and the uncanny followed Alexander all his life, from his mother's snake-worship rituals to his death in the month of Tammuz the Dying God, ringed around with omens from Chaldean sorcerers and Greek seers. Later romance held that Alexander had harnessed gryphons to his chariot, penned up the evil giants Gog and Magog behind a mighty brazen wall, and sought the Fountain of Youth. More prosaically, there is good reason to suspect that Alexander was poisoned by a conspiracy headed by his childhood tutor Aristotle. Whether Aristotle was a patsy for the Nine Unknown Masters fearful of Alexander's intentions against their Indian stronghold, or whether he served some other power, is up to the GM.

with Olympias) assassinated Philip in 336 B.C.. After putting down revolts among the mountain tribes and leveling the rebel city of Thebes, Alexander invaded Asia, defeating the Persians at Granicus in 334 and the Great King Darius III himself at Issus in 333. Moving down the coast, he sacked Tyre and Gaza, entering Egypt in 332 as a liberator. While there, Alexander visited the Oracle of Ammon-Ra at Siweh, which proclaimed him the son of Zeus-Ammon.

Emerging from Egypt, he decisively crushed Darius again at Gaugamela despite being outnumbered five to one. He followed Darius into Asia, burning the Persian capital, Persepolis, in 330. After the general Bessus murdered Darius, Alexander pursued Bessus into mountainous Central Asia. He spent the next three years defeating rebel Persian generals and conquering the tribes of Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and Sogdiana. While in Sogdiana, he drunkenly murdered a Macedonian nobleman, Cleitus the Black, who had saved his life at Granicus. He also married Roxane, daughter of a Sogdian monarch; by this (and by founding at least five garrison cities, all named Alexandria) he gained Sogdian allegiance and was able to turn his attention to India.

He crossed the Hindu Kush in 327, and allied himself with King Ambhi of Taxila. At the Jhelum River, he defeated Ambhi's rival Porus, making himself the master of the Punjab. However, on the banks of the Beas River, his army mutinied, refusing to march any further. This forced Alexander to turn back, marching down the Indus (where he nearly died during the siege of Mallia) and across the deadly Gedrosian Desert. His wounds, the desert and his near-constant drinking weakened him; he died of a fever in Babylon in 323 B.C.. His last words left his empire "to the greatest," and he predicted "great funeral games" upon his death. His generals divided up Alexander's empire in civil war, fulfilling this prophecy.

Alexander in History

Bizarrely enough, the greatest impact of Alexander the half-barbarian conqueror was cultural. The collapse of his empire saw his successors turning Alexandrian tactics on each other, but the fusion of Greek, Persian, (and to a lesser extent) Jewish and Indian elements into one "Hellenistic" society reshaped everything from sculpture to mathematics. Although Greek culture already permeated the eastern Mediterranean, Alexander's conquests took Hellenism farther east and gave it a distinctively urban and mercantile character (Alexandria-in-Egypt being only the most famous and successful of the 30 cities Alexander founded), while his inheritors brought Persian divine kingship into the West to replace moribund Greek democracy. Even now, Alexander is both folk-hero and folk-demon in lands from Iceland to China; this heroic myth inspired Caesar, Napoleon and others.

Encountered

Alexander's force of personality, energy, and vast personal magnetism appear in the most sober histories and bitter attacks. His characteristic posture (head cocked slightly upward and to the left with a half-smile) set fads in art (and probably court society) for centuries. Whether it was due to a childhood deformity or injury, bouts of epilepsy, or simple affectation, is impossible to say. Alexander's high-pitched voice carried a tune reasonably well, and must have been distinctive on the battlefield.

Educated by Aristotle (see the previous entry), Alexander will react with analytical curiosity to anything new or different. He craves information about the countries ahead of him, and respects men of learning as long as they show him deference. Nonetheless, he remains a mountain nobleman, superstitious and mercurially quick to anger and grandiosity.

— Kenneth Hite

Further Reading:

Bosworth, A.B.: *Conquest and Empire*.

Green, Peter: *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*

Renault, Mary: *The Nature of Alexander*.

Born 259 B.C.; died 210 B.C.

Age 30; 5'8", 155 lbs.; a physically fit Chinese man in extraordinarily expensive clothing.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 5

Advantages

Ally: Li Ssu (12-) [10], Literacy (Local scripts) [10], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire x1 [75], Status 7* [25], Strong Will +1 [4].

*Includes +2 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Bloodlust [-10], Delusion (Magic really works) [-5], Enemies (Other Chinese states) (6-) [-20], Fanaticism (Self) [-15], Honesty [-10], Megalomania [-10], Workaholic [-5].

Quirks

Desires immortality; Reacts favorably to plain speech; Hostile to Confucianism; Proud of Ch'in heritage. [-4]

Skills

Acting-12 [1], Administration-15 [6], Animal Handling-12 [2], Area Knowledge (Ch'in)-15 [4], Area Knowledge (China)-14 [2], Bow-10 [4], Broadsword-10 [2], Calligraphy-9 [1], Carousing-10 [1], Diplomacy-12 [2], History-11 [1], Intelligence Analysis-11 [1], Intimidation-16 [8], Law-12 [2], Psychology-11 [1], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Strategy-14 [6], Tactics-12 [2], Teamster-12 [1].

Languages

Classical Chinese (native)-13 [0].

The above represents Shih Huang Ti as the king of Ch'in, before he conquered the rest of China. This is probably the most interesting point for PCs to encounter him, as he still faces opposition from the other kingdoms. Later, he will have at least one more level of Multimillionaire, with the accompanying Status 8, and will develop Paranoia and an Obsession with immortality.

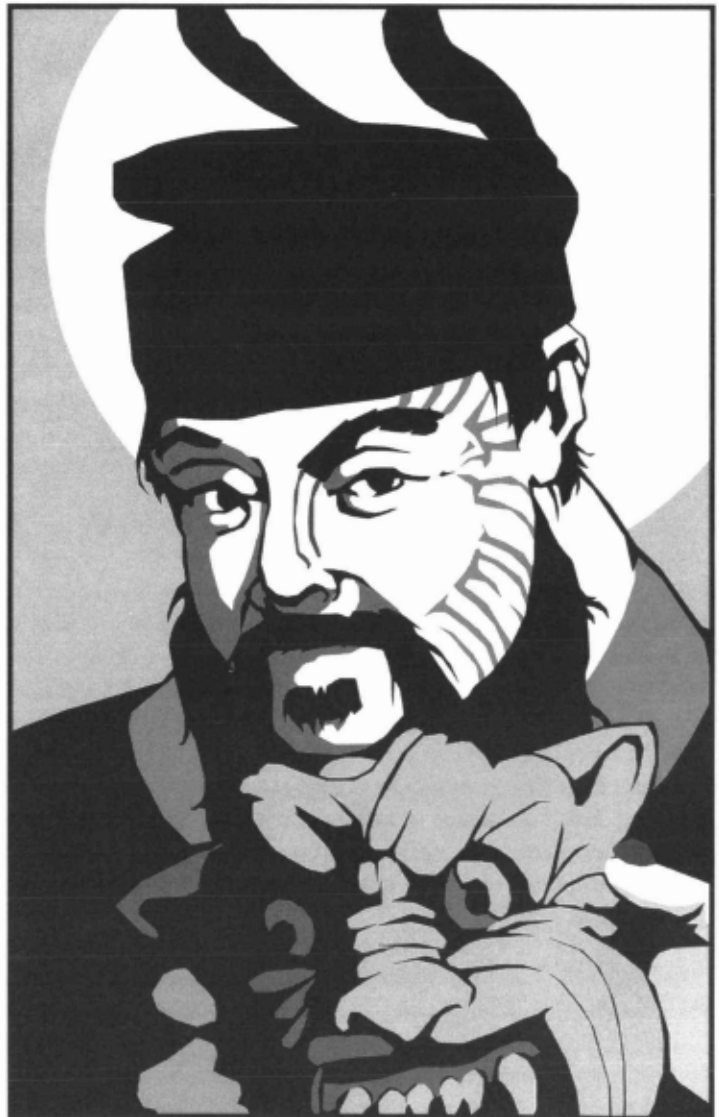
Historians disagree on whether Shih Huang Ti was the architect of his own victories or a tool of his highest ranking minister, Li Ssu. This description assumes that he had some measure of ability, as shown by his ruthless elimination of the regent, Lu Pu-wei, as soon as he reached 21. His hard work in administration is documented; he is reported to have read many pounds of reports daily. His physical fitness and military skills are based on Ch'in's warrior tradition; they would have been expected of a ruler.

BIOGRAPHY

Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, the name by which we remember him, defines his identity in political terms: "Chin First Emperor." He was born Ying Cheng, son of a concubine of the merchant Lu Pu-wei by Chuang Hsiang, heir to the throne of Ch'in, but living as a hostage in Zhao. Lu Pu-wei became Ying Cheng's regent when he ascended to the throne of Ch'in in 246 B.C., at age 13.

Ch'in was a large kingdom in western China, regarded as half-barbaric by other kingdoms. Being close to Central Asia, it was often attacked by nomads and had a militaristic culture. The Legalist philosophy, which emphasized administrative efficiency and harsh penalties for crimes and failures, appealed to its rulers and helped them mobilize its resources for war.

When Ying Cheng came of age in 238 B.C., he quickly consolidated his own power, sending Lu Pu-wei into exile and making the scribe Li Ssu his minister of justice and even-



“Ch’in Shih-huang-ti advanced the theory of the cyclic revolution of the Five Elements. He believed that the authority of Chou had been supplanted by that of Ch’in because Ch’in’s element was water and Chou’s fire. So began the era of the Power of Water . . . In order to inaugurate the Power of Water it was believed that there must be firm repression with everything determined by law. Only ruthless, implacable severity could make the Five Elements accord. So the law was harsh and there were no amnesties.”

– *Ssu-ma Ch’ien (145 – c. 90 B.C.)*

tually head of government. Ch’in began a series of campaigns against the other kingdoms, combining military force with covert means such as bribery and espionage. Their rulers alternated between trying to ally against Ch’in and appeasing it. As a result, they were conquered one by one: Han in 230 B.C., Zhao in 228, Wei in 225, Chu in 223, Yan in 222, and Ch’i in 221. Ying Cheng changed his name to Ch’in Shih Huang Ti, proclaiming that his dynasty would endure for ten thousand generations.

Under his rule, the Chinese feudal aristocracy was replaced with officials appointed through competitive examinations. The empire was divided into 36 commanderies, each with a civil governor, a military commander, and an inspector. Legal codes, writing, and weights and measures were standardized. The emperor’s best general, Meng T’ien, was ordered to build the Great Wall, completed in 214 B.C.; Three-hundred thousand men were drafted to work on this and other public works.

Three assassination attempts, in 227, 219, and 218 B.C., made Ch’in Shih Huang Ti fearful of death; he supported magicians who claimed they could make him immortal. He sent two expeditions to seek the Elixir of Immortality on the islands of the east. Confucian scholars’ criticism of the claims of magicians led to his ordering the burning of all books except law codes and practical works. He undertook repeated tours of inspection, roughly one per two years, but became increasingly isolated and secretive. In 210, he died – according to some accounts, after taking a purported immortality drug. His dynasty fell four years later after the first peasant uprising in Chinese history.

Shih Huang Ti in History

The Chinese are still ambivalent about Ch’in Shih Huang Ti; he is remembered as ruthless and harsh, but the system of examinations and appointments he founded survived for two thousand years. Mao Tse-tung admired his attacks on Confucianism and tried to follow his example. He succeeded in unifying China for the first time, but not in establishing a lasting dynasty. The Great Wall is the greatest physical monument left by any human ruler.

Encountered

If encountered during the period of warfare, Ying Cheng is ruthlessly pragmatic; conciliatory toward those who can help him, harsh toward subordinates, aggressive toward enemies. His commandant, Liao, said that he had the heart of a tiger or wolf. He is superstitious, and believes the claims of magic-workers. Later he becomes obsessed with immortality, suspicious, and secretive; PCs are unlikely to meet him at this point. Throughout his career, he takes the advice of Li Ssu on nearly everything.

– *William H. Stoddard*

Further Reading:

Ssu-ma Ch’ien: *The Grand Scribe’s Records*.

Twitchett, Denis, and Loewe, Michael, Eds.: *The Cambridge History of China (Vol. I)*.

Star Wars (a romanticized portrait of an empire much like the Ch’in Dynasty).

WHAT IF?

PCs could play a major role in Ch’in’s conflicts with the other kingdoms. On one hand, they could work for Ch’in as soldiers or as spies. Ying Cheng could be a terrifying master, but the missions would be exciting. On the other hand, what if the other kingdoms appointed the player characters to lead their common defense against the dark lord of the west? This could be the basis for either a realistic campaign of strategy and intrigue or a massively cinematic one of personal heroism. If successful, the player characters might prevent the unification of China and preserve the traditional feudal system.

What if this happened in the past? Or what if Ying Cheng was never born, or died in the first assassination attempt? China would be very different without its bureaucracy and examinations on the Confucian classics, and with feudal aristocrats still holding power – much more like Europe, in fact. Medieval China was the world’s most advanced nation technologically; could competing states have led to further advances and to naval exploration and colonialism? Even if steppe-nomads still conquered the mainland, there might have been a Chinese Diaspora and new Chinese kingdoms overseas.

THE EASTERN ISLANDS

What if the expeditions into the eastern ocean brought back word of Japan? Hope of immortality, fear of barbarians, and the need for a place to send inconvenient people all would offer reasons to found colonies there, which Japan – a thinly populated country at TLO – would find hard to uproot. The result could be a much more “Chinese” Japan in future centuries. Player characters could come from, or discover, such a Japan, or could be among its founders, colonists fighting off the Rising Sun savages.

TEN THOUSAND YEARS?

In a fantasy setting, what if the alchemists had really been able to extend Ch’in Shih Huang Ti’s life? Centuries later, China might still be under his rule. Would he be more benevolent if freed of fear, or would he become more paranoid and take measures against more remote threats? Either way, his rule would produce an ever-less-Confucian China; Legalism, Taoism, and eventually Buddhism would be much more prevalent.

What if the alchemical treatment had to be renewed, perhaps with rare ingredients? Player characters could be sent on a quest: find and bring back the exotic materials that preserve the Divine Ruler’s immortality!

Julius Caesar

Total Points: 317

Born 102 B.C.; died 44 B.C.

Age 56; 5'6", 135 lbs.; black hair, dark eyes, light skin.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.5

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 7 **Block:** 7

Advantages

Charisma +1 [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Literacy* [0], Military Rank 8 [40], Reputation +1 (Civic Crown) [5], Reputation +3 (Great leader, from his soldiers) [7], Status 8** [25], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire ×3 [125].

*Free, from Status (IR33).

**Includes +3 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Age [-18], Lecherousness [-15], Obsession (Power) [-10], Overconfidence [-10], Reputation -2 (Lecher, adulterer) [-10].

Quirks

Takes the long view; Claims descent from Roman kings and Venus; Courts public opinion; Merciful to Roman opponents; Shares his soldiers' hardships. [-5]

Skills

Administration-15 [4], Area Knowledge (Roman Empire)-15 [2], Bard-16 [4], Brawling-12 [2], Diplomacy-15 [6], Engineer (Combat)-14 [4], History-13 [2], Knife-11 [1], Law-14 [4], Leadership-17 [6], Literature-12 [1], Mathematics-11 [½], Performance-15 [2], Philosophy-12 [1], Poetry-13 [1], Politics-20 [14], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-12 [4], Sacrifice-12 [1], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Savoir-Faire (Military)-14 [1], Sex Appeal-13 [6], Shield-12 [2], Shortsword-12 [4], Strategy-17 [10], Tactics-16 [7 ½], Theology-12 [1], Wrestling-10 [1], Writing-15 [4].

Languages

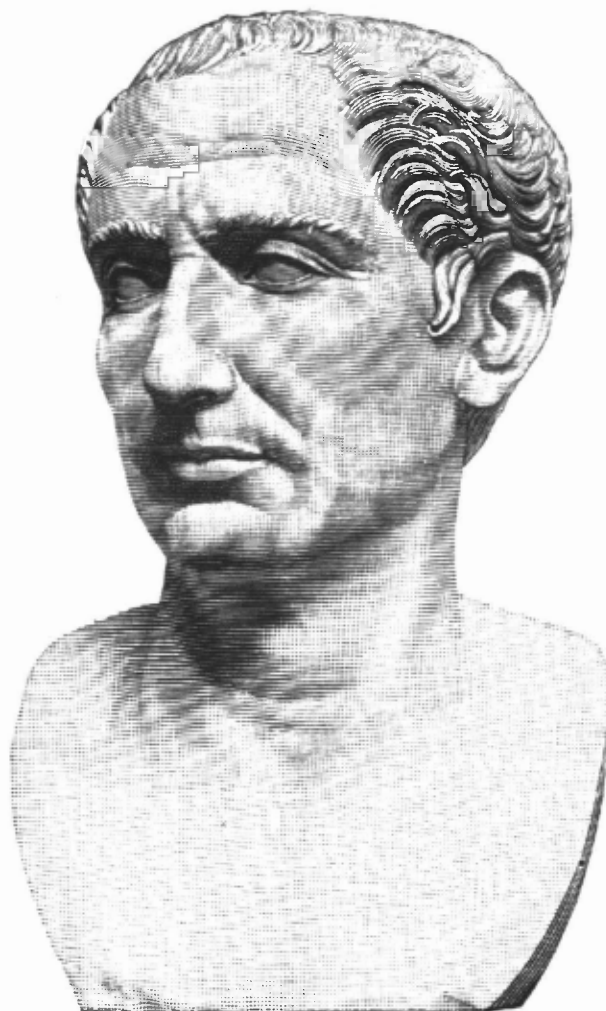
Latin (Native)-15 [1], Greek-13 [1]

Equipment

Caesar dresses as a Roman consul, in white robes with a purple sash. As a general, he wears armor; as dictator, he wears a laurel crown (the mark of having won a Civic Crown).

This is Caesar shortly before his assassination. A younger version, before the Civil Wars, would have a Reputation as a rabble-rouser, Extravagance, and a Patron (Crassus).

As a commander, Caesar pays close attention to planning and supply; however, he often seems to end up fighting on



unfavorable ground. Fortunately, his battlefield maneuvers are often inspired, and he is immensely popular with his troops, fighting alongside them at times; hence, he always wins through.

BIOGRAPHY

Caius Julius Caesar was born in 102 B.C. into a patrician family. The Julians were extremely ancient, claiming descent from the goddess Venus. His uncle Marius was a general and populist politician – an idol that Caesar would emulate.

Even in youth, Caesar took risks; when ordered by the dictator Sulla to divorce his first wife, Cornelia, he refused. He was proscribed, shorn of his property and the high priesthood of Jupiter. He fled Rome and served with the army in Asia, earning a Civic Crown for saving the life of a fellow soldier on Lesbos. A famous story comes from this time; captured by pirates and held for ransom, Caesar insisted that they more than double the ransom demand. When freed, he joked he would return and deal with them. He did exactly that, and crucified the pirates when the local governor vacillated.

Caesar returned to Rome in 78 B.C. after Sulla's death. He set about prosecuting legal cases, to demonstrate his oratory and acquire funds. He also became very active politically, backing Pompeius Magnus, virtual head of the popular party. Caesar established a reputation for adultery as well as pragmatism, but when Clodius, a senator, was caught trying to sneak into a women-only festival held by Caesar's second wife, Caesar divorced her. Shortly afterward, Caesar recruited Clodius to organize street thugs for him.

About this time, Caesar began to associate with Crassus, a financier with incredible wealth. Crassus bankrolled Caesar's extravagant expenses and bribes, in return for helpful legislation. Caesar also pushed for land reform and debt law changes, which made him popular with the masses and unpopular with the senate. In 60 B.C., he, Crassus, and Pompeius (Pompey) formed the Triumvirate, to support one another's political ambitions. After a governorship in Spain, where he conquered most of the peninsula, Caesar was due a Triumph. Denied the right to stand for office *in absentia*, he declined it. In 59 B.C. he was made a Consul. He ignored his conservative colleagues' interference and often the law as well, thus opening himself up to prosecution if he ever left office.

Caesar was given the consulship for Near Gaul and Illyricum, as well as three legions and approval to raise another. To ensure he had enough troops, Caesar gave full Roman citizenship to several Italian towns and all who enrolled in his legions. This was illegal, but ensured that his troops would be loyal only to him. Seizing on a request from Gallic tribesmen to help against a migratory tribe, Caesar went to war. He quickly expanded his expedition into a full-fledged invasion. He spent eight years ruthlessly consolidating his conquest. He imposed a huge indemnity on Gaul, enriching himself and his soldiers. He also briefly invaded the nearly legendary Britain, and crossed the Rhine to defeat a German tribe. His campaign journals were published and widely read.

Meanwhile, the Triumvirate had broken up; Crassus had been killed invading Parthia in 53 B.C., and Pompeius recognized Caesar as his main rival. Returning in 49 B.C., Caesar was ordered to disband his legions and present himself to the Senate. Instead, he invaded Rome and had himself made dictator. Pompeius fled East to build an army.

After years of civil war, Caesar defeated Pompeius' superior force at Pharsalus. Pompeius fled to Egypt, where he was killed. Caesar followed, installed Cleopatra as the sole ruler, and left after consolidating his control. For the next several years, Caesar campaigned to finish off his enemies. He declared himself dictator and consul for life in 44 B.C., but on March 15th, three days before he was to depart to war against Parthia, he was assassinated. At the senate, a group of senators stabbed him to death. He fought back with his metal stylus, and took 23 wounds before dying. He had dismissed his bodyguards, believing that the knowledge that his death would plunge Rome into civil war would discourage any assassins.

His adopted son Octavius and his friend Marcus Antonius first allied, then fought. Octavius defeated Marcus Antonius and his lover Cleopatra. With the civil war ended, Octavius took the title Augustus. Rome was now an empire.

Encountered

Caesar is the quintessential power-hungry politician. He always keeps his eye on the main chance, often making powerful enemies or seemingly unsupportable choices. His decisions are always aimed at advancing himself and Rome. While exceptionally cruel to non-Romans, Caesar is merciful to Roman enemies. He is not superstitious; faced with the unusual, he would probably be pragmatic. He adapts well to circumstances, so weird powers should not leave him off-balance for long.

— Peter V. Dell'Orto

Further Reading:

Grant, Michael. *Julius Caesar*.

Caesar, Julius. *The Gallic Wars*.

Caesar, Julius. *The Civil Wars*.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Caesar took several large gambles in his life, any of which could have ruined him. He paupered himself laying out bribes for various offices, opened himself up for a treason trial, and even (at both Alexandria and Alesia) let himself be besieged by a superior force, using himself as bait to ensure a decisive victory.

The biggest moment of truth was not centered on Julius, but instead on Pompeius – had the senate not alienated him, he would not have needed to join the first Triumvirate. Caesar's route to power would have been greatly impeded. What would he have had to do to reach the top with Pompeius and the Senate working together?

THE IDES OF MARCH

Stopping the Ides of March assassination of Caesar would have a number of historical effects. Had Caesar been able to invade and conquer Parthia (quite likely, given that the general who won Carrhae had been killed by the jealous king), Rome's eastern border would have been secure. Octavius might not have had to fight for his throne, in which case the Second Civil War would not have occurred, and the whole pattern of Roman imperial politics – a sequence of power struggles and assassinations – might have been improved. Warning Caesar about the plot might not work – some historians believe he was aware of it and did nothing, sure it would not come to pass. The assassins – important senators – could not simply be killed with impunity. High-tech body armor might stop the blades . . .



THE DIVINE JULIUS

From Caesar onwards, Roman emperors were likely to be deified – after death, and sometimes in life. Other empires worshipped their rulers as gods, but the Romans were typically systematic about it. If supernatural powers oversee the lives of men, Caesar's career was surely the result of manipulation – to grant him or his heirs apotheosis, or to bring it into disrepute. And that assassination had something of a ritual about it . . .

Boudica (Boadicea)

Total Points: 150½

Born c. A.D. 25; died c. A.D. 60.

Age 36; 5'10"; 150 lbs.; A tall, muscular woman with fiery red hair and pale skin, usually dressed in a striped tunic and cloak.

ST: 12 [20]	DX: 11 [10]	Speed: 5.75
IQ: 10 [-]	HT: 12 [20]	Move: 5
Dodge: 6	Parry: 7	Block: 4

Advantages

Attractive [5], Charisma +3 [15], Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness +2 [4], Reputation +2 (Among Britons, as a brave and victorious queen) [5], Status 7 [35].

Disadvantages

Bloodlust [-10], Dependents (Two daughters; 26-50-point characters; 12-) [-24], Obsession (To avenge herself and her daughters) [-5], Reputation -2 (Merciless barbarian, among Romans in Britain: 10-) [-2], Selfish [-5].

Quirks

Cocky; Mildly disturbing voice; Quick to placate her troops; Religious. [-4]

Skills

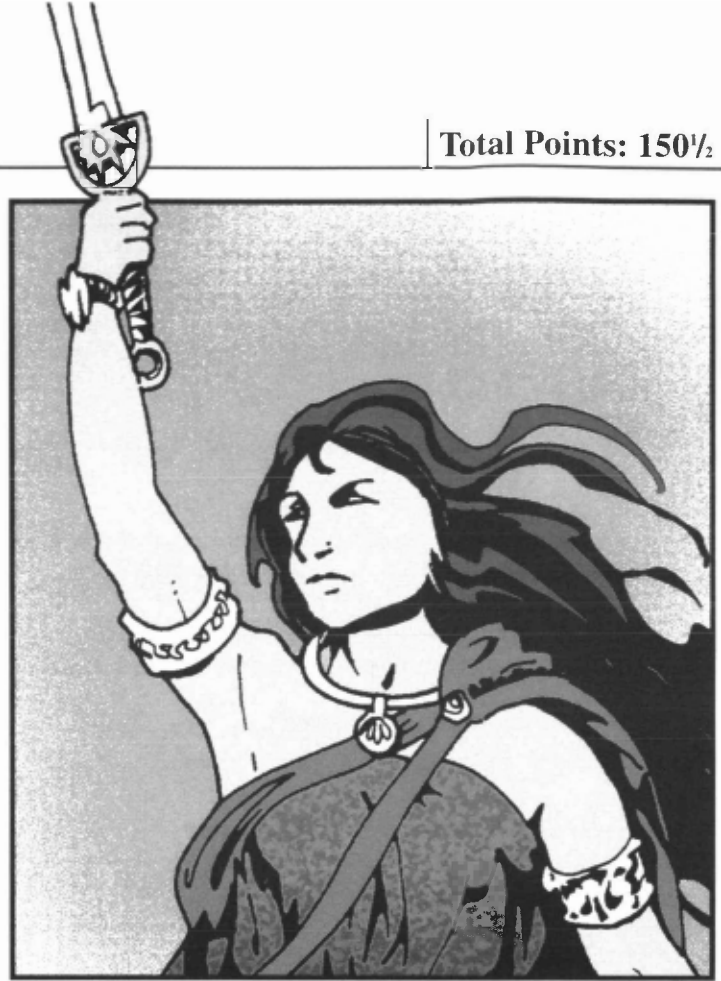
Agronomy-8 [½], Animal Handling-12 [8], Area Knowledge (Britain)-10 [1], Area Knowledge (Iceni territories)-14 [8], Augury-7 [1], Bard-15 [6], Boating-10 [1], Brawling-11 [1], Cooking-9 [½], Leadership-18 [12], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-12 [3 ½], Savoir-Faire-13 [2], Shortsword-12 [4], Spear-14 [16], Strategy-10 [4], Swimming-10 [½], Teamster-11 [2].

Languages

Briton (native)-10 [0]; Latin-8 [½].

This represents Boudica just prior to her final confrontation with Suetonius. It reflects Roman descriptions, which may well romanticize a brave and dangerous foe; certainly, her fighting skills represent a generous guess at best. Her wealth level is debatable; the Romans took or destroyed most of her family property, but the resources of her tribe would have been available to her. To depict Boudica before the rebellion, remove her Reputations and Obsession and make her Wealthy. Her dress would remain the same, but with much more jewelry.

For the Boudica of cinematic legend, raise DX and IQ by 2, change appearance to Very Beautiful, add a Sense of Duty to the Iceni, and increase her Leadership, Strategy, and listed Combat/Weapon skills. This Boudica drives a large chariot with blades at the wheels, and wears a Roman toga. Her daughters are Dependents, but she deliberately took them



into dangerous battles, so they are rated as “Friends” rather than “Loved Ones.” It is likely that she had some kind of personal following as bodyguards, and they may have been strongly loyal to her (an Ally Group).

BIOGRAPHY

Boudica (popularly known as Boadicea, a copyist's error) was born to the nobility of the Iceni tribe of Britons in what is now eastern England (Norfolk and Suffolk). She married the tribe's king, Prasutagus, around A.D. 45, and eventually bore two daughters.

In A.D. 43, the Roman emperor Claudius conquered much of Britain. The Iceni became a client kingdom, allowing them autonomy with the option of becoming full citizens. Ostorius Scapula was appointed governor of the territory in A.D. 48, and attempted to disarm several tribes, including the Iceni. Angered, Boudica's husband raised the Iceni in revolt. Scapula easily put them down.

By A.D. 60, Britain had largely been pacified, and the Iceni returned to their pro-Roman ways. When Prasutagus died, he willed his kingdom to be divided between Rome and his daughters under Boudica's regency. His attempt at placating the Romans while supporting his family failed, however, due to the appointment of a greedy Roman procurator, Decianus Catus, who was already demanding repayment for loans and gifts given to the Iceni by his predecessor. Decianus plundered Iceni territory, seizing property, raping women, and taking slaves. When the Romans reached Caistor, the Iceni capital, Boudica appeared in her royal

"We British are used to woman commanders in war. I am not fighting for my kingdom and wealth now. I am fighting as an ordinary person for my lost freedom, my bruised body, and my outraged daughters. Nowadays Roman rapacity does not even spare our bodies. Old people are killed, virgins raped. But the gods will grant us the vengeance we deserve. The Roman divisions which dared to fight us are annihilated. The others cower in their camps or watch for a chance to escape. They will never face the din and roar of our thousands, much less the shock of our onslaught. Consider how many of you are fighting, and why! Then you will win the battle or perish. That is what I, a woman, plan to do! Let the men live in slavery if they will!"

– Boudica

apparel. She questioned their actions, assuming her royal bearing would safeguard her. The Romans, only angered by her audacity, stripped and flogged her. They then raped her two daughters.

This was the last straw. Boudica rapidly stirred her people up for a rebellion, and several other tribes joined under her banner. She then led her armies to nearby Camulodunum, a settlement of retired Roman soldiers. Thanks in part to Britons who shared the city, the Roman veterans were forced to take shelter in the temple to Claudius (which the local tribe, the Trinovantes, had been forced to build and fund). Boudica and her army made short work of the temple and the soldiers inside.

Boudica next set out for Londinium, a thriving mercantile city. En route, her army encountered a legion of Romans under Petillius Cerealis and destroyed them. When they arrived at Londinium, the Britons captured it easily; it had no walls and had been left undefended by the Roman governor and military commander, Paullinus Suetonius. Boudica had her soldiers butcher the city's inhabitants and burn the city to the ground. The rebels next took Verulamium, an undefended town of Britons with pro-Roman sentiments, killing all of its inhabitants as well.

The rebel army reveled in its booty and glory for several days, but Boudica finally got them to organize for their coming battle. She delivered a stirring speech, calling upon the Iceni war-goddess, Andrasta, and parading her violated daughters. Using a hare to divine their future, Boudica announced good luck to follow. The army, which had grown larger after each victory attracted more fair-weather soldiers, set off; Boudica was relying upon superior numbers to win out over Roman training and equipment.

The Briton's long revelry had allowed Suetonius to pick the site of the coming battle, which he did to maximize his advantages. Boudica led the charge while the women and children, who had been brought along in wagons, watched from the rear. The Romans took out the first wave of attackers with their javelins and then advanced with their swords, forcing the rebels back upon their own wagons. A massacre of men, women, children, and draft animals alike ensued.

Boudica escaped, but chose to poison herself (and possibly her daughters) rather than face slavery or worse. The Iceni survivors later gave her a royal burial.

Encountered

Boudica is, in a word, impressive. She carries herself in a regal manner at all times, eager to show her high station. Couple this with her already remarkable physical appearance, and those who meet her are likely to be awed, at least initially. She is haughty, however, and this causes some to disdain her after the opening moments of an encounter. Motivated by rage and vengeance, her behavior may become erratic if the situation becomes complicated.

– Brian C. Smithson

Further Reading:

Fraser, Antonia. *The Warrior Queens*.

Salway, Peter. *Roman Britain*.

Webster, Graham. *Boudica: The British Revolt Against Rome of AD 60*.

WHAT IF?

INEVITABLE REBELLION?

Had Boudica not led her rebellion, Roman colonization would have continued unhindered, and the attempted suppression of the natives would have continued. The pent-up resentment of the natives might eventually have led to another, stronger, rebellion, one that could force the Romans from Britain for good.

SUCCESS?

Had Boudica been a better tactician, or her troops better disciplined, her rebellion might have succeeded. The Romans often seem to have considered Britain barely worth the cost of conquest, and they might have swallowed their injured pride and decided that it, like northern Germany, was better left to its own devices.

Without Roman influence, the tribal ways of the Britons would have continued. Eventual Christianization would probably have been a much slower process, and the history of Europe would have been very different. (One might even imagine Druidism surviving and evolving into a major international religion.)

DRUIDIC PAWN?

The druids of Britain were always opponents of Roman colonization; they sought to maintain traditions which the Romans evidently regarded as either unacceptably barbarous or a rallying-point for revolt. Indeed, the druids of Mona were under Roman attack around the time that Boudica was suffering her injustices. The entire Mona enclave was slaughtered. Was Boudica, then, a figurehead for a greater druidic plan to throw off the Roman yoke? The druids were notoriously secretive; could they have been rivals of a Roman "Illuminati"? The Iceni rebellion *did* immediately follow the slaughter at Mona . . .

DIVINE INTERVENTION?

Boudica repeatedly prayed to Andrasta, the Iceni war goddess. Did Andrasta, then, *really* come to her aid? The Romans of Camulodunum reported many strange goings-on after Boudica's rebellion, such as visions in the Thames, wailing in the theater, and foreign cries in the senate.

Taking it further, Boudica was in many ways the *embodiment* of the war goddess; what if she *was* Andrasta, or an avatar? Could the druids of Mona have pleaded for aid from their gods, leading a deity to take possession of Boudica's body? The Romans said that Boudica fought like a Fury during the battle – maybe they weren't that far from the truth. Whether Andrasta's aid was simply not enough, or whether some secret cult, order, or entity was aiding the Romans, is up to the GM.

Constantine the Great

Total Points: 203

Born 274 (?); died 337.

32 years old, 5'9", 160 lbs; dark hair, olive skin. Other than perhaps a firm chin, little distinguishes Constantine in appearance. In battle, he'll wear armor and uniform; otherwise he's dressed in a tunic or robes. His style of dress later becomes progressively gaudier, including floral patterns and many wigs of differing colors.

ST: 12 [20] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.5

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 6 **Block:** 5

Advantages

Charisma +3 [15], Filthy Rich [50], Fit [5], Literacy [10], Single-Minded [5], Status 5* [20].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Jealousy [-10].

Quirks

Generally humane; Wears wigs, eccentric clothes, and gaudy jewelry; Gives generously to Christian causes. [-3]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Rome)-12 [1], Bard-14 [1], Bow-11 [4], History-12 [4], Intelligence Analysis-10 [1], Lance-11 [2], Leadership-14 [1], Politics-11 [1], Psychology-11 [2], Riding (Horse, Stirrupless)-12 [4], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Shield-11 [1], Shortsword-13 [8], Spear-11 [2], Strategy-15 [10], Tactics-14 [7 ½], Theology-9 [½].

Languages

Latin (native)-12 [0], Greek-11 [1].

This is Constantine in 306, just as his father dies and leaves him ruler of the West. If he's encountered later, as he secures his power, add Administration and Diplomacy at around level 15, and raise his Politics; also add two levels of Multimillionaire, raise his Status through 6 to 7, and make him Overweight. His pious mother might rate as an Ally.

BIOGRAPHY

As the Roman Empire continued its slow descent at the beginning of the 4th century, a succession of leaders tried to revamp and revitalize its operation. Barbarians threatened from all sides, and the empire's own military, ever divided, promised civil war.

Constantius I became a Caesar of Rome in 305, inheriting this internecine struggle. His son, Constantine (born Flavius Valerius Constantinus), proved himself on the battle-



fields of the empire – Egypt, Persia – and joined his father in Britain. Shortly thereafter, the older man died, and the troops clamored for the popular Constantine to become *Augustus* – Emperor. Constantine instead became a Caesar, however, to build support for his bid for power. He achieved it fighting the barbaric Franks, and only when five others declared themselves *Augusti* did he follow suit.

Faction fought faction, pacts were made and broken, and rivals died. Finally Constantine, using speed and superior tactics, cornered his rival Maxentius at the Mulvian Bridge on the Tiber river. Here he supposedly received a message from God: a blazing cross appeared in the sky and a dream told him to bear the symbol upon his troops' shields. He did so, and his enemies perished in the Tiber. Constantine and Licinius were now, for all intents and purposes, co-rulers of Rome.

They issued the Edict of Milan, calling for toleration of all religions and restoring to Christians whatever properties they had lost. The two men consolidated their power against any remaining challengers, but continued to eye one another

hungrily. War broke out between them, and in 314, Constantine took all of Rome's holdings in Europe, save Thrace. Licinius took out his frustrations on Christians, renewing the persecutions. When barbarians threatened Thrace, Constantine made himself a hero by pushing them back where Licinius would not. Constantine attacked Licinius once more, in 323, and took from him the last dregs of power. Licinius was pardoned briefly in 324, but then executed for supposedly plotting against the new emperor.

In addition to validating the fledgling Christian religion and reorganizing (and separating) the military and civilian authorities, Constantine restored lost powers to the Senate and, with the help of a council, ruled the empire himself. He knew Rome was untenable (and none too strategic) as the seat of government, and set about building Nova Roma – Constantinople – on the site of the old city of Byzantium. Although the empire continued to falter, Constantine's efforts preserved it that much longer, and his new capital was a bastion of the Eastern Empire until the Turkish conquest in 1453.

Constantine was central in the propagation of the Christian faith and the onset of the Middle Ages. His personal belief in God is the subject of much debate, but regardless of his individual commitment, his policies and efforts on behalf of Christians were monumental. He used bishops as advisors, restored what Christians had lost during their years of persecution, sponsored the Council of Nicaea, and sent his mother to the Holy Land where she is said to have discovered the True Cross. Constantine himself forewent baptism until shortly before his death on May 22, 337. (This was common at the time; baptism was considered to wash away sin, and someone who was baptized and then later sinned, however trivially, was in effect breaking their faith, so it was thought better to wait until one's deathbed.)

Encountered

Constantine is a strong personality, though his conversation is mostly limited to warfare, which comprises the majority of his experience to this point. If encountered later, during his repeated bids for greater power, he'll be equally conversant with Christianity. (His mother instilled him with most of what he knows, but it's only later in life that he actually has notable contact with followers of the faith.)

Constantine is a wily, guarded fellow, competent at speechmaking, with an impeccable sense of timing. He is the very embodiment of the phrase "strike while the iron is hot." His fashion sense becomes increasingly eccentric as time goes by, and he suffers more from innuendo and hostile public opinion.

– Andy Vetromile

Further Reading:

Grant, Michael: *Constantine the Great: The Man and his Times*.

Walworth, Nancy Zinsser: *Constantine*.



WHAT IF?

NO CONSTANTINE?

Without a powerful patron, the advance of Christianity would have been slowed. It could have died out altogether; other faiths might have "caught up." Also, Constantine's singular vision and military skill bought Rome itself a brief stay of execution. He secured a future, at least for his eastern provinces, by establishing the redoubtable Constantinople.

KEY MOMENTS

Joining his father in Britain was no easy task for Constantine. Galerius, the ruler of the east, was keeping the younger man at his court – a polite insurance policy to keep Constantius in line – and Constantine allegedly had to ride a long way in the dead of night to escape this "hospitality."

Later, with Christianity forming a crucial tool for Constantine, his support for the Council of Nicaea (where it was decided Jesus was one with God) was necessary to keep that base of power from splintering. This is one of the major dates in religious history.

IN THE SHADOWS

The failing Rome was surely an ideal proving ground for the enigmatic architects seeking to test Christianity. If it survived everything they threw at it, it was an invaluable dogma. If it stumbled and fell, the soil of Rome could be turned over it, and no one would be the wiser.

Intrigues were common for Roman statesmen, but Constantine seemed fated to lose the empire. Fortunately, he evidently refused to keep to the Secret Masters' timetable. He survived captivity, Licinius' betrayal, familial scandal and attacks on Christianity. But he split his kingdom among his sons when he died, and the cycle began anew.

THE WILD SIDE

Constantine supposedly experienced visions and voices. Assuming that these were neither authentic divine messages nor propaganda stories, could telepathy or ultra-tech have been used to manipulate him? He laid boundaries for Constantinople, saying he would stop only when his "Invisible Guide" commanded. Modern Istanbul might not realize the ancient architects *still* haven't finished their plans, and the city's true purpose remains unknown.

And who's to say Constantine never caught on? Many say he put his son, nephew and second wife to death in the belief they had plotted against him or taken each other as lovers. Maybe the mind-altering drugs wore off, and the emperor saw the beings who posed as his family in their true form.

Justinian I

Total Points: 256

Born 482; died 565.

Age 48; 5'11", 160 lbs., A well-built Byzantine Greek, with a round face (probably clean-shaven) and reddish complexion.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 6

Advantages

Ally (Theodora, 15-) [60], Charisma +2 [10], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [10], Status 8* [35].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Reputation -2 (Lower-class origins, among Byzantine aristocrats) [-5].

Quirks

Even-tempered, very good at hiding anger; Uses luxurious trappings but doesn't really care for them. [-2]

Skills

Acting-14 [4], Administration-15 [6], Broadsword-12 [8], Carousing-11 [2], Diplomacy-14 [6], Law-15 [8], Riding-10 [2], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Strategy-13 [4], Tactics-13 [4], Theology-12 [2].

Languages

Latin (native)-13 [0], Greek-13 [2].

This depiction of Justinian, a couple of years into his reign, is fairly skeptical of Procopius' delightfully slanderous picture in the *Secret History*.

BIOGRAPHY

Born Flavius Petros Sabbatios, Justinian was descended from peasants, but his uncle Justin entered the upper classes through a successful military career and became emperor on the death of Anastasius I in 518. Flavius adopted the name Justinian, probably as the result of being adopted as Justin's heir. During the 520s, he married the controversial Theodora (see Theodora p. 36). Justinian worked as an important official and Justin's close associate, becoming emperor himself in 527.

Justinian inherited an empire in peril from Persians in the east, Goths in the west, and internal factional conflict, but he attacked his problems energetically and, thanks to previous emperors, with a full treasury. Since the aristocrats of Constantinople looked down on his lower-class origins, he surrounded himself with loyal associates from similarly humble beginnings (Theodora foremost among them), and at the same time instituted elaborate ceremonies and commissioned lavish buildings. To enforce religious unity, he enacted laws against pagans and, in places, Jews and heretical Christian sects. In 529, Justinian put the general Belisarius in charge of the eastern frontier. Despite mixed success there, Belisarius was to become one of Justinian's most useful tools.

In 532, protests over the treatment of members of two circus factions (clubs of horse-racing fans, which may have had a quasi-official standing as civic militias) in Constantinople led to violence



“A guilty intention, not just the act, makes a man guilty.”

– Justinian

in the streets and, despite Justinian’s conciliatory gestures, full-blown rioting that burned down much of the city. With other avenues exhausted, Justinian called in Belisarius’ troops and crushed this “Nika” revolt bloodily. With the city in ruins, he rebuilt extensively, commissioning the Hagia Sophia, the grandest church in Christendom through most of the Middle Ages.

With his position in the capital secure for the time being, Justinian was free to pursue his own design, which was to rebuild a unified, well-run empire. He had a definitive summary of Roman civil law drawn up, the *Codex Justinianus*, also known as the *Digest*. His new legislation seemed aimed at making the empire “one big happy family.” There was little tolerance for heresy, but women and the disadvantaged were granted greater rights. He also moved to restore imperial authority in the west. First, he sent Belisarius to retake the Vandal kingdom in North Africa, then he sent armies into Italy and Spain. Territorial gains in Spain were minimal, but by the mid-550s, after twenty years of back-and-forth fighting, he had regained control over a devastated Italy as far north as the Po.

But despite an active start, the later years of Justinian’s reign were cursed with problems. In 542, bubonic plague swept into Europe for the first time and hit the empire hard. He faced increasing threats on the Persian and Danube borders. In 548, his beloved Theodora died. Thereafter, his policy toward heretics was even less moderate than before. Relations between the emperor and the pope also deteriorated. He faced further domestic unrest and, in 562, an assassination attempt. Although he left the empire larger when he died in 565 than when he came to the throne, it was beset by too many problems to keep growing.

Justinian in History

The sixth century saw many turning points for the empire and the emerging Middle Ages. The reign of Justinian occupied most of them. He was the last emperor with serious ambitions in the west. He was responsible for building much of Byzantine Constantinople, and his reign saw a final flowering of Classical-styled literature. During his rule, paganism finished its long death. The *Digest* was both the last summary of Roman law and the basis of much of medieval law. In many ways, Justinian wasn’t on one side or the other of the line between the ancient and medieval periods; he *was* the line.

Perhaps more than any other emperor, Justinian tried to shape the empire according to a coherent vision. He made very definite moves toward building an empire of more-or-less equal subjects with a single faith, under a single ruler. It was a good start, but between plagues, barbarians, and excessive taxation, he left his successors with an empire they could hardly maintain, much less extend.

Encountered

Justinian is quiet and apparently good-natured. Still, he is a hard-headed politician and very good at feigning sympathy with others. Although he uses his associates erratically, Justinian also has a good eye for talented people whose loyalty he can count on. He is likely to be accompanied by a number of skilled but not necessarily scrupulous assistants.

Justinian set the tone for the elaborate ceremonies and lavish palaces of later Byzantine emperors in order to overawe the Byzantine aristocracy and, perhaps, outsiders. Ironically, he prefers to live more simply and, if encountered in a private moment, will certainly not be loaded down with finery.

– Matt Riggsby

Further Reading:

Browning, Robert: *Justinian and Theodora*.

Procopius: *History of the Wars*, *On Buildings*, and *Secret History*.

WHAT IF

THE PLAGUE NEVER HAPPENED?

Justinian made a start toward rebuilding the empire, but the plague of the 540s reduced its population by as much as half, making it vulnerable to enemies. It also reduced the empire’s tax base to the point where it could no longer support Justinian’s lavish spending.

But what if the empire had remained wealthy and fully populated? The change might have been considerable, even in the last years of Justinian’s reign. Fully defended borders would have been cheaper than the bribes he was forced to pay the Persians and barbarians across the Danube, and with the extra money and a full compliment of troops, he might have secured Italy sooner and in better condition than he finally got it. With the whole of Italy producing income, Spain and southern France might be within Justinian’s grasp, or at least that of his successor. Then, with Rome under imperial rule, the schism between eastern and western churches might not have been so absolute, and with imperial control of the Mediterranean, the first wave of Muslim expansion would have encountered much stronger resistance than in our history.

CHURCH OF THE DIVINE WISDOM

It is said that, when Justinian first entered the newly built Hagia Sophia, he murmured “Solomon, I have surpassed thee.” (A reference to the legend of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, of course.) Today, despite earthquakes, rebuilding, and conversion to a mosque and then a museum, the elegant, soaring dome remains one of the world’s great buildings. For much of the Middle Ages, Muslim architects were obsessed with the need to create a greater dome, to prove their superiority over the Christians. When they succeeded, they largely lost interest in building bigger.

If ever there was a building that was sacred to the Conspiracy, in its supernatural and religious aspects at least, this is it. It was also built with extraordinary speed and efficiency. One wonders what bizarre Sacred Geometry is encoded in its form.

Theodora

Total Points: 238½

Born 497; died 548.

Age 33; 5'3", 125 lbs.; a short, pale, but attractive Byzantine woman.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Ally (Justinian, 15-) [75], Beautiful [15], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [10], Status 7* [30], Strong Will +2 [8].

*Includes +1 for Wealth

Disadvantages

Reputation -3 (Former actress, among Byzantine aristocrats) [-7], Social Stigma (Monophysite) [-5].

Quirks

Enjoys baths immensely; Unforgiving. [-2]

Skills

Acting-15 [6], Administration-13 [2], Carousing-11 [4], Dancing-12 [4], Performance-15 [6], Politics-14 [4], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Streetwise-14 [4], Theology-13 [4].

Languages

Greek (native)-13 [0], Latin-11 [½].

Theodora aroused strong feelings in historians, and much that was written about her is dubious. This is about as close as one can get to a neutral description. Sensible underlings were nervous (or scared) of her; she could easily be given a complex Reputation (dangerous, but generous to her friends and not to be crossed), or perhaps some Intimidation skill.

"For a King, death is better than dethronement and exile."

— attributed to Theodora

BIOGRAPHY

Theodora was the middle daughter of one Akakios, an animal-keeper employed by the Hippodrome (stadium and horse-racing track) at Constantinople. Her mother put her and her sisters on the stage at a very early age; she often played supporting roles for her older sister. In her mid-to-late teens, she left Constantinople as the mistress of a Syrian named Hecebolus, who was traveling to Libya to assume the post of a civic governor. The relationship soon ended badly for Theodora, so she drifted back east to Alexandria and resumed acting. It is also in Alexandria that she converted to



Monophysite Christianity, a sect usually persecuted by the Orthodox emperors. At some point during her travels, she had an illegitimate daughter.

From Alexandria, she went to Antioch and befriended a dancer named Macedonia, who also worked as an informer for a senior military official in Constantinople. It is probably through Macedonia that she met that official: a nephew of the emperor, named Justinian (see the previous entry). Theodora and Justinian quickly fell in love, which posed a problem; in the late Roman/early Byzantine period, the theater was regarded as a center of immorality, probably due to the pagan character of many plays, and actresses were synonymous with prostitutes. "Theodora from the Brothel" seems to have been a nickname for her, although probably one used without malice by the lower classes. That Justinian was having an affair with an actress wasn't so bad, but that he wanted to marry one (and a Monophysite to boot) was intolerable. Justinian's aunt, the emperor's wife, forbade the union, and even after her death, the emperor had to proclaim a new law allowing penitent ex-actresses to be forgiven for their former occupation and marry members of the upper classes. But in 523, Justinian and Theodora were married.

In 527, Theodora took her next step up. The emperor Justin died, and Justinian took the throne. From the begin-

ning, Theodora and Justinian's relationship was one of those rare romances where each party truly regarded the other as an equal partner. Their affection and mutual loyalty was reinforced by the muted hostility of the entrenched upper classes, who could not have been happy to see the low-born Justinian and even lower-born Theodora ascend the throne. The imperial couple retaliated by instituting new ceremonies and court protocol, which required aristocrats and magistrates visiting the imperial court to prostrate themselves before the emperor. Other legal reforms gave the emperor greater direct supervision over magistrates in order to reduce corruption, but Justinian and Theodora could not have been unaware or unappreciative of the authority they exercised over the snobbish aristocrats themselves.

Through Justinian's reign, Theodora remained an important advisor and perhaps even a driving force. Justinian explicitly mentioned having consulted with Theodora on some pieces of new legislation. (Hecebolus may have served at the model for the corrupt official he legislated against.) Her influence is also clear in his religious law; while Justinian enacted laws to suppress pagans, Judaism, and many Christian sects, the Monophysites never suffered under his reign, even after Theodora's death. While there is no direct evidence, some other laws strongly suggest Theodora's influence, particularly those protecting the rights of women. For example, under Justinian, women were given rights to hold property equal to those of men. She may even have initiated some military actions, getting Justinian's approval after the fact.

Theodora also had a reputation for toughness. The even-tempered Justinian might, in time, forgive failures, but woe to the poor official who failed Theodora. Her finest moment came during the "Nika" riots in 532. With the city in flames and the emperor in real danger, a conference of terrified officials advised the emperor to flee Constantinople. Theodora, however, demanded a tough line against the rioters. She proclaimed that whatever Justinian decided to do, she would stay behind, and if she was killed, she would at least die in a manner befitting royalty; "an empire makes a fine shroud." Justinian stayed, and the army crushed the revolt.

Theodora died in 548 of an unidentified illness, possibly cancer or gangrene, and after her death Justinian never had quite the energy he had before. Contemporaries and later historians were never sure just what to make of her, but one thing was certain: while she lived, the empire was ruled not by Justinian, but by Justinian and Theodora.



Encountered

Theodora bears comparison to certain modern political wives: tough, businesslike, and less sentimental than their gentler husbands. She knows who her friends and enemies are and treats them accordingly. She is generous with friends, relatives, and fellow Monophysites, but will not hesitate to have opponents pushed out of the way. While a devout Monophysite herself, Theodora's first loyalty is to her husband. She will treat any threat to him as a threat to herself. She is also more fond of luxury than Justinian.

— Matt Riggsby

Further Reading:

Browning, Robert: *Justinian and Theodora*.

Procopius: *History of the Wars*, *On Buildings*, and *Secret History*.

WHAT IF . . .

SHE NEVER BECAME EMPRESS?

Any number of circumstances could have prevented the union of Justinian and Theodora: Theodora could have never met Justinian, or the whole imperial family could have opposed the match. Without Theodora, Justinian's legislation against non-Orthodox Christians might have been harsher, and his legislation granting rights to women nonexistent. Still, Theodora was never popular, and he might have had an easier time dealing with the aristocracy.

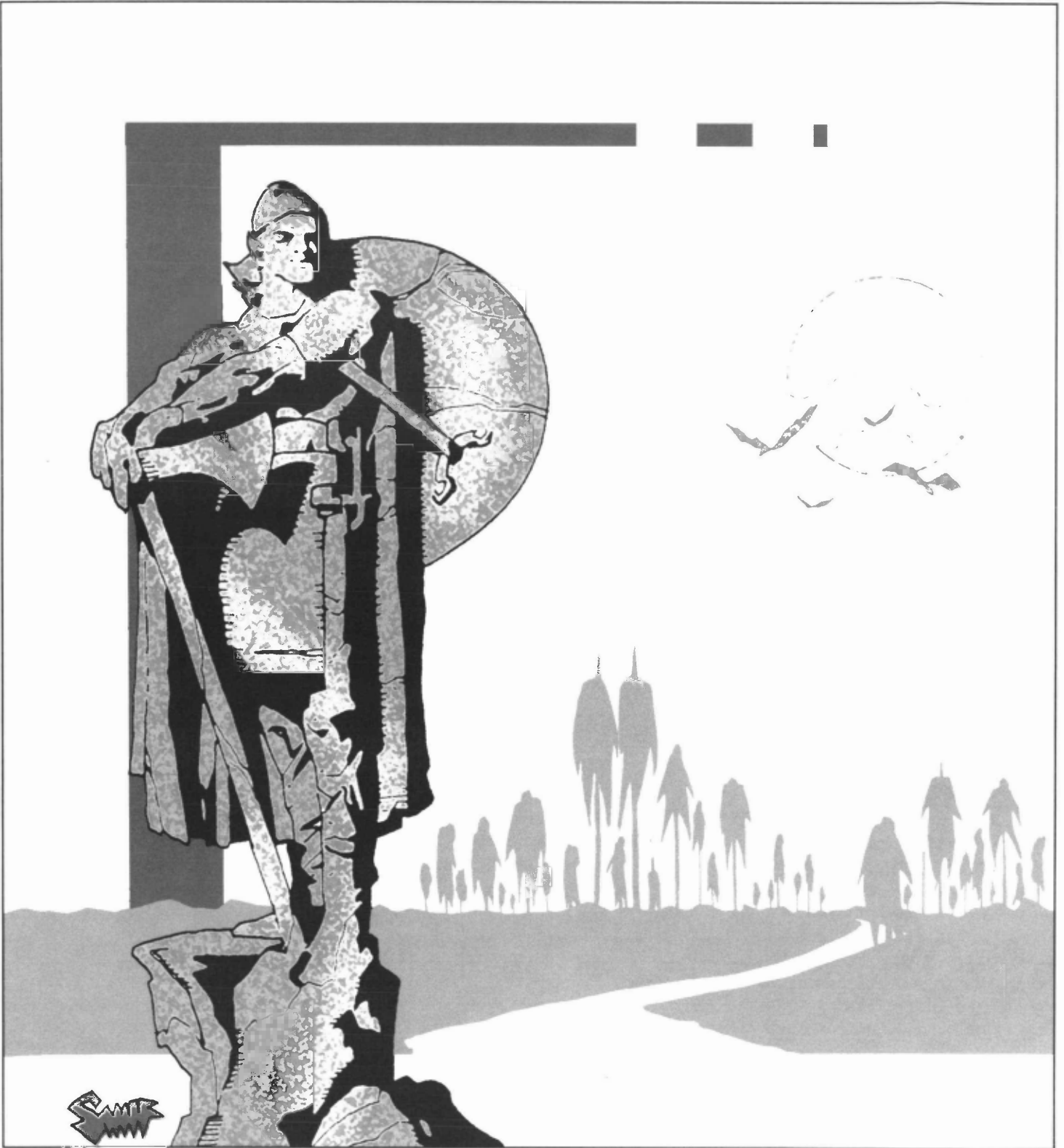
Theodora might also have achieved some kind of greatness without Justinian. If she had gone north instead of east after her affair with Hecebolus (very unlikely, given Italy's poverty at the time, but not impossible), she might have fallen in with the Gothic rulers of the peninsula. With her ambition, good looks, and forceful personality, she could have ended up as the wife of one of them and begun to build her own empire. The 530s could have seen troops under Justinian's command fighting troops under Theodora's. Perhaps diplomatic visits between East and West would lead to Justinian and Theodora finally meeting ten years later than they did in our history, and, quite possibly, a dangerous affair.

PROCOPIUS WASN'T LYING?

Much of what we know about Justinian and Theodora comes from the works of the historian Procopius, a member of Belisarius' staff. In addition to the tame, respectful *History of the Wars* and *On Buildings*, Procopius is responsible for the greatest ever hatchet-job in historical writing: the *Anekdotai*, usually called the *Secret History*. In it, Procopius tell countless terrible stories about the imperial couple: Theodora was a prostitute since childhood and had an insatiable sexual appetite, taking on armies of lovers. Justinian was, behind his affable demeanor, a mad killer of millions. The two of them were actually demons in human form.

If everything Procopius said was true, the pleasant and fairly popular facade of the imperial palace hid a chamber of horrors. But what secrets might that be hiding in turn? Are Justinian and Theodora *just* evil and debauched? Are they performing special rites of a secret society? Are they, in fact, demons in human form using their wars of expansion to bring them prisoners to use as victims? An ambitious PC, working his way up in imperial service, who catches the eye of the emperor (or his wife) might find more than he counted on.

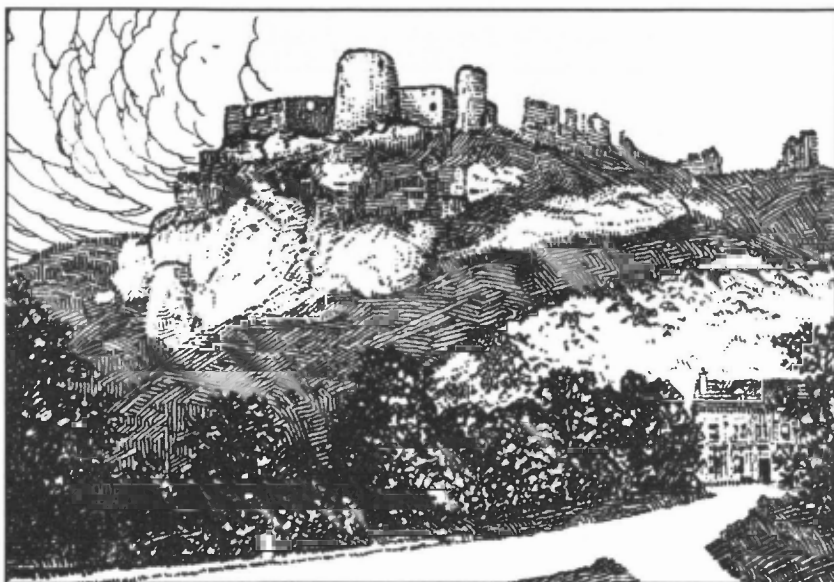
The Middle Ages



With the rise of feudalism in Europe, and the emergence of new cultures in the rest of the world, a new range of world-shaping figures come to prominence. The period covered by this chapter – the 10th to 15th centuries – is close enough in time, and literate enough, for us to detail poets and courtiers as well as kings and emperors.

Not that there was a shortage of powerful rulers – and better technology and communications sometimes enabled the creation of more extensive civilizations. Even the less-than-unified world of Islam shared a common ideal and a legal system, enabling travelers such as Ibn Battuta to range across whole continents. Elsewhere, the European warrior-hero figure found its epitome in knights such as William Marshal.

Of course, in alternate history, there might have been slightly less unity . . .



WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

St. Luan of Westmoreland

Tradition treats St. Luan (b. 631) as a great preacher, even a prophet, although historians have suggested that he was, in fact, primarily an administrator who made himself invaluable to King Oswiu of Northumbria. His famed *Sermons* may be the work of allies and hagiographers. He was certainly a great proponent of the Celtic church, gaining it Oswiu's support, despite the fact that Queen Eanfled favored the Roman church's claims to superior authority.

At the Synod of Whitby, in A.D. 663-4, Luan allied with Bishop Colman and Abbess Hilda to drive out the "Roman Intrusion" of Eanfled and Bishop Wilfrid. This marks the final split between Roman and Celtic churches; Wilfrid retired to the continent to organize ineffectual missions to Britain, Eanfled disappeared from public activity, while Luan spent the remaining 20 years of his life organizing missionary work in unconverted Celtic areas.

This missionary tradition continued after his death; Luan's fierce, stark, personal style of faith appealed greatly to Pictish mountain-men, and later to Norse seafarers. The emergent Celtic-Norse concept of "God War" would probably have shocked Luan, but his rejection of Rome's authority drove a dividing line across Europe that would endure for millennia.

–Phil Masters

Ulffar Thorgrimsson

Ulffar Thorgrimsson (b. 977) was a third son, with no inheritance, so he left Norway in search of fortune. In his travels throughout the known world he became a seasoned, highly respected seaman-trader. Soon, he had several ships. Eventually, he decided to found a new community, as a base for his activities. However, there seemed to be few good lands not taken. Hearing rumors from the west, Ulffar talked his crews into the gamble of his life.

His expedition first stopped at Iceland, where more men and families joined. He soon had the largest expedition ever

known, with close to 1,000 settlers. He then headed to the New World.

Ulffar's luck held, and the expedition found Leif Eriksson's Vinland house in 1018. Relations with the established (but failing) colony were touchy, so he sailed south and established five settlements along the coast, ruled by himself and his four sons. This colony survived, and although it gradually merged with some of the native tribes, it retained some knowledge of metalworking and good farming techniques; by the time Europeans rediscovered it, they had to deal with a disease-resistant community, and with inland tribes who had learned to ride stolen Norse ponies. Vinland remains an important cultural element of North America to this day.

–Larry Strome & Phil Masters

Iskandar an-Nasir

Born into an Egyptian Arab family in 706, Iskandar ibn Daud found inspiration in Alexander the Great, for whom he was named and of whom stories were still told. Unusually, he admired not just Alexander's courage but his strategic principles, particularly mobility and maintenance of objective. As an officer during Abd ar-Rahman's invasion of Aquitania in 732, he watched soldiers leave the battlefield to guard the treasure in their camp, leaving their leader open to Charles Martel's attack. He gathered a small force that rode back to kill Charles and save Abd ar-Rahman. The demoralized Franks fled. Iskandar exhorted the Muslims to abandon their booty and complete his victory, after which they could get more. The following battles gave him mastery over France and earned him the epithet an-Nasir, "The Victor."

As ruler of France under Abd ar-Rahman, Iskandar pressed on to conquer Italy by 757. Muslim missionaries found converts in Scandinavia, who joined in the defeat of Byzantium in 889 and gained control of Britain in 1066. Christianity, like Judaism, survived only as the faith of a protected minority, except in distant lands such as Ethiopia and south India.

–William H. Stoddard

Sei Shonagon

Total Points: 96½

Born 966; died 1013.

Age 30; 5'8", 145 lbs. A Japanese woman with long hair, a pale complexion, blackened teeth, and eyebrows shaved and painted on, wearing either Japanese court dress or Chinese robes.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Alertness +1 [5], Literacy [5], Patron (Empress Sadako, 12 or less) [20], Reputation +2 (In the Imperial Court: knowledge of literature) [5], Status 3* [10], Wealthy [20].

*Status includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Japanese nobility) [-10], Intolerance [-10], Odious Personal Habit (Sarcastic remarks) [-5], Reputation -2 (In the Imperial Court: makes fun of people) [-5], Social Stigma (Valuable Property) [-10], Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks

Frequently says "charming" or "splendid"; Has many love affairs; Likes flute music; Makes lists of things that illustrate ideas or feelings; Proud. [-5]

Skills

Appreciate Beauty-14 [11], Area Knowledge (Imperial Court)-14 [2], Backgammon-13 [1], Bard-13 [2], Bardic Lore-16 [10], Calligraphy-12 [8], Carousing-9 [1], Flower Arranging-13 [1], Go-13 [1], Illumination-9 [1], Naturalist-11 [1], Needlecraft-11 [4], Poetry-13 [2], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Stealth-9 [½], Writing-18 [12].

Languages

Japanese (native)-15 [2], Classical Chinese-13 [2].

Equipment

Sei Shonagon nearly always has ink, brushes, and paper at hand. During her tenure in court, she keeps a collection of writings in a drawer in her pillow.

A remarkable amount is known about Sei Shonagon's personal tastes and feelings, because she wrote about them in great detail. Actual biographical details are few. Many of her skills and attitudes can be determined from her own stories about herself; others are inferred from the way of life of the Imperial Court during the Heian period. Her knowledge of Chinese and Japanese poetry is defined as Bardic Lore rather than Literature because her ability to quote appropriate pas-



sages and to identify obscure quotations in conversation or letters was the main use she made of it; such wittily allusive conversation was one of the vital social skills in her milieu. If the campaign can tolerate such elements, give her the Rapiert Wit advantage – there are few people in history for whom it's so well justified.

Her Code of Honor is mostly a period version of the classic "Gentleman's" code, with a heavy emphasis on etiquette and avoiding shame.

BIOGRAPHY

Sei Shonagon was born into an aristocratic Japanese family, the daughter of Motosuke, a highly regarded poet, and reached adulthood intimately familiar with both Japanese and Chinese literature. In 991, she was appointed a lady-in-waiting to the Empress Sadako, principal wife of the 67th emperor, Ichijo (at the time Ichijo was 11 and Sadako 15). Her birth name may have been Nagiko, and Sei a name she assumed at court; Shonagon was a nickname meaning "minor counselor," presumably given in recognition of her quick wit and extensive education.

In fact, Sei Shonagon made herself a minor terror to the other courtiers, both men and women, using her literary

knowledge to make them look foolish by not recognizing her quotations. She was intensely aware of status, admiring the emperor and empress and despising anything provincial – even though her own family may have been provincial. Her contemporary Musasaki Shikibu, the other great Heian writer, criticized her conceit and frivolity. Still, the empress was attached to her and encouraged her literary efforts. She began writing *The Pillow Book* after the empress gave her a number of notebooks originally intended for copying historical records, as she describes in Note 326, the last passage in *The Pillow Book*. By 996, other people in the Imperial Court knew about her writing and praised it, though she claimed that she does not share their admiration.

The Heian court allowed women almost complete sexual freedom; the only restriction was that they should not make a public display of their lovers. Sei Shonagon had a number of lovers chosen from among court officials. She may have been married briefly to Tachibana no Norimitsu and may have borne his son. The empress died in A.D. 1000, and Sei Shonagon retired after that, though she lived until 1013 and continued to work on *The Pillow Book* for some time.

Sei Shonagon in History

Sei Shonagon is still admired as one of the greatest prose stylists in Japanese literature; apparently she never used a word that was not native Japanese, except for Chinese names and quotations. *The Pillow Book* gives a vivid portrait of life at court, and thus is a valuable historical document. It also gives the reader a sense of its author's personality, bringing her to life in a way that is rare for historical figures of so long ago. Many other Japanese authors have adopted its form for their own work.

Encountered

Sei Shonagon may be met by anyone who comes to the Imperial Court, especially but not only if they have business with the household of Empress Sadako. If they try to gain access to the Empress or the Emperor through her – a custom she describes in one of her notes – they will find her exasperating; she thinks anyone who is unfamiliar with court etiquette and gossip is not worth taking seriously. Even courtiers are afraid of her, given her love of humiliating men who court her; from time to time they dare each other to send her poems or gifts. She lives in luxury and idleness, with no work except sewing occasional garments and no worries worse than not being able to recognize a poetic allusion or having a man embarrass her by staying too late in the morning; she knows powerful men such as Fujiwara no Michinaga, the minister who actually ruled Japan, only for their love affairs and personal quirks. But such matters are the main concern in the self-contained world of the Imperial Court, and thus vital to anyone who seeks power or the favor of the powerful.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Morris, Ivan: *The World of the Shining Prince*.

Sei Shonagon: *The Pillow Book*. [The translation by Ivan Morris has extensive notes on Japanese life and culture of the time.]

WHAT IF?

THE COUNSELOR

Sei Shonagon's tenure in the Imperial Court ended with the death of Empress Sadako, to whom she was assigned as a lady in waiting and who made her a close friend. But what if Sadako had not died in childbirth? Though she was no longer the principal wife, she would have been the mother of some of Emperor Ichijo's children, and would have retained her household within the palace. Accustomed to asking Sei's advice and respecting her intelligence, Sadako would have gone on doing so while her children grew up. And since any sons she had might have gained the Imperial throne, Sei might have found herself giving advice to a future emperor. Of course, in this period, the emperor had relatively little political power; but on matters of taste and ceremony, Sei might have shaped the culture of the Imperial Court of the next generation, and indirectly that of Japan's aristocracy in the provinces. And visitors to a later court might have to get past an even more formidable older woman to gain a hearing for their petitions.

DEAR DIARY

Sei Shonagon is almost completely apolitical and scarcely pays attention to politics; for example, she somewhat admires the Minister of the Left, though he is plotting against her patron, the Empress Sadako. Now, though, she has been in a position to overhear two men talking together about court politics. What has she written in her famous diary about the conversation? The Minister of the Left wants to know. The player characters may get involved as his agents, or because Sei realizes that someone has gone through her books and wants to know who; either way, they find themselves entangled in a classic film noir situation in the rarified atmosphere of Heian Japan.

KITSUNE

Being unusually perceptive, Sei Shonagon notices the odd traits of the stranger who comes to the Imperial court, and eventually connects them with old stories about fox spirits. Being unusually outspoken, she alludes to them – in cryptic language, but the stranger clearly understands. Now she finds herself in a duel of etiquette and magic. The player characters are drawn to defend her. But in a world where magic is real, a lady with as much learning as Sei may know a few tricks of her own.



Leif Eriksson

Total Points: 223½

Born c.970; died c.1020.

Age 31; 6'1"; 185 lbs. A big Norseman, wearing woolen breeches and tunic embroidered with gold, a fur cloak, and a round leather cap.

ST: 13 [30]	DX: 11 [10]	Speed: 6
IQ: 12 [20]	HT: 13 [30]	Move: 6
Dodge: 6	Parry: 6	Block: 5

Advantages

Acute Vision +3 [6], Ally Group (Family, 9-) [20], Attractive [5], Charisma +1 [5], Fearlessness +1 [2], Reputation +3 ("Leif the Lucky," honorable man and explorer) [15], Status 5* [20], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Charitable [-15], Sense of Duty (To family) [-5], Social Stigma (Christian) [-5], Code of Honor (Viking)* [-10], Vow (To Christianize Greenland) [-15].

*See p. V26.



Quirks

Eager to expand into new territories; Feels he must live up to his father's reputation; Practical; Proud. [-4]

Skills

Administration-11 [1], Agronomy-11 [1], Animal Handling-11 [2], Area Knowledge (Greenland)-16 [8], Area Knowledge (Viking world)-14 [4], Area Knowledge (Vinland)-12 [1], Axe/Mace-12 [4], Boating-14 [16], Brawling-10 [½], Carousing-12 [1], Cooking-11 [½], Fishing-11 [½], Leadership-17 [10], Masonry-11 [1], Meteorology-12 [2], Naturalist-9 [½], Navigation-15 [10], Riding (Horse)-10 [1], Sailor-14 [6], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Seamanship-14 [4], Shield-11 [1], Shiphandling-17 [14], Survival (Arctic)-12 [2], Swimming-10 [½], Theology-10 [1], Tracking-12 [2].

(All skills TL3 where applicable.)

Languages

Old Norse (native)-12 [0].

This is Leif around 1001, as the ruler of Greenland. Before his voyage, lower his Reputation to +1 and Status to 4, give him the Heir advantage, reduce wealth to Comfortable, reduce skill levels in Leadership, Masonry, Seamanship and Shiphandling, and remove Area Knowledge (Vinland) completely. His Christianity is only a Stigma in Greenland, and the faith will soon spread even there. Leif may have the Luck advantage in cinematic campaigns.

Most knowledge of Leif comes from the *Saga of Erik the Red* and the *Greenlanders' Saga*, two semi-historical works first written down in the 13th century. Where they disagree, the latter has been followed; it is generally accepted as the more reliable. Because they were works of patriotism as well as history, this description is probably romanticized.

BIOGRAPHY

Leif was probably born in Norway, but traveled with his father, Erik the Red, to colonize Greenland around 985. Greenland was a harsh country, and Leif had to learn the skills of survival from an early age. He also studied the staple arts of Norse culture: seamanship and warfare. From the start, Erik made it clear that Greenland was a free settlement owing allegiance to no king. Erik was king in all but name, however, and Leif was his heir. Leif lived on his father's manor in the capital of Brattahlid with his siblings.

Leif decided to return to Norway around 999. In Trondheim, he met King Olaf Tryggvason, a recent convert to Christianity, and was himself converted. Leif reluctantly promised Olaf to Christianize Greenland, and left with missionaries in tow. Erik refused to convert, seeing the act as a betrayal of his forefathers. Leif's mother, Thjodhild, did convert, and Erik banished her from the household. Always eager to please his father, Leif must have been devastated.

WHAT IF?

Removing Leif Eriksson from history would probably not have much impact. His family would be a bit poorer, and the subsequent expeditions to Vinland would not have occurred. In addition, the Christianization of Greenland would have taken much longer; Leif's influence and standing were important there. However, given the close proximity of North America and Greenland (about 200 nautical miles at the narrowest point), the discovery of these lands by a seafaring people like the Norsemen was probably inevitable. Leif served to speed the process and became a Norse hero, but was not likely instrumental in the settlement of the land.

Around the year 1000, Bjarni Herjolfsson arrived at Greenland with tales of lands seen to the west. This was the perfect chance for Leif to mend his relationship with his father, and he decided to mount an expedition. Leif bought Bjarni's ship, took on some of Bjarni's crew, and set sail that summer.

Leif followed Bjarni's course in reverse, coming first upon a land of glaciers and stones (most likely modern Baffin Island). He deemed it worthless and named it Helluland (Flat Stone Land). He next came upon a land of forests and white beaches (probably modern Labrador) which he named Markland (Forest Land). Leif's next landfall was an island (probably modern Great Sacred Island or Belle Isle); then he set off on the final leg of his journey. His ship ran aground west of the cape opposite the island (this was probably modern Newfoundland). When the tide rose, Leif sailed upriver. He eventually made anchor and set up camp.

The land was bountiful with salmon, fodder for cattle, and lush grasses. Leif named it Vinland (probably "Meadow Land," possibly "Wine Land," though the Vikings would have written the latter as "Vínland"). He decided to stay for the winter and ordered the building of a settlement, Leifsbudir (Leif's Booths) and the exploration of the land.

One crewman discovered that the local berries could be used to make wine. (These were most likely currants, gooseberries, or squash-berries, though legend makes them grapes.) The settlement was finished, so Leif set his men to gathering berries and felling timber. They set out for Greenland the following spring with a fortune in trade goods. En route, Leif spotted some men shipwrecked on a reef. He rescued them, thus gaining the epithet "The Lucky."

Leif arrived at Brattahlid only to discover that his father had died, making him the ruler of Greenland. The stories told by Leif and his crew inspired other explorers, including Leif's siblings, to travel to Vinland. Leif later loaned Leifsbudir to Thorfinn Karlsefni, an Icelander who made the first attempt at permanent settlement. Leif married, and when he died in about 1020, Greenland was left in the hands of his son, Thorkel.

Leif's Legacy

Viking settlements in Vinland may have lasted as late as 1350, when attacks from native Skraelings ("Screechers," "Uglies," or "Savages") forced the colonists away. Even after that, Norsemen likely traveled there periodically for timber. Leif's discoveries were known to the rest of Europe, too; a German, Adam of Bremen, knew of them in 1070, and some scholars hold that Columbus himself traveled to Iceland to view a map. Ruins of a Norse settlement were found in Newfoundland in 1960, and in 1964, the U.S. Congress declared October 9 Leif Eriksson Day.

Encountered

Leif is highly respected for his selflessness and adventurous spirit; he is attractive and impressive-looking by Norse standards, and his reputation is widely known. His Christianity serves as a barrier to influence as a Norse ruler, however. Leif would make a wonderful patron for a group of Norse explorers or colonists.

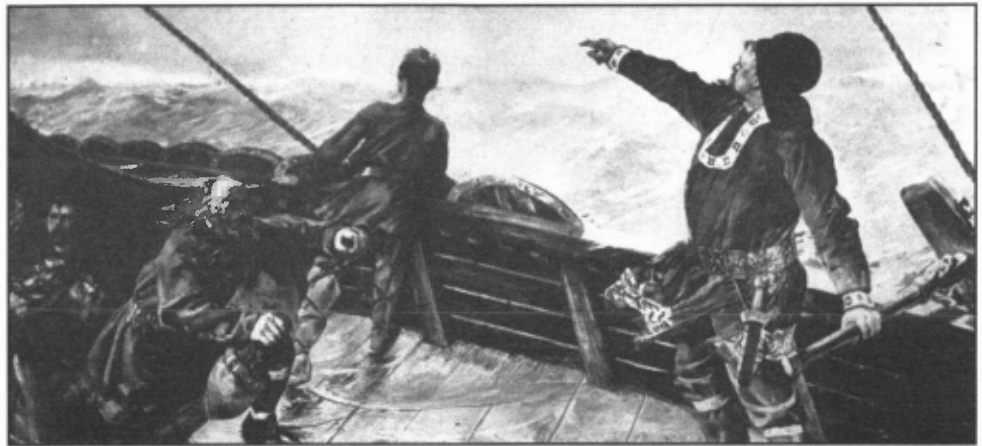
— Brian C. Smithson

Further Reading:

Connery, Donald S.: *The Scandinavians*.

Ingstad, Helge: *Westward to Vinland*.

Logan, F. Donald: *The Vikings in History*.



ONE UP ON COLUMBUS

What if news of Leif's journey had reached the rest of Europe with greater force than it did? The nations of Europe might send explorers to find – and claim – the lands for themselves. Without the advantage of gunpowder, the Europeans would face the natives on much more even terms than their counterparts in our timeline – and the natives would far outnumber them. Europe would still have its great "secret weapon" of a larger disease pool, but a slower invasion would give the natives more chance to build up resistance to the epidemics spreading ahead of the invaders. Conquest of the Americas would be a *much* slower process, if not an impossible one.

SUPPRESSED KNOWLEDGE

And why *didn't* knowledge of Leif's journey reach the rest of Europe? Perhaps the Secret Masters simply decided that it wasn't time for such a discovery to be made public. For the same reasons, could they also have been behind Erik the Red's death, Leif's uneventful ruling years, or the failure of the Norse colonies in Vinland? And what of Adam of Bremen, the man who owned the map to Vinland? Was he somehow silenced by them, or was he *one* of them?

Harald Hardradi

Total Points: 323

Born 1015; died 1066.

Age 50; height 6'11", 280 lbs. A huge Viking, with blond hair and beard, and one eyebrow slightly higher than the other (giving him a permanently sardonic expression); in peacetime, dressed as befits a Norwegian king; on the battlefield, wearing a double-linked hauberk.

ST: 16 [70] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 6.25

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 14 [45] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 8 **Block:** 9

Advantages

Attractive [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Literacy [10], Status 7* [30], Filthy Rich [50].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bloodlust [-10], Reputation -2 (As a ruthless king, among Scandinavians) [-5], Stubbornness [-5], Code of Honor (Viking)* [-10].

*See p. V26.

Quirks

Code of honor does not extend to those he considers a threat to his rule; Composes poetry, especially before battle; Names his weapons and armor. [-3]

Skills

Administration-13 [4], Area Knowledge (Byzantine Empire)-12 [1], Area Knowledge (Kiev)-12 [1], Area Knowledge (Scandinavia)-14 [4], Axe/Mace-11 [2], Bard-11 [1], Bow-11 [4], Broadsword-15 [24], Diplomacy-11 [2], Leadership-17 [11], Poetry-13 [4], Riding (Horse)-11 [2], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Shield-16 [24], Spear-11 [2], Strategy-12 [4], Tactics-14 [8].

Languages

Old Norse (native)-12 [0], Greek-12 [2], Rus-11 [1].

Equipment

Harald is always likely to have a sword at hand; on the battlefield, he goes equipped with shield, helm, and his double-linked chainmail hauberk named "Emma."

The above represents Harald Hardradi toward the end of his reign over Norway, from 1047 to 1066. This description is largely drawn from the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson; the author writes with a favorable bias, but without the exaggeration that characterizes many other historians of his time. Harald's physical stats concur with his description as an extremely tall man (almost 7 feet), battle-hardened by 10 years in service to the Byzantine Emperor and 17 years of



**"She told me once to carry
My head always high in battle
Where swords seek to shatter
The skulls of doomed warriors."**

**– Harald Hardradi
on the verge of battle at Stamford Bridge, 1066**

war with Svein II (Ulfsson) of Denmark. It is assumed that his strength isn't *quite* as high as his build might suggest, as the stories make no specific mention of it; it could have been higher in his youth. In other societies, that height might have been inconvenient, but for Harald, it simply earns respect. (It wasn't quite extreme enough to qualify as *GURPS*' Gigantism, which reflects a real medical problem.)

A younger Harald would have lower Status (3 or 4, as a figure in the Byzantine court), but also Military Rank of at least 4, along with a Duty to the Byzantine Empire; he would also have a favorable Reputation as a successful leader. Harald's Reputation takes a turn for the worse upon his return to Norway, due to his ruthlessness in pursuit of power. Note that he has Savoir-Faire-12 in cultures other than his own; this should certainly apply in Byzantium.

BIOGRAPHY

Harald Sigurdarson was born in 1015, and raised in the court of his half-brother Olaf, king of Norway. Olaf's desire to Christianize his realm was not well received, and in 1028 he was forced to flee with his family to Kiev, where his distant kinsman Yaroslav ruled. Harald was welcomed at court, and sought the hand of Yaroslav's daughter, Yelisaveta, but Yaroslav would not give his daughter to a landless refugee, so Harald sailed to Constantinople to join the Varangian Guard.

This was an elite company in the Byzantine army, composed solely of Norsemen. Harald established a good reputation, and within a short time was commander of the Guard. He fought numerous battles, defeating opponents by guile and force of arms and amassing great wealth, which he sent to Yaroslav.

In 1044, Harald returned to Kiev to marry Yelisaveta and claim his fortune. He then returned home, where he used wealth and political skill to win a share of the kingship of Norway from his nephew Magnus, who had recently taken the throne. On Magnus' death in 1047, Harald became sole ruler. He was in conflict throughout his reign, either with Denmark, to which he felt he had a claim, or with his own nobles, who disliked his tyrannical ways. Harald was quick to destroy any perceived threat to his kingship, earning the nickname *Hardradi* – "Hard Ruler."

In 1066, the king of England, Edward the Confessor, died, and Harald turned his attention there. In September, he landed in the north of England with 300 ships and 9,000 men. Harald's forces quickly subdued the Northumbrian militias, and he prepared to negotiate with the city of York. But he underestimated his opponent; he left a portion of his army to guard the fleet, and took a lightly armed force toward York. As they approached Stamford Bridge, they were attacked by the newly crowned King Harold Godwinsson and his army, who had marched day and night from the south.

Ill-prepared for battle, Harald stood his ground and sent for reinforcements. But the ships were too far away. Harald Hardradi died of an arrow wound, and his army was almost completely destroyed.

Harald in History

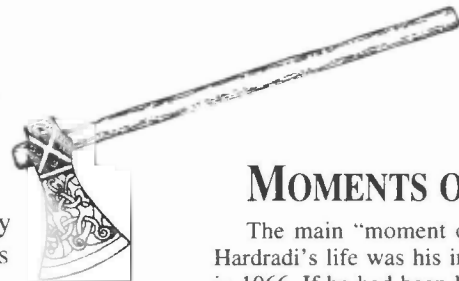
Harald was the last of the great Viking warrior-kings, and exemplified their cultural ideals. He had traveled over much of the known world as a leader capable of providing his followers with wealth, and he died in battle, leaving behind a mighty reputation. But his death also spelled the end of the Viking Age; many of the nobles of Norway died at Stamford Bridge, and Denmark was also exhausted after years of war.

Encountered

An encounter with Harald at any point in his adult life is likely to be an intense experience. He is imposing, intelligent, and driven to succeed. He is a career soldier, versed in strategy, and, as a Viking, he is expected to be a skilled warrior in his own right and to lead his troops personally. He is also known as a talented poet and a patron of poets.

Harald is likely to deal with any situation aggressively. Unfortunately, his personality is better suited for warfare than kingship; he tends to favor brute-force solutions to political problems, even when subtlety might yield better results. (For that matter, his approach to warfare is not overly subtle.) Personal insults are never forgotten, and a threat to his position will be dealt with harshly. On the battlefield, his banner *Landeythan* ("Land-Waster") is well-known, and provides a rallying-point for his warriors as well as demoralizing his foes.

– Matthew Rice



MOMENTS OF TRUTH

The main "moment of truth" in Harald Hardradi's life was his invasion of England in 1066. If he had been less arrogantly confident, he could have been ready for Harold Godwinsson at Stamford Bridge; the result would then be finely balanced. Given a victory for Harald, William of Normandy might be facing at least as much of a threat as in our history; unlike Harold, Harald would be under no great pressure to rush south and stop the Normans on the beaches. Instead of an exhausted English force, William would eventually confront rested troops. William would be securely ashore, and would still have the advantages of cavalry and numerous archers, but the outcome would be in serious doubt. Much might hinge on who could convince surviving Saxon lords that they were the lesser evil. If Harald drove the Normans away and took England, he would have the manpower to renew hostilities with Svein II of Denmark, and rule a Scandinavian empire the equal of Cnut the Great's.

Further Reading:

Graham-Campbell, James (editor): *The Cultural Atlas of the Viking World*.
Sturluson, Snorri: *Heimskringla*.

WHAT IF?

Without Harald Sigurdarson, the year 1066 might have been very different. Harold Godwinsson might have been able to resist William of Normandy with an army not already exhausted by marching the length of England twice. The English king might then have strengthened his hold on the throne, but would likely have to face more incursions from a Scandinavia united under Svein Ulfsson, who, as a relative of Cnut the Great, would probably have inherited both Denmark and Norway from King Magnus. (Alternatively, with Normandy doubtless in turmoil, the Scandinavians might have considered that land to be easier prey.) On the other hand, if William somehow still conquered England, he would inherit the very same problem, and the two strongest Viking kingdoms together could pose a serious threat indeed, unweakened by the long war between Harald and Svein.

If King Olaf the Stout had survived the battle of Stiklestad, or had never been deposed, he might have lived longer and passed on a Christianized Norway to his son Magnus. While it seems unlikely that the formidable Harald would accept this, there are many things that might have distracted him: love in the court of Kiev or battle in the Varangian Guard, say. And Vikings from a Christian country might be very keen on the idea of a Crusade.

Alexius I (Alexius Comnenus)

Total Points: 210

Born 1056; died 1118

About 40 years old; 5'8", 140 lbs. Average height but well built, olive-skinned, with dark, curly hair, full beard, deep set eyes, and a prominent, angular nose; dressed to impress.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 10 [0] **Speed:** 5

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 10 [0] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 5 **Block:** 5

Advantages

Charisma +2 [10], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [10], Status 8* [35], Strong Will +3 [12]

* Status includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Intolerance (Heresy) [-5].

Quirks

Notably generous to Orthodox causes; Conservative; Genuinely dislikes warfare. [-3]

Skills

Administration-18 [10], Broadsword-10 [2], Diplomacy-20 [16], Leadership-14 [2], Politics-15 [0], Riding-10 [2], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Shield-10 [1], Spear-10 [2], Strategy-15 [6], Tactics-13 [2], Theology-13 [2].

Languages

Greek (native)-14 [0], Latin-13 [1].

This is a fairly realistic, if sympathetic, take on Alexius around the beginning of the First Crusade. His daughter Anna wrote an idealized account of him, which would justify increasing his IQ and Charisma, and perhaps giving him a level or two of Appearance. His Wealth could well be higher – he certainly made a great *show* of it – but on the other hand, his personal resources, and those of his empire, were sometimes under stress at this time.

BIOGRAPHY

Related to the houses of Comnenus and Ducas, which had supplied the Byzantine empire with its rulers from the year of his birth, Alexius was raised in the Byzantine aristocracy and, like many of his class, learned diplomacy and military strategy both early and by practice. He demonstrated both cleverness and a willingness to be merciful as a military leader as early as his teens. However, his early efforts were merely preparation for his most important if completely inadvertent achievement: the Crusades.



From 1071 to 1081, the Byzantine empire lost more than half of Asia Minor to invading Turks. After he became emperor in 1081, Alexius moved to stabilize the Byzantine position, playing Turkish princes off against one another and shoring up the bureaucracy (Alexius was a poor economist, but an excellent administrator). By 1095, a combination of Byzantine diplomacy and the deaths of some particularly

troublesome Turks temporarily halted the Turkish advance and even returned some territory to the Byzantines.

Conditions were excellent to recover Asia Minor, but Alexius lacked one important tool: an army big enough to do the job. Relations between the Orthodox Byzantines and Catholic western Europe were unusually good, so Alexius decided to take advantage of the poor treatment of Christian pilgrims trying to reach Jerusalem, who were often robbed or killed by the Turks (attacks on pilgrims were mere banditry rather than religious oppression; Muslim travelers would have received the same treatment). He sent emissaries west to call for soldiers to make the way to Jerusalem safe for Christian travelers.

The Western response was far more than Alexius expected. Stories of pilgrims' hardships grew in retelling, leading the West to believe that Christians were being cruelly oppressed and Jerusalem itself was being desecrated, and some were intrigued by the possibility of carving new kingdoms out of infidel lands. On November 27, 1095, Pope Urban II declared the first Crusade, and soon armies were marching to Constantinople, which was to become the staging area for taking the Holy Land.

And so, in 1096, Alexius was unhappily surprised to find that his hoped-for companies of mercenaries had become armies with loyalties of their own. Nevertheless, he arranged one of the greatest administrative and diplomatic feats of the Middle Ages. First, he prepared routes through the empire with supplies and parties of escorts to make sure that the ill-behaved Crusader armies didn't ravage the countryside. He also prepared the Byzantine navy to carry the Crusaders from Constantinople to the frontiers as quickly as possible.

Then came the hard part. As Crusader armies passed through, Alexius would subtly isolate the leading noblemen one at a time, overawe them with the magnificence of the imperial palace, and subject them to intense personal diplomacy in order to get them to swear allegiance to him. In some cases, he had only a few days to work, but he succeeded in establishing that any land taken during the Crusade would belong to the empire.

Of course, the agreement could not hold forever. The unruly Crusaders were cooperative enough as they pushed through the unspectacular interior of Asia Minor, but finally broke with the emperor in a dispute over Byzantine support of the Crusaders' perilous but eventually successful attack on the important city of Antioch in 1098. Thereafter, the Crusaders were satisfied to establish their own territories in land taken from the Muslims. Nevertheless, Alexius was able to consolidate his initial territorial gains in Asia Minor. By the time of his death from what appears to have been a respiratory infection, the empire was relatively secure.

Encountered

Alexius was kind and friendly when he could afford to be, although he would not hesitate to use trickery, bribery, or threats. He was an ingenious and creative diplomat and soldier, although he shared the general Byzantine distaste for warfare and became a bit conservative as a general. He was known for an intense personality and tremendous force of will.

Alexius was devoutly Orthodox and would be hard-pressed to tolerate heresy within the empire. He preferred to deal with heretics through reason, but would, if pressed, move on to imprisonment and even violence.

A competent warrior in his youth, Alexius is long past his years as a soldier at this point. He may travel armed and armored if leading an army, but only because it is expected of him. Alexius is very much aware that the best weapon in his arsenal is the power to impress with the majesty of the imperial throne. Therefore, he is usually accompanied by a large, well-equipped entourage.

— Matt Riggshy

Further Reading:

Comnena, Anna : *The Alexiad*.

Runciman, Steven: *A History of the Crusades (Vol. 1)*.

WHAT IF?

Alexius was perhaps the last great Byzantine emperor. Without his diplomacy, the Crusades might never have happened and the Byzantine empire might have fallen to the Turks centuries earlier. The east-west trade that partly fueled Europe's 12th-century economic revival and eventually led to the Renaissance might have been cut off by a less receptive east. Turkish armies rolling up through the Balkans would have encountered a less organized, less advanced Europe and could have made far greater inroads than they did in the 15th century. On the other hand, the Crusades had a mixed effect on European culture; they brought wealth and learning, but perpetuated a rather xenophobic world-view that survives to our own age in the form of anti-Semitism and reflexive "Islamophobia," while leaving the Muslim East with a bitter distrust of Christendom.

The Crusades could still happen without Alexius. Pope Gregory VII, Urban's predecessor, had considered a war against the Muslims, and a direct Muslim threat to Europe would provoke the call for a holy war. However, Alexius paved the way by weakening the Turks in Asia Minor, and it was his emissaries who caused the Crusading ideal to reach a fever pitch. Later Crusaders might not be so eager and would probably face a stronger, better-organized enemy.



IMPORTANT MOMENTS

Alexius' hold over the Crusaders was broken when one of the Crusader leaders, a formidable Norman named Bohemond, used Alexius' failure to support the attack on Antioch as a breach of agreements the emperor had made with the Crusaders. (Alexius, following behind the Crusaders, had been informed that the Crusaders had been defeated.) If Alexius had advanced more aggressively, or if some of the more rebellious Crusaders had died in the fighting, Alexius could have established Byzantine authority over Antioch and perhaps through the rest of the retaken territories. Instead of slowly dying, a revitalized Byzantine empire might have withstood later Turkish attacks and survived for centuries as an important regional power.

William Marshal

Total Points: 280

Born 1144; died 1219.

Age 45; 5'7", 150 lbs.; Lean, hard, and weathered.

ST: 13 [30] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 6.5

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 13 [30] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 9 **Block** 9

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire $\times 1$ [75], Semi-Literacy [5], Status 6* [20].

*Includes +2 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Chivalric) [-15], Compulsive Generosity [-5], Duty (Liege lord, 12-) [-10], Honesty [-10], Sense of Duty (Friends and companions) [-5].

Quirks

Loves a good fight; Practical. [-2]

Skills

Administration-12 [2], Area Knowledge (Europe)-12 [1], Axe/Mace-12 [1], Body Language-12 [4], Brawling-16 [8], Broadsword-17 [24], Carousing-12 [1], Falconry-10 [$\frac{1}{2}$], Fast-Talk-11 [1], Heraldry-12 [1], Lance-16 [16], Leadership-13 [4], Riding-16 [16], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Shield-16 [8], Strategy-12 [4], Tactics-12 [4], Tournament Law-11 [$\frac{1}{2}$].

Languages

Norman French (native)-12 [0], English-10 [$\frac{1}{2}$], Low German-10 [$\frac{1}{2}$].

Maneuvers

Ground Fighting (Brawling)-13 [1], Hit Location (Broadsword)-17 [4].

Equipment

As a rich lord and seasoned soldier, William Marshal would have excellent armor and weapons, and be mounted upon a superb war-horse. (When fully armored, he would of course suffer encumbrance penalties.)

This is Marshal in 1189, at the peak of his career, in good health, commanding a large number of knights and soldiers and holding a huge amount of land in England, Normandy, and Ireland. It is based on descriptions that may flatter him – but the evidence is that he lived up to his image. As he

becomes older, and more of an administrator than a warrior, his combat skills would decrease and his attributes would drop somewhat – but he remained a formidable figure and a feared warrior well into his old age. As a feudal lord, he commands troops by right of his Status; thus, he has not been given a separate Military Rank, although he commanded whole armies in the field.

In campaigns where only characters with martial-arts styles may buy maneuvers, either drop those or give Marshall a style ("Tournament Combat") – he surely studied combat intensively and systematically. There were many legends about his toughness and skill; a somewhat cinematic version could add High Pain Threshold, Toughness, *more* maneuvers, or almost anything else that makes him better in a fight.



BIOGRAPHY

William Marshal was born in 1144, the son of John Marshal, a middle-class knight and tender of the king's horses (hence the title of Marshal that John had taken as his surname). In 1156, William was sent to William of Tancarville, the chamberlain of the Duke of Normandy, to be trained as a knight. He was knighted in 1164, on the eve of a battle at Drincourt. He fought brilliantly in his early tournaments, though he was always more concerned with fame and prowess than with riches. After making a name for himself, he was summoned back to England to train young Henry, the son of King Henry II. The Young King, as the 15-year-old Henry was known, was crowned by his father at a young age to ward off usurpers in the event of Henry II's early death.

In 1173, however, the young Henry rebelled against his father and gave Marshal the honor of knighting him. The rebellion failed rather peaceably a year later, and for a time Marshal wandered the continent as a brilliantly successful knight-errant. In a single 10-month period, he took over a hundred knights captive.

By 1179, he had rejoined the Young King's household and was promptly accused of having an affair with Margaret, the Young King's wife. William challenged the accusers to trial by combat, but young Henry refused to allow it and sent William away. In 1183, however, as Henry lay dying after another failed rebellion, William was by his side. At Henry's request, he made a five-year crusade to the Holy Land, finishing a task the Young King had never completed.

In 1187, William returned and entered the service of Henry II, receiving lands and titles in a short war against Henry II's son, Richard the Lionheart. When Henry II died suddenly in 1189, and Richard became king, William was rewarded for his service. Even though he had nearly killed Richard on the battlefield, Richard could see the loyalty and honor in William, and allowed him to marry Isabel de Clare, the 18-year-old daughter of the Earl of Pembroke.

For the next few years, Marshal served as one of four justiciars, looking after the country while Richard was away on a crusade. In 1199, the year Marshal became Earl of Pembroke, Richard died and Prince John, Richard's brother, became king.

Wisely, Marshal left England to tend his lands in Ireland, since King John had no love for him, and suspected him of plotting against him. Even so, by 1216 he was back in command of royal troops, putting down an uprising of English barons backed by French forces.

King John gave the kingdom into Marshal's care on his deathbed, begging him to look after John's young son. William accepted, and defeated a subsequent rebellion. Until his death in 1219, he ran the kingdom as regent for the young Henry III.

Encountered

William Marshal was described as courteous, generous, and true to his word. He was said to be humble and soft-spoken, but he loved to fight and drink with his men. This is, in essence, the perfect model of knighthood in his time, and such a paragon would make an excellent patron for younger knights or squires. As opponents in one of the bloody and brutal tournaments that Marshal so loved, PCs would be advised to steer clear of him. He once charged out of a tavern where he was eating dinner with some companions, scooped up a wounded knight who was hobbling down the street outside, and plopped him down on the table as a gift for them to ransom!

– Shawn A. Fisher

Further Reading:

Fines, John: *Who's Who in the Middle Ages*.

Gies, Francis: *The Knight in History*.

“To protect our valor, for us, for those who love us, for our wives and our children, for the defense of our lands, in order to win the highest honor, for the peace of the Church as well, for the remission of our sins, let us bear the weight of arms . . . You are the hope of the country . . . Behold, those men are in your hand. They are ours, if your hearts serve you boldly now, without fail. If we die, God will take us to His paradise. If we defeat them, we shall have acquired lasting honor for ourselves and our descendants. They are excommunicate, and those we strike down will go straight to hell.”

– William Marshal, to his troops
before a battle at Lincoln in 1217

WHAT IF?

William Marshal's place in history is that of an essential supporter – a strong captain for the throne to call upon. If he had not stood at the side of the young Henry III, England might have been much weaker in a time of international instability, and might well have fallen under the influence of the Papacy and the French. The long-term consequences for European and world history could be vast.

In a game, Marshal might make a great Ally, loyal and generous, in his tournament years, a powerful Patron later. In a somewhat-historical *GURPS Robin Hood* campaign, the passage of a certain justiciar should be a cue for sensible outlaws to lie very low for a while.

KEY MOMENTS

Marshal's life was *full* of dramatic and violent incident. Time travelers sent to work near him, even simply to observe, should be tough, careful, and preferably possessed of a high level in Carousing.

His most *dramatic* moment was perhaps the battle of Lincoln, as he put down the rebellion against young Henry III, at the age of 73. He led the charge that day, and fought in the streets until he captured the enemy commanders, with three dents in his helm from the fighting. Later he rode to Dover and stopped the French forces there to make peace. Not bad for an old codger . . .

THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLE

Marshal joined the Knights Templar on his deathbed and was buried in Temple Church in London. Why? Was there something about Templar magic that William knew? He traveled the Holy Lands with them when they were at their most powerful, but we know very little of his time there. What did he witness in those deserts that would convince him of the necessity of joining that order on his deathbed?

Born 1304; died 1368

Late 20s to early 40s; 5'9", 170 lbs. Bearded, and usually dressed in traditional jurist's outfit of turban, shawl, and a long robe. Little about Ibn Battuta's appearance, but he is often depicted as a distinguished-looking man with dark eyes and hair.

ST: 10 [0] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 10 [0] **Move:** 5.25

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 5

Advantages

Claim to Hospitality (Charitable Muslims and many fellow scholars) [10], Literacy [10], Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages

Curious [-5].

Quirks

Occasionally experiments with Sufi asceticism; Often quotes the Koran (from memory); Prudish. [-3]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Muslim world)-15 [6], Broadsword-10 [1], Carousing-12 [8], Law-15 [10], Poetry-10 [½], Politics-13 [4], Riding (Camel)-10 [1], Riding (Horse)-10 [1], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Theology-15 [10].

Languages

Arabic (native)-12 [0], Persian-10 [½].

This is fairly representative of Ibn Battuta during most of his travels. His Status could rise if he's working as a Cadi, perhaps as high as 4 during his stay in the Maldives. If he's settled into a job, as he was in Delhi and the Maldives, Comfortable wealth would also be appropriate.

BIOGRAPHY

Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Lawati ibn Battuta was born into a well-to-do Berber family in Tangier, Morocco, and received a good Koranic and legal education. In June 1325 (the year after the death of the other great medieval traveler, Marco Polo), he left home unaccompanied on a leisurely *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. From the beginning, he demonstrated a taste for travel. He made it a point to visit famous legal scholars, Sufi mystics, and the tombs of great men along the way, and spent months attending lectures by prominent jurists in Egypt.

In Alexandria, he met a Sufi whose suggestion changed his life. Learning of Ibn Battuta's love of travel, he suggested

that he visit some colleagues in India and China. Soon, Ibn Battuta was taken by a desire to see the whole Islamic world, which stretched from southern Russia to the lower reaches of the Nile and from Africa's Atlantic coast to the Pacific rim. He chose a good time for it; the Islamic world was at relative peace during most of his life. First, using Mecca as a base of operations, he traveled through Persia and Iraq, then along the East African coast as far south as Mombasa. In the early 1330s, he headed north through Asia Minor with a brief trip outside Muslim lands to visit Constantinople, then around the north shore of the Black and Caspian Seas and south through Afghanistan to reach Delhi in 1333. The sultan of northern India, Muhammed Tughluq, had a habit of appointing foreigners to high offices, so Ibn Battuta soon found himself a highly placed *Cadi* despite his almost total inexperience.

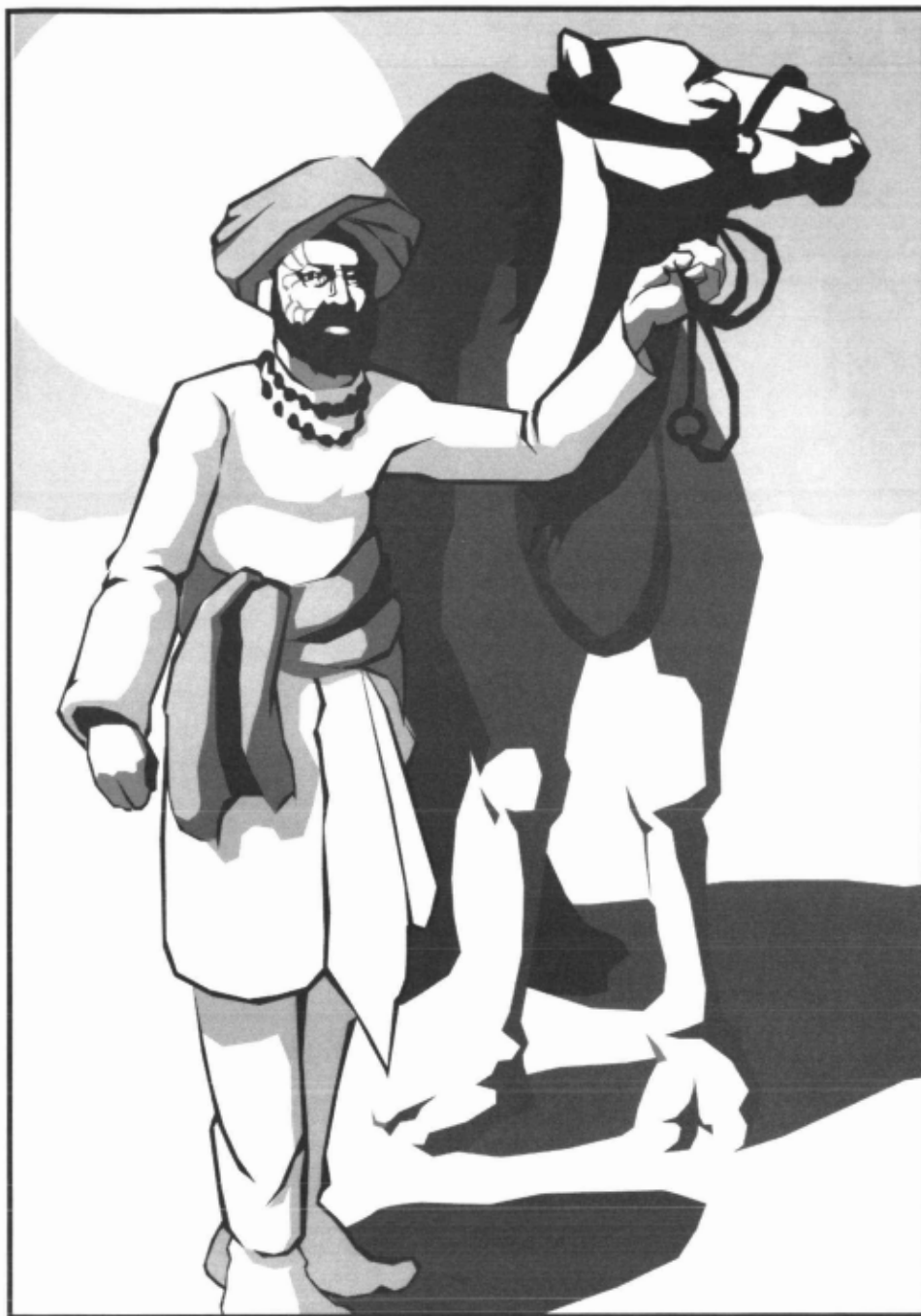
In Delhi, he ran up debts and fell under suspicion of sympathy with a rebel leader, so it probably came as a relief in late 1341 when the sultan appointed him to accompany a party of visiting ambassadors back to the Chinese court. The trip, however, was ill-fated. On the way to the coast, the party was delayed by a battle with a band of rebellious soldiers, and Ibn Battuta himself was briefly taken hostage by bandits. But the worst was yet to come. In early 1342, the ships taking Ibn Battuta and his party east were scattered and destroyed in a storm. Giving up on his exasperating mission, he returned to his wandering ways but soon found himself appointed the chief *Cadi* of the kingdom of the Maldives. After finding himself on the wrong side of a rebellion again, he followed the coast of the Indian Ocean around to Sumatra, then north to China, where he visited Canton and perhaps even Beijing.

At long last, homesickness started to catch up with him. After visiting China and considering India played out, he made his way back west, returning to Tangier by 1349. His travels were not over yet. In the early 1350s, he traveled through exotic lands closer to home: west Africa and southern Spain.

In his last years, after he had finally settled down in Tangier, he was well-known as an accomplished traveler. In 1356, the sultan of Morocco commissioned Ibn Battuta to write down his memoirs for posterity. Ibn Battuta's *Travels*, actually prepared with the assistance of a ghost-writer, have preserved his reputation in the Muslim world as the greatest traveler of the ancient and medieval world.

Encountered

Ibn Battuta is gregarious and always eager to learn new things. In part, this is an important survival skill for him. When he isn't working as a sort of itinerant judge, he has to rely on alms and the generosity of his fellow Muslims for shelter and sustenance, so the ability to make a good impression is vital. Like many other scholars of his faith, he has memorized the entire Koran, and may quote it freely; his culture also admires those who can extemporize an apposite verse in conversation, and he sometimes does this.



He is also a social climber, conscious of his status, and capable of being rather self-righteous. He will exert considerable effort and skill to charm people more important than he is, but has a limited interest in people who can't help him along his way. His talent for meeting important people is considerable; he made the acquaintance of sultans, Mongol chiefs, and a Byzantine princess. He will not hesitate to inform the authorities of violations of Muslim moral codes. (While in the Maldives, he unsuccessfully attempted to prevent women from going topless.)

Ibn Battuta married several times on his journey and probably divorced nearly as often. He might be encountered with a retinue of wives, slaves and servants, parties of friends, or even alone.

– Matt Riggsby

Further Reading:

Dunn, Ross: *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*
Ibn Battuta: *Travels* (4 vols.)

“Histories and biographies there are in quantity, but the historians for all their picturesque details, seldom show the ability to select the essential and to give their figures that touch of the intimate which makes them live again for the reader. It is in this faculty that Ibn Battuta excels.”

– from *Travels in Asia and Africa*
1325-1354

WHAT IF?

Ibn Battuta's apparent impact on history was minimal. He traveled far and saw a great deal, but did very little during a relatively peaceful time. His briefly held post as Chief *Cadi* of the Maldives was the closest he ever came to a position of influence. But the very fact that he traveled so far can lead to speculation.

IBN BATTUTA: AGENT OF THE CONSPIRACY

Just why did Ibn Battuta take it into his head to travel across all of Asia in an age when the trip to Mecca was itself a considerable adventure? In his own memoirs, he testified that he had no such ambitions until an Alexandrian Sufi suggested it to him. Sufism is an openly mystical approach to Islam, and the Sufis surely counted among their number many wizards and alchemists. Could Ibn Battuta have had a Geas laid on him? Perhaps, but given his training in Sufi thought (the school of legal thought he specialized in was heavily influenced by Sufism), he was more likely a willing participant in any hidden plans that may have involved him. Was he passing secret messages to a hidden network of Sufi magicians? Was his poorly documented trip to China a survey for the benefit of Muslim mystics in response to the hidden purpose of Marco Polo's trip a generation earlier? And just why did he visit so many tombs on the way?

IBN BATTUTA: ALIEN INVADER

Another possibility is that Ibn Battuta wasn't from the neighborhood. His journey took him through most of the Islamic world, which was, at the time, the most advanced and widespread civilization in the world. Perhaps he was a time traveler on a long-term survey mission, or even an alien surveying a new planet. If Ibn Battuta was scouting Earth for potential invasion by an alien power, he appears to have gone native and turned in an unfavorable report. What would a party of 14th-century adventurers do if a follow-up team came to bring their agent back by force?

Geoffrey Chaucer

Total Points: 131

Born c.1342; died 1400.

Age 42; 5'6", 170 lbs. A well-rounded man with gentle eyes, sporting a beard and mustache, dressed well but not ostentatiously.

ST: 10 [-]	DX: 10 [-]	Speed: 5
IQ: 13 [30]	HT: 10 [-]	Move: 4
Dodge: 4	Parry: 4	

Advantages

Administrative Rank 3 [15], Literacy [10], Reputation +3 (Clever English poet, among cultured courtiers) [5], Status +3* [10], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Dependent (one of his children, 6-) [-6], Duty (To the king, 6-) [-2], Overweight [-5].

Quirks

Can't look after his own money; Fascinated by classical myth; Obsessed with books. [-3]

Skills

Accounting-12 [2], Administration-12 [1], Area Knowledge (London)-12 [½], Astrology/TL3-10 [½], Bard-13 [2], Broadsword-9 [1], Diplomacy-14 [6], Knife-10 [1], Law-11 [1], Literature-13 [4], Mimicry (Human Speech)-11 [7 ½], Poetry-20 [16], Riding-10 [2], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Singing-10 [1], Writing-15 [6].

Languages

English (native)-15 [2], French-13 [2], Italian-12 [1], Latin-11 [½].

Equipment

When performing his Customs duties, Chaucer will carry the official seals; on the continent he will have letters of introduction and warrants of safe passage.

The above represents Chaucer at one of the high points of his career. He holds prestigious positions as Controller for Wool and Petty Customs, is popular at court, and is working on his masterpiece, *Troilus and Criseyde*. At other times, he is not so well off (Comfortable rather than Wealthy) and suffers a reduced Reputation.

He usually enjoys patronage at court, but this was part of his "job" as a courtier and doesn't count as an advantage.

He may have played a musical instrument, and his military skills were probably higher when he was in the army. "Astrology" is a casual gentlemanly interest in star-gazing and the astrolabe, and does not involve making predictions.



"To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
"Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
"Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
"That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
"For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
"A woful wight to han a drery fere,
"And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere."

– Geoffrey Chaucer, from *Troilus and Criseyde*

BIOGRAPHY

The man who would become English's greatest pre-Shakespearean poet was born in London around 1342, the son of a successful vintner of solid middle-class London origins. His immediate family survived the Black Death of 1348, but most of his other relatives were wiped out.

He was taught at St. Paul's until he was 14, when he was sent to join the retinue of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, as a page. Here he learned courtly ways and advanced to valetus (yeoman) before serving in the military campaign of 1359-60, during which he was captured by the French during the siege of Riems.

After being ransomed by the king, he acted as a courier for Elizabeth's husband, Prince Lionel, carrying messages between Calais and England during the peace negotiations of 1360.

Chaucer also studied law and business at the Inns of Court, and was transferred to the royal household. In 1366, he married Philippa Roet; her position in the duchess of Lancaster's retinue and his at court were to keep them apart most of the time, but they had three children, Elizabeth, Thomas, and Lewis. He was also sent on a secret mission to Spain, and over the next 10 years he spent much of his time abroad as a courier or diplomat.

In 1372-73, he went to Genoa and Florence and successfully negotiated a large loan to King Edward from the Bardi bankers. This gave his career a boost; on his return, he was granted a pitcher of wine a day for life by the king, an unusually large gift, and made Controller of the Wool Subsidy. The trips to Italy also exposed him to the work of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; subsequently he began establishing himself as a grand poet. His first important work – written for John of Gaunt's late wife and titled *The Book of the Duchess* – was well-received, and he began working on *The House of Fame*, based in part on his impressions of Italian culture.

Chaucer's success continued. He produced *The Parliament of Fowls* to celebrate King Richard's marriage, was appointed Controller of the Petty Customs, and then became a justice of the peace in Kent, with a deputy assigned to perform most of his Customs work.

The year 1386 was a turning point. *Troilus and Criseyde* was a great success, the queen asked him to write *The Legend of Good Women*, and with the king's support he became a member of Parliament; however, the Duke of Gloucester then gained control of the king, and Chaucer was forced to resign from the Customs and sell his annuities or lose them.

The next few years were hard; he had a much-reduced income, his wife died, and some of his friends were executed. He started work on what would become his most widely read masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. (While many consider *Troilus and Criseyde* his *magnum opus*, the two poems are too dissimilar to fruitfully compare, and Chaucer can be happily viewed as having produced two "best" works.) *The Canterbury Tales*, the story of a storytelling contest among 30 pilgrims, was to occupy Chaucer for the rest of his life.

King Richard took charge again in 1389, and Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works, an important and well-paid post that left him little time for writing; he resigned two years later, after being robbed twice in one day.

The rest of Chaucer's life was spent relatively quietly, though he was in financial difficulties for much of it. He weathered the change of government in 1399 well, even persuading the new king to double his annuities, but died a year later. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, an uncommon honor for a commoner.

A Bleaker View?

Additional information may reveal a different Chaucer. As a student, he was fined for assaulting a friar, and in 1380, he settled out of court with Cecily Champaign over a charge of raptus (rape, or possibly abduction) – Lewis may have been their son. Combine this with the speculation that John of Gaunt was the real father of Elizabeth and Thomas and you get a grimmer, more complicated picture . . .

Encountered

Chaucer's talent with words was not limited to his writing – he was a successful minor diplomat and able to converse well, giving the impression of a likeable, knowledgeable man. He was good at making friends, but somewhat detached, and he liked to mimic regional and individual accents. The dry wit which comes through in his writing might make him an entertaining conversationalist, but a formidable verbal opponent; an initial impression of a plump, cheerful bureaucrat could be terribly deceptive. He was also always on the lookout for political or financial gain.

– John G. Wood

Further Reading:

Brewer, Derek: *Chaucer and his World*.

Howard, Donald R.: *Chaucer and the Medieval World*.

WHAT IF?

English was growing in popularity in the 14th century; other writers were also experimenting with the language. Chaucer, however, was unique in his use of French forms and Italian ideas. He had immense impact as a poet. Without him, English literature would have stayed in its traditional forms for much longer, significantly restricting its readership. Its development was bound up with the cultural confidence of the emerging English nation; delaying one would have held back the other.

The Canterbury Tales, a poetic story-cycle, is perhaps the single most comprehensive, varied picture of medieval European society, and a keystone of English literature. It is also incomplete; there should logically be many more tales. Chaucer probably simply didn't get around to writing them, but many time-traveling scholars would be prepared to bend a lot of rules to find out.

THE TRIP TO FLORENCE

Chaucer's trip to Italy in 1372-73 introduced him to Italian humanism; if someone else had been sent, Chaucer would probably have continued producing poetry in the old French courtly style. And if he had gone on the mission and *failed*, the English would have had trouble financing the war against France and Castile, and Chaucer's position at court would have been very different.

AGENT OF THE CONSPIRACY?

Almost no reliable records of Chaucer have been found for 1361-66; even the report of his punishment for assault is second-hand. He then turns up on a secret diplomatic mission to Navarre (on the Spanish/French border) with three unnamed companions. Was he being trained in more than law by the Cathars or the *Prieuré de Sion*, who both had bases in Southern France? Chaucer the writer had the ear of three successive kings of England; Chaucer the diplomat went to the continent many times. He would have been a very useful tool.

This might explain one puzzling aspect of the Florentine mission: how he persuaded the Bardi to lend Edward III such vast sums, when the king had previously defaulted on a loans worth £230,000, helping to bankrupt them. It was this which brought Chaucer close to the king; arranging it may have been a good *investment*.

Finally, during the Peasants' Revolt, Chaucer was living in a house above one of London's main gates, the Aldgate – which was opened to let in the rioters. One William Tonge was blamed, but maybe Chaucer actually did the deed under orders from the Secret Masters.

Joan of Arc (Jeanne d' Arc)

Total Points: 127½

Born 1412; died 1431.

Age 18; 4'10", 120 lbs.; a pretty, petite young woman with short brown hair.

ST: 8 [-15] **DX:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 6

IQ: 11 [10] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 5

Advantages

Attractive [5], Charisma +5 [25], Comfortable Wealth [10], Composed [5], Higher Purpose (Liberate France) [5], Military Rank 4 (Captain, "brevet command") [20], Pious [5], Reputation +4 ("Savior of France," to all Frenchmen) [10], Sanctity [5], Status 2* [5], Strong Will +2 [8], Very Rapid Healing [15], Voice [10].

*Includes +1 for Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Disciplines of Faith (Devout Christian) [-10], Delusion (Receives instructions and prophecies from saints) [-10], Enemy (The English, 6-) [-20].

Quirks

Acts older than her years; Modest, and determined to remain a virgin; Soft-spoken and solemn; Wears only soldier's clothing. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Domrémy)-11 [1], Broadsword-10† [2], Leadership-14 [½], Needlecraft-12 [2], Riding (Horse)-10 [½], Savoir-Faire-13 [0], Strategy-8 [½], Theology-9 [1], Weaving-12 [1].

†Includes -2 ST modifier.

Languages

French (native)-11 [0].

Equipment

In battle, Joan wears a suit of white plate armor purchased for her by the dauphin at the cost of a hundred war-horses. Her sword is supposedly an ancient blade, found buried behind the altar in the church of Saint Catherine of Fierbois after its existence was revealed to Joan by her saints. (The encumbrance of all this would, of course, reduce her Move and Dodge.)

Joan is 18 years old here; it is winter 1430, almost a year after she raised the siege of Orleans. She and her family have been ennobled, and she lives at court. The king may have previously qualified as a Patron (worth as much as 60 points), but her relationship with him is souring; he still provides for her, but has largely given up on her as a military



asset. During the campaigns of 1429, Joan was still a peasant girl and would not have Status or Wealth advantages, nor the Reputation.

There are many ways of interpreting Joan's story, as involving anything from an authentic divine blessing to schizophrenia. This version attempts a respectful middle view without assuming actual supernatural forces; GMs may wish to adjust it to fit their own opinions. (In game terms, her success is mostly based on obtaining very good reactions from the French troops, followed by much use of accordingly modified Leadership skill.)

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1412 in Domrémy, France, Joan enjoyed a peaceful rural childhood despite growing up in a country torn by the Hundred Years' War and ravaged by plague. When she was 13, she began hearing voices, often accompanied by bright lights. She identified the voices as belonging to Saints Michael, Catherine and Margaret; they told her she was needed by God to liberate her people.

By the time she was 16, Joan's voices spoke to her with such urgency that she left home. Her homeland was desperate; the dauphin Charles VII was on the throne but hadn't been formally crowned, and the English were gaining ground. Joan traveled to Vaucouleurs, where she pleaded with the garrison commander for an audience with Charles. In March 1429, she met the dauphin; he was skeptical, but she passed his tests: having never seen him, she was able to pick him out of a crowd, and she told him about the prayers he made in private. His theologians confirmed that she was neither a sorceress nor a charlatan. Well enough convinced, Charles gave Joan the rank of captain, equipped her, and allowed her to lead a campaign against the English forces besieging Orleans.

She proved an inspiring leader, and the siege of Orleans was lifted in a week. Joan was injured by an arrow in her breast, but her wounds healed quickly and she never stopped fighting. That success led to further victories, ending with the liberation of Reims. In July, Charles was crowned, with Joan standing at his side. That marked the beginning of the end for the young woman who was now famous all over France as a living saint.

The voices told Joan she would live only one more year, and she was eager to resume fighting. Charles had what he wanted – the crown – and was unhelpful. That autumn, Joan tried to free Paris, but the campaign was aborted when she was shot in the leg. Soon afterward, Charles signed a truce with the Duke of Burgundy, an ally of the English. Miserable, Joan laid down her arms at the altar of St. Denis. Charles attempted to console her, and ennobled her family.

The truce with the Burgundians expired the following spring, and without support from Charles, Joan resumed campaigning. In May, in Compiègne, she was unhorsed and captured by an English ally, John of Luxemburg. She was sold to the English for 10,000 francs, and imprisoned in Rouen.

Joan was chained in the dungeon until her trial began in February 1431, before a tribunal of ecclesiastical judges. She was accused of crimes including sorcery, witchcraft, invoking spirits, making prophecy, and wearing men's clothing. An examination revealed she was still a virgin, which proved (to the court's satisfaction) she was no witch. The charges were reduced to heresy, for refusing to defer the pope, and for wearing men's clothing. She was to be burned, but at the last minute she signed a retraction, and her sentence was reduced to life in prison. Back in the dungeon, it was only a matter of days before Joan was once again found to be wearing men's clothing. (Most likely, it was the only thing she was given to wear.) She was pronounced a relapsed heretic, and on the morning of May 30, 1431, she was burned alive in the Old Market Square in Rouen. She faced her death with such bravery that even the executioner was ashamed, and remarked later that he knew he was burning a saint. According to legend, Joan's heart would not burn.

Encountered

Joan is pensive and intensely religious. She spends much of her time in prayer, awaiting word from her saints. It is said that she exudes a grace that makes it impossible to think ill of her, or wish her harm. The men under her command are devoted to her, and in the short time she carries France's banner on the battlefield, she is a powerful symbol of hope.

– andi jones

Further Reading:

Brooks, Polly Schoyer: *Beyond the Myth: the Story of Joan of Arc*.
Pernoud, Regine: *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses*.

WHAT IF?

The story of Joan of Arc is a tragic illustration of the power of hope and faith, and also of greed, ambition, and fear. Even at face value, it is an incredible tale: an illiterate country girl takes up arms against her country's oppressors, almost single-handedly putting an ungrateful king on the throne who, when she is captured by the enemy, allows her to be burned as a heretic. (In the year between her capture and her execution, Charles never once made any effort to have Joan released.) The mundane facts are miraculous enough . . . But what if there was more?



A GIFT FOR PROPHECY

Joan's life was governed by prophecy, delivered to her by her saints. Leaving home in 1428, she said she would liberate France. The following February, she predicted the French defeat at the Battle of the Herrings. Following Charles' coronation, she prophesied that she would live only one more year. During her trial, she prophesied that the English would lose Paris in seven years' time. All were correct.

Joan's very existence is said to have been prophesied by none other than Merlin himself, who said, "Out of the oak forests of the Lorraine will come a virgin to save France." What do all these prophecies mean? Who – or what – was actually pulling the strings? Were Joan's voices really a cabal of witches? Or otherworldly beings?

JOAN THE SAINT

In 1456, a quarter-century after her death, Pope Calixtus III overturned the verdict and declared her innocent. She was beatified in 1909, and canonized in 1920.

HOLY RELICS

In 1996, a Frenchman claimed to have found the armor worn by St. Joan. It was the right size and age, and showed damage where Joan is known to have been wounded. What is the story behind this mysterious armor? Where did it go when Joan was captured in 1430, and where has it been for five centuries? And what of the ancient sword of St. Catherine of Fierbois? What supernatural powers might it have granted? What happened to it?

Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler)

Total Points: 181

Born 1431; died 1476.

Age 30; 5'8", 165 lbs. A short, stocky man with long hair and a mustache, an aquiline nose and deep-set green eyes, wearing a golden dragon medallion.

ST: 13 [30]	DX: 10 [-]	Speed: 5.25
IQ: 11 [10]	HT: 11 [10]	Move: 6*
Dodge: 5	Block: 5	Parry: 5

*Includes Running bonus.

Advantages

Fearlessness +3 [6], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [5], Patron (Matthias I of Hungary, 9-) [10], Status 6* [25].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bully [-10], Code of Honor (Warrior's) [-5], Enemy (His brother Radu, 6-) [-5], Intolerance [-10], Sadism [-15], Unattractive [-5].



Quirks

Admires clever speakers; Calls himself "Dracula"; Favors impalement as a means of execution; Goes out disguised in the night to look for wrongdoers; Hates the Turks. [-5]

Skills

Acting-14 [8], Administration-10 [1], Animal Handling-9 [1], Area Knowledge (The Balkans)-12 [2], Bow-10 [4], Broadsword-11 [4], Diplomacy-10 [2], Disguise-12 [4], History-9 [1], Intimidation-14 [6], Jumping-11 [2], Lance-10 [2], Leadership-12 [4], Mathematics-9 [1], Riding (Horse)-13 [16], Running-8 [½], Savoir-Faire-13 [0], Shield-10 [1], Stealth-10 [2], Strategy-14 [10], Swimming-10 [1], Tactics-12 [5 ½], Theology-9 [1], Tracking-10 [1], Whip-11 [4].

Languages

Rumanian (native)-11 [0], French-9 [½], German-10 [1], Hungarian-10 [1], Italian-9 [½], Latin-9 [½], Old Church Slavonic-9 [½], Turkish-11 [2].

Equipment

Vlad has the usual nobleman's armor and weapons of the time, having been trained in archery, swordsmanship, and jousting; he can afford the best equipment. (Obviously, his Move and Dodge may be reduced by encumbrance.) At his court, he has an extensive collection of torture equipment, including some ingenious and bizarre devices to kill people in novel ways.

Records of Vlad's life are relatively poor, and distinguishing fact from legend is difficult. He is estimated to have killed anywhere from 40,000 to 100,000 of his subjects in his first period as prince, but some of the numbers that make up this total were clearly exaggerated. The surviving portraits of him are copies of earlier paintings now lost. This version of him is compatible with either realistic or cinematic treatments.

His Code of Honor obliges him to face pain and danger stoically, and to avenge any insults to himself or his kin – violently rather than gracefully. It involves bravery, but not mercy. His Bully and Sadism are well known, and generate reaction penalties accordingly – but his subjects are likely to be very careful to hide their ensuing reactions.

BIOGRAPHY

Vlad Tepes (pronounced "Tseh-pesh") was the second son of Vlad Dracul, Prince of Wallachia, and Princess Cneajna of Moldavia. He was raised in Sighisoara and Tirgoviste, then the capital of Rumania, until he was 11, when he and his

younger brother, Radu, were taken as hostages by the Turkish ruler Sultan Murad. He was educated in the Turkish court in the style of a Muslim prince, but under the constant threat of death, mutilation, or torture.

In 1448, he began to serve in the Turkish army. In 1449, however, he went into exile in Moldavia. From there he went on to involve himself in Wallachian politics, and in 1456 he was made prince of Wallachia by Matthias I of Hungary.

As prince, he became widely known for his harsh punishments and cruel jokes – for example, when two Italian envoys failed to take off their skullcaps before him, he had the caps nailed to their heads to assist them in keeping them on. His preferred method of execution was impalement, or having a stake driven through a victim's body; this was the practice that gained him the epithet *Tepes*, “the Impaler.”

He played on this reputation in the ensuing battles with the Turks. Mehmed II, with whom he had been educated, succeeded his father in 1451 and went on to conquer Constantinople in 1452. There followed a long series of battles between Christians and Muslims in eastern Europe. Vlad confronted Mehmed II with “the forest of the impaled,” thousands of Turkish captives on stakes along the main invasion route. Mehmed sent Vlad's own brother Radu to combat him, and the country went over to Radu, terrified of Vlad's harshness. Vlad fled to Hungary, but King Matthias made him a prisoner, showing him off to Turkish delegations, and recognized Radu as ruler of Wallachia.

Vlad regained his freedom when Radu died in 1475 and was sent back to battle his cousin, Stephen of Moldavia. He converted to Roman Catholicism and married a Hungarian princess. Hied shortly afterward, in 1476, under mysterious circumstances; two monks found his headless body in a marsh after a battle.

Vlad Tepes in History

Vlad was the basis for Bram Stoker's classic horror novel “*Dracula*,” but the real Vlad was much more terrifying than the fictitious vampire. He governed Wallachia by terror, killing a significant percentage of its total population in response to various offenses. Among these deaths were many of the old boyars, whom he replaced with newly ennobled peasants. Despite this, or because of it, he is admired in Rumania as a national hero, a leader of the war against the Turks, rather as Stalin is still admired in Georgia. Among his other deeds, he built the first fortification in Bucharest and thus set it on the path toward becoming Rumania's capital.

Encountered

Meeting Vlad is an experience best avoided, if possible. Any hint of disrespect or criticism will bring a swift threat of an ugly death. A player character who can speak cleverly, and above all one who shows no fear, may gain Vlad's respect and escape with his life. Even so, Vlad will be glad to tell him what fate he so narrowly escaped.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Florescu, Radu R., and Raymond T. McNally: *Dracula: Prince of Many Faces*.

WHAT IF?

Vlad could easily be eliminated from history – perhaps most easily during his stay as a hostage in the court of Sultan Murad. When his father, Vlad Dracul, cooperated in military actions against the Turks in 1444 and 1445, putting Vlad and Radu to death would have been a very natural response for Murad.

Without Vlad, the Wallachian resistance to the Turks would have gotten a slower start, and the Turkish boundaries might have been pushed further north, even into Hungary; Austria might have been weaker in the centuries to come. Also, since the fortification of Bucharest began with Vlad, a different city might have become the future capital of Rumania – perhaps Tirgoviste, his father's capital. Finally, Vlad's extermination of the established boyars would not have taken place, and a number of older families might survive in Wallachia.

VLAD THE ILLUMINATED

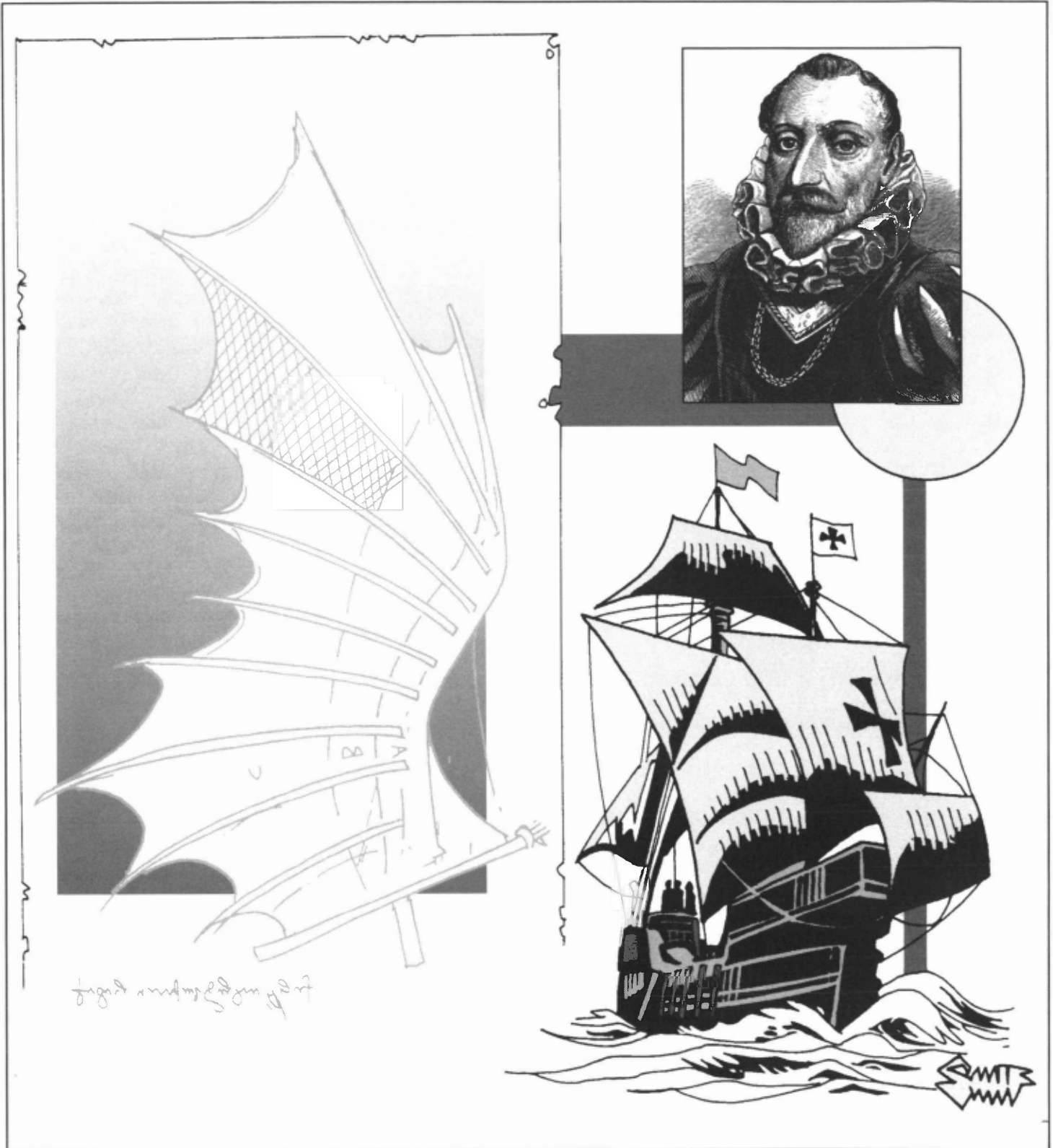
In the 15th century, the Turkish court was one of the world's great centers of conspiracy and intrigue. Vlad's education might have included initiation into one or more secret cabals – even into heirs of the Order of Assassins. And once back in Wallachia, he might have come into closer contact with the Order of the Dragon, into which his father had been initiated, and which was sworn to defend Christian Europe against the Turks. Vlad's ruthless pursuit of power and imposition of harsh laws could have reflected indoctrination into an “illuminated” sense of being above ordinary morality. For that matter, the final discovery of his headless corpse hidden in a swamp could indicate that some occult conspiracy had decided it was time to end his membership in a very permanent way.

DRACULA

Vlad's cruelties have so terrorized the people of Wallachia that they have begun to suspect a more than natural origin for them. “*Dracula*,” they whisper, does not mean “son of the dragon” (from his father's membership in the Order of the Dragon) but “son of the devil.” If the PCs investigate (perhaps sent by King Matthias or the pope), they discover disturbing evidence that this is true. Vlad really is a monstrous being with supernatural powers: he steals out of his fortress by night and prowls the land in the guise of a huge wolf. But learning that this is true is one thing and living to make it known is another, in a land where the were-wolf is the absolute monarch.



The High Renaissance



This chapter covers a relatively short period – less than three centuries – but a crucial one in world history, as the foundations of later European power were laid in the Renaissance. Brilliant thinkers, artists, and scientists epitomize this period in most people's eyes, but of course, the same era saw some equally crucial exploits in the realm of exploration – and soon, conquest.

Thus, Hernán Cortés takes his place in this chapter alongside Leonardo Da Vinci and Paracelsus. (The chapter stretches into the early Enlightenment period, when colonization of the New World had generated enough wealth to support pirates such as Bartholomew Roberts.) Nor was Europe united; the Protestant Reformation represented a dangerous split, enabling the emergence of national leaders such as Elizabeth I. Elizabeth's court was as dynamic as it was dangerous, with figures such as William Shakespeare and John Dee on its edges. Revolution followed revolution, with Oliver Cromwell ultimately bringing down a king and Peter the Great changing the face of Russia.

Not that Europe was the whole of the world; in the Far East, for example, Tokugawa Ieyasu was unifying Japan – an accomplishment that would have intricate consequences down the centuries. Below are two possible, pre-Renaissance bases for alternate histories in which Europe did not have matters quite so much its own way, and China took a more active role in forging a new world.

WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

Wu Lu

Born in 1057, Wu Lu was the greatest of China's Taoist-inspired scientific experimenters. The son of a physician, he took up alchemy and discovered electricity by immersing two different metals in acid around 1080. Further experiments led him to believe he had found an intensified form of chi with yang and yin poles, and to invent ways of measuring it. He worked primarily on applications in acupuncture, which led him toward the concept of nerve impulses.

In 1100, he discovered that an electric current could turn a compass needle. He died in 1103, but his students carried on his work and eventually devised the telegraph. The Mongols grasped its military advantages; under Khublai Khan, a network was set up around 1270. With only wind and water as power sources, electric power was slow to develop, but eventually "dragon wires" spread out from China's major rivers, supporting light industry.

The Mongols carried electricity westward along with the compass, gunpowder, and printing. European science's more quantitative approach led to Leibniz's electric calculator, Franklin's incandescent light, and Henry's spark-gap radio. Rapid communications revolutionized exploration and warfare, speeding European expansion, but China had enough industrial and military strength to remain independent, modernize, and found a trade empire in the 19th century, resulting in a culturally bipolar world.

– William H. Stoddard



General Lai

Lai Shiyu of Nanking (1095-1158) was one of the *nouveaux riches* of the Song Dynasty who sought a position in imperial service. Assigned to the army (typically a career graveyard), he rose to prominence (rather than being killed, as in our history) in the catastrophic wars of the 1120s, when the Song lost northern China to the barbarian Jin. Lai's innovations in strategy, weaponry, and, most important, training and discipline, finally reversed long-standing military decline. Although Lai himself was killed during one of the first major victories of his newly professional infantry, backed up with recently invented gunpowder rockets and mortars, his reforms had given China the tools to defeat first the Jin and later the far more dangerous Mongols.

Without the devastation of the Mongol Conquest, China continued to be the most advanced and powerful country on Earth. By the time the Portuguese arrived in 1517, it was already well into its industrial revolution. Once the vigorous Chu Dynasty replaced the decadent Song a few decades later, the Chinese navy and merchant marine effortlessly surpassed Europe at sea. China's soldiers and diplomats, and still more her merchants, created a Sinocentric world system which the European West was quite unable to challenge until recently.

– Craig Neumeier

Born 1452; died 1519.

Age 60; 5'10", 150 lbs. An elderly man, once handsome and strong, with long gray hair and a full beard; usually functionally dressed for a long day in the workshop.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 9 [-10] **Speed:** 4.5

IQ: 18 [125] **HT:** 9 [-10] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Acute Vision +1 [2], Attractive [5], Comfortable Wealth [10], Fit [5], Literacy [10], Reputation +2 (To Florentines) [3], Status 1 [5], Versatile [5], Voice [10].

Disadvantages

Age [-30], Compulsive Behavior (Constant study) [-5], Distractible [-1], Vow (Kindness to animals) [-5], Weak Will -1 [-8].

Quirks

Dislikes war, calling it "beastly madness"; Fascinated by birds and flight; Insists on taking the "Mona Lisa" with him on his travels; Perfectionist; Writes his notes backward. [-5]

Skills

Architecture-17 [1], Area Knowledge (Tuscany)-18 [1], Armoury-16 [½], Artist-21 [8], Blacksmith-12 [½], Botany-15 [½], Cartography-16 [½], Choreography-16 [½], Engineer (Combat Engineering)-16 [½], Engineer (Hydraulics)-17 [1], Engineer (Primitive Machines)-16 [½], Geology-16 [1], Hiking-10 [4], Leadership-16 [½], Mathematics (specializing in Geometry)-15/21 [1], Mechanic (Gears/Pulleys)-16 [½], Musical Composition-16 [½], Musical Instrument (Home-made)-16 [½], Naturalist-16 [1], Performance-19 [½], Physics (specializing in Aerodynamics and Optics)-14/21 [1], Physiology-18 [8], Savoir-Faire-22 [0], Scene Design-17 [½], Sculpting-12 [8], Singing-13 [4].

All skills are at TL4 where relevant.

Languages

Italian (native)-18 [0], French-16 [½], Greek-16 [½], Latin-16 [½].

This is Leonardo circa 1512, working in Rome for Pope Leo X. He is famous in his native Florence, and has rivalries with younger artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael. His ST, DX and HT have declined; he was known in his youth as strong, rugged and handsome, and these attributes might have been as high as 12. His patron at any time might qualify as a **GURPS** "Patron," but could as easily be considered simply an ordinary employer.

There is a strong argument that Leonardo may have been homosexual, which, given the severe but erratically enforced laws of the era, could rate as a serious Secret. Rumors of this, and of heresy and necromancy, may have constituted a dangerous negative Reputation at times. His "Vow" (actually a personal eccentricity) not only made him a strict vegetarian; it lead him to use up his spare cash buying captive animals in the marketplace, simply to free them.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1452, Leonardo was the illegitimate son of a public notary and a peasant girl. He was accepted into his father's household as a full son, however, and educated accordingly. He displayed an early aptitude for art; when he was 17 his father moved to Florence and apprenticed him to painter Andrea del Verrocchio, a pioneer in the technique of perspective. Leonardo was admitted to the painter's guild in 1472; his genius was evident immediately, and he was famous by his early 20s. He soon outshone his master, leading Verrocchio to declare that he would retire.

Leonardo moved to Milan in the 1480s, where he entered the service of Duke Ludovico Sforza. During the next seventeen years, in addition to being court painter and sculptor, Leonardo served Sforza by organizing musical productions and designing weapons and fortifications, and studied geometry, architecture, geology, botany, waterworks, civil engineering, and aerodynamics. It was also during this time that he painted two of his greatest works: the *Madonna of the Rocks* and the *Last Supper*.

The French seized Milan in 1499, and Leonardo left. He wandered Italy, spending a year as military architect to Cesare Borgia, consulting on engineering projects in Mantua and Venice, and finally returning in 1503 to Florence, where he designed waterworks, continued his studies, and painted the famous *Mona Lisa*.

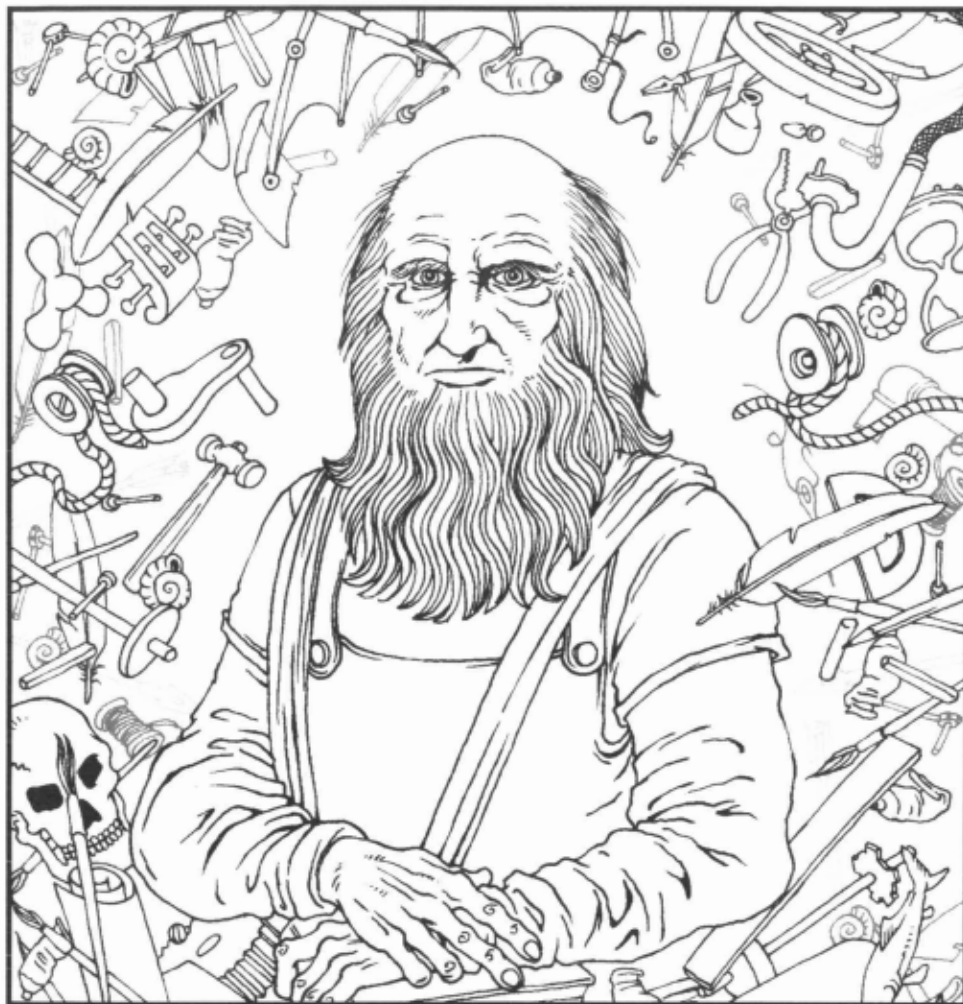
The Florentine Republic granted Leonardo permission to return to Milan in 1506, to finish some of his abandoned projects. He dedicated himself almost exclusively to science, making advances in hydraulics and the study of anatomy. He left again in 1512, when the French were evicted by the returning Sforzas, and traveled to Rome, where he worked for Giuliano dei Medici, brother of Pope Leo X. Along with Michelangelo and Raphael, Leonardo contributed designs for St. Peter's Cathedral.

After Leo's death in 1516, Leonardo accepted an invitation to become painter, engineer and architect to Francis I, King of France, who provided him with a manor house, a stipend, and the freedom to pursue his studies. He remained in France until his death in 1519.

The Renaissance Man

Leonardo not only mastered all he was taught, he applied that knowledge in ground-breaking ways. He didn't merely paint, he invented new materials and techniques. He didn't

just play music, he improvised entire compositions on home-made instruments. He didn't merely master established fields of study, he invented whole subjects. An avid mountain-climber, he discovered fossils in rocks, and correctly deduced what they were. He designed engineering projects beyond the construction capabilities of his day, which have since been demonstrated to be structurally sound. He apparently thought of the telescope a century before Galileo. He doodled helicopters, multi-barreled guns, tanks, submarines, diving suits, steam-powered cannon, life-preservers, and double-hulled ships. His eyesight was so keen that he could sketch the detailed movement of birds in flight. He embodied logic and rationalism, but never lost sight of the wonders around him.



Encountered

Leonardo believes that the human eye is the instrument through which we unlock the secrets of Nature. He can't resist a mystery, and may drop everything to pursue a theory. To others, he himself is a mystery, enigmatic and obsessive. He is in awe of Nature, and rather than feeling pride, he regrets how much he is unable to do. On his death-bed, he will tell Francis, "I have offended God and humanity . . . because my work did not reach the quality it should have."

— andi jones

Further Reading:

Clark, Kenneth and others: *Leonardo Da Vinci*.
Da Vinci, Leonardo: *Codex Lester, A Masterpiece of Science*.

WHAT IF?

In some respects, Leonardo's breakthroughs had little immediate impact on the world around him. Many of his discoveries were too radical, and would be rediscovered in later times. Many of his inventions were never built, for practical reasons, or were abandoned as he moved around. But if Leonardo the scientist was under-appreciated, Leonardo the painter was not. His artworks made him famous, and his innovative use of light, shadow and perspective had a powerful and lasting influence.

But what if that was not the case? What if he had been driven not by the desire to learn, but to lead, or become rich? As a pacifist, Leonardo disliked building war machines, and kept his more sinister designs to himself. A greedier Leonardo might have made his fortune designing weapons; with his intellect and the funding of an ambitious king, he might have advanced the science of warfare by centuries. (The novel *Pasquale's Angel*, by Paul J. McAuley, shows an alternate world created by Leonardo as an engineer.)

UNSOLVED SECRETS

A man as complex as Leonardo is bound to have his secrets. Who, for instance, was the Mona Lisa? It is believed she was the wife of Francesco del Giocondo, a local nobleman. But others have suggested that the painting is actually a self-portrait. Modern X-rays and analyses support this. If it was done for a noblewoman, why did Leonardo carry it around with him for the rest of his life? If it's a self-portrait, why is it a woman? And why is she smiling?

LEONARDO AND THE SHROUD

The Shroud of Turin, the supposed burial cloth of Jesus Christ, has always been surrounded by controversy, and one theory puts Leonardo square in the middle of it. There are those who claim that Leonardo forged the Shroud, and that the "photographic" image on the cloth is Leonardo himself. Some of his contemporaries supposedly experimented with light-sensitive chemicals, and Leonardo studied optics, and used a camera *obscura* in his artwork. Maybe the Shroud was an early, experimental photograph. He might have made it for the sake of the science, only to see his creation hailed as a holy relic. He might have been part of the Conspiracy, making it to spite the Church, with which he had ideological differences — or for the Church, in exchange for patronage or favors.

Hernán Cortés

Total Points: 296½

Born 1485; died 1547.

Age 37; 5'10", 180 lbs. A large, handsome Spaniard with pale skin and a dark beard, usually wearing simple but expensive clothing and jewelry, or armored for battle.

ST: 12 [20] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 6

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 13 [30] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 7

Advantages

Charisma +4 [20]; Cool [1]; Handsome Appearance [15]; Literacy [10]; Military Rank 4 [20]; Reputation +4 (as the man who conquered México, among Europeans) [10]; Reputation +3 (as a brave and resourceful warrior, among Méxicans) [7]; Status 4* [10]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Wealthy [20].

*Status includes +1 for each of Military Rank and Wealth.

Disadvantages

Dependent (Family member: 1-25 point character, 6-) [-12]; Duty (To Spain, 15-) [-15]; Greed [-15]; Intolerance (Religious) [-10]; Missing Digit (Finger) ×2 [-4].

Quirks

Becomes anxious after long periods of inaction; Swears "On my conscience"; Proud; Punishes insubordination severely; Sees himself as a soldier of God. [-5]

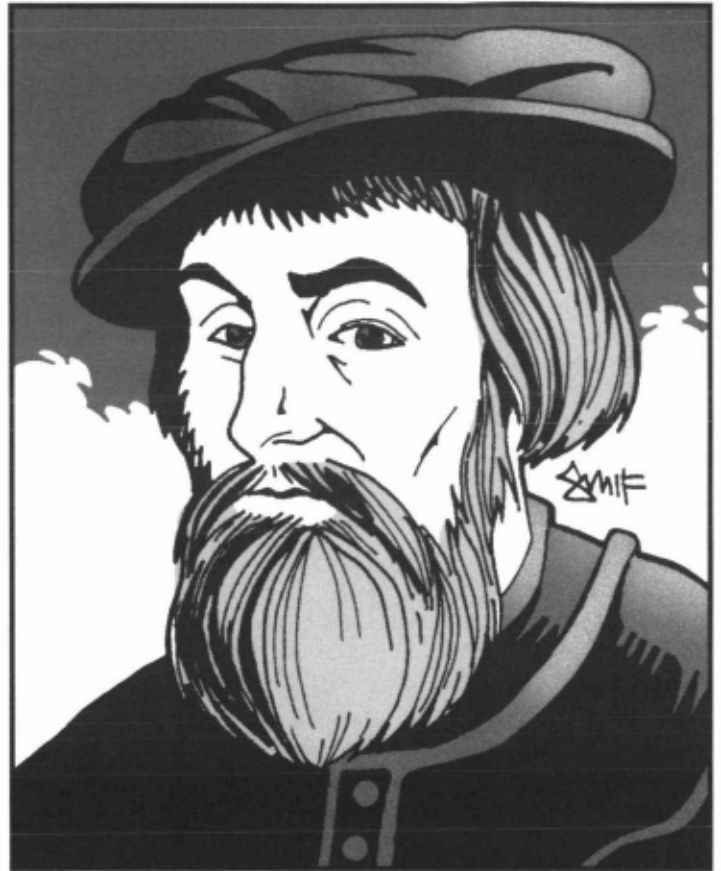
Skills

Accounting-10 [1], Administration-14 [6], Agronomy-13 [4], Area Knowledge (Caribbean)-15 [6], Area Knowledge (México)-13 [2], Bard-17 [4], Black Powder Weapons (Matchlock Arquebus)-12 [½], Boating-10 [1], Brawling-12 [2], Broadsword-15 [24], Carousing-11 [½], Crossbow-13 [4], Diplomacy-15 [10], Fast-Talk-15 [8], Fencing-10 [1], Hiking-13 [2], Intimidation-13 [4], Lance-12 [4], Law-9 [½], Leadership-20 [10], Meteorology-12 [2], Navigation/TL4-12 [4], Orienteering-11 [1], Poetry-10 [½], Riding (horse)-14 [16], Sailor/TL4-12 [2], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Seamanship/TL4-14 [4], Shiphandling/TL4-13 [6], Strategy-15 [6], Swimming-12 [2], Tactics-18 [16], Writing-10 [½].

Languages

Spanish (native)-12 [0], Latin-12 [2].

This is Cortés in 1522, as ruler of post-Conquest México. At the onset of the Conquest, remove his Reputations, give him Status 8 among Aztecs only (they think he's a god), reduce his wealth, delete the Dependent, change his Duty to Extremely Hazardous, give him back his Missing Digits, remove Area Knowledge (México), reduce Diplomacy, Leadership, Strategy and Tactics a couple of



points, and add an Enemy (Velasquez). Over the course of the Conquest, Cortés gains the Aztec princess Malina as a Ally and eventually Moctezuma as an Unwilling Ally.

He has five children; they probably keep out of the way, but the general risks of bringing family to a newly conquered land are reflected in the Dependent disadvantage.

BIOGRAPHY

Hernán Cortés was born in Spain in 1485. He went to law school in 1499, but was more interested in women and adventure than books. His family was not disappointed when he joined the army in 1502.

He made his way to the New World, and in 1511 joined Diego Velasquez's conquest of Cuba; afterward, he served as Cuba's secretary-treasurer. Cortés married and became a rich planter, but soon grew restless. When Charles I of Spain asked Velasquez to send an expedition into México, Velasquez made Cortés its leader. The governor eventually had second thoughts, but Cortés snuck away on November 18, 1518.

Cortés, hungry only for gold and glory, had little idea what odds he faced. It was only through his tactical genius, superb leadership, and realization that the natives were disgruntled with their subservience to the vast Aztec empire that he even stood a chance. The army worked its way inland, allying with or forcibly converting the nations they encoun-

tered. Meanwhile, the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma, thinking Cortés was the god Quetzalcoatl and would overthrow his empire, tried fruitlessly to force the Spaniards away with gifts, threats and trickery.

On November 8, 1519, Cortés reached Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital. Moctezuma was congenial, but the Spaniards soon grew anxious as his guests. When a rival expedition from Jamaica angered the natives further east, Cortés took Moctezuma hostage in case Tenochtitlán grew hostile. He then had the leaders of a local insurrection burnt at the stake, and ordered the destruction of Aztec idols and the whitewashing of their bloody temples. The Aztecs were enraged.

Things grew even grimmer when Cortés learned of the arrival of an expedition sent by Velasquez to apprehend him. He took some men to confront it and left the rest in Tenochtitlán. He easily dealt with Velasquez's men, convincing most of them to join him, but returned to Tenochtitlán only to find that his men had slaughtered a group of Aztec dancers. The Aztecs had declared all-out war.

The Aztecs overthrew Moctezuma and then blocked the bridges out of Tenochtitlán. Cortés's men eventually recaptured some of the bridges (losing their loot in the process), and the Aztecs were forced to regroup. On July 7, 1520, the Spaniards fought the resoundingly successful battle of Otumba (during which Cortés lost two fingers on his left hand), and by April, 1521, town after town had returned to the Spanish fold. The Spaniards returned to Tenochtitlán, burned it, and slaughtered over 15,000 natives. The Conquest was complete.

In 1522, Cortés was appointed governor and captain-general of New Spain. When administrators and aristocrats arrived, however, Cortés realized that his real power was minimal. In 1524, he led an unsuccessful expedition to Honduras which damaged his health. He returned to México only to find that his lands had been seized and his titles revoked. He returned to Spain and petitioned Charles to reinstate him as governor, but the king merely granted him a large estate and made him commander of the colony's military. Cortés returned to México in 1530, and after an unsuccessful expedition to Baha California, sank into poverty. He returned to Spain in 1540, and died seven years later.

Encountered

Cortés is impressive, in appearance and personality. He has a knack for getting along with just about everyone, especially soldiers, who view him almost as an equal. He is fair unless sufficiently provoked, at which point, he becomes a calculating enemy who does not rest until his opponents have been brought into line or eliminated. He is also a religious bigot, and often makes heavy-handed attempts to convert others to Christianity. In his later years, he travels with a retinue of Indian retainers.

— Brian C. Smithson

Further Reading:

Cortés, Hernán: *Five Letters*.

Innes, Hammond: *The Conquistadors*.

Prescott, William H.: *History of the Conquest of México*.



“When I saw the discord and animosity between these two peoples I was not a little pleased, for it seemed to further my purpose considerably; consequently I might have the opportunity of subduing them more quickly, for as the saying goes, ‘divided they fall’ . . . And I remember that one of the Gospels says, ‘Omne regnum . . .’ So I maneuvered one against the other and thanked each side for their warnings and told each that I held his friendship to be of more worth than the other’s.”

— Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*

WHAT IF?

Without Cortés, the conquest of México probably still would have occurred but would have taken much longer. Without his presence in New Spain, the colonization of the territory would also have taken longer – his fame drew thousands to the New World. This would also delay the later conquest of Peru by Pizarro, if not prevent it completely – the sequestered Incas were by no means as destined for conquest as the Aztecs.

TOO MANY COINCIDENCES?

Despite the fact that Cortés was a brilliant tactician and leader, the odds were against him. Several coincidences occurred that aided him profoundly, however. First was his arrival on the heels of Aztec prophecies of destruction. Second, he had little trouble locating translators in the new lands, which allowed him to engage in diplomacy with the natives. Lastly, reinforcements from Spain arrived at several key moments. Was someone else, then, guiding the conquest from afar? The Aztecs were a wholly alien culture, something that would never fit in with the schemes of most Illuminated groups . . .

THE PROPHESED CONQUEROR

The Aztecs believed that their god Quetzalcoatl had left them long ago and would return one day. In the meantime, the Aztec soothsayers had predicted that their empire was about to fall, but Moctezuma refused to believe them. When Cortés arrived, resembling Quetzalcoatl, Moctezuma knew the end was near. But Cortés *wasn't* Quetzalcoatl. Or was he? The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice as a way of placating their deities, and the largest temple of Tenochtitlán was dedicated to the god Huitzilopochtli. Had Quetzalcoatl, then, become angered by lack of sacrifices or too much homage paid to another deity? Perhaps it was Quetzalcoatl's divine influence that led Cortés (his look-alike, after all) to conquest. The destruction of the Aztec civilization at the hands of the Spaniards surely fits with the Aztecs' notions of what would happen should the gods become angered.

Paracelsus

Total Points: 149

Born 1493; died 1541.

Age 40; 5'9", 200 lbs. A large, prematurely bald man with long curly hair at the side and back, always dressed in expensive robes (though their condition varies).

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.75
IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 3
Dodge: 3

(Move and Dodge are adjusted for Overweight encumbrance.)

Advantages

Alcohol Tolerance [5], Literacy [10], Reputation +2 (Brilliant doctor, 10-) [5], Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Compulsive Generosity [-5], Delusion ("I'm the only one who truly understands medicine"), Odious Personal Habit (Reviles opponents) [-10], [-5], Overweight [-5], Reputation -2 (Grandiloquent quack, 10-) [-5].

Quirks

Often drunk but always lucid; Writes lying fully clothed on his bed. [-2]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Denmark)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (France)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (The Germanies)-16 [4], Area Knowledge (Italy)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (The Netherlands)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (Russia)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (Sweden)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (Turkey)-14 [1], Astrology-16 [8], Chemistry-18 [12], Diagnosis-18 [12], Geology-12 [1], Herbalist-14 [4], Metallurgy-16 [8], Occultism-16 [6], Physician-18 [12], Surgery-16 [16].

(All skills TL4 where applicable.)

Languages

German (native)-14 [0], Latin-12 [½], Italian-12 [½].

This is Paracelsus when wandering Europe after leaving Basel. His wealth and weight are averages; sometimes he will have lots of money after selling a book or receiving a gift, in which case his clothes will be new and Overweight may turn into Fat. At other times he will be broke, his clothes in tatters, and the extra weight altogether gone. His Reputation produces varied results; some people haven't heard of him, some admire him, some have been warned about him, and some have mixed feelings.

The skill list constitutes an estimate; he may have other skills. One drawing shows him leaning on a bastard sword; as



"The book of Nature is what the physician must read; and to do so he must walk over the leaves."

– Paracelsus

an army surgeon, he would have had opportunity to learn swordplay, and as a wanderer he could have uses for it. Add some fighting skills and he becomes a swashbuckling adventurer-scientist. Riding would be just as easily justified.

The only language that he definitely used is German; Latin and Italian are likely guesses. Depending on how long he spent in any country and how good his language talents were, he could have many more. In a game where alchemy works, his Chemistry skill becomes Alchemy; even in a realistic game, his era calls it that, and it incorporates a lot of mysticism.

BIOGRAPHY

"The aim of alchemy is not to make gold, but to manufacture medicines."

Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim was born in the Swiss village of Einsiedeln, in 1493, the son of a physician. As a boy he was instructed in alchemy, astrology, medicine, and surgery by his father. He is said to have left home at 14 and wandered Europe from one university to another in search of famous teachers. At 16, he entered the University of Basel; some time later he was at Würzburg, studying under a celebrated expert in magic, alchemy, and astrology, Hans von Trittenheim ("Trithemius"). At 22, he went to the mining school of Sigismund Fugger, in the Tyrol, where he worked for a year, gleaning valuable information about precious metals and broadening his knowledge of alchemy, in which Fugger was expert.

He then traveled on, possibly even to Britain, definitely through Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Russia. He may even have visited India, Egypt, Arabia, and the Holy Land before reaching Turkey. From there, he went back to Germany via Italy. He served as an army surgeon in Denmark, and possibly also during the Venetian wars of 1521-25. While in Italy he secured the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Ferrara. During his travels he associated with physicians, alchemists, astrologers, apothecaries, miners, gypsies, and occultists.

He settled in Strassburg, but shortly afterwards was called to the sickbed of a publisher and patron of scholars, Johannes Froben of Basel, who was seriously ill. He effected a cure and as a result was given the vacant position of City Physician and Professor of Medicine.

At the University of Basel, he gave well-attended lectures wherein he mocked the teachings of Galen and Avicenna, and claimed to be the only real authority in medicine. In addition to his attacks on other physicians in general, he singled out individuals; he was soon hated by every druggist and apothecary in the city as well as by other physicians. Attempts were made to get rid of him, and his lectures were ruined by interruptions. Matters came to a head when a judgement concerning the payment of a large fee went against him. Paracelsus reviled the court in a gala display of vituperative wit, leaving himself wide open to punishment for contempt. He left Basel secretly and hurriedly.

For most of his remaining years, he wandered Germany and Austria, sometimes alone, sometimes with a crowd of disreputable students. On one occasion, he was so scruffy that he was denied admittance to a city. Through it all, he wrote incessantly. In 1536, his *Grosse Wundartzney* ("Great Surgery Book") was published, restoring his reputation. He became wealthy, and was invited to Salzburg by the Prince Palatine, Duke Ernst of Bavaria, himself a student of the occult. He settled down, but lived only a few months more. On September 24, 1541, he died at 48.

Encountered

Paracelsus is larger than life. He eats and drinks heartily and speaks loudly, being much given to grandiose words and gestures (The adjective "bombastic" derives from his name). He is impatient of fools (and considers anyone who disagrees with him a fool), but he is generous and convivial – unless he is writing one of his many books, in which case he can work for hours without noticing his surroundings. His response to anything strange or supernatural will doubtless be based on intelligent interest. Whether or not he truly believes in magic, he studied with those who did, and his intellect is certainly not blinkered.

– Hans Rancke-Madsen

Further Reading:

Eric John Holmyard: *Alchemy and Makers of Chemistry*.

Franz Hartmann: *The Life of Philippus Theophrastus Bombast of Hohenheim, Known by the Name of Paracelsus, and the Substance of His Teachings* (1887, reprinted in *The Prophecies of Paracelsus*, 1973).

WHAT IF?

While Paracelsus' own ideas were a strange mixture of sound practical beliefs, weird mysticism, and philosophical theories, his chief importance lay in provoking a change in the stagnant fields of alchemy and herbalism toward a more scientific exploration thereof. He was responsible for setting alchemy and herbalism on the road that turned them into chemistry and medicine, and through that he also influenced related scientific fields. Without him, the odds are that someone else would have done the same eventually. But how soon? Killing him could have delayed the scientific revolution somewhat – probably only decades, but who knows? Delay chemistry and medicine and you *might* delay the discovery of electricity; you would certainly ensure the early deaths of quite a few people.

KEY MOMENTS

There are few real key moments known in Paracelsus' life. Even his clash with the Basel magistrates probably only hastened his departure from that city. (If every one of your colleagues and co-workers hates your guts, sooner or later they're going to get rid of you.) Still, with his event-filled life, the opportunities for a time traveler to threaten or influence him would be many.

IN THE SHADOWS

Why did Paracelsus leave Basel and spend the rest of his life traveling through Europe, never staying long in any one place? Was someone hunting him, or was he hunting someone – or something?

His writings are frequently said to be confused and muddled. But maybe that was deliberate, to throw off suspicion. Maybe his *secret* notebooks contains reams of Knowledge That Man Is Not Ready For. The Lost Notebooks of Paracelsus would make a splendid MacGuffin for any campaign set after his death.

THE WILD SIDE

If he did die, that is. Paracelsus was not interested in learning how to create gold, but he probably was interested in that other alchemical grail, the Elixir of Life. If he had found it, many powerful Illuminati would have been after him. Maybe he arranged for his own "death."

Paracelsus as an immortal magus would make a dramatic figure in any "secret weirdness" campaign. He would definitely be on the side of Western Science, Enlightenment, and Progress, but his individualistic, anti-authoritarian nature would make him an unpredictable wild card.

Catherine di Medici

Total Points: 174

Born 1519; died 1589.

Age 55; 5'1", 120 lbs.; plain face, light brown hair, now thinning and turning white; always impeccably dressed.

ST: 8 [-15] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Charisma +1 [5], Fashion Sense [5], Filthy Rich [50], Literacy [10], Status 7* [30], Strong Will +3 [12].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Age [-15], Reputation -3 (Among Huguenots) [-7], Social Stigma (Foreigner) [-5], Unattractive [-5].

Quirks

Fond of dances and plays; Quietly ruthless. [-2]

Skills

Administration-16 [6], Appreciate Beauty-18 [20], Dancing-10 [2], Diplomacy-16 [8], History-12 [1], Literature-12 [1], Musical Instrument (Lute)-12 [2], Politics-18 [10], Savoir-Faire-18 [4].

Languages

Italian (native)-14 [0], French-13 [1], Latin-13 [1].

This is Catherine at the height of her personal power. Although she has vast influence, the irreparable weaknesses in her position may well be visible to the astute (including herself). Furthermore, her rather ruthless policies are already making her unpopular in some quarters; her negative Reputation is probably already spreading across all of French society (and it will endure after her death).

BIOGRAPHY

For two centuries, the life of a Medici was guaranteed not to be dull. Catherine, last and ironically most powerful direct descendant of Florence's Renaissance rulers, spent her early years in Florence during a remarkably chaotic period. At the age of eight, she spent some time as a hostage after a short-lived revolt against her family, but her education in the convents was uninterrupted.

In 1533, her uncle, Pope Clement VII, arranged for her to be married to the second son of King Francis I of France. The Valois kings needed money, and the Medicis wanted a link to the French crown. Though she was not well-loved by the French court, the king was fond of her, and Catherine herself made an impressive entrance. She brought Italian



cooking, fashion, and theater with her, which had a tremendous impact on the French. For example, to compensate for her short stature, she had a Florentine cobbler make for her the first modern high-heeled shoes.

In 1536, the dauphin died, suddenly leaving Catherine's husband, Henry, first in line for the throne. Despite the French court's intense dislike of her, she secured her position when she started having children in 1543 (ten in all by 1555, seven of whom survived infancy). When Francis died in 1547, Catherine became queen of France.

Catherine's marriage was not easy. Henry, never a very bright man, was controlled by his mistress until his death in a jousting accident in 1559. Her oldest son, now King Francis II, was no smarter and only survived another year and a half. His 10-year-old brother, now King Charles IX, succeeded him and in 1574 another brother followed him as Henry III. Catherine served as regent for Charles until he came of age, and she continued to dominate both him and his brother thereafter. From 1560 to her death, Catherine ruled Europe's most powerful kingdom, and like her ancestors Cosimo and Lorenzo di Medici in Florence, she did so from behind the scenes.

Unfortunately, Catherine came to power in a difficult time not just for France, but for Europe in general. The Protestant Reformation was wracking the continent, leading to riots and even open religious warfare. The French crown

was firmly Catholic and had long enjoyed a special relationship with the papacy (Catherine, like most Italians, was devotedly Catholic, and closely related to several popes to boot), but it was facing a rising tide of Protestant Huguenots. Catherine's reign saw a series of poorly fought, inconclusive religious wars between predominantly urban, upper- and middle-class Huguenots and royalist and peasant Catholics. Her policy was conciliatory when possible, and she was known to play the Huguenots against Catholic enemies. Ultimately, though, the Huguenots' anti-royalist sentiments forced her to take a hard line.

The most infamous event of her reign was the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. In 1572, Catherine arranged the marriage of her daughter Margarete to King Henry of Navarre, a leading Protestant, as a sign of reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. Important Protestants poured into Paris to celebrate the wedding. On the night of the wedding, August 23, armed Catholics slaughtered thousands of Huguenots, including Admiral de Coligny, the foremost Huguenot leader. Henry of Navarre was saved only by a sudden conversion to Catholicism (one of several such conversions). While the true extent of her involvement is unknown, Catherine is popularly thought responsible.

Nevertheless, the wars continued. In January, 1589, Catherine died, taking with her the last hope of the Valois dynasty. By the end of the year, her son had been deposed and Henry of Navarre became king of France. Though she was blamed for many of France's problems, Catherine nevertheless managed to maintain excellent foreign relations (she was very good at arranging advantageous marriages for her children), defend her position against constant attack for three decades, and have a profound impact on French art and culture. Even her long-time rival, Henry of Navarre, expressed amazement that Catherine had been able to overcome so many obstacles for so many years.

Encountered

Catherine is very easy to underestimate. She is a small, plain-looking woman of advancing years without any obvious charm, but she has a remarkable talent for getting her way. Characters spending any time with her will probably end up utterly fascinated. Like any good politician, Catherine is likely to greet strangers in a way that makes them comfortable, or at least dismiss them without offending them. She is a great patron of the arts, and has an excellent eye; she may commission particularly skilled artists.

– Matt Riggsby

Further Reading:

Hibbert, Christopher. *The House of Medici, Its Rise and Fall*.

Williamson, Hugh Ross. *Catherine de Medici*.

Queen Margot (dir. Patrice Chereau, 1994); heavily fictionalized (based on a Dumas novel) but critically acclaimed film touching on Catherine's last days.

“... suppress this violence of emotion. I have always found it best to appear to yield. Assume a seeming conformity to your husband's will, even attend mass, and you will more easily get the reins into your own hands.”

– Catherine Di Medici,
remark to Queen of Navarre



“Catherine believed in ghosts and spirits. She always wore upon her bosom the skin of an infant whose throat had been cut; this amulet was covered with mysterious characters of different colours, and she was persuaded that it possessed the virtue of preserving her from all injury.”

– Annie Forbes Bush, *Famous Women Described by Great Writers*

WHAT IF . . .

SHE WASN'T QUEEN

In a way, Catherine's greatest achievement wasn't what she did, but what she prevented. Since Charlemagne, the rulers of France regarded themselves as “the most Christian kings” and defenders of the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, the anti-Catholic Huguenots despised the very pro-Catholic rulers of France, and some advocated abolishing the monarchy altogether. It is historically unlikely but amusing to imagine radical Huguenots deposing the king and declaring a republic, moving the French Revolution from the late 18th century to the late 16th. That might lead in turn to popular revolts elsewhere. Shakespeare might have been witness to a revolution against Elizabeth I.

SHE WAS QUEEN ELSEWHERE

The easiest way to dispose of Catherine is to suppose that she died in childbirth, as so many other women did. However, it is more interesting to imagine that she didn't marry Henry III and instead remained in Florence. While Catherine was ruling France, her ambitious cousin Cosimo was duke of Tuscany. If Catherine had been able to join forces with her cousin, instead of spending all her time defending her position in France, Italian history could have been very different. At that time, Italy saw a style of diplomacy at which Catherine would have excelled. With Cosimo giving the Medicis a public face and Catherine managing alliances, they might have been able to extend Medici rule over large parts of Italy. In the course of the 16th century, the Medicis managed to have themselves promoted from (technically) commoners to grand dukes. With Catherine's assistance, perhaps they could have become kings of Italy, a position that did not appear until Italy's unification in the 19th century.

SHE WAS MORE THAN QUEEN

Catherine has most of the attributes of an Illuminatus – power, connections, and manipulative skills. However, it is hard to say what long-term conspiratorial ends she served; rather, she acted to deal with threats and problems. Perhaps she was part of a losing faction within the Conspiracy – or even a group that opposed it by any means necessary.

Born 1527; died 1608.

Age 56; 6', 150 lbs.; handsome, with rosy cheeks, and a reddish-blond beard turning white.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Comfortable Wealth [10], Language Talent +2 [4], Literacy [5], Patron (The Court, 9-) [15], Reputation +3 (Among European academics) [5], Status 2 [10].

Disadvantages

Age [-18], Dependent (Wife or children, 6-) [-12], Gullibility [-10], Reputation -4 (Among the superstitious, as a sorcerer and necromancer; 10-) [-5], Truthfulness [-5].

Quirks

Believes in destiny of Britain; Believes in possibility of reuniting Christendom; Devout Christian and Hermeticist; Peacemaker; Vain, flamboyant dresser. [-5]

Skills

Alchemy-10 [1], Area Knowledge (England)-13 [1], Area Knowledge (Europe)-13 [1], Architecture-11 [½], Artist-10 [½], Astrology-15 [8], Calligraphy-12 [4], Cartography-13 [2], Cryptography-14 [6], Diplomacy-13 [4], Heraldry-13 [2], History-13 [4], Law-10 [½], Literature-13 [4], Mathematics-16 [10], Mechanic ("Classical" devices)-12 [1], Navigation-13 [3½], Occultism-14 [4], Philosophy-14 [6], Physician-14 [6], Physics-10 [½], Politics-14 [4], Research-16 [8], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Teaching-14 [4], Theology-14 [6], Writing-15 [6].

(All skills TL4 where applicable.)

Languages

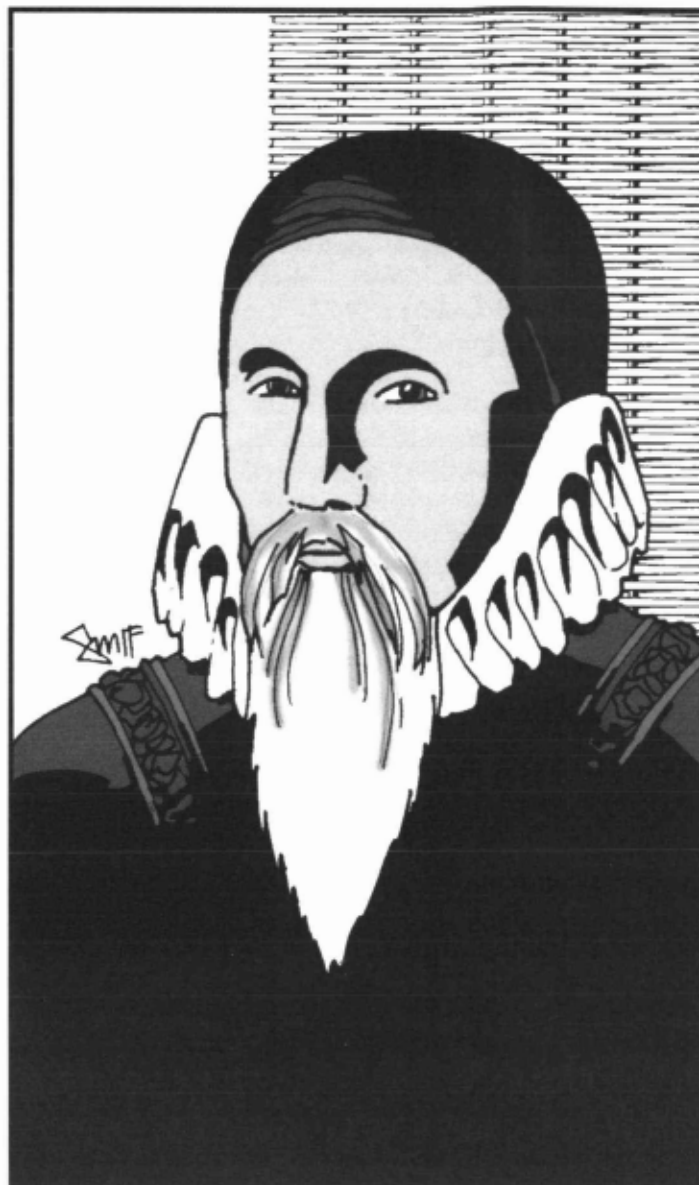
English (native)-15 [0], Aramaic-13 [½], Anglo-Saxon-13 [½], Classical Greek-14 [1], "Enochian" (M/H)-12 [½], Flemish-13 [½], French-14 [1], German-13 [½], Hebrew-13 [½], Italian-13 [½], Latin-14 [1], Polish-13 [½], Welsh-13 [½].

Equipment

Dee's house has an extensive library (4,000+ titles). He also owns various items of ritual equipment.

Notes

Dee is here at the height of his career, just before his disastrous journey to the Continent. Later, he will lose the Patron, a level of Status, and his wealth. If the GM wishes to treat him simply as a conman, his academic skills can be



reduced, and Sleight of Hand and Fast-Talk added; he might also have Greed, a worse Reputation, or even Glory Hound.

In youth, or even at this date, Dee might rate as Attractive or even Handsome.

BIOGRAPHY

At the height of the Renaissance stand a handful of men who were part of both the medieval world of magic and the emerging world of reason. They were magicians and scientists, mystics and engineers. John Dee was perhaps the greatest, a man with a continent-spanning reputation during his own lifetime. History sees him as a gullible enthusiast for mystical nonsense, or a conman. Perhaps he was all of these things.

At the age of 15, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. He soaked up learning as most young men soak

up ale: classical languages, mathematics, and his first great love, astronomy. At 20, he went abroad for the first time; from 1548, he was at various European universities, studying and teaching. (It has been suggested that England may have become too hot for him.) He began to call himself "Doctor" Dee. (He may have earned the title, he may just have taken it.) His reputation grew. He lectured at Paris, and in 1551 was offered the position of reader in mathematics there, but he returned to England.

Over the next thirty years, he acted as a tutor to members of the aristocracy, including the Earl of Leicester (who he introduced to Queen Elizabeth), and the poet Sir Phillip Sidney. He grew in wealth and fame, married in his forties, and had a happy, productive life. He wrote on everything he knew; he also acted as a consultant to the monarchy, on astronomy, navigation (he was an enthusiast for the navy), cryptography (it's *doubtful* that he was an Elizabethan James Bond), calendar reform, antiquarianism (he was the first person to advocate a national library), the historical claims of England to an empire (he coined the word "Britannia" and the term "the British Empire"), and magic.

He had first earned a reputation as a "sorcerer" at Cambridge with effects for a play. He accepted the general belief in astrology, and the metaphysics of Hermes Trismegistus, with its Gnostic ideas about enlightenment. (That he reconciled this with devout Christianity is a puzzle only to the rigid-minded.) So it was natural that he should be consulted by the court regarding horoscopes and threats such as a "witch's poppet" of Queen Elizabeth left by some ill-wisher. However, it wasn't until about 1581 that he began the work for which he is most remembered; using a medium, he tried to call up angels. His first medium turned out to be a conman and troublemaker. So, arguably, did the second: Edmund Kelley, a failed Oxford student.

In seances, Kelley would peer into Dee's "show-stone" and relay angelic conversations. This revealed a language, called "Enochian," which Dee believed was the ancient tongue of angels. There were also revelations concerning God, Jesus and the afterlife which were, to put it mildly, unorthodox. At least part of the conversations were published after Dee's death by a priest, to show that such workings only called up lies and devils. Rationalists use them as proof that Dee was Kelley's dupe; some occultists have had other opinions.

In 1583, Dee and Kelley went to Krakow in the service of Prince Albert Lasky, a pretender to the throne of Poland. They began working for Lasky and the Holy Roman Emperor. Kelley presented himself as an alchemist, and got himself knighted despite failing to produce the gold his patrons wanted. However, when he informed Dee that the angels wished the two of them to share everything, including their wives, Jane Dee (if not her husband) finally had enough, and the Dee household returned to England in 1589 without Kelley, who died shortly thereafter of falling from a tower. It seems the Emperor's patience had run out.

Dee now found that his home by the Thames and beloved library had been looted by a mob (or perhaps by his aristocratic and antiquarian "friends"). In the dying years of Elizabeth's reign, he endeavored to gain himself a profitable position, with limited success. When James I, a man in dread of witchcraft, came to the throne, Dee fell out of favor and ended his days in genteel poverty.

Encountered

Whatever his true nature, Dee's intellect and knowledge are formidable. He is courteous, and knows how to flatter. He also loves to be flattered. If you know something strange, he will have no difficulty in "believing six impossible things before breakfast."

— Michael Cule

Further Reading:

Charlotte Fell-Smith: *John Dee* (from 1909: out of date, but available for free from the web site of the John Dee Society, <http://www.johndee.org>).

Peter J. French: *John Dee: The World of the Elizabethan Magus*.

Thackery, Charles: *Extraordinary Popular Delusions & The Madness of Crowds*.

DEE'S POWER?

Dee's influence on the early years of British imperialism was subtle but definite. He helped give intellectual respectability to the tendency of the English to go out and grab whatever wasn't tied down. He also promoted mathematical education – arguably laying the groundwork for the career of Sir Isaac Newton a century later. And if he had never been born, perhaps Ben Jonson wouldn't have written *The Alchemist* and Shakespeare would have found a different model for *The Tempest*.

SCHOLAR

Recovering works lost when Dee's library was ransacked would make an interesting job for a time traveler – especially if the Doctor was capable of conjuring up real protection or the thieves were themselves wizards (or powerful aristocrats). And Aubrey implies that "not above the third part" of Dee's angelic conversations were published; a horror campaign could involve the discovery of the "lost" material.

ASTROLOGER

In 1553, the Catholic Queen Mary came to the throne of England, and Dee was asked to cast her horoscope. A short while later, he was in correspondence with the Protestant Princess Elizabeth, the heir to the throne, and casting *her* horoscope. This caused Mary's ministers to take a closer look at him, and he found himself being investigated for witchcraft. After some uncomfortable interrogation, Dee talked his way out.

Mary's life ended early, while Elizabeth's was long and glorious. One wonders if Dee had come up with the goods. A lot of people would love to see copies of both charts.

MAGUS

John Dee is an ideal character for any "secret magic" game; Patron, Enemy, or historical background. Near the end of his life, he had a vision of the Archangel Raphael, who promised him a long life and great success in a far-off place. Perhaps the promise was true, and John Dee may be found, even now, still active in some government department (or somewhere further off).

In *GURPS Voodoo* he should be a low-level Initiate of the Royalist Lodge (the high-level ones wouldn't let themselves be known). Second-level Initiation with Lodge Rank 3 and skill in several Paths would fit.

Elizabeth I

Total Points: 170

Born 1533; died 1603.

Age 50; 5'8", 145 lbs.; moderately tall, with pale skin and red hair, always dressed in fine clothes and jewelry, and beginning to use heavy white makeup to hide the signs of aging.

ST: 9/14 [5] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 6

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 14/10 [25] **Move:** 6

Dodge 6

Advantages

Charisma +2 [10], Fashion Sense [5], Filthy Rich and Multimillionaire [75], Language Talent +1 [2], Literacy [5], Manual Dexterity +1 [3], Reputation +2 (In England: the Virgin Queen) [5], Status 7* [25], Strong Will +2 [8].

*Includes +2 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Code of Honor (Princely) [-10], Enemy (Mary Queen of Scots, 9-) [-10], Indecisive [-10], Reputation -2 (Among Catholics: Henry VIII's bastard) [-5], Selfish [-5], Sense of Duty (England) [-10], Social Stigma (Woman in a man's role – second-class citizen) [-5], Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks

Flirtatious; Hates the signs of aging in herself; Loves jewelry, especially pearls; Miserly over large expenditures; Physically active. [-5]

Skills

Administration-12 [1], Area Knowledge (England)-14 [2], Area Knowledge (Europe)-12 [½], Bard-16 [4], Calligraphy-11 [2], Carousing-13 [1], Dancing-10 [2], Diplomacy-14 [6], History-11 [1], Literature-12 [2], Needlecraft-11 [2], Philosophy-10 [½], Poetry-11 [½], Politics-15 [6], Riding (Horse)-12 [8], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Singing-14 [1], Theology-12 [2], Writing-12 [1].

Languages

English-14 (native) [0], Flemish-12 [½], French-13 [1], Greek-12 [½], Italian-13 [1], Latin-12 [½], Spanish-12 [½], Welsh-12 [½].

Elizabeth lived out her threescore years and ten, and rode for miles in her sixties; her health must have been remarkable. Her fluency in several languages is well documented. She used dress to enhance her appearance; when she was under 30 she would rate as Attractive. Her Code of Honor involves defense of her personal dignity, her nation (which she embodies), and standing by promises and treaties (although the nation comes first).



“Intriguing, lying, courting flattery, she carried on a series of amours while governing her land with great sagacity, never allowing her chambermaid’s heart to influence her statesman’s head.”

from Makers of History: Queen Elizabeth

At 50, she has a full supporting cast: advisors such as Burghley and Walsingham, her favorite Leicester, and her adversary Mary Queen of Scots – not to mention figures from Shakespeare to John Dee (both detailed elsewhere in this volume). Sir Francis Drake’s fleet (effectively her personal employees) might be considered a huge Ally Group. There were often factions plotting against her, including serious would-be assassins; these could rate as additional Enemies.

BIOGRAPHY

Elizabeth Tudor was the daughter of Henry VIII by Ann Boleyn, his second wife. The Catholic Church did not recognize Henry’s divorce from his first, Catharine of Aragon, so English Catholics considered Elizabeth a bastard, not entitled

to the throne. Henry also declared her a bastard after having her mother executed, but later made her third in the succession, after her younger brother Edward and older sister Mary.

After Henry's death in 1547, his last wife, Katherine Parr, who raised Elizabeth and gave her a remarkable education, married one of Edward's uncles. He flirted with Elizabeth and, when Katherine died in childbirth, aspired to marry her, though for her to entertain his suit was legally treason. His brother, Edward's guardian, condemned him to death but found Elizabeth innocent.

After Edward's death in 1553, Mary attempted to force Catholicism on England. Protestant hopes focused on Elizabeth; Mary suspected Elizabeth of plotting against her and sent her to the Tower of London in 1554. Again she was reprieved, partly at the urging of Mary's husband, Philip of Spain.

After Mary's death in 1558, Elizabeth moved quickly to end religious conflict. She imposed uniform observance while adopting a "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward dissent. Throughout her reign she supported Protestantism but opposed religious rebellions. England thus avoided much of the strife that drove her cousin Mary Queen of Scots from her throne to refuge in England, where she plotted against Elizabeth until executed in 1587.

Parliament was anxious that Elizabeth keep Mary off the throne by marrying and bearing an heir, but she was reluctant, though she often made the chance to court her an incentive in diplomacy; both the French and Spanish royal families pursued her, despite her Protestantism. She loved Robert Dudley, whom she made Earl of Leicester, but didn't marry him, and lesser favorites never came even that close.

In 1577, she commissioned Francis Drake to raid Spanish commerce, which helped restore finances drained by wars. This eventually provoked a Spanish invasion attempt, the Armada, in 1587. When storms and Drake's fireships defeated it, she saw the hand of God in the victory.

In later years, Leicester died, as did her old advisors. Her new favorite, Leicester's stepson, the Earl of Essex, disobeyed her orders and attempted a rebellion when she punished him; in 1601, she had him beheaded. Two years later, her last act was to approve Mary Stuart's son James as her heir.

Elizabeth in History

Elizabeth held the throne of England for 45 years. At the start, the country was torn by religious strife and nearly bankrupt; at the end, it was a great power, though in renewed fiscal difficulties. Her talent lay in finding exceptionally capable advisors, and then knowing when to ignore them. (Empathy might fit on her character sheet, though she could be insensitive.) Public confidence in her also played a part; she was personally impressive, and could be persuasive. Literary works of the time make her the focus of devotion.

Her reputation has endured remarkably well, though in Scotland, Mary's death is remembered against her (despite the fact that she put a Scottish king on the throne), and her story has rarely played well among Catholics.

Encountered

PCs will meet Elizabeth at court, or during one of her official tours of England. She will be gracious, and if the male characters are attractive, she may flirt or tease them. Unless they are royalty, though, she will expect them to treat her with deference; she believes princes are favored by God. Her legendary temper is best not provoked, especially since striking back or drawing weapons is high treason.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Erickson, Carolly: *The First Elizabeth*.

Perry, Maria: *The Word of a Prince*.

Ridley, Jasper: *Elizabeth I*.

Elizabeth (this 1998 film takes gross liberties with history but catches some of the baroque paranoia of the Tudor court).

WHAT IF?

If Elizabeth had never been born, or had died young, who would have been Henry's heirs? Edward and Mary would have remained first and second, and Lady Jane Grey, Henry's great-niece, likely moved up to third – but the same desperate attempt to move her ahead of Mary would likely have ended the same way, in her death. Mary would have been under pressure to choose a successor.

One claimant was Mary Queen of Scots, another of Henry's great-nieces. As a Catholic, she would have appealed to Mary Tudor. England and Scotland might have been united 45 years earlier, but under a queen whom Protestants in both countries would have hated. Perhaps the Puritan revolution and the beheading of a monarch would have taken place in the 16th century.

THE PRINCESS IN THE TOWER

Philip advised Mary not to risk putting Elizabeth to death. But suppose Mary ignored his advice? England was already filled with protest against her harshness, and the symbolism of heirs to the throne murdered in the Tower was powerful, as it still is. A martyred Elizabeth could well have meant civil war – a perfect setting for a violent and dramatic historical campaign, and possibly the start of decades of strife as ugly as France endured in the same century.

NOBODY EXPECT'S

THE SPANISH ARMADA

What if the Spanish had succeeded in landing in England? Elizabeth was near the front lines and in danger. A group of player characters, assigned by Leicester to escort her to safety, would face challenges ranging from Spanish marauders to Elizabeth's own stubbornness. But if they performed well, they might find themselves favored with other interesting missions as the war progressed.

GLORIANA

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* portrays a romanticized version of Elizabeth's court that could be the setting for a fantasy campaign. Gloriana, the queen of Faerie, could be written up as an enhanced version of Elizabeth by removing one or two character flaws and adding suitable magical abilities. Spenser's world has everything a high fantasy campaign needs: chivalric knights, including the warrior lady Britomart, scheming enchanters, and monsters such as the Blatant Beast.

Born 1543; died 1616.

Age: 60; 5'3", 150 lbs.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 8

Advantages

Cool [1], Literacy [5], Military Rank 8 (Shogun) [40], Status 7* [15], Filthy Rich [50].

*Includes +1 for Wealth and +3 for Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Age [-30], Code of Honor (*Bushido*) [-15], Fanaticism (Japanese power and glory) [-15], Overweight [-5].

Quirks

Disapproves of foreign missionaries; Fond of *tempura* (fried food); Sometimes very stubborn. [-3]

Skills

Administration-16 [8], Area Knowledge (Japan)-13 [1], Body Language-10 [½], Bow-11 [8], Breath Control-10 [1], Calligraphy-10 [2], Diplomacy-14 [6], Falconry-13 [2], Fast-Draw (Arrow)-11 [2], Fast-Draw (Katana)-11 [2], History-11 [1], Leadership-16 [8], Literature-11 [1], Katana-12 [8], Meditation-10 [½], Merchant-13 [2], Metallurgy/TL4-12 [2], Philosophy-14 [6], Riding-10 [2], Savoir-Faire-16 [2], Strategy-16 [10], Swimming-10 [1], Tactics-14 [5 ½], Tea Ceremony-11 [1].

Languages

Japanese (native)-13 [0].

Equipment

Ieyasu wears ceremonial swords day-to-day. These are exquisitely fashioned, but the craftsmanship has been dedicated to their etchings and other decorations rather than their sharpness, and they do not qualify for the quality bonuses usually given to good katanas.

In the eighth year of Keicho (1603 in the Gregorian calendar), Tokugawa Ieyasu was given the title *seii taishogun*. By Japanese reckoning, he was 62 years old – he was one at birth, and turned two with the new year five days later. At this point in his life, Ieyasu's age was starting to affect his physical stature, as was his appetite for *tempura*. His DX was probably as high as 12 at some point; his physical skills had atrophied as well.

BIOGRAPHY

Named Matsudaira Takechiyo at birth, Tokugawa Ieyasu was born on the 26th day of the 12th month of the 11th year of Tenmon (January 31, 1543 in the Gregorian calendar). His parents were young samurai in the castle town of Okazaki, in the Mikawa province. His father, Hirotada, had become head of the Matsudaira clan at age nine, and the family fortunes were quite tenuous for several years.

Hirotada had to rely on aid from other families to maintain his holdings. After one such incident, Hirotada had to show his indebtedness to his benefactor, Imagawa Yoshimoto, by sending four-year-old Takechiyo to Sumpu as a voluntary hostage. He was intercepted en route, however, and taken to Oda Nobuhide (father of Oda Nobunaga); Oda tried to use Takechiyo to gain Hirotada's allegiance, but Hirotada refused to join Oda against Imagawa. So Takechiyo remained Oda's hostage for about two years until Oda delivered him to Yoshimoto himself, in exchange for one of Oda's own sons who had been captured by the Imagawa clan. Takechiyo lived at Sumpu for eleven years and received formal education at a Zen temple.

He became head of what remained of the Matsudaira holdings in 1555, and changed his name from Takechiyo to Motonobu. He changed his name again in 1558, after his first battle, to Motoyasu. His family was still serving as vassals to the Imagawa clan in 1560 when Yoshimoto was killed in battle with the army of Oda Nobunaga. Upon hearing of Yoshimoto's death, Motoyasu returned to Okazaki and claimed the castle there, a *de facto* declaration of his new independence from the Imagawa clan. He quickly forged an alliance with the Oda clan, which included the promise of the marriage of Motoyasu's eldest son to Nobunaga's daughter – the children were each four at the time. In 1563, Motoyasu changed his name to Ieyasu. He extended his web of political alliances and secured his position in the Mikawa province sufficiently to gain the title of Governor of Mikawa in 1566 – and changed his family name to Tokugawa.

Ieyasu continued to expand his daimyo domain as quickly as possible, and Nobunaga did likewise. Their alliance was put to the test in 1579, when Ieyasu's wife and eldest son were involved in a plot against the Oda clan. Nobunaga discovered the plot through his daughter, who had by this time wed Ieyasu's eldest son as promised. Ieyasu sent a servant to kill his wife and, eventually, had to order his son to commit suicide.

Nobunaga's attempts to consolidate power in Japan ended with his death (by his own hand, following a military betrayal) in 1582; he was followed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Hideyoshi continued the consolidation, but died of illness in 1598. Ieyasu commanded his army and the armies of his many allies in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and emerged victorious. This established his control over all of Japan, although it was not officially recognized by the emperor until 1603.



WHAT IF?

IEYASU HADN'T BEEN BORN?

Without an ally in Ieyasu, Oda Nobunaga might have had a harder time gaining enough power to begin the consolidation that Ieyasu finished in 1600. The Warring States period (*sengoku*) would then have continued on into the 17th century, presenting more opportunities for savvy European traders. Japan might never have closed its borders to foreign trade, resulting in closer relations with Europe, and maybe more expatriates to the New World when it is discovered. The Japanese might colonize what would have been California. The United States might extend only to the Rockies, or only to the Mississippi. A weaker Japan with more of its children wandering the globe would leave the East more open to colonial plundering – but the dynamic Japanese culture might become *more* influential in the long term.

THE WILD SIDE

In a campaign which includes such things, Ieyasu's calm exterior could be just another form for a very ambitious *gaki* (p. BT89). Being of nobility makes feeding on peasants easier, as all vampires know. Couple that with a proven battlefield record and you've got a big supply of human blood! The *gaki*'s Morph ability yields even more possibilities. Ever notice how you never see Ieyasu and Nobunaga together?

Once peace reigns throughout Japan, however, the *gaki* may become bored – perhaps impersonating one of the missionaries and hopping a boat back to Europe could be fun.

THE TOKUGAWA DYNASTY

Ieyasu had ten living children at the end of 1603: three daughters (Kamehime, Tokuhime, and Furuhide) and seven sons (Hideyasu, Hidetada, Tadayoshi, Tadateru, Yoshinao, Yorinobu and Yorifusa). The possibility for dynastic politics in variant-history campaigns are endless.

MANAGERIAL APPROACHES

To illustrate the differences in the three men who unified Japan, the Japanese have this story: Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu are faced with a cuckoo-bird that will not sing. Nobunaga would wring its neck, Hideyoshi would force it to sing – but Ieyasu would wait for it to sing.

Encountered

At this point in his life, PCs who wish to meet Tokugawa Ieyasu will almost certainly have to do so in his recently completed Nijo castle in Kyoto. Ieyasu will be quite hesitant to bestow any favor unless the benefit to his governmental rule can be demonstrated. He is quite interested in maintaining and increasing trade, especially with Europe; he is almost equally opposed to any missionary activities. In all dealings, however, he will pay close attention to the details of courtly behavior, and will hardly ever be flustered. PCs should *never* underestimate him; he is a shrewd, methodical strategist.

– J. Hunter Johnson

Further Reading:

Dunn, Charles J.: *Everyday Life in Traditional Japan*.

Matsunosuke Nishiyama: *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868*.

Sansom, George B.: *A History of Japan, 1334-1615* (the second of a three-volume work).

Totman, Conrad: *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*.

Tycho Brahe

Total Points: 140

Born 1546; died 1601.

Age 44; 6', 215 lbs. A tall, heavy Danish man with a copper nose (silver on special occasions) and a beard and mustache; richly dressed but normally without arms or armor.

ST: 13 [30] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 15 [60] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 3

Dodge: 3 **Parry:** 6

(Move and Dodge are adjusted for Overweight encumbrance.)

Advantages

Acute Vision +1 [2], Literacy [5], Reputation +2 (Among the learned: brilliant astronomer) [5], Status 4* [15], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5], Gluttony [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Overweight [-5], Unnatural Feature (Metal nose) [-5].

Quirks

Gives his pet elk beer; Says his dwarf Jeppe is clairvoyant; Wants his heirs legitimized; Wears a silver nose on formal occasions (copper for ordinary wear); Writes Latin verse. [-5]

Skills

Administration-14 [1], Architecture-15 [2], Area Knowledge (Hven)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (Europe)-14 [½], Artist-13 [1], Astronomy (specialized in observational work)-15/21 [6], Carousing-12 [4], Cartography-13 [½], Chemistry-15 [4], Dancing-9 [1], Fencing-9 [1], Law-12 [½], Mathematics-14 [2], Mechanic (Astronomical instruments)-14 [1], Meteorology-14 [1], Occultism-13 [½], Physician-14 [2], Poetry-14 [1], Research-13 [½], Riding (Horse)-9 [1], Savoir-Faire-17 [0], Teaching-13 [½], Theology-12 [½], Writing-15 [2].

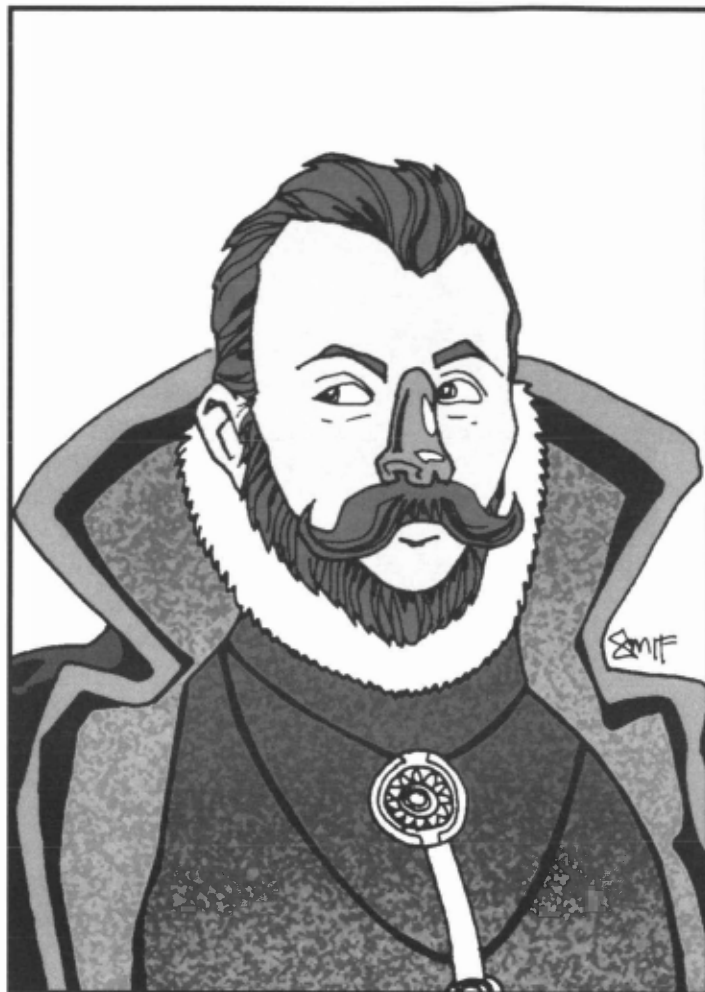
(All skills TL4 where applicable.)

Languages

Danish (native)-15 [0], German-14 [1], Greek-13 [½], Latin-15 [2].

Equipment

Tycho owns many astronomical instruments of his own design, and might have some with him if he is at work, though most are awkwardly large. He owns a sword but seldom carries it.



The above represents Tycho circa 1590. Astronomy and chemistry include alchemical and astrological concepts; in a world where magic works, he may have Alchemy. (Although *GURPS* labels TL4 astronomy as "Astrology," Brahe was thoroughly scientific about it, so the modern term is used here.) A younger Tycho would be Comfortable rather than Wealthy, not Overweight, and lack a Reputation; before 1566, he would have his own nose.

Although Tycho's prosthetic nose is treated as an Unnatural Feature, it is probably not unique or terribly startling in his world; dueling injuries happen often enough.

BIOGRAPHY

Tycho Brahe was larger than life in many different dimensions: physique, intellect and personality. We remember him as a great astronomer, but the breadth of his interests made him one of the prototypical Renaissance Men.

Born into one of Denmark's four greatest noble families, Tyge Brahe (Latinized to Tycho) was kidnapped at 2 by his father's childless brother and raised as his heir. An aristocratic upbringing included studies at several universities, during which he lost the end of his nose in a sword duel with a fel-

low student, Manderup Parsberg, after a quarrel at a Christmas party. He was expected to study law, take an administrative job, and find an aristocratic wife; instead he lived for 28 years with Kirsten Joergensdatter, a commoner he could not legally marry, and became an astronomer. (He was strikingly loyal to his unorthodox family, although his wife mostly seems to have stayed in the background socially.)

Tycho's fascination with astronomy began in his student days and became an obsession in 1572, when he observed a nova in Cassiopeia. He spent the rest of his life in observational work, compiling a major star catalog and writing many books, which he established his own press to publish. He was also a physician and alchemist in the tradition of Paracelsus (see earlier in this book), an artist and architect, and a Latin poet.

Tycho virtually invented the role of the career scientist. Starting as court astrologer for King Frederick, he persuaded the king to fund his research by granting him feudal title to the island of Hven, where he designed and built an observatory, Uraniborg. In addition, he secured commissions for projects such as a new map of Denmark – which was never completed. Uraniborg became a tourist attraction, with such visitors as James VI of Scotland.

After King Frederick's death in 1588, the Danish government viewed Tycho less favorably. There were complaints about high costs (1% of the annual budget), failure to complete projects or perform feudal duties, harsh treatment of the inhabitants of Hven (he put one who criticized him in chains), and lack of deference toward King Christian. In 1599, he accepted the invitation of the Holy Roman Emperor to move to Prague, where Kepler joined him in 1600. In 1601, at a banquet, he drank too much, ruptured his bladder, and died after 11 days.

Tycho in History

Tycho was the last great naked-eye observational astronomer, and had such skill that his measurements attained 10 times the standard of precision of the ancients. His observations of comets and of a nova in Cassiopeia overthrew the Aristotelian conception of the unchanging heavens and opened a path to Newton's unification of earthly and heavenly physics. Ironically, Tycho never accepted the heliocentric theory, preferring a compromise where the sun and moon orbited the earth and the other planets orbited the sun. Despite this, his observations were the basis for Kepler's theory of planetary orbits and thus indirectly for Newton's theory of gravity.

Encountered

Tycho is normally encountered at Uraniborg, where he receives many visitors. He loves to entertain and to show off his facilities, especially to guests of high rank, though he assumes that such guests will treat him as an equal and may be touchy if they do not, or if lower-ranked guests are not deferential. His temper has gotten him into many quarrels throughout his life, and he may quarrel with player characters on little excuse, though he will be friendly and generous if they are respectful of his achievements and whims. If the PCs were sent by the Danish regency to look into Tycho's handling of his duties, he will try to restrain himself, but the job will demand considerable tact.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Koestler, Arthur: *The Sleepwalkers*.
Thoren, Victor: *The Lord of Uraniborg*.



TYCHO IN ECLIPSE

If Tycho had never lived, or had given in to the wish of his family and tutor that he not pursue astronomy, the growth of science might have been significantly slowed. Kepler used Tycho's observations in working out the theory of elliptical planetary orbits; with the much less precise data available before Tycho, he might never have succeeded. Could Isaac Newton have made up for this, or would mathematics and physics remain underdeveloped?

In the meantime, Tyge Brahe, if he lived, would likely have gone into politics. If his ability and his arrogance didn't destroy him, they could have made him powerful; perhaps he could have been the regent for the young King Christian. In some alternate timeline he may have been an autocrat dragging his country to world power – and occasionally looking up and wondering about other worlds.

Or he might have rebelled in a different way. What if his lost duel drove him to master swordsmanship and take up a life of adventure and carousing? Player characters might meet a tall Danish mercenary with a silver nose, and learn to be careful of his temper.

THE DARK SIDE OF TYCHO

Tycho spent nearly as much time on medical and alchemical investigations as he did on astronomy. In a world where magic worked, his systematic empirical approach might have taught him many alchemical secrets. He could be a patron for a group of player characters, sending them to find rare ingredients in exchange for alchemical support – or he could need their help, if one of his discoveries threatened the balance of power. This could be anything from the secret of making gold to a potion that enhanced the combat abilities of soldiers. He could also have connections with occult conspiracies, or be their target. And perhaps his dwarf could really be clairvoyant.

FLY ME TO THE MOON

A wilder fantasy campaign could be based on Johannes Kepler's fantasy novel *Somnium*, in which a young Icelandic, Duracotus, first studies with Tycho and then goes home to his mother, the witch Fioixhilda, whose demonic allies send him to visit the moon and its exotic inhabitants. Tycho could lead or send a party of adventurers to explore this new world.

William Shakespeare

Total Points: 151

Born 1564; died 1616.

Age 43; 5'9", 150 lbs. A balding, middle-aged man with a neat beard and mustache.

ST: 10 [-]	DX: 10 [-]	Speed: 5
IQ: 14 [45]	HT: 10 [-]	Move: 5
Dodge: 5	Parry: 5	Block: 4

Advantages

Charisma +1 [5], Literacy [5], Patron (James I, 6-) [5], Reputation +2 (Among actors and playgoers: skilled poet and playwright) [3], Status 1* [0], Very Wealthy [30].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (The show must go on) [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Secret (Bisexual) [-5].

Quirks

Dislikes actors who ad lib; Sense of privacy; Socially ambitious. [-3]

Skills

Acting-13 [1], Area Knowledge: London-14 [1], Bard-14 [1], Carousing-10 [2], Carpentry-13 [½], Cloak-8 [½], Dancing-10 [2], Directing-14 [4], Fencing-8 [½], History-13 [2], Law-12 [1], Leadership-13 [½], Literature-14 [4], Make-Up-14 [1], Performance-14 [1½], Poetry-24 [21], Psychology-16 [8], Research-14 [2], Riding-8 [½], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Singing-10 [1], Sleight of Hand-8 [1], Stage Combat-10 [2], Stealth-10 [1], Streetwise-13 [1], Writing-21 [15].

Languages

English-18 (native) [4], French-12 [½], Greek-12 [½], Latin-13 [1].

Though Shakespeare was one of his time's most popular playwrights, his passage left few traces. If he spoke of what he thought or felt, no one recorded it; and the only works in which he used his own voice, his *Sonnets*, are phrased so discreetly that no one is sure how to interpret them. Biographers have guessed at secrets ranging from homosexuality to Roman Catholicism; the version presented here has been attracted to boy actors and to the young nobleman who appears in the *Sonnets*, but has never performed any legally punishable acts – but a referee who prefers a different secret may choose one.

The majority of his skills are those needed on the stage. The Wealth and Status reflect investments, his father's purchase of a coat of arms, and his standing as principal poet for the most successful company of actors in England; a youthful Shakespeare might have only the attributes of a pushy provincial actor with a small, justified reputation for wit.

BIOGRAPHY

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire; his father held offices in the city government and his mother was a minor heiress. He attended grammar school, learning "small Latin and less Greek," but had no further education. At 18 he married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior; six months later, they had a daughter, Susanna. Two years afterward they had twins, Hamnet and Judith, though Hamnet died at 11.

Sometime in the next eight years, Shakespeare moved to London, leaving his family behind, though he continued to support them. His exact movements in that period remain a



mystery; the best guess is that he became a schoolmaster or private tutor, but other theories have him in the army, at sea, or in a lawyer's office. (Time-traveling researchers will want the truth; GMs can take the excuse to give him almost any skill.) He probably served an apprenticeship as actor and stagehand, and he took work revising and adding scenes to others' plays before any of his own were produced. He quickly gained recognition, first for historical plays about English royalty, later for comedies and tragedies.

The London theater was passing through an era of extraordinary creativity; with Shakespeare as playwright and Richard Burbage as principal actor, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became its most successful company. When James I succeeded Elizabeth, they were renamed the King's Men (and one of his plays, *Macbeth*, made a point of honoring James' ancestors).

Shakespeare also began to associate with the nobility, especially the Earl of Southampton, to whom his first published poems were dedicated. He privately circulated a series of *Sonnets*, describing his love for a young man and for a mysterious dark lady; historians cannot agree who these were, or even if they really existed. He valued his poems more than his plays, perhaps because playwriting was a purely commercial activity, but poetry was respectable – many noblemen dabbled – and Shakespeare wanted to improve his social standing. He probably paid the fees for his father's coat of arms.

He was no fool with money; in the modern idiom, he took profitable percentage deals rather than flat fees. As a senior member of his company, which could afford to build its own theater, the Globe, Shakespeare became prosperous, and was able to buy land in Stratford. He retired there in 1612 and died in 1616, less than a month after making his will. His plays remained in the Kings' Men's repertoire until the Puritan revolution closed the theaters.

Shakespeare in History

In his own time, Shakespeare gained recognition as its best playwright and poet, and posterity has confirmed the opinion of his contemporaries – and of Shakespeare, who wrote "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments/Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme." His writing provided an example for later literary movements, especially in the 18th century, when his indifference to "classical" rules inspired romantics throughout Europe (who ignored only his cheerfully businesslike approach to work). His plays still attract actors and directors who want to prove their skill, and are adapted into genres from musical comedy to space opera and into media from ballet to film. His vocabulary was the largest of any writer in English, and it is almost impossible for an educated English-speaker to go a week without quoting him, often unknowingly.

Encountered

Most Londoners have seen Shakespeare on the stage, except for Puritans who consider the theater the doorway to Hell. He seldom acts any longer, and when he does he uses his skills primarily to mask his privacy. He enjoys the company of other writers, and is skilled enough at conversation that few of them notice how much more he learns from them than they learn from him. His works show a passing knowledge of the jargon of law, medicine, and magic, which suggests someone who reads and listens voraciously (unless one wishes to credit him with strange hobbies, of course).

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Honan, Park: *Shakespeare: A Life*.

Laroque, Francois: *The Age of Shakespeare*.

Norman, Marc, and Tom Stoppard: *Shakespeare in Love: A Screenplay*.

Schoenbaum, Samuel: *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*.

Shakespeare, William: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*.

Wilson, Ian: *Shakespeare: The Evidence*.

THE WASTES OF TIME

History without Shakespeare? Given his lack of involvement in affairs of state, what difference would his absence make?

Perhaps a great deal. His works inspired later generations to break the "classical" rules; without him, literature might have been much more formal and correct, and less able to inspire rebellion. Even if this seems farfetched, it might seem plausible to time travelers wanting to create a more orderly society.

Their interventions might create a future in which the English language was noticeably different, and rather poorer. For that matter, England might have gone through history a little less sure of itself. Only recently, Shakespeare was voted "Man of the Millennium" in a poll in the UK.

A BASENESS TO WRITE FAIR

Shakespeare is privileged to have his own personal conspiracy theorists, who seek to prove that someone else wrote "his" works. Their main reason seems to be snobish; Shakespeare was lightly educated and provincial, and yet was the greatest writer of his age. They assume that he was a front-man, and use the obscurity of his life and supposed hidden codes and clues in his works to support candidates including Francis Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, and Christopher Marlowe (after a faked death).

TREASONS, STRATAGEMS, & SPOILS

England's official Protestantism under the Tudors was unwelcome to its many Catholics, and some of them plotted revolt, from Mary Queen of Scots (executed 1587) to the Gunpowder Plotters of November 5, 1605. Both Shakespeare's family and his early patron had Catholic ties. What if Shakespeare used his theatrical talents to play deadlier roles than on the stage? His rival and friend Christopher Marlowe was certainly an atheist and anti-Catholic informer in the pay of Walsingham until his death in 1593.

BOTH ALIKE IN DIGNITY

The year is 1604, but Marlowe lives on. Two companies of players contend for primacy: The Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's company, and The Lord Admiral's Men, Marlowe's. Now all theatrical licenses have been revoked at the urging of Puritans; but the new King James I is granting new licenses in his own name. Who will gain the coveted title of The King's Men?

A group of PCs could act out this contest. Alternatively, the story could be spun out as background to a campaign set in London in this period. The rivalry between two playwrights of such eloquence could hardly fail to draw notice and comment.

Cardinal Richelieu

Total Points: 319½

Born 1585; died 1642.

Age 46; 6', 145 lbs. A tall, thin Frenchman with angular features, grayed dark hair, a neat mustache and a pointed beard, wearing the red hat and robes of a cardinal.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 4.75

IQ: 16 [80] **HT:** 9 [-10] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4 **Parry:** 8

Advantages

Ally (Father Joseph, 9-) [15], Ally (Louis XIII, 15-) [60], Ally Group (Personal spy network, 9-) [30], Attractive Appearance [5], Eidetic Memory [30], Legal Immunity [15], Literacy [5], Filthy Rich and Multimillionaire ×2 [100], Religious Rank 7 [35], Reputation +1 (As highly capable and intelligent, among European nobility, 10-) [1], Single-Minded [5], Status 7* [10].

*Includes +3 for Wealth and +2 for Religious Rank.

Disadvantages

Chronic Depression (Only after a personal setback or major defeat: -50%) [-7], Edgy [-5], Enemy (French nobility, 9-) [-30], Fanaticism (Himself) [-15], Obsession (Turn France into dominant power in Europe) [-15], Reputation -4 (Tyrant and sorcerer, among the peasantry, 10-) [-5]; Reputation -3 (manipulative puppet-master; 10-) [-7], Weak Immune System [-30].

Quirks

Dislikes most women; Hides intense emotions behind an icy facade; Manipulative and opportunistic; Relishes the praise of others; Secretive. [-5].

Skills

Acting-19 [4], Administration-19 [4], Appreciate Beauty-15 [1], Area Knowledge (France)-17 [1], Area Knowledge (Luçon)-16 [½], Area Knowledge (Paris)-19 [3], Bard-20 [5], Diplomacy-19 [5], Fencing-12 [8], Intelligence Analysis-15 [1], Interrogation-15 [½], Leadership-17 [2], Philosophy-16 [2], Politics-14 [0], Riding (Horse)-12 [8], Savoir-Faire-19 [1], Sport (Racquets)-9 [1], Theology (Catholic)-20 [6], Writing-18 [3].

Languages

French (native)-17 [½], Ancient Greek-15 [½], Latin-15 [½].

(Note that all mental skills are at half cost because of Eidetic Memory.)

Equipment

When accompanying troops into battle, Richelieu wears a breastplate over his robes.



**"If there is a God, Cardinal Richelieu
will have much to answer for.
If not, he has done very well."**

— Pope Urban VIII

This represents Richelieu in 1631, with Louis XIII's absolutism cemented and the Hapsburgs on the retreat. During his early career, Richelieu lacked the Enemies and Allies and had a Reputation for promise. His Reputation grew worse as his nature was revealed, and he picked up Enemies and Allies, though not necessarily the ones listed (e.g. Marie de Médecis was first his Patron before becoming an Ally and later Enemy, while Louis XIII was an Enemy during Richelieu's service to Marie). He may well also have spoken Spanish and Italian.

Richelieu was often ill, but at other times, he led armies in the field; reasonable physical attributes combined with Weak Immune System reflect this in game terms. (The results may be a little extreme, but not all that unrealistic.) In 1642, his health suffered dramatically; lower ST and HT to 7 or less. Also, if he suffered a major reverse, he could become overwhelmingly depressed. Eidetic Memory is a rather cinematic advantage, but Richelieu's ability in this area is recorded as having been remarkable, and it does make him an especially formidable opponent. In a cinematic, *Three Musketeers*-style campaign, or arguably in realistic terms, Richelieu's personal bodyguards could rate as another Ally Group.

BIOGRAPHY

Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal et Duc de Richelieu, was born September 5, 1585, to a noble French family. He excelled at school, then entered a leading military academy where his future looked bright. However, his older brother rejected his post as bishop of Luçon to become a Capuchin monk, leaving the family with no source of income. Richelieu dutifully devoted himself to theology. The Vatican made him Bishop of Luçon at the unprecedented age of 22.

Instead of joining the court of Henry IV (the obvious choice for a power-hungry man), he moved to Luçon and began renovating the episcopal residence and educating and acting as a spiritual guide for the populace (thus gaining further respect from the Vatican). He eventually gained the notice of Marie de Médecis, regent to the child king Louis XIII, who appointed him minister of foreign affairs. Louis' master of the house, Luynes, came to dominate the king, and Marie and her followers were forced into exile. When Luynes died in 1621, Richelieu convinced Marie not to rebel against Louis and arranged a reunion of mother and son. In gratitude, Louis urged the Vatican to promote Richelieu to cardinal in 1622.

Richelieu became chief of the Royal Council and ruled France in all but name, whipping the nobility and Protestants into line. Marie de Médecis made an attempt to supplant him at the king's side in 1630, but Louis backed the cardinal, promoting Richelieu to principle minister of state. Marie and her supporters fled Paris in fear.

To combat the Hapsburg empire, Richelieu funded the army of Denmark in the Thirty Years War. Denmark swept through Hapsburg Germany, but things turned bad when Hapsburg Spain and the Holy Roman Empire massed on the French borders by 1635. Richelieu scrambled to prepare, signing treaties, distributing propaganda, and securing strategic areas. The assault began in 1636. France stood a chance thanks to the bolstered French military and the cardinal's allies, including Father Joseph, who traveled through Hapsburg lands urging the citizens to revolt. The stress was causing the cardinal's health to deteriorate, however.

The city of Corbie fell, leaving Paris exposed. Richelieu isolated himself in his palace while Parisians fled. Father Joseph talked Richelieu out of his stupor, and the next day, the cardinal led an army of twenty thousand to meet Louis. Spain hesitated and French reinforcements arrived, securing Paris. The Hapsburgs soon retreated, but Richelieu hadn't long to live. He spent his last days in bed being spoon-fed by the king.

Encountered

Richelieu is an impressive figure in his robes. He may exhibit a cough or snuffle, however, or even be bedridden, especially later in his career. His attitude toward others depends on their perceived importance; he is notoriously indifferent to the peasantry and mildly intolerant of women. However, in the presence of social betters, Richelieu becomes a sycophant, especially in his early career.

Richelieu makes a deadly enemy. Once he gets foes in his clutches, he personally interrogates them and then has them imprisoned or publicly tortured or executed as an example.

— Brian C. Smithson

Further Reading:

Dumas, Alexandre: *The Three Musketeers*.

Erlanger, Philippe: *Richelieu: The Thrust for Power*.

Glossup, Pat: *Richelieu*.

WHAT IF?

AMERICAN FOREFATHER

A world without Richelieu could well see France remain a loose collection of territories nominally controlled by the king. With no unified French opponent, the pre-eminence of the Hapsburg empire would last a bit longer, but its power would wane as its colonial gold dried up. England would fill the vacuum and provide the menace against which other nations would rally.

This would lead to a dramatic reduction, if not elimination, in the French presence in the Americas, leaving England to expand even further. The American colonies would be largely on their own during any revolts, having no centralized France from which to seek aid. Even with help from England's enemies, the stronger English presence would likely crush the Americans.

PROTO-NAPOLEON

What of a world where a slightly healthier Richelieu pursued his military career? His trademark political skill would raise him quickly through the ranks while he modernized and expanded the French military. He might even then lead his armies against Louis XIII and proclaim himself emperor of France. Europe would then face a threat much like that posed by Napoleon nearly two centuries later, but with Richelieu at its head.

ILLUMINATUS

Richelieu matches the stereotypical Illuminatus perfectly: he works in secret and for his own ends, his spies are everywhere, and he is feared by his subjects. Maybe he was even a *founder* of the Conspiracy, or at least the French branch. A falling-out with other Illuminati could have led to the plots on his life . . . and possibly his sickness and premature death.

CARDINAL LICH

The peasants of France feared Richelieu and credited him with sorcerous powers, and the nobility were perplexed by the cardinal's almost supernatural ability to influence others. Could the cardinal have had magical abilities? His vast personal library could very easily have housed *Things Man Was Not Meant To Know* . . .

Interestingly, in his final days, Richelieu often had his servants take him out on a stretcher to oversee his troops in battle. Why would he risk such an outing . . . unless he had more *sinister* plans in mind? Was the cardinal absorbing the souls of those felled in battle, thus preparing himself for a return from death as a lich or shadow (see pp. UN70-71 and UN77-78)? The peasants feared that Richelieu lived on after his death. Maybe they were right.



Oliver Cromwell

Total Points: 142

Born 1599; died 1658.

Age 50; 5'10", 155 lbs. A famously unprepossessing Englishman, solidly built with a ruddy, warty face, usually scruffily dressed in plain clothes or uniform.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25
IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5
Dodge 5 **Parry:** 6

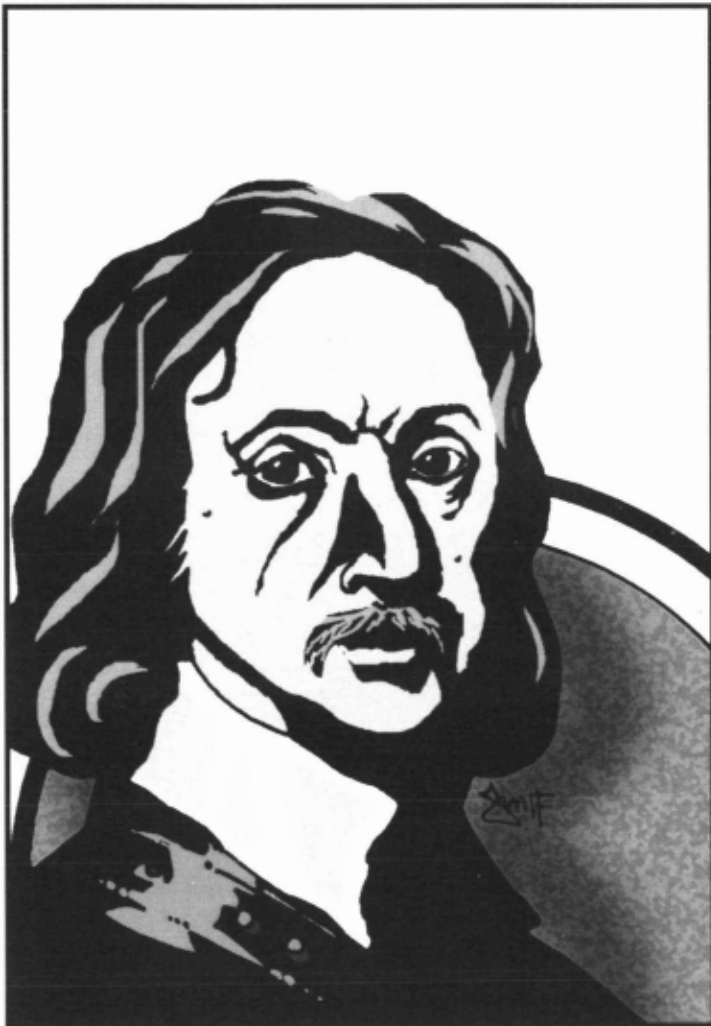
Advantages

Literacy [5], Military Rank 7 [35], Reputation +3 (War hero, among Parliamentarians) [7], Status 4* (Member of Parliament) [5], Strong Will +1 [4], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 from Wealth and +2 from Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Puritan) [-10], Sense of Duty (His soldiers) [-10], Unattractive [-5], Vow (Establish a godly nation) [-15].



Quirks

Holds Parliamentary authority in high esteem; Somewhat stubborn and hot-tempered; Not worried about his appearance; Relatively unconcerned about social status; Tolerant of all branches of Protestantism, but intolerant of "popery." [-5]

Skills

Administration-14 [4], Agronomy/TL4-12 [1], Area Knowledge (England)-14 [2], Bard-13 [2], Black Powder Weapons (Matchlock Pistol)-13 [1], Brawling-12 [2], Broadsword-13 [8], Law-11 [1], Leadership-19 [14], Politics-12 [1], Riding-12 [4], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Strategy-18 [14], Swimming-11 [1], Tactics-14 [4], Theology-12 [2].

Languages

English (native)-13 [0].

Equipment

In the field, Cromwell would be armed with broadsword and pistol, and armored in a helmet and back-and-breast plate. In Parliament, he would wear a sword. He always had a Bible available.

The above represents Cromwell around 1649. At this date, the Royalists could rate as a major Enemy. He is a lieutenant general in a small army. This version takes a generous view; a more critical account would reduce his Code of Honor and might even give him Megalomania. A more generous view might replace the Vow with a Higher Purpose. Later in his career, he would have higher Rank and Status; earlier, he would have less Rank, lower Wealth, and probably some Allies (Ireton, Saye, *et al.*).

Cromwell is devoted to the creation of a "Godly, Christian Kingdom" with religious liberty for Protestants. If a man has the "heart of the matter" as he sees it, he doesn't mind if he's Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist. Catholics, he violently opposes. His Code of Honor means he will keep his word, and protect those he sees as good.

BIOGRAPHY

Little is known of Cromwell's early years. His father was the younger son of a knight, but his status and finances were precarious. His education was typical of "minor gentry"; he went to college in Cambridge and apparently studied law in London, where he married in 1621, then moved back to Huntingdon. He was a Member of Parliament in 1628-1629, but made little impact. In the early 1630s, he suffered a political or financial crisis and was reduced to a mere yeoman. His conversion to Puritanism may date from this time.

An inheritance in 1636 restored his fortunes, and in 1640 he was returned as MP for Cambridge in the "Long Parliament." He lacked the tact to get far, although he had influential allies. This was the Parliament which came into conflict with King Charles I.

“Royalty is but a feather in a man’s cap: let children enjoy their rattle.”

– Oliver Cromwell, rejecting title of king in 1658

At the outbreak of civil war in 1642, Cromwell joined the army. In 1643, he set about raising a cavalry regiment, eventually famous as the “Ironsides.” Despite having no previous military experience, he was an outstanding commander; his troops were capable of matching the best Royalist cavalry. Throughout the First Civil War (1642-1646), he built a reputation. In 1645 he helped form the “New Model Army” and joined it as second-in-command in time to win a famous victory at Naseby.

Cromwell had a major part in negotiating with the King in 1647-1648, becoming increasingly frustrated at Charles’ obstinacy. The Second Civil War started in 1648 when the King escaped to Scotland. Cromwell led the New Model Army to defeat the Scottish Royalists at Preston. He returned to London just after Colonel Pride purged Parliament of remaining Royalist/Presbyterian sentiment and led the faction calling for the trial and execution of Charles I; in January 1649, he was one of the “regicides” who signed the king’s death warrant.

Parliament then sent him to Ireland, where he crushed the ongoing Irish revolution. Returning to England, he was appointed Lord General of the army, replacing Fairfax, who was unwilling to attack Charles II’s forces in Scotland. The campaign that followed culminated in victory at Worcester in 1651; Charles II fled to France. In three years, Cromwell had united England, Scotland and Ireland.

He returned to Parliament, but became disillusioned with its failure to implement moderate reforms. Fearing for the religious liberty of nonconformists under a Presbyterian Parliament, he reluctantly used the army to bring the Long Parliament to an end in 1653. Later that year, he declared himself Lord Protector of England. Until his death in 1658, he attempted to restore some sort of Parliament that would govern in a godly manner, as he saw it, but all his attempts failed. After his death, his son Richard took his place but proved unsuited to the job, and in 1660, Charles II was invited back.

Cromwell in History

In many ways Cromwell is an ambiguous figure; whether he was a hero or villain depends entirely on your perspective. His egalitarian views prefigure many of the principles of modern democracy, but he could be downright reactionary in defense of social order. Although he played a pivotal role in the English Civil War, it is hard to say how much impact that war really had; the Crown returned, albeit with reduced powers.

His influence on military history was more profound. The New Model Army was the first modern, national army wearing a common uniform. Its standards of conduct were extremely high; soldiers indulging in pillage or rape could expect to be hanged. In a way, it was England’s first truly professional army.

Encountered

Cromwell is a man of action rather than a politician. He possesses a fierce temper, and will not hesitate to criticize. He is also an inspiration to his men, as loyal to them as they are to him.

He seeks the will of God in all things; battlefield victories, say, are to be interpreted as showing that his course of action meets God’s approval. Biblical references are very common in his speech and writings. He will strenuously resist any signs of heresy, and condemn anything not in accord with Puritan doctrine.

– Gareth L. Owen

Further Reading:

Coward, Barry: *Oliver Cromwell (Profiles in Power Series)*.

Hibbert, Christopher: *Cavaliers and Roundheads*.

Morrill, John and others: *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*.

Sherwood, Roy Edward: *Oliver Cromwell: King in All but Name, 1653-1658*.

WHAT IF?

Cromwell was the major Parliamentary player in the Civil War. Without his generalship, the war could have dragged on much longer, possibly even to a Royalist victory. And in 1648, he played the key role in calling for the King’s execution.

The modern troubles in Northern Ireland are also partly his fault. Without his bloody intervention, the Irish revolt would have stood a much better chance of success, especially given a capable Irish leader. An Ireland which found allies on the continent would have stood some chance of retaining independence.

And if he had been a better politician, or if his son had been more able, they might have created a lasting English Republic. History from then on would have been very different. Conversely, there are suggestions that he seriously considered taking the throne himself; a “Cromwellian” dynasty might have pursued some *interesting* policies, or it might have slipped into a traditional royal pattern.

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Cromwell’s career is littered with crisis points. However, two in particular stand out. Had Charles been willing to compromise in 1648, the crown would have been restored, albeit reduced in power. And in 1645, the “Self-Denying Ordinance” prevented MPs from holding army commissions. Cromwell and his allies passed this bill to remove a number of ineffective officers; an exemption was made for Cromwell himself. If his enemies in Parliament had been more effective, they could have removed him from the army at this point, depriving him of the power base he eventually used to become Lord Protector.

CROMWELL’S HEAD

After the Restoration, the new King, Charles II, was keen to eliminate any threat to his throne. The remaining regicides were tried and executed, and those who had already died were exhumed and posthumously beheaded. Cromwell’s head was displayed publicly for all to see. However, shortly afterward, it disappeared. It had fallen to the ground in a high wind, and a guardsman had taken it home.

For the next few centuries it passed from owner to owner, being stored in a biscuit tin at one point. Eventually it was acquired by his old college, Sidney Sussex, in Cambridge, where it is now interred. (The exact site is kept secret, to prevent it ever being exhumed again.) The irony is that Cromwell considered the body a mere piece of earth and would not have cared what happened to it.

Peter the Great

Total Points: 339½

Born 1672, Died 1725.

Age 38; 6'7", 210 lbs. Lanky, with dark, wavy, shoulder-length hair, a small wart on his right cheek, brown eyes, and callused hands; dressed in German commoner's clothes.

ST: 13 [30] **DX:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 5.75

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge 6 **Parry:** 6

Advantages

Alcohol Tolerance [5], Attractive [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire ×2 [100], Language Talent +1 [2], Literacy [10], Military Rank 8 [40], Status 7* [20], Strong Will +2 [8], Versatile [5].

*Includes +3 levels from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5], Curious [-10], Modified Arm DX (-2 on Left Arm, Uncontrollable, Unconscious Only: -50%)* [-6], Obsession (Make Russia a modern state) [-15], Remove Attractive Appearance (Uncontrollable, Unconscious Only: -50%)* [-2], Unnatural Feature (Extremely tall) [-5], Xenophilia [-5].

*Peter suffers facial tics and arm spasms due to focal epilepsy. Roll vs. HT (not Will) for this, as per the guidelines for Epilepsy, p. B28. The symptoms last until he can sleep for several hours. On a critical failure, he may be completely incapacitated.

Quirks

Crude sense of humor; Drives himself (and others) past exhaustion; Likes to work with his hands; Places merit over birth; Uncomfortable about effect of facial/arm tics on strangers. [-5]

Skills

Administration-13 [1], Area Knowledge (Europe)-14 [1], Area Knowledge (Russia)-15 [2], Artist-13 [1], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Pistol)-14 [1], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Musket)-14 [1], Blacksmith-13 [1], Boating-16 [24], Bow-11 [2], Brawling-12 [1], Broadsword-11 [1], Carousing-13 [8], Carpentry-15 [2], Cartography-13 [1], Chess-13 [½], Climbing-11 [1], Cooking-13 [½], Dancing-12 [1], Diplomacy-13 [2], Engineer (Combat)-13 [1], Fireworks-13 [2], Gunner (Cannon)-14 [2], History-12 [1], Leadership-14 [2], Masonry-12 [½], Mathematics-12 [1], Meteorology-13 [1], Musical Instrument (Drum)-13 [1], Musical Instrument (Trumpet)-12 [½], Navigation-13 [2], Physician-11 [½], Riding (Horse)-11 [1], Sailor-14 [2], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Seamanship-15 [2], Shipbuilding-14 [4], Shiphandling-14 [4], Singing-12 [1], Spear-10 [½] Strategy



“Last Will: Advising his ministers to keep Russia continually at war for the good of the nation, Peter wrote out a complete plan of strategy for a Russian conquest of Europe.”

– Walter Kempthorne, *The People's Almanac*, 1975

(Land)-14 [4], Strategy (Naval)-14 [4], Surgery-10 [½], Tactics (Land)-14 [4], Tactics (Naval)-14 [3], Theology-12 [1], Woodworking-13 [2].

Languages

Russian (native)-15 [0], Church Slavonic-13 [½], Dutch-14 [1], German-14 [1], Latin-13 [½].

Equipment

In battle, Peter often takes the role and equipment of a common soldier. He always carries tools, paper and pen, etc., to use to build or to take measurements and notes.

This is Peter just after Poltava in 1709. Later, he will declare himself Emperor (Status 8). He is granted the range of skills his contemporaries ascribed to him; a cynical view (or a younger Peter) could have many of these only at default. His HT may seem high (he was often bedridden with fevers or other illness), but his lifestyle would have killed a feebler man.

BIOGRAPHY

Peter Alexeevich Romanov was born to the second wife of Tsar Alexis I. He was crowned tsar at 10, on his father's death. His sister Sophia engineered the crowning of his older, infirm brother Ivan as co-tsar and made herself regent. Freed from the demands of government, Peter moved to Preobrashenskoe. There he formed two regiments of young boys to help him enact battles – with real cannon and muskets. These would become the Guards, the core of his modern army.

In 1689, he took charge, sending Sophia to a convent and leaving Ivan to handle ceremonial duties. He went to war with the Ottoman Empire, seizing the port of Azov in 1696. In that same year, Ivan died, leaving Peter as sole tsar. Peter would continue to war with his neighbors, looking for warm-water ports; only one subsequent year in his reign (1724) was peaceful.

Peter was curious about the West. He had spent days in the company of Westerners in Moscow's German Quarter, and nights in drunken revelry with the "Jolly Company." This group of Westerners and *boyars* formed the core of Peter's meritocracy. Peter sent Russians abroad to study, and ordered books translated into Russian. In 1697, he went himself, with 250 companions.

The purpose of Peter's "Grand Embassy" was to study European warfare, crafts, and seamanship, and hire foreign experts. The Tsar traveled incognito as "Peter Mikhailov," and personally worked in the Amsterdam shipyards. His journey was cut short by a revolt of the Moscow *Streltsy*. Upon his return, the rebels were tortured and executed; rumor had Peter executing several himself. (He was ruthless with enemies, even of his own blood; in 1718 the Tsarevich Alexis died under questioning after fleeing Russia, having been suspected of treason.) He also ordered the shearing of beards and the wearing of Western clothes, disliking the reactions of Westerners to Russian dress.

The year 1700 saw the beginning of the Great Northern War, with Russia, Denmark, and Poland attacking Sweden and its teenage king Charles XII. Charles, a military genius, quickly eliminated Denmark, humiliated Peter's army at Narva, and turned on Poland. Taking advantage of the breathing-space, Peter built up his forces and began to seize Sweden's Baltic coast. He founded St. Petersburg in 1703, on captured land at the mouth of the Neva river. He drafted laborers and forced nobles to build residences even as Sweden fought to retake the land. By 1712, he declared it Russia's capital.

In 1708, Sweden turned on Russia; Peter ordered a scorched-earth strategy. Eventually, at Poltava in 1709, his army crushed the Swedes and turned the war; Peter was in the thick of battle. Although fighting would continue until 1721, Russia was now a great power. Peter would go to war again with the Ottoman Empire, unsuccessfully, and later seized territory from Persia.

Peter died in 1725; his prodigious drinking and physical pace had taken their toll. Up to his last day, he continued to actively rule. He designated his wife, Catherine, as his heir.

Encountered

Peter epitomizes hands-on rule. He laid ships' keels, built the first house in St. Petersburg, cooked his own meals in the field, planned sieges and buildings, and read every book he ordered translated into Russian, often sending them back to the printer with corrections. He would make an *interesting* patron for PCs, haranguing those who looked useful into working for him, paying well, and putting the power of the State behind them. He would also be utterly exhausting. He would react to strange powers with great curiosity, demanding explanations and demonstrations.

– Peter V. Dell'Orto

Further Reading:

Cracraft, James. *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery*.

Hughes, Lindsay. *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great*.

Massie, Robert K. *Peter the Great*.

THE GIANT TSAR

Descriptions of Peter's height vary; some sources say he was over 7 feet. He evidently towered above his fellow Russians, who are not a small people, and this caused him some inconvenience. (It is not full *GURPS* "Gigantism," but could have some of the same side effects, as the GM sees fit.)

RUSSIA WITHOUT PETER?

Killing Peter would not be difficult for time travelers – he rarely bothered with an escort, and would be more inclined to like a stranger than another Russian. Russia would suffer greatly if he were killed before or early in the Great Northern War – St. Petersburg would never be founded, Sweden would remain a great power, and the Ottoman Empire would be unchecked. Russia might still modernize, but much more slowly; Peter forced the pace incredibly. Without his force of will, Russia would remain a backwater.

WAR OR PEACE?

Had Sweden agreed to any of Peter's various peace offers, it could have remained a major power while Russia would have given up most of the Baltic Coast – except St. Petersburg. A loss to Sweden at Poltava or later battles would just have prolonged the war – Peter and Russia were willing to fight as many battles as it took to win. A more successful Peter might have defeated the Ottoman Turks in the later years of his reign. Had Peter been healthier or longer-lived, he could have continued his campaign against Persia. Russian domination of Persia from this early date would have greatly worried the British, concerned with the security of India.

PETER THE ANTICHRIST

Peter was hated by most Russians. He raised or created every conceivable tax to pay for his wars, drafted soldiers and laborers and shipped them around Russia, consorted with Westerners, and upset many customs. (This might justify a negative Reputation, though few dared act on it.) He also turned Russia into a modern state, and linked it irrevocably to the West.

For this, many Russians believed Peter was not a true Russian tsar. His odd manners, Western outlook, and refusal to defer to the Orthodox Church even made some believe that he was the Antichrist. If Peter was a creature of evil, it suggests an interesting series of adventures for a secret magic campaign. The pagan powers of the Russian forests, dedicated Christians, and satanic manipulators could end up in a three-sided war.

Bartholomew Roberts

Total Points: 190

Born c.1682; died 1722.

Age 37; 5'11", 150 lbs. A swarthy Welshman, dressed more like a Naval officer than a pirate; crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, tricorne hat with a red feather, and gold necklace with a diamond crucifix.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 7

Advantages

Ally Group (Crew, large group, 12-) [60], Charisma +2 [10], Collected [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Literacy [5], Strong Will +1 [4], Very Wealthy [30].



Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Code of Honor (The Articles of Bartholomew Roberts, p. SW41) [-5], Enemy (Royal Navy, 6-) [-15], Overconfidence [-10], Reputation -4 (Fierce pirate, to law-abiding society) [-10], Social Stigma (Outlaw) [-15], Status 0* [-5].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Quirks

Always names his flagship *Royal Fortune*; Courts a reputation for viciousness; Discourages, but doesn't stop, alcohol consumption by his crew and refuses to drink himself; Dresses like a gentleman; Has a standing offer to duel anyone who questions his fitness to command. [-5]

Skills

Area Knowledge (West African Coast)-13 [1], Area Knowledge (Atlantic Ocean)-13 [1], Area Knowledge (Caribbean)-13 [1], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Pistol)-14 [2], Boating-12 [4], Brawling-10 [½], Climbling-11 [2], Gunner (Cannon)-12 [1], Intimidation-13 [2], Leadership-17 [6], Merchant-13 [2], Meteorology-13 [2], Navigation-18 [14], Sailor-16 [8], Savoir-Faire-12 [½], Seamanship-16 [6], Shiphandling-18 [14], Shortsword-12 [4], Streetwise-13 [2], Survival (Island/Beach)-12 [1], Tactics-17 [12].

Languages

English (native)-13 [0].

Equipment

Roberts commonly carries a sword and *at least* one pair of pistols stuffed in a silk sash. He will be armed at all times.

This is Roberts c.1719. His reputation was established very quickly; he will shortly become known as Black Bart or the Great Pirate Roberts. In game terms, his dealings with nonpirates are usually based on Intimidation skill; given his well-known ability to carry through on his threats, this generally ensures compliance. (People who surrender know they have at least a chance of survival; if they resist, they must expect to die.)

His Wealth level represents both personal wealth and his effective possession of a pirate vessel, although captaincy is an elected position, and the ship does not belong solely to him. By 1721 he would have a much larger Ally Group as well as Allies; other pirate captains, complete with their *own* Ally Groups, who sail with him and take his orders. A group of crewmen calling themselves the House of Lords make up the core of his Ally Group, but some crew members would change from cruise to cruise.

His Code of Honor is basically a formalized Pirate's Code. Later, his Enemy will have a higher frequency; the Royal Navy sent ships to Africa specifically to hunt him down.

“To many who sailed with him during the incandescent months of his career, Roberts seemed touched with with some strange and splendid madness that transformed him into a Demoniac Prince who rode the wind seeking vengeance and his own destruction.”

– Frank Sherry, from his book *Raiders and Rebels*

BIOGRAPHY

Bartholomew Roberts was born around 1682 in Wales. It is likely that he saw active service in the War of the Spanish Succession, like the vast majority of his seagoing contemporaries. By 1717, he was a mate aboard a Barbados trading sloop and a master mariner, expert in shiphandling, navigation, and naval tactics. By 1719, he was third mate aboard an English slaver, the *Princess*.

On June 5, 1719, Welsh pirate captain Howell Davis of the *Royal Rover* raided Anamaboe in Guinea. The *Princess* was seized, and Roberts and others of the crew were pressed into service. Six weeks later, Davis was killed in an ambush at Princess Island. Roberts was elected captain by his shipmates. While he may have been forced into piracy initially, he had no problems with it once he was in command. He started his three-year rampage on the West Coast of Africa, first getting revenge by sacking Princess Island. After seizing a few prizes, the crew voted to sail for Brazil.

Roberts guided the ship to a small volcanic island 2,300 miles away in only 28 days – an impressive feat of navigation. Off Brazil, Roberts sailed into a 42-ship Portuguese convoy and looted the best prize, then sailed away before the escorting warships could react. He then sailed first to the Caribbean, then to Newfoundland. After sailing into, and seizing, Trepassi, he went south, taking prizes all the way down the American coast. Bad winds caused a trip to Africa to fail, so Roberts cruised the Caribbean despite strong Royal Navy and privateer opposition. Often, those forces actually sailed away rather than face him. In 1721, the Caribbean began to get too dangerous, and he needed to dispose of loot and refurbish his ships. He set sail for Africa with three ships. The Royal Navy sent two ships, each with 60 guns (as many as Roberts' whole fleet) to catch him. After six months of plundering (and cleverly timing his movements to avoid pursuit), Roberts missed the remote island of Annabon and instead ended up at Cape Lopez. He stayed, not knowing his enemies had been delayed nearby. The Navy caught Roberts by surprise; he fought back, but his throat was torn out by grapeshot in the first salvo. Without his personality, his crew fell apart. They threw incriminating documents and the Jolly Roger overboard and surrendered after a desultory resistance. Many were subsequently hanged after a surprisingly fair trial.

Encountered

Roberts dresses like a gentleman, with fine clothes, and drinks tea, as a gentleman would. He has been described as slight and a dandy, but at the same time his personal magnetism and bravery are emphatic. He is the antithesis of the hard-drinking, devil-may-care pirate (e.g. Blackbeard). He is also vindictive, and retaliates violently against anyone or anything that stands in his way.

He is quick to anger if insulted or threatened, but just as quick to take advantage of circumstances. It's likely that he would analyze the value or threat of any strange powers or problems. Once he makes his decision, he will quickly either take advantage of or act to eliminate them. GMs should remember the loyalty he inspires in his crew; most were willing to die for him, or suffer extreme hardship without a hint of mutiny. They would back him in even in the face of crushing odds.

– Peter V. Dell'Orto

Further Reading:

Daniels, George D. (ed.): *The Pirates*.

Johnson, Charles: *A General History of Pirates*.

ROBERTS IN HISTORY

Bartholomew Roberts was, in his time, the pirate. He epitomizes the pirate career: short, violent, and spectacular. In three years, he took over 400 prizes, crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, and brought Caribbean traffic to a dead halt. He terrorized shipping from Brazil to Newfoundland, the Caribbean to the west coast of Africa. He even fought a brief war with river tribesmen of the Calabar river – a war so fierce that it was remembered in oral histories in the 20th century!

HISTORY WITHOUT ROBERTS

Roberts could probably be eliminated from history without too many repercussions. Without him, pirate legends might be a little less fierce – many of his exploits have been popularly associated with Blackbeard, Henry Morgan, or William Kidd. Killing Roberts, or killing Howell Davis before Roberts was forced into piracy, *would* make the oceans rather safer during this period (which might have subtle consequences).

WHAT IF?

Roberts was caught off Africa by the Royal Navy mostly due to bad luck; what if he had escaped? He could have continued on his piratical career – his navigation skill and leadership would allow him to go almost anywhere. Perhaps the close encounter with his pursuers would have encouraged him to sail the Indian Ocean. Or even the Sea of Japan . . .

Alternatively, he might have turned, vengefully, against English colonies – perhaps in North America. Could he have done enough damage to set the development of Virginia back significantly (and maybe even give the French a subsequent lead)?

SKULL AND BONES

Once dead, Roberts would make an excellent ghost or revenant (see *GURPS Undead*). His propensity for vengeance makes for a fearsome and ruthless opponent while alive; dead, he (and his crew?) could be even worse. A ghostly *Royal Fortune*, heaving into view off the coast of Africa, would be a chilling start to a *GURPS Horror* adventure.

Roberts can also make an excellent foe in a swashbuckling *GURPS Voodoo* campaign, especially as the ally of choice of the dark powers. Perhaps some of his wide swings – such as north to Newfoundland – were at the directive of some evil power. Possession by an evil spirit could explain his sudden swing from ordinary seaman to pirate legend.

From Enlightenment To Modernity



This chapter brings the book up to date (or at least as close as libel laws permit). And with increasing literacy, better records, and new political ideals, it can include at least as many commoners as aristocrats and courtiers.

From the 18th century “Age of Enlightenment” onward, science and technology become ever more powerful and immediate forces in history, and this chapter reflects that with the inclusion of Darwin, Tesla, Santos Dumont, and Einstein. However, literacy and the technology of communication have an unexpected side-effect; it becomes possible for a person to be famous mostly for being famous, as figures such as Lola Montez and “Emperor” Norton illustrate. Not that these recent centuries have lacked conquerors and warriors – either spreading European power (as with Clive of India), wandering between cultures as a mercenary (such as Morris “Two-Gun” Cohen), or carving out local kingdoms in regions still unstable enough to support this (as in the case of Shaka Zulu).

In fact, the wars of the modern world are more terrible than ever – as the personal tragedies of Santos Dumont and Rudyard Kipling show. But there is still scope for visionaries and poets, from the romantic Byron to the haunted Lovecraft, for the idiosyncratic talents of a Sir Richard Burton to move between cultures and adventures, or for the noble labors of a Harriet Tubman to help set a whole people free.

WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

Jacques Choiseul

In most timelines, Jacques Choiseul perished at the age of four, when a fire destroyed his Rheims home in 1770. Had he survived, he would have gone on to become a political radical as extreme as Robespierre, but lacking any talent for oratory or government.

He attained historical importance only by accident, with his discovery of the royal family during their attempt to flee Paris in 1791. In a fit of patriotic rage, he attacked and killed Louis XVI. Quickly tried and executed, he did not live to see the ironic results of his deed. Popular revulsion made the royal family popular again, stigmatizing the republicans as regicides and greatly contributing to the stability of the new constitutional monarchy (whose council of regency found the boy Louis XVII a helpful symbol). Without the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, France continued its growth, while Prussia remained unreformed and German nationalism undeveloped until, in the 1850s, France won hegemony in Italy and western Germany. A three-way struggle among France, Britain and Russia came to war in the 1920s: France lost the war but won the peace with her American and Japanese allies.

– Craig Neumeier

Peter Karbolev

Peter Alexeevich Karbolev was born a minor noble in Russia in 1875. A thin, reedy-looking man (but with an enormous capacity for drink), Karbolev was fascinated from a young age with democratic thinkers. After a rapid rise through the civil service, he traveled abroad on diplomatic



missions. He was most famous for his early “alarmist” views of the Communists while a member of the Social Democrats in the Russian Parliament. He was called “the Russian Cicero” by Theodore Roosevelt (whom he met and admired) for his oratory. With his force of will and speaking skills, he was able to forge a coalition government and reach out to the people by offering food welfare programs. His coalition strengthened Russian democracy, enacting social reforms while Russia stayed in WWI until the end. He survived no less than 27 assassination attempts (including one nearby bomb blast and three gunshot wounds), through luck and will to live.

The result was a failed communist revolution (both Trotsky and Lenin ended up exiled to Siberia). The Nazis had few apologists in the absence of a “Communist threat,” and their brief rule in Germany in the 1930s made them pariahs. Hitler could never attempt expansion in the face of an alliance of Britain, France, and Russia. With reduced international tension, atomic weapons were only developed in the 1990s.

– Peter V. Dell’Orto

Benjamin Franklin

Total Points: 168½

Born 1706; died 1790.

Age 70; 5'11", 240 lbs. Balding, with brown hair and eyes; looks like a calm, sensible scholar at first glance; wears bifocals and a well-made but plain-looking coat.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.75

IQ: 15 [60] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 2

Dodge: 2

(Move and Dodge include Fat encumbrance.)

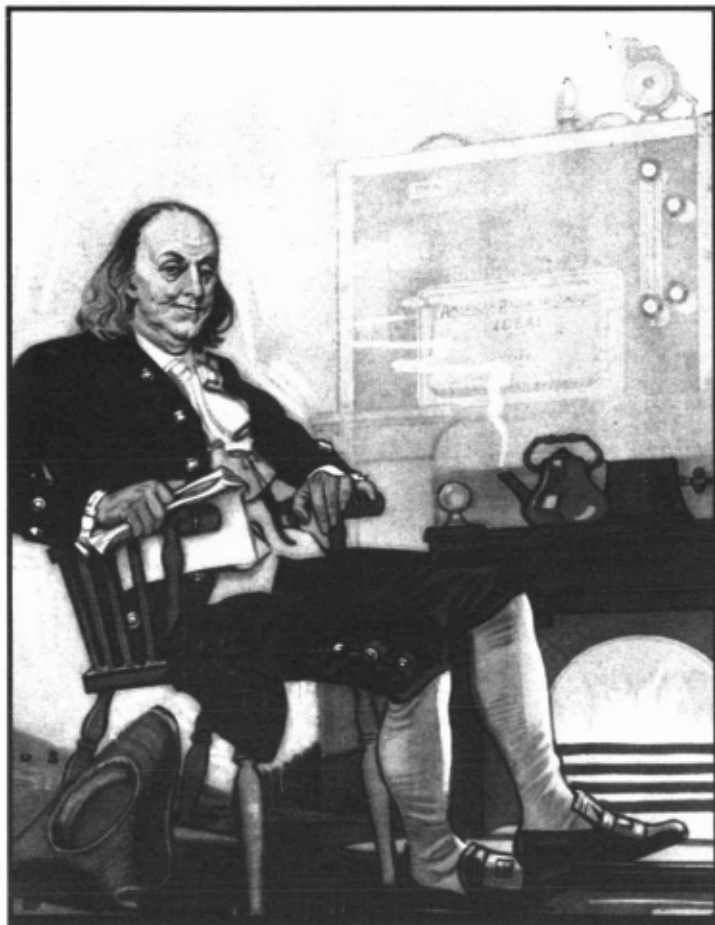
Advantages

Administrative Rank 5 [25], Alertness +1 [5], Claim to Hospitality (Masons, U.S. government) [10], Reputation +3 (Writer, scientist, diplomat) [15], Status 5* [10], Versatile [5], Very Wealthy [30].

*Includes +1 for Wealth and +2 for Administrative Rank.

Disadvantages

Age [-60], Bad Sight (Nearsighted, correctable) [-10], Code of Honor (Personal) [-5], Curious [-5], Fat [-10], Sense of Duty (United States) [-10].



Quirks

Enjoys inventing; Interested in practical uses of science; Likes appearing as homespun American; Never directly contradicts people; Speaks French with English grammar. [-5]

Skills

Accounting-16 [2], Administration-18 [2], Agronomy-13 [½], Architecture-14 [1], Area Knowledge (American Colonies)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (London)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (Paris)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (Philadelphia)-16 [2], Astronomy-12 [½], Bard-15 [1], Boating-11 [2], Brawling-12 [2], Dancing-10 [½], Detect Lies-13 [1], Diplomacy-21 [16], Economics-14 [0], Engineer (Combat)-13 [½], History (specialized in American Colonies)-12/18 [1], Law-14 [2], Leadership-13 [½], Linguistics-11 [½], Literature-13 [1], Mathematics-14 [2], Mechanic (Small gadgets)-14 [1], Merchant-20 [12], Meteorology-15 [2], Musical Instrument (Glass Harmonica)-13 [½], Musical Instrument (Guitar)-13 [½], Musical Instrument (Harp)-13 [½], Musical Instrument (Violin)-13 [½], Musical Notation-15 [1], Naturalist-13 [1], Navigation-12 [½], Physics-13 [1], Poetry-14 [½], Politics-17 [2], Profession: Chandler-13 [½], Profession: Printer-15 [2], Savoir-Faire-17 [0], Strategy-12 [½], Swimming-14 [8], Teaching-13 [½], Theology-12 [½], Wrestling-11 [2], Writing-17 [4].

(All skills TL5 where applicable.)

Languages

English (native)-16 [0], French-14 [½], German-14 [½], Latin-14 [½].

Equipment

Franklin dresses well but avoids displays of wealth. Even before royalty, he will appear as a well-to-do printer, eschewing a wig. He owns an extensive library in America but lives quite frugally.

This is Franklin at the start of the American Revolution. In his youth, he was very strong and quick (+1 or +2 ST and DX, and maybe also HT). His personal Code of Honor is based largely on honesty and refraining from speaking ill of people.

The above views Franklin as an uncommonly wise and knowledgeable man. (Common Sense would be appropriate if the GM gives it to NPCs.) More negative views would emphasize his fear of debt and concern for money (Miserliness), his active sex life even in old age (Lecherousness and possibly Social Disease), and his concern with status and capacity for bearing grudges (Selfish; some say he only joined the Revolution because of a grudge against the British government). He might also have Intolerance toward pacifists, at least as a quirk. In Europe, he arguably had the minor Social Stigma or negative Reputation of being a rough-edged colonial (and, in British eyes, a rebel).

“Yes, we must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.”

– Benjamin Franklin

BIOGRAPHY

Ben Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts. His father wanted him to be a priest, but by age 10 it was obvious that Ben was not suited to this, and he was apprenticed to his half-brother James, a printer and newspaper publisher. At age 17, he began to secretly contribute to his brother's newspaper, using a pen name and a disguised signature.

Ben did not get along well with his brother, and took the first opportunity to leave. He moved to Philadelphia, setting up as a printer. After spending three years in London, he returned to Philadelphia, becoming owner/editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, as well as a printer, moneylender, and shopkeeper. He helped organize a system of fire departments, tried launching German and High Dutch papers, and created the American Philosophical Society, a literary society, and a lending library. He was also an inventor, creating the Franklin stove, bifocals, and the lightning rod. He refused to patent his creations, believing that they belonged in the public domain. He wrote prolifically, both in his newspaper and books. He published *Poor Richard's Almanac* from 1732 until 1757, filling the standard farmer's almanac with common-sense advice, much of which became American proverbs.

Married at 30, Franklin loved female company. He fathered several children, including his illegitimate son, William. He retired at 42, selling his lucrative business to a partner, and dedicated his life to science and public service. Electricity, still poorly understood, fascinated him. He studied it using experiments so elegant that he was recognized by European scientists as an equal. His famous kite-flying experiment of 1748, replicated worldwide, proved that lightning was electricity. He was made a member of the Royal Society of London and awarded its highest honors. He loved England and considered settling there, but as the rift with the colonists widened, he chose America. His son William disagreed, however, causing a lifelong estrangement. In 1776, Franklin helped draft the Declaration of Independence, of which he was a signatory. Later that year, he was sent to France.

Franklin was the sole American representative in Europe. He proved very popular in Paris, which greatly aided him in securing French support. In 1781 he was sent to negotiate with Britain, remaining in Europe until 1785. He returned home and was appointed president of the executive branch of Pennsylvania's government. In 1787, aged 81, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Committee, working hard to bring all sides together in what would be his final major contribution to the American cause. He died in 1790; his autobiography was published a year later.

Encountered

Ben Franklin will appear on first encounter as a mild-mannered scholar, reserved and inoffensive. In fact, he is intense and forceful, with a great love of life. He avoids direct confrontation (though he had a rough youth), preferring diplomatic solutions, where his great advantage lies.

Advanced scientific knowledge would intrigue him. He should be hard to overawe through personality; he knew all of the major figures of his time, from scientists to the founders of the United States to the King of England.

– Peter V. Dell'Orto

Further Reading:

Clark, Ronald W.: *Benjamin Franklin*.

Franklin, Benjamin: *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (can be found online at <http://earlyamerica.com/lives/franklin>).

Labaree, Leonard W. (ed.). *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

Van Doren, Carl: *Benjamin Franklin*.

Wright, Esmond: *Franklin of Philadelphia*.

WHAT IF?

MASON – AND ILLUMINATUS?

Franklin was not above using his newspaper to his own ends; he became a Freemason soon after intimating that he would reveal details about the group in a future issue. He rose quickly in the Masons and drafted several of their laws and charters. He also founded several *known* societies; who is to say he did not found more?

Anyway, why did the Secret Masters want him to help split the Colonies from Britain? Why did they wish him to “discover” the properties of electricity? Or was Ben Franklin himself a Secret Master? Such a version of Franklin could have the Illuminated advantage as well as Administrative Rank and Security Clearance within the Illuminati.

SLAYING POOR RICHARD

Two likely points to assassinate Ben Franklin are early in his career, while he was still a young printer, or later, while he was a successful diplomat. If Ben Franklin was killed in his teens, his entire contribution to science as well as his popular almanac would be eliminated. His almanac did much to popularize practical science, otherwise not always part of general knowledge.

Killing Ben Franklin during the American Revolution would gravely weaken America. Franklin made a popular figure in France, with his colloquial American ways, sharp wit, and charming accent. He negotiated with French courts over privateers, arranged for arms shipments, and lobbied for support. Without Franklin, the fledgling revolution might have failed.

WORKING FOR FRANKLIN

During the American Revolution, Franklin was in Europe, feverishly working to keep America's interests alive in the minds of Britain's foes. His work with privateers could bring him in contact with PCs of a piratical or smuggler bent. Spies – both for and against the Crown – would have many reasons to come into contact with Franklin. He was a demanding master, and he played his cards close to his chest, so spying on him for the British would be a very difficult – but very rewarding – mission. If Ben is also a Secret Master, the difficulty and reward increase dramatically! Or perhaps the PCs are members of a rival faction within the Masons, and the Revolution is all part of an internal power struggle for control of the lodges.

On a more warm-hearted note, empathetic PCs may wish to help bring William Franklin and Benjamin together again. Much work would be involved; their argument was bitter.

Robert Clive (Clive of India)

Total Points: 107½

Born 1725; died 1774.

Age 31; 5'8", 170 lbs.; a stout man dressed in stylish clothes befitting an 18th-century official, or the uniform of a lieutenant colonel; a firm and sober face with a large nose, thick dark eyebrows and a heavy brow; overall, a fairly sullen, forbidding countenance, with a hint of gloominess.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Charisma +2 [10], Comfortable Wealth [10], Military Rank 5 [25], Patron (Stringer Lawrence) [10], Reputation (Military hero) +2 [10], Status 2* [0], Strong Will +2 [8].

*Includes +2 from Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Duty (To the Company, Madras, and the Army, 15-) [-15], Manic-Depressive* [-20], Shyness [-5], Stubbornness [-5].

*Clive's manic-depressive shifts are triggered by circumstances rather than being random; a setback or prolonged inactivity will throw him into a depressive phase (which can verge on the suicidal), and only an emergency will then draw him out and trigger manic overconfidence. On some occasions, physical stress may trigger a shift (roll vs. HT).

Quirks

Ambitious; Likes nice clothes. [-2]

Skills

Accounting-12 [4], Administration-13 [4], Area Knowledge (Great Britain)-12 [1], Area Knowledge (Carnatic)-11 [½], Area Knowledge (Shropshire)-12 [1], Bard-13 [2], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Pistol)-11 [½], Carousing-8 [1], Dancing-9 [1], Diplomacy-12 [6], Economics-12 [4], History-10 [1], Law-11 [2], Leadership-15 [6], Literature-10 [1], Mathematics-9 [½], Merchant-13 [6], Politics-10 [1], Savoir-Faire-13 [0], Strategy-13 [6], Riding (Horse)-9 [1], Tactics-14 [8], Writing-11 [1].

(Skills include modifiers for Shyness as well as Charisma.)

Languages

English (native)-13 [1], Classical Greek-10 [½], Latin-10 [½], Portuguese-10 [½], Tamil-10 [½].

This description captures Clive as Deputy Governor of Madras in 1756, before liberating Calcutta and conquering Bengal. As a Governor, his Status rises to 3, and as a Baron it becomes 3 permanently. His patron, Major Stringer



Lawrence, is the army commander in Madras whose confidence in him started his career. Over time he makes and loses Allies and Enemies, gains positive and negative Reputations, and after taking Bengal becomes Very Wealthy. His skill at warcraft improves with experience and his statecraft improves considerably during his time in Bengal. He could easily be given Luck.

BIOGRAPHY

Robert Clive was born into the country gentry in 1725 at Styche, Shropshire. He had a wild childhood in which he was sent to several schools, among them the Merchant Taylors' school in London. In 1743 his father arranged him a post as a "writer" in the British East India Company.

In 1744, he arrived in Madras (now known as Chennai), in the region of Carnatic on the southeastern coast of India. Madras was one of the three most important British trading settlements in India, along with Calcutta and Bombay (now Mumbai).

About 90 miles south of Madras was Pondicherry, the chief French territory. England and France were Europe's two great trading nations and fierce rivals in every sphere. In India, the French had the advantage, capturing Madras in 1746. In 1748, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed (and Madras returned) and the two nations were at peace. The conflict turned indirect, each supporting rival claimants to local thrones. By 1750, the French managed to get their allies

on the thrones of Hyderabad and the Carnatic, making the French governor-general the most powerful man in southern India.

During these conflicts, Clive had led a prickly existence, with at least one duel and a suicide attempt. The ongoing hostilities finally led him to volunteer for military duties. In 1751 Captain Clive offered to attack Arcot, the base of a French ally. Leading a force of 500, he was so magnificently successful that France and its allies were set back badly. Clive scored further successes, and within a short time the French army was broken and, with an English ally on the Carnatic throne, French influence in southern India was irrevocably damaged.

Accompanied by his wife, Margaret Maskelyne, Clive returned to England in 1753, with a tidy fortune amassed while in charge of troop supplies. After standing for Parliament without success, he was enticed back to Madras as a deputy governor and lieutenant colonel in 1755. On the way he assaulted a pirate stronghold at Gheriah on the western coast.

In 1756, the Nawab of Bengal captured Calcutta, and dozens of Englishmen died in the infamous "Black Hole." Clive was given command of the 2,400-man force sent to liberate the city. After doing so, he campaigned against the Nawab with the support of a conspiracy of local lords and businessmen. The Nawab was defeated at Plassay in 1757, and Clive's puppet replaced him, putting the wealthiest province of India in English hands.

From the new Nawab, Clive received a huge monetary reward and the title of mansab. (This example – while enriching Clive personally – set a horrible precedent, leading to rampant corruption that would threaten Bengal, the Company, and ultimately Clive himself.) The Company appointed Clive Governor of Bengal from 1758 to 1760.

He spent the rest of his life in politics as the MP for Shrewsbury. He returned to India only once more, in 1765, to reform an administration that had become unworkably corrupt. He was made a Baron and a Knight of the Bath.

In 1773, however, he was subjected to an inquiry into possible corruption. Defending himself in Parliament, he complained of being treated like a sheep stealer with his usual conviction and energy. Though he was vindicated, the charges damaged his career.

In 1774, suffering from nervous tension and poor health, Robert Clive took his own life.

Clive's Achievements

Clive's contribution to history was to lay the foundations for the British Empire in India. When he arrived, the British possessions were only a handful of wealthy but vulnerable trading colonies. When he left, Britain, rather than France or the Marathas, was the major power, set to inherit India from the Moghuls.

He was able to achieve so much because of his fearsome determination. When he was inspired, nothing could withstand him. His success on the battlefield demonstrated his character. So, unfortunately, did his frequent depressions – so intense was his energy that he suffered when it wasn't provided an outlet of suitable proportions.

Encountered

The person one meets when encountering Clive will depend on the circumstances. Socially, one is likely to find him dour and repressed. He is not unfriendly, but he is withdrawn. Professionally, one might find him difficult; he is extremely determined, and this is coupled with a temper. Even as an ally, his overbearing manner can be tiresome. He is always convinced he is right, and because he can sometimes be inconsistent, he occasionally seems hypocritical.

– Benedict Chapman

Further Reading:

Keay, John: *The Honourable Company: A History of The English East India Company*.

Spear, Percival: *Master of Bengal: Clive and his India*.

WHAT IF?

Fate itself might easily have ended Clive's life early. He attempted to kill himself while working as a Company man in Madras, but twice the gun did not fire. On several occasions, he cheated death on the battlefield – on one famous occasion, two men supporting him were shot dead by a single bullet that missed him entirely.

If he had died early in his career, there might have still been a European empire in India, but it would probably have been French. By the time Clive entered the war in the Carnatic, the French were already enormously powerful in India. Clive's efforts deprived them of much of their influence and, furthermore, ruined their prestige. After their defeat in the Carnatic, they were no longer the formidable force they were once taken to be; instead, it was the British who were seen to be made for victory.

If Clive had not lived until Plassay, there might never have been a British Empire in India. For India, this might have meant eventual unification under a native Maratha empire, or more likely dissolution into independent principalities. For Britain, without the "jewel in the crown," the Victorian age would not have been as wealthy, and without the captive Indian market, the industrial revolution might have been jeopardized.

KEY MOMENTS

The two standout moments of Clive's life were his capture and defense of Arcot and his defeat of the Nawab of Bengal at Plassay. Observers at these moments would see Clive at his most glorious.

Approaching Arcot, he showed the intensity of his determination by marching his army through a thunderstorm and thus so terrifying his enemies that he arrived to find the place deserted. In defending it, he was outnumbered ten to one and had no great advantages, the fort being short on defenses; experienced commanders would have retired from such a hopeless position. He won through his determination and personal courage, which inspired his men. He repaired the defenses and harried the enemy with guerilla raids. After 53 days of siege, his opponents retired in the face of approaching reinforcements, leaving Clive the unlikely victor.

Plassay was a less impressive battle but more important overall. Of more interest are Clive's machinations in obtaining allies in the conspiracy against the Nawab, including his use of treachery. (He had the signature of a British admiral forged on a deceitful treaty.)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Total Points: 144

Born 1756; died 1791.

Age 31; 5'8", 140 lbs.; A relatively unimpressive-looking man dressed in fine, almost foppish, clothes, with sandy-blond hair and brown eyes.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 6

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 6

Advantages

Absolute Timing (Only for use with musical activities: -50%) [3], Comfortable Wealth [10], Courtesy Rank 2 (Papal Knight) [2], Eidetic Memory [30], Literacy [5], Musical Ability +5 [5], Reputation +1 (Former child prodigy, 10-) [3], Reputation +3 (Great composer, to many music lovers, 10-) [4], Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages

Compulsive Spending [-15], Oblivious [-3], Odious Personal Habit (Likes making vulgar jokes) [-5], Selfish [-5], Sense of Duty (His father, wife, and children) [-5].

Quirks

Cheerful but fatalistic outlook; Dislikes composing for the bass; Likes delicacies; Likes elegant apparel. [-4]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Europe)-13 [½], Area Knowledge (Salzburg)-13 [½], Area Knowledge (Vienna)-13 [½], Billiards (Hobby)-13 [1], Conducting-18 [2], Diplomacy-13 [2], Gambling-12 [½], Leadership-13 [1], Literature-14 [3], Merchant-14 [2], Musical Composition-24 [5], Musical Instrument (Fortepiano)-21* [3], Musical Instrument (Harpsichord)-21 [5], Musical Instrument (Viola)-17 [1], Musical Instrument (Violin)-17 [1], Musical Notation-16 [3], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Writing-14 [1].

*Defaults from Harpsichord at -3.

Languages

German (native)-18 [2 ½], English-14 [2], French-15 [3], Italian-16 [4], Latin-12 [½].

(Note that all mental skills and languages are half-cost because of Eidetic Memory.)

Surprisingly little is known about Mozart as a person, despite his fame and the numerous biographies. There are some letters and records, but the majority of first-hand information has been edited by those who survived him. This lack has not deterred

biographers from speculating about what the "real" Mozart was like. Given that the description above is essentially an educated guess, GMs should feel free to change it to fit a different image or to surprise players.

Mozart was not a very attractive person, but he overcame that by dressing well. If he is dressed in ordinary clothes for some reason, he should be considered Unattractive after he was 18. His old reputation as a child prodigy occasionally became a minor problem when he was a adult; people expected him to be younger!

Eidetic Memory is always debatable for realistic characters, but Mozart definitely had an uncanny memory for music, and stories suggest that he could also recall nonmusical events with striking accuracy. GMs may remove this advantage (and increase the cost of his skills) if they prefer. His perfect sense of musical timing is well documented; it is possible that he could apply this to other activities (eliminating the -50% limitation).



"No musician of any epoch has possessed so universal a genius for all the departments of musical art as Mozart."

— from Hundred Greatest Men, Wallace Wood, ed.

BIOGRAPHY

On January 27, 1756, Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, who became known to the world under the name Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was born in Salzburg. He was the youngest child of a minor composer, Leopold Mozart. When Wolfgang's older sister, Nannerl, started to learn music, young Wolfgang first displayed his gift; he was three years old. He composed his first work when he was five, his first sonatas by age six, and his first symphony before he was eight.

To exploit the talents of both children, the Mozart family toured Europe continuously from 1763-1769, and Mozart continued to tour quite often after that. He played for innumerable audiences, from the pope in Rome to commoners in London. It was after one of these trips, to Paris in 1777-1778, that Mozart began to fall out with his father over his first love, Aloysia Weber. Relations continued to be cool between them and finally ruptured over his marriage to Constanze Weber in 1782. Mozart continued to feel obligated to his father, but tried to avoid him whenever possible.

Though his life is portrayed as a tragedy, and he died young, Mozart was happy most of the time, especially when in Vienna after 1781. He joined the Freemasons in 1784, and frequently expressed his great enthusiasm for Freemasonry. He composed works of music for them and persuaded his best friend, Haydn, to join as well. He lived in various houses in Vienna, moving no less than nine times in 10 years. Soon after his father's death in 1787, he was appointed Royal and Imperial Chamber Musician.

Mozart was bedridden on November 20, 1791, and died just after midnight on December 5, 1791. Legend notes correctly that he was buried in a unmarked grave, but it is likely that this is what he wanted; he espoused the high-minded philosophy of the Enlightenment and did not believe much in the church, though he often expressed a belief in God.

Encountered

Mozart is much like his father, in that he dislikes authority and cannot stand social slights. He also has a sense of duty toward his father, trying to gain his approval. However, by age 20 he no longer likes to follow his father's orders without question. He tends to be condescending toward people who he feels cannot appreciate his music. He also makes inappropriate jokes, and many others find him difficult to work with.

Although he has a respectable income and although his father left him quite a bit of money in 1787, Mozart lives beyond his means. He survives, especially late in his life, by borrowing. At his death he owes around 1,500 florins (around \$15,000 in modern terms) to one friend and creditor alone. Anyone who he knows to be well off will probably receive appeals for money in letters; it is also possible that Mozart could be convinced to do anything short of murder if the amount of money (and flattery) promised is high enough.

— Matthew Michalak

Further Reading:

Hildesheimer, Wolfgang: *Mozart*.

Landon, H.C. Robbins: *Mozart, The Golden Years*.

Solomon, Maynard: *Mozart, A Life*.

Sterling, Bruce and Lewis Shiner: "Mozart in Mirrorshades" from *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*.

Amadeus (A film which uses a minor piece of "secret history" regarding Mozart's death.)

WHAT IF?

Had Mozart never been born, it *probably* would not have a huge effect on history. Many lesser composers would be played more, and Haydn and Beethoven would have developed differently, but the broad flow of events would likely be unaffected (although this is always debatable with great artists). However, fun could be had with that possibility. Perhaps someone wishes to make some other composer more famous, or maybe even to take Mozart's place, passing off the works Mozart will never produce as his own. Or a music-lover might try to save his life in 1791; what would he have achieved given another 30 years? Should PCs then intervene to *kill* this supreme artist? Or should they bring the cured Mozart home with them, leaving a dummy in the unmarked grave and confronting Mozart with atonal music and Hollywood film-score contracts?

THE KEY OF FATE

The late 18th century was a turbulent time, and it would have been very easy for Mozart's life to head in another direction. He contracted rheumatic fever, the illness that eventually killed him, in 1763. He nearly went blind as a result of smallpox in 1767. He might have stayed in Paris had things gone better for him there when he was 22, and then he might have been caught up in the Revolution. ("Theophilus," a mysterious plotter with perfect timing and a fondness for musical motifs, could give an alternate-universe *GURPS Scarlet Pimpernel* campaign a surreal edge.) In 1786, he even considered emigrating to England.

DAS KÖNIGREICH RÜCKEN

Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) has many Masonic themes; if the Masonic branch of the Conspiracy has a theme tune, it's in that opera. The year that Mozart died saw a suppression of the Bavarian Illuminati and Freemasons in Austria. Liberal Freemasonry was connected, tenuously, with the Illuminati.

Mozart's health faded as he put the finishing touches to *Die Zauberflöte*. It was a great success, but soon afterward he told his wife "someone has given me acqua toffana [slow-acting poison] and calculated the precise time of my death." Later he said that he was being silly, but he said nearly the same thing again as he grew sicker. It is generally accepted that he died of rheumatic fever, but it is possible that someone really did kill him. Perhaps Mozart was an Illuminatus, and was killed by Hapsburg agents. Or perhaps he was killed by the Conspiracy, to stop him encoding their secrets in music.

Aaron Burr Jr.

Total Points: 115

Born 1756; died 1836.

Age 45; 5'6", 140 lbs. A short, thin Dutch American, with startling brown eyes and reddish-brown hair, usually dressed formally but giving a slight impression of casualness.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge 5

Advantages

Ally Group (Tammany Hall leadership, small group, 9-) [10], Attractive Appearance [5], Charisma +1 [5], Status 4* [15], Wealthy [20].

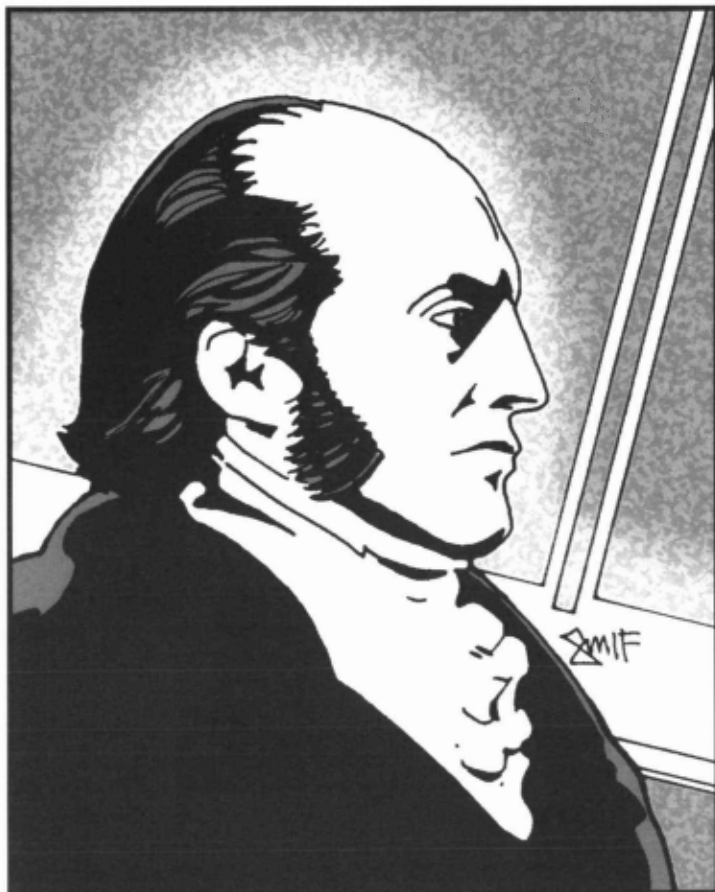
*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Spending [-10], Enemy (Hamilton and some Federalists, 9-) [-10].

Quirks

Dislikes Washington; Feminist; Outspokenly liberal; Overly critical; Sympathizes with the French Republic. [-5]



Skills

Administration-14 [2], Area Knowledge (New York State)-14 [1], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Pistol)-12 [1], Dancing-8 [½], History-12 [1], Law-18 [12], Literature-15 [6], Politics-13 [1], Riding (Horse)-11 [4], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Strategy-13 [2], Tactics-15 [6], Theology-13 [2].

Languages

English (native)-14 [0], Classical Greece-12 [½], French-12 [½], Latin-12 [½].

Equipment

Burr is known to carry a pistol sometimes.

This represents Burr in 1801, just after the tied vote between himself and Jefferson. As vice president, he gets a Duty, an Administrative Rank between 4 and 6 (depending on the GM's view of the power of the office), and possibly +1 or +2 Status (again, depending on the GM's opinion).

After killing Hamilton, he trades his Enemy for his Ally Group by losing his political career. A more "tragic hero" version might have a better Politics skill, Jefferson as an Enemy, better scores in his social skills, and Unluckiness. A "treasonous murderer" version might be less militarily able and have Jealousy and Overconfidence. Proud might fit either.

Burr's Reputation changed often, but he was generally well-liked during his early career; when he was in politics, he was liked by northern liberals but disliked by southern landowners and conservative politicians. After killing Hamilton, he was disliked by most of the country. His reputation fell even lower following his Mexico scheme, but he became simply obscure thereafter. His Wealth level may fall to Struggling while he is in Europe.

BIOGRAPHY

In 1756, Aaron Burr, Jr. started life a Dutch-American in New Jersey, the son of a prominent Calvinist preacher and second president of Princeton college. He was also the grandson of a theologian, Jonathan Edwards, Princeton's third president. By the time he was 2, both of his parents had died, and he was brought up by his strict uncle, Timothy Edwards. The young Burr did not respond well to Edwards' discipline, often attempting to run away and go to sea till he left Edwards' home and enrolled in Princeton at 13.

In 1772 the 16-year-old Burr graduated with honors, having been a leader in his class and active in student society. He began studying to become a preacher because of his family's background, but rejected Calvinism. Its dogmatic outlook did not find a home in the free-thinking student. During the next year, he began studying law, but lost interest in this, too, when the Revolution came around.

Burr joined the army under the command of General Montgomery during his ill-fated Quebec expedition. Holding up well despite fierce cold and starvation, he earned an

appointment as a captain in the headquarters staff. During the final assault on the city, a cannon blast tore into Montgomery's contingent, leaving only Burr and an Indian guide without mortal wounds. Montgomery died in Burr's arms.

Now famous, Burr accepted an invitation to join General Washington's staff. This proved unfortunate. He didn't agree with Washington, whom he probably thought an uneducated slaver and Indian fighter, and was transferred with John Hancock's help. Placed under General Putnam's command, he distinguished himself on several occasions and rose to the rank of colonel. His troops liked him, in some part because his strict discipline never incorporated corporal punishments.

In 1777 Burr endured Valley Forge without a complaint. It's likely he had suffered worse in the Quebec campaign.

At the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, Burr suffered heatstroke and was given a leave of absence. He came back to the army not fully rejuvenated, and resigned his post after a few months.

After returning to law school, Burr opened up a successful practice in New York in 1782. He also married the widow of a British colonel and had a daughter, Theodosia, who would become the inspiration for his feminist beliefs. Six months after arriving in New York, he was elected to the state assembly without seeking office. In the assembly he spoke out against slavery (among other things), but after his term was up, he returned to his law practice. His fame began to grow as he rose through the ranks of the bar, where he became familiar with Alexander Hamilton, the already famous lawyer and Secretary of the Treasury.

After being appointed New York's attorney-general by the governor in 1789, Burr beat out Hamilton's father-in-law in a 1791 U.S. Senate race. Previously a friendly rival, Hamilton now became Burr's fierce enemy. After losing the 1796 vice presidency and his place in the Senate, Burr went back to practicing law. But he didn't stay out of the political arena for long, running in the 1800 presidential elections on the Republican, or "Jeffersonian" ticket. Technically the candidate for vice president, he won as many electoral votes as Jefferson, thanks to his links to the powerful New York liberal institution, Tammany Hall. Only after 36 committee meetings was the tie broken; Jefferson became president.

Burr became the victim of two-front opposition from Hamilton and Jefferson, angered that Burr hadn't given him the presidency. He served respectfully, but was not chosen to run for vice president again. In 1804 he ran for governor in New York but lost, largely due to Hamilton's vicious slanders. After letters passed between them, they agreed to a duel, which took place July 11, 1804, in Weehawken, N.J. Hamilton was killed.

Burr was charged with murder, but acquitted. After he completed his term as vice president, it was clear his career was over.

Burr reappeared in the public view in 1806, when he developed a clever but flawed (and still much-debated) scheme to invade Mexico and provoke a war between Spain and the United States. For this he was charged with treason, but he defended himself and was acquitted. His public standing shattered, he went to Europe for several years. There he attempted to discuss an invasion of Florida with Napoleon. He moved back to New York in 1812 and practiced law until he died.

Encountered

Burr is handsome and charming, but possibly a little too open about what he *thinks* (despite usually having a thoughtful opinion). If he hears an idea he likes, he will follow it exuberantly, despite any problems. He is perhaps much more clever than wise. Though he acted brashly in the case of Hamilton, GMs should note he would not challenge someone to a duel without serious provocation.

— Seth Bernstein

Further Reading:

Nolan, Janette: *Soldier, Statesman, Defendant: Aaron Burr*.

Rogow, Arnold: *A Fatal Friendship: Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr*

Vidal, Gore: *Burr* (a novel based on the nearly complete truth).

WHAT IF?

Though Burr never became a real success in politics, what if he *had* managed to pull the presidency out of the fire in 1800? A liberal president could have meant triumph or destruction for a fledgling nation. He could have brought in an era of new tolerance toward all, or a Civil War 60 years before Lincoln. President Burr might have instituted such heavily pro-French policies that he could lead to French world domination.

AARON BURR, LIBERATOR OF MEXICO

Burr's plan to invade Mexico failed, but not by the margin expected. With a little more help, his plan could have been pulled off. Though the power of Spain was dwindling under the might of Napoleon, a victory over the Spanish would have global impact. Would Burr's republic then work, or would he be at war with the United States as soon as his country formed an army? Certainly, U.S.-British relations would change if a third power formed on the continent. Britain could seize the opportunity to reclaim the colonies if they had an ally in the south, but Canada would almost certainly fall in a two-front war.

"Law is whatever is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained."

— Aaron Burr

TOOL OF THE REPUBLIC OR ENEMY OF THE SOUTH?

When Burr killed Hamilton, an important traditional enemy of France's new republic was eliminated, and Burr, an enemy of slavery, saw his career end. It is possible that Hamilton never really slandered Burr at all during his 1804 gubernatorial campaign and that someone secretly wanted one or both of their careers over. Could French spies have been the cause of Hamilton's and, subsequently, Burr's downfalls, or would a proto-KKK group of slavers stoop to killing a man to preserve their way of living before it had come under fire? Both possibilities might make interesting spy/counterspy campaigns.

Born c.1787; died 1828.

Age 37; 6'3", 190 lbs. A dark, well-muscled African, with a protruding forehead and buck teeth, typically clad in a kilt and collar of twisted civet fur, arm and leg bands of leather with cow-tail fringes, and a headband with a blue feather.

ST: 14 [45]	DX: 14 [45]	Speed: 6.75
IQ: 12 [20]	HT: 13 [30]	Move: 8
Dodge: 7	Parry: 10	Block: 9

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15], Filthy Rich [50], Fit [5], Status 7* [30], Toughness (DR 1) [10].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Bad Temper [-10], Bloodlust [-10], Callous [-6], Curious [-5], Illiteracy [0], Reputation -3 (Among non-Zulus: cruelty, kills casually) [-7], Secret (Impotent) [-5].

Quirks

Always remembers and avenges slights; Careful to foil hostile sorcery; Conceals his curiosity in public; Praises overt bravery; Shouts "Ngadla!" ("I have eaten!") when striking in combat. [-5]



Skills

Animal Handling (specialized in Cattle)-9/15 [1], Area Knowledge (Coastal Natal)-12 [1], Armoury-12 [2], Axe/Mace-14 [2], Brawling-14 [1], Dancing-12 [1/2], Hiking-15 [8], Intimidation-15 [8], Leadership-14 [6], Running-15 [16], Savoir-Faire-14 [0], Shield-16 [4], Shortsword-18 [24], Singing-12 [1/2], Spear-14 [2], Spear Throwing-15 [2], Stealth-14 [2], Strategy-13 [6], Survival (Plains)-13 [4], Tactics-15 [10], Teaching-10 [1/2], Tracking-12 [2], Wrestling-14 [2].

Maneuvers

Feint (Shield)-18 [2].

Languages

Zulu (native)-12 [0].

Equipment

Shaka almost always carries his specially forged spear, and usually a shield. He never wears sandals. He has little gold and few luxuries compared even to a moderately wealthy European, but he has complete control over the resources of his nation.

This represents Shaka in 1824. He is thought to have been impotent, which is presented here as a Secret (and if it was total, he should also have Sterile). He never referred to his 1,200 concubines as "wives," but instead as "sisters," and was careful to kill any who became pregnant, ostensibly because he did not want an heir to trouble him. However, this is supposition; some sources argue that he did actually avoid fathering children for political reasons. GMs may change the Secret (to, say, "Vow: Avoid fathering heirs") if they wish.

Although the *iKlwa* developed by Shaka was basically a spear, it was very short, mostly blade, and used for fairly close-quarters stabbing; it is treated as a shortsword for *GURPS* purposes. The *knobkerrie*, a heavy club, is functionally a mace. The Shield Feint maneuver represents Shaka's tactic of hooking an enemy's shield and pulling him off balance while stabbing with his *iKlwa*.

BIOGRAPHY

Shaka was the son of Senzangakona, a Zulu chief, but was exiled, along with his eLangeni mother, Nandi, due to his illegitimacy. (Senzangakona had at first denied Nandi was pregnant, claiming she was suffering from an intestinal beetle called an *iShaka*.) Eventually settling with Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthethwa, he found a release for his frustrations in combat against wild animals, then in war. He was a loner, but won respect for his physique, courage, and leadership.

On the death of his father, Shaka was chosen to lead the Zulus, then a minor tribe. After killing those who had slighted him in his youth by impaling or burning, he set about militarizing society. He introduced new combat methods: dis-

“Terror is the only thing they understand, and you can only rule the Zulus by killing them. Who are the Zulus? They are parts of two hundred or more unruly clans which I had to break up and reshape, and only the fear of death will hold them together.”

– Shaka Zulu, after the death of his mother

carding ox-hide sandals to ensure good footing on rocky or thorny ground, replacing the light throwing *assegai* with the *iKlwa* (named from the sucking sound it made when it was pulled out of a foe), and designing a larger, longer shield. He also refined the “regimental” system, wherein young men trained and fought alongside each other for years until they retired middle-aged and were allowed to marry. Shaka created such *esprit de corps* that regiments had to be physically separated to avoid bloodshed. Discipline was harsh; disobeying orders, losing weapons, or flight were all punishable by death.

Traditional Bantu warfare involved few tactics or casualties. After challenges between champions, long-distance spear-throwing decided which side would concede defeat and forfeit land or cattle. Families sat and watched, chanting support or insults. Shaka abandoned these conventions, creating the “bulls-head” tactic: the army was divided into the “head,” two “horns” and the “loins.” As the “head” engaged, the “horns” encircled the enemy; the “loins” served as a reserve.

The Buthelezi were caught entirely unawares and annihilated, along with onlooking women and children. Shaka then systematically absorbed smaller tribes. Offering membership of a “family” group, he appealed to migrants and exiles, exploiting a basic linguistic unity. Zulu justice was harsh, serving with the threat of the *impis* (armies) to cow their neighbors. Shaka believed that an enemy needed to be *destroyed*; allowing defeated foes to accept your hegemony only meant they betrayed you later. No neutrality was tolerated. He killed potential resistors and assimilated the remnants of conquered clans.

In only three years, to 1824, Zulu lands grew from 100 to 11,500 square miles, and the army from 350 to over 20,000. Executions occurred daily and wars were constant. He fought both Africans and Boers, but also made diplomatic overtures to Britain; he allowed the founding of Port Natal by English adventurers, then used them as allies. His people were subject to his slightest whim. When his mother died, he killed all who did not mourn enough and issued strict proclamations to ensure all felt his loss. After this, he ceased to lead armies personally. Eventually, his heavy-handedness, the enforced celibacy of males from their teens until their forties, and his disregard for the lives of his tribesmen became too much; his own brothers murdered him in 1828.

Encountered

The young Shaka might often be found in combat; he also greatly enjoyed hunting. Later, he might be found at his capital, surrounded by his regiments and other chiefs.

He is extremely curious. In public, he maintains dignity by appearing casual, even bored by gifts or events. In private, he spends hours pouring over every detail of advanced technologies or knowledge. He will not regard foreigners as inviolate, but rather will not treat lightly a valuable source of advantages; he gives leeway when it suits him. He delights in arguing religion and politics, and will compare descriptions of foreign lands with Zulu culture. One of his tricks is to sign over the same territory several times, to different parties, thus frustrating would-be merchants. PCs expecting an “ignorant savage chief” will be very, very surprised.

– Peter V. Dell’Orto & Tim Pollard

Further Reading:

Morris, Donald: *The Washing of the Spears*.

Ritter, E.A.: *Shaka Zulu*.

Taylor, Stephen: *Shaka’s Children*.

WHAT IF?

Would the *mfecane* (“crushing”) have happened without Shaka? The economy and culture of the Bantu revolved around cattle, and as good grazing became scarcer, the likelihood of conflict increased. Add to this the impact of European expansion, and the “crushing” seems almost inevitable. A frequently quoted figure of two million deaths in the decade of Shaka’s rise may now be disputed, but even if it is correct, many of those would not have been as a direct result of his actions. Still, he was deeply involved in a crucial stage of southern African history. Whites tend to remember him as a bloody tyrant, but in Africa, he is often admired as a stern but fair leader.

And there were many times when Shaka’s career might have been cut short. He took part in many combats, at least once only narrowly avoided death while hunting, saved only by the sacrifice of a companion, and survived wounds from at least one assassination attempt.

ISANDHLWANA, 1829?

Shaka believed that Zulus could defeat European firepower – that firearms reloaded too slowly to stop a charging *impi*. This belief was tested in 1879 in places like Isandhlwana and Ulundi, with mixed results. What if a surviving Shaka had tested it 50 years earlier?

SHAKA AND THE CONSPIRACY?

It has been claimed that the history of the *mfecane* was a falsehood, concocted by Europeans with vested interests in diverting attention. According to this theory, Shaka was simply a scapegoat whose local victories could be exaggerated as the cause of the much wider destabilization.

Alternatively, the dying Shaka is said to have prophesied eventual defeat for his killers, and the Zulus in general, at the hands of white men. What if this was truly prophecy? He once showed his power by “blotting out the sun,” apparently forecasting an eclipse. His reaction to witches and sorcerers, who had previously held vast sway over the Zulus, was to challenge and out-manuever them politically with little fear of their “powers.” This suggests remarkable shrewdness – or implausible knowledge.

SHAKA THE IMMORTAL?

In many stories, immortals cannot have children. What if this was the reason Shaka produced no heir? Magic played a part in his life; he had servants dedicated to destroying excreta, fingernail pairings, hair clippings, etc., to prevent it being worked on him, and his forging of the *iKlwa* was allegedly inspired by dreams. Who knows what secret protections he possessed, and how they were defeated?

Lord Byron

Total Points: 148

Born 1788; died 1824.

Age 28; 5'8½", 145 lbs. A slender, well-dressed young man with chestnut hair. Byron's face is pale and clear, rather boyish and strikingly handsome, with searching blue-gray eyes. He wears a specially made boot to support his right foot, malformed from birth, and walks with a very noticeable limp. He speaks with a slight Scots accent.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 5.5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 2

Dodge: 2

Advantages

Charisma +2 [10], Fit [5], Imperturbable [10], Status 4* [15], Very Handsome [25], Very Wealthy [30].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Crippled Leg [-15], Code of Honor (Gentleman's) [-10], Lecherousness [-15], Manic-Depressive [-20], Reputation -3 ("Mad, bad, and dangerous to know," in English society) [-7], Sense of Duty (The poor and oppressed, and his dependants) [-10].

(Note: Byron's Code of Honor does *not* include patriotism; he considers himself an exile.)

Quirks

Acts without regard to long-term consequences; Bisexual; Hates dancing (especially waltzes) but loves swimming; Sensitive about his club foot; Sleeps with pistols and dagger by his bed. [-5]

Skills

Bard-14 [1], Black Powder Weapons (Flintlock Pistol)-15 [2], Boating-12 [2], Boxing-11 [8], Carousing-11 [4], Fencing Sport-11 [8], History-12 [2], Leadership-14 [1], Literature-13 [4], Poetry-19 [14], Politics-12 [1], Riding (Horse)-13 [4], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Sex Appeal-13 [8], Swimming-15 [8], Writing-17 [10].

Languages

English (native)-15 [2], Arabic-11 [½], Armenian-11 [½], French-11 [½], Greek (Classical)-12 [1], Greek (Modern)-10* [0], Italian-12 [1], Latin-12 [1], Portuguese-11 [½], Turkish-11 [½], Spanish-11 [½].

*Defaults from Classical Greek.

This is Byron during his time in Switzerland in 1816. Before 1812, remove his bad Reputations and reduce his Poetry and Writing. After 1822, add Military Rank 5 and Reputation +4 (Greek national hero from Greek patriots), increase his Modern Greek, and reduce his HT to 8. His IQ is



debatable; even some of his admirers doubted his capacity for deep thought. It's hardly necessary to modify Byron for a cinematic campaign; he was cinematic enough in real life. (Still, a swashbuckling Byron could have Fencing at high levels.)

Byron's bisexuality arguably ought to be a major Secret; homosexual behavior was nominally highly illegal. However, he spent much of his time in areas of relaxed morality, and had a bad enough reputation in respectable society that confirmation of any facts would have changed little.

BIOGRAPHY

George Gordon Byron was born in London in 1788 and raised in Aberdeen by his impoverished mother, Catherine; both his parents came from noble families, but his father had squandered their money and fled to France. In 1798 his great-uncle (known as the "Wicked Lord") died and suddenly Byron became the sixth Lord Byron, owner of Newstead Abbey; although the estate was almost bankrupt, it gave them a little more to live on. Byron was sent to school at Harrow, where he was an excellent student and athlete; his adventurousness earned him the admiration of his fellow students. He went on to Cambridge; he spent most of his time there partying, or studying fencing, boxing and pistol-shooting, and famously kept a pet bear.

**“What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
Is much more common where the climate’s sultry.”**

– Lord Byron

In 1807, a collection of his poems was published. Byron had no intention of taking his poetry any further – he was planning to take up his seat in the House of Lords – but early the next year, the *Edinburgh Review* printed a vitriolic article belittling Byron and his poems. Byron replied with a vicious satire before leaving to tour Europe.

His experiences there inspired another poem, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*; its publication in 1812 made him famous almost overnight. His charm, fame and radical views brought him into fashionable social circles; they also brought him a disastrous affair with the obsessive Lady Caroline Lamb.

In 1815, Byron married the respectable Annabella Milbanke. Both had good intentions, but the marriage broke down within a year. Annabella was terrified by Byron’s black and angry moods – probably caused by manic-depression and heavy drinking – and eventually left him. When they argued over their daughter, Ada, Annabella’s friends spread rumors of his incestuous relationship with his half-sister, Augusta.

Deserted by most of his friends, Byron left England in 1816. After a few months in Switzerland he went on to Italy, where he began his epic poem *Don Juan*. In 1822, he was contacted by an organization championing Greek independence from Turkey, and the next year he sailed to Missolonghi to bring them support. He met many setbacks and disappointments; although he kept faith, his lifestyle and responsibilities had ruined his health. One day he returned home badly ill after being caught in the rain; his illness (probably uremic poisoning) was worsened by doctors who insisted on bleeding him. After fighting for life for 10 days, he died on April 19 during a thunderstorm. Ironically, Byron’s death in a noble cause redeemed him in English eyes and brought support for Greece; subsequently, at the battle of Navarino, Greece won independence.

Byron is best remembered as a writer. He had an extraordinary ability to describe human vanity and weaknesses, but he was tolerant of them; he knew his own flaws well enough. Having grown up in poverty, he fought hard for justice for the weak and dispossessed, and many of his works express contempt for petty tyrants and bullies.

Encountered

Many who meet Byron, expecting one of his brooding heroes, are surprised to find how enthusiastic he can be. He loves to ride, swim, shoot, almost anything except dancing; he knows how to talk to anybody, without snobbery or awe, and he’s not afraid to speak his mind. It’s his good qualities that make him dangerous; people are overwhelmed by his intelligence, kindness and honesty, and grow too close to him.

Byron is a man of “tumultuous passions”; he spreads himself too thinly to focus on one project (or lover) for very long. His outspoken political and artistic views have a way of making powerful enemies. He is definitely manic-depressive, but he can show incredible courage when protecting what he loves; this is a man who nursed a rabid pet dog with his bare hands. He’d probably get along with many PCs.

– Geoffrey Brent

Further Reading:

Byron: *Complete Poetical Works* (esp. *Don Juan*).

Eisler, Benita: *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame*.

Gleckner, Robert F. (Editor): *Critical Essays on Lord Byron*.

Marchand, Leslie: *Byron: A Portrait*.

Maurois, André: *Byron* (Out of print, but available from libraries).

Powers, Tim: *The Stress of Her Regard*.

WHAT IF?

Apart from his involvement in Greece, Byron had little direct effect on history; he lacked the tact or diplomacy to become a serious force in English politics. But had he not married Annabella, he might have stayed in England and developed his political skills; he was always a strong speaker, and under his influence, the British Empire might have been more considerate of its subjects. On the other hand, his daughter Ada would never have been born . . .

Ada Lovelace was a mathematically gifted woman who worked with Charles Babbage on the attempt to build a mechanical computer. Although technical difficulties prevented them from building a working model, their theory was sound, and more than a century later, when technology finally allowed the construction of electronic computers, they were recognized for their prescience.

THE VILLA DIODATI

While in Switzerland, Byron hosted a few friends in a rented villa by the shore of Lake Geneva; Dr. John Polidori, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Byron’s mistress Claire Clairmont. One evening, Byron suggested writing ghost stories, Mary’s idea developed into her famous novel, *Frankenstein*. Byron began a short story about a vampire but abandoned it after a few pages; Polidori took notes, and rewrote it some years later. The result was published as *The Vampyre*, under Byron’s name to boost sales; Byron was furious, but the story became a minor classic.

The GM of a horror-related campaign might wonder what exactly happened at the Villa Diodati to inspire two such influential stories. Polidori committed suicide soon after the publication of *The Vampyre*, at the age of 26, and Shelley drowned in 1822; two of Byron’s close friends from his youth also drowned. Both the Byrons and the Gordons (his mother’s family) were said to be cursed; Catherine’s father and grandfather both committed suicide – again by drowning – and the fifth Lord Byron killed his own cousin in a particularly pointless duel. The movie *Gothic* and Tim Powers’ novel *The Stress of Her Regard* both deal with this subject (in very different ways).

MEMOIRS

Byron kept detailed memoirs, which he left in the keeping of friends; soon after his death, they were burned unread, ostensibly to prevent further scandals. It has been suggested that a copy existed; such a thing, if genuine, would be worth a fortune. On the other hand, one might discover why Byron’s friends *really* wanted them destroyed . . .

Charles Darwin

Total Points: 117

Born 1809; died 1882.

Age 50; 5'9", 150 lbs. A prematurely aged Englishman in tailored clothes.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 4.5

IQ: 15 [60] **HT:** 8 [-15] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Ally (T.H. Huxley, 12-) [10], Manual Dexterity +2 [6], Reputation +2 (Among naturalists: careful researcher) [3], Status 5* [20], Very Wealthy [30].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior (Collecting factual evidence) [-5], Delicate Metabolism (No special diet available) [-20], Pacifism (Cannot kill) [-15], Reputation -4 (Among the devout: enemy of religion) [-10], Sense of Duty (His family) [-5], Shyness [-5], Truthfulness [-5].

Quirks

Collects specimens in great numbers; Hates slavery; Relies on unorthodox medical treatments; Religious skeptic; Takes snuff. [-5]

Skills

Agronomy-14 [1], Animal Handling-14 [2], Area Knowledge (South America)-14 [½], Backgammon-15 [1], Botany-17 [8], Chemistry-13 [1], Geology-16 [6], Guns (Rifle)-14 [4], Juggling-9 [½], Naturalist-21 [16], Paleontology (Paleozoology)-19 [10], Research-16 [4], Riding (Horse)-12 [4], Savoir-Faire-16 [0], Stealth-9 [1], Theology-12 [½], Writing-15 [2], Zoology-18 [10].

(All skills TL5 where applicable.)

Languages

English-15 (native) [0], Greek-13 [½], Latin-13 [½], Spanish-13 [½].

This is Darwin following the publication of *The Origin of Species*. His highest scientific skill is Naturalist, partly because this gives him a high default in Ecology, a field which he virtually invented, and partly because the theory of evolution reflects close attention to minute details of how plants and animals live in the wild; he did reputable work in several other fields, notably his comprehensive treatise on living and fossil barnacles. This research was helped by his inherited wealth; he began his marriage with roughly £90,000. His low HT and Delicate Metabolism reflect chronic digestive illness; the younger Darwin, during the voyage of the *Beagle*, had neither, but was only Comfortable in wealth.

BIOGRAPHY

Charles Darwin was the son of a wealthy doctor and the grandson of Erasmus Darwin, a doctor and a well-known naturalist and poet. He was intended to become a doctor also, but lectures at the University of Edinburgh bored him and the first operation he saw horrified him. (He might be considered to suffer from a mild phobia.) He and his father then agreed that he would become a minister, and he entered Cambridge in 1827, but gave little attention to his studies. Instead, he became an amateur naturalist, carrying on an interest from his childhood; his most prized possessions were a gun and a microscope. A popular craze for collecting beetles drew him in, but he also came into contact with serious naturalists.

In 1831, the Admiralty sent H.M.S. *Beagle* to survey South America and the Pacific Ocean. The ship's captain, Robert Fitzroy, wanted a dinner companion he could talk to without undermining his authority; he proposed to take a civilian naturalist. Darwin sailed in 1831 for a five-year voyage around the world. Apart from his observations, he encountered two ideas during the voyage that became part of his theory of evolution: Malthus' idea that human populations outbred their food supplies, in a pamphlet by Harriet Martineau his sisters mailed to him; and the observation that human languages would need much more than 6,000 years to diverge from one original language, suggested by the astronomer John Herschel, whom he met in Cape Town.

Returning to England, he married his cousin, Emma Wedgwood, and on their combined fortunes settled down to raise a large family. His account of his voyage made him a famous naturalist. He had developed the basic ideas of his theory of evolution but kept them secret, fearing ridicule and religious bigotry. Instead he accumulated supporting evidence while working on other projects such as a comprehensive treatise on barnacles. He became chronically ill and could only work four hours a day.

In 1859, a young naturalist in Malaya, Alfred Russel Wallace, sent him a paper stating the main ideas of his own theory. This pushed him into publishing his ideas at the same time as Wallace's, as *The Origin of Species*. The dreaded controversy broke out, though Darwin found defenders such as T.H. Huxley, nicknamed "Darwin's bulldog." Darwin spent the rest of his life in studies based on his theory, ranging from the fertilization of orchids to human evolution. By his death in 1883, it was generally accepted by scientists, as was his project of classifying all of life into one family tree. He was buried in Westminster Abbey by invitation from Parliament, after a publicity campaign managed by Huxley.

Darwin in History

Darwin is considered the world's greatest naturalist, not only for the theory of evolution, but for his empirical studies in natural history, which are still classics of careful observation and interpretation. He virtually created such sciences as ecology and comparative psychology. His ideas shattered old



"I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term Natural Selection."

– Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species

religious certainties and inspired such theorists as Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx to their own speculations – though both were more inclined than he to "theorize in advance of the data." The molecular biology of the 20th century complemented Darwin's theory rather than replacing it.

Encountered

Darwin meets few people, as traveling and entertaining strain his constitution. Any naturalist may receive one of his letters, though, often asking for a favor. Such favors will earn not only his thanks but generous repayment of expenses. Though his theory is controversial, he finds confrontations painful and tries to avoid them. He could make a helpful Patron for young scientists or foreign travelers.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Darwin, Charles: *The Voyage of the Beagle*.

Desmond, Adrian, and James Moore: *Darwin*.

Ghiselin, Michael: *The Triumph of the Darwinian Method*.

WHAT IF?

Darwin could easily be removed from history without killing him. Captain Fitzroy actually had another applicant for the voyage, who backed out. Had Darwin stayed in England, he might have married the flirtatious and athletic Fanny Owen and become a country parson with an amazing collection of beetles or a greenhouse full of orchids. Or Fanny herself might have persuaded him not to go. His later ill health may have been due to Chagas' disease, caught in South America; as a healthy man with an outgoing wife he might have had far less time for biological theory.

Evolutionary theories were numerous before Darwin. His contribution was, first, the novel idea of differential survival and reproduction as the mechanism of evolution, and second, the solid reputation that gained him a hearing. Wallace alone might have won less acceptance for the theory; for one thing, Huxley would have been less likely to take up his views. And Wallace, unlike Darwin, exempted the human mind from evolutionary explanations. Evolution might have faced less opposition from religion, but at the price of a lessened cultural and scientific impact.

THE REFORMER

Darwin's encounter with slavery in Brazil shocked him deeply and left him with a lasting hatred of the institution. What if he had become preoccupied with the anti-slavery movement and with liberal politics generally, to the point of forgetting natural history? His health would have precluded standing for elections, but his exhaustive collection of evidence would have made him a powerful advocate of reforms such as free trade and religious tolerance, as well as abolition; he might have become Gladstone's most trusted admirer. A campaign with player characters investigating social abuses for Darwin could present some unusual challenges.

LOST WORLDS

What if there were dinosaurs in Brazil or ape-men in Africa? Any such discovery would have fascinated Darwin as a new source of evidence on evolution – and he had the funds to help support an expedition. For added entertainment, a referee might send a young Jules Verne along to send back dispatches about its discoveries, perhaps as a representative of a French newspaper that was helping to fund an international expedition.

Born 1818; died 1880.

Age 54; 5'9", 150-160 lbs. A slightly pudgy, balding man with a thick mustache and a beard which does not extend onto his cheeks, wearing a military uniform with large gold epaulets and a plumed hat; generally carries a cavalry saber and a walking stick.

ST: 8 [-15] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 4.5

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 8 [-15] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Patron (The people of San Francisco, 9-) [25], Reputation +4 (City "mascot") [20].

Disadvantages

Age [-12], Dead Broke [-25], Severe Delusion ("I am Emperor of the United States") [-15], Status -2 [-10].

Quirks

Doesn't like his city referred to as "Frisco"; Doesn't drink alcohol (or only very rarely); Shy around women. [-3]

Skills

Accounting-12 [8], Area Knowledge (San Francisco)-12 [1], Area Knowledge (Cape of Good Hope)-11 [½], Botany-9 [½], Chemistry-9 [½], Ecology-9 [½], Economics-10 [1], Engineer (Railroad)-10 [1], Geology-9 [½], History-10 [1], Merchant-12 [2], Metallurgy-9 [½], Physics-9 [½], Savoir-Faire-14 [4], Writing-12 [2], Zoology-9 [½].

(All Scientific skills are TL5.)

Languages

English (native)-12 [0], Dutch-12 [2].

Equipment

Emperor Norton generally has the cavalry saber mentioned above, although its sharpness and effectiveness as a weapon are at the GM's discretion. He may also have a cane or walking stick. He carries at all times his own 50-cent bonds, redeemable at 7% interest in the year 1880, which he will sign and sell to anyone interested in purchasing one. In cash, he carries perhaps \$5 at any given time.

This is Emperor Norton in 1875, at the peak of his "career." Before 1870, he will not have bonds to sell and will be significantly thinner and weaker without this source of income. During the Civil War period, his uniform may be either Union or Confederate; he took neither side in the matter (since both sides were part of his empire), and wore both colors to demonstrate this.

BIOGRAPHY

Emperor Norton was born Joshua Abraham Norton of London in 1818. His family moved to the Cape of Good Hope when he was two, and he lived there until he inherited his father's property at the age of 30. Norton then sailed to San Francisco to seek his fortune through real estate speculation and commodities trading. At the height of his fortune, he is estimated to have been worth about \$250,000, which translates to about two and a half million 1999 dollars.

In 1852, Norton risked almost all his liquid assets attempting to corner San Francisco's rice market. Luck turned against him, and the loss, combined with failure of certain investments and an economic depression, forced him into bankruptcy by 1856. There is little record of his activities for the next three years, but it is believed that he survived by continuing his business on a much smaller scale.

On September 17, 1859, Joshua Norton submitted an announcement to the San Francisco *Bulletin*, which the editor printed for its amusement value. In it, he declared himself Norton I, Emperor of the United States. Subsequent proclamations disbanded Congress, dissolved the Republic, and added the title "Protector of Mexico" in response to Napoleon III's invasion of Mexico. There were also many false proclamations printed in various city newspapers as their staff humorists tried to get in on the joke.

As emperor, Norton was able to survive by eating at free lunch counters and "taxing" his Masonic brothers for the cost of his lodgings. He spent his time walking around San Francisco, reading about scientific discoveries and playing chess at the Mechanics' Institute, and occasionally traveling to other California towns for various ceremonies. He quickly became a local celebrity, and business owners found that they had to treat him with respect in order to stay in the people's good graces. Thus, His Majesty received free tickets to a private box at all theater openings, was able to travel on railroads, streetcars, and ferries at no expense, and was occasionally presented with a new hat, stick, or uniform by various persons and organizations.

In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was complete, and tourists began coming to California. Norton was already well-known across the United States, the legend of the beggar emperor having spread via newspapers. Seeing a chance to capitalize on the tourist industry, he began selling bonds bearing his signature for fifty cents, redeemable in 1880 at 7% interest. These bonds were treasured souvenirs, and their sale allowed Norton to vastly improve his standard of living.

For 10 years, Norton enjoyed a fair degree of comfort and even respect. He was still a beggar, but policemen and soldiers saluted him, and wealthy bankers invited him to eat lunch with them. Norton always acted the full part of an emperor, behaving with regal dignity and precisely following standards of etiquette.

On January 8, 1880, he dropped dead in the street of a stroke. Ten thousand people turned out to view his body as it



lay in state, and he was buried with full ceremony, his funeral paid for by donations from the city's millionaires.

Encountered

Historical accounts of Norton describe him as very gentle but firm. He will gladly sell bonds if asked, but he will *not* offer them – that would demonstrate a need for money, which is improper for an emperor. He has a wide (though incomplete) knowledge of science, and can provide reasonably correct opinions on any topic that a gentleman would be expected to know about. He will be unfailingly polite to women, and will observe all proprieties when dealing with anyone of elevated rank.

In general, apart from his insistence on being called “Your Majesty” and his potential to become irate at anyone demeaning his imperial city with the name “Frisco,” characters meeting Emperor Norton should come away with a feeling that the man might not be as daft as people claim.

– Alik S. Widge

Further Reading:

Drury, William: *Norton I: Emperor of the United States*.

Gaiman, Neil: “Three Septembers and a January,” collected in *Sandman: Fables and Reflections*.

WHAT IF?

The historical Emperor Norton captured the hearts of his city and nation, but never wielded the power that went along with his grandiose title. Had things gone a little differently, though . . .

NORTON FOR PRESIDENT!

Norton was in many ways a symbol for the spirit of San Francisco. It wouldn't have been hard to rally its citizens around him if someone convinced the emperor that the only way to make the state or country obey was to go through the election process. Quibbles about his birthplace aside, perhaps an emperor could have become president; some would say that weirder things have happened in modern politics. Other offices would be even less difficult. Aside from his delusions, Norton was intelligent enough to make a reasonably good leader.

METHOD IN THE MADNESS

In the course of a typical day, Emperor Norton traveled all around San Francisco to meet his subjects. He could easily follow people, eavesdrop on conversations, and otherwise gather sensitive information without being noticed. A campaign could start by having Norton approach characters with warnings of some sinister plot, either local or global in scope. His sharp mind can formulate plans, but he would need helpers to implement them, since no authorities would ever take him seriously.

THE SHADOW EMPEROR

Instead of fighting a conspiracy, Norton might be part of one. The *Principia Discordia* hails him as a saint. He was an active Mason and was buried in the Masonic cemetery. There is a legend that he stopped a vigilante mob by standing before it with his head bowed in prayer – evidence of secret mental powers? Depending on the campaign's degree of Illumination, the Emperor could be anything from a Conspiracy spy to the most powerful of Secret Masters. An Illuminated campaign set in the present day could also make use of Norton – perhaps the characters need to travel back in time to foil one of his long-term schemes, or perhaps he remains alive as a brain in a jar right next to Hitler and Einstein.

Born 1820; died 1861.

Age 27; 5'6", 145 lbs. An attractive woman of classic "black Irish" appearance, with black hair, blue eyes, and light skin, usually provocatively dressed and with tobacco-stained fingers.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 5.75

IQ: 11 [10] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 5

Advantages

Attractive Appearance [5], Charisma +2 [10], Filthy Rich [50], Musical Ability +1 [1], Patron (Ludwig I of Bavaria, 9-) [10].

Disadvantages

Addiction (Tobacco) [-5], Bad Temper [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5], Compulsive Lying [-15], Compulsive Spending [-5], Impulsiveness [-10], Odious Personal Habit (Smokes in public) [-5], Secret (Married) [-5], Social Stigma (Demimondaine) [-10], Status 0* [-5], Weak Will -2 [-16].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Quirks

Claims her enemies are tools of the Jesuits; Fond of dogs; Likes to flirt. [-3]

Skills

Black Powder Weapons (Caplock Pistol)-15 [2], Carousing-13 [16], Dancing-13 [2], Disguise-10 [1], Fast-Talk-15 [10], Holdout-10 [1], Knife-13 [1], Musical Instrument (Guitar)-10 [1], Performance-14 [8], Riding (Horse)-12 [1], Sex Appeal-16 [14], Singing-12 [2], Whip-11 [½].

Languages

English (native)-11 [0], French-10 [1], Latin-9 [½], Spanish-10 [1].

Equipment

Montez commonly has a knife and a pistol concealed in her clothing.

Montez's wealth was a gift from her patron, Ludwig I of Bavaria; her fortunes rose and fell throughout her life, helped by her inability to resist spending money or going into debt. While she often performed on stage, her personality and mannerisms seem to have been more important than her skill as a dancer, which critical audiences never felt to be up to professional standards. This version makes her more attractive than photographs taken in her 30s, but less so than her

admirers thought; their judgment may have been weakened by her seductiveness and intense personality.

BIOGRAPHY

Lola Montez was the assumed name of Eliza Gilbert, the daughter of an English army officer and an Irish girl of 14. Her parents went to India when her father gained reassignment there, though he died the very day he reported to his new regiment. Her mother soon remarried, and in 1826, Eliza was sent back to school in England. At 17, she married Lieutenant Thomas James and went back to India with him, but returned to England in 1841, where she became involved with other men and studied for a theatrical career. Her husband sued for separate maintenance (called divorce, but they could not legally remarry) and was granted it in 1842.

Lacking talent for stage acting, Mrs. James went to Spain to study dance and returned calling herself Maria Dolores de Porris y Montez – "Lola Montez." Under that name, she traveled to many European cities, performing on the stage and encouraging men to support her, though her lack of self-control repeatedly led to scandals that forced her to move on. She had a brief liaison with Franz Liszt in 1844, and he still admired her years later.

In 1846, she visited Munich, the capital of Bavaria, hoping to perform during the Oktoberfest. The request brought her to the attention of Ludwig I, then 60 years old. Ludwig was hardworking, stingy, and autocratic, with a strict sense of duty, and socially awkward because of poor hearing, but he was also a romantic who wrote poetry and insisted that his wife permit him to be involved with other women. Montez's beauty, her violent emotions, and her claims to an exotic Spanish background fascinated him, and she became his final great love.

The relationship quickly generated scandal, both because of Montez's lack of propriety and because she was thought to be interfering in Bavarian politics. Ludwig believed everything "Lolitta" said, dismissing ministers who criticized her and installing more liberal ones; he even made her a countess. But in 1847, public protests drove her out of Bavaria, and in 1848, as a wave of revolution swept through Europe, Ludwig abdicated rather than rule as a constitutional monarch. He and Montez lived apart, but he continued to support her in luxury for some time.

Subsequently, Montez emigrated to the United States, where she became a popular lecturer, writing much of her own material. Her speaking tours took her to California, Australia, Ireland, and England. A stroke left her partially paralyzed in 1860, but she was recovering well when she caught pneumonia, from which she died early in 1861.

Lola in History

Montez was a prototype of the professional celebrity; she had only moderate talent, but attracted large audiences by the force of her personality and the fascination of her scandalous

WHAT IF?

Removing Lola Montez from history would probably have little immediate impact – outside of Bavaria. Ludwig I might stay on the throne until his death in 1868, when Ludwig II (“Mad King Ludwig”) might succeed him directly. He and his Catholic allies might have held out against the 1848 revolution had Montez not divided them, and even delayed Bavaria’s alliance with Lutheran Prussia. A more important impact, though, could have been artistic: Ludwig’s continued support for major architectural projects, art collections, and the theatrical arts could have made Bavaria a major cultural center through most of the century.

LOLA IN AMERICA

Montez died just early enough to miss the Civil War. But had she not caught pneumonia, she could have lived some years longer. How would she have reacted to the great conflict?

In her lectures on the United States, she opposed abolition and women’s rights, and predicted that American political instability would only be resolved by an American monarchy. She might have been more at home in the romantic society of the Confederacy. With her scandalous past, she would never have been fully socially acceptable, but visible support for the South could have gained her some popularity. Southern PCs, or Yankee spies, might have occasion to call on her or see one of her lectures.

THE DEMON

What if there was more behind the change from Eliza Gilbert James to Lola Montez than simple lying? Taking a new name is a traditional symbol of magical or religious initiation. In a Victorian-era fantasy campaign, Montez might have been initiated into a magical tradition or possessed by some god, spirit, or demon – and might have possessed more than one form of glamour.

Suppose, for example, that Eliza James took part in a secret occult ritual during her stay in Spain and was ridden by a succubus. Her outspoken fear of Jesuit plots might both reflect and conceal real fears of exposure. Her seduction of Ludwig, aside from being part of her primary mission on Earth, offered fringe benefits, from wealth and luxury to throwing the Bavarian Catholic hierarchy into confusion. Investigators might find her an unexpected challenge – and if she was actually a possessed mortal woman, would they choose to destroy her or to try to set her free? With her deceitfulness and unpredictability, Montez would be a formidable adversary to either effort.



life. She helped to break down the old restrictions on women by her fame for ignoring them – which is rather ironic, given her own generally romantic-conservative views. (A team of time travelers sent back to protect her, and thus to ensure the weakening of rigid Victorian social mores, would have to deal with not only her unpredictable behavior, but also a lot of speeches which actually defend the antiquated values they are there to see subverted.)

Encountered

Montez could be encountered in any European city that has a substantial theater. She will have a male patron but will flirt, or do more, with men she finds handsome or charming. If a PC gets involved with her, she will spend his money freely, behave embarrassingly in public, see other men, lie about her actions and her previous life, and become enraged if challenged – but with such passion and charm that few men can resist her. She dresses in what she considers a Spanish style, and speaks Spanish fairly fluently, but not like a native. She constantly makes up stories about herself – for example, she claims that the Jesuits are persecuting her – and sifting the truth from her inventions would challenge the shrewdest investigator in Europe.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Seymour, Bruce: *Lola Montez: A Life*.

Varley, James F.: *Lola Montez: The California Adventures of Europe’s Notorious Courtesan*.

Born c.1820; died 1913.

Age 38; 5'5", 145 lbs. A short, sturdy black woman, looking much older than she is. Her clothes are simple and worn, and she's never without a pistol or rifle in the South. She has an indentation on her skull (visible only on close inspection and usually covered with a bandana) and some missing front teeth; otherwise she is completely unremarkable.

ST: 12 [20] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 12 [20] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Charisma +2 [10], Claim to Hospitality (Underground Railroad) [5], Composed [5].

Disadvantages

Epilepsy (Actually "narcolepsy," triggered at random rather than by stress, but unconsciousness lasts for 5d minutes: -50% limitation) [-15], Illiteracy [-10], Secret (Underground Railroad conductor) [-10], Sense of Duty (To her people) [-10], Social Stigma (Black woman) [-15], Struggling [-10], Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks

Happy to let Southerners believe her to be a man; Never allows "passengers" to turn back; Prefers death to servitude. [-3]

Skills

Acting-11 [1], Agronomy-10 [½], Animal Handling-12 [4], Area Knowledge (Underground Railroad)-13 [2], Bard-14 [2], Black Powder Weapons (Caplock Rifle)-13 [1], Camouflage-11 [½], Cooking-11 [½], Disguise-11 [1], First Aid-12 [1], Guns/TL5 (Pistol)-13 [1], Hiking-9 [1], Leadership-14 [2], Physician (Herbalist)-11 [2], Riding (Horse)-9 [½], Stealth-11 [2], Tactics-13 [6], Teaching-10 [½], Teamster (Oxen)-10 [½], Weaving-11 [1].

Languages

English (Native)-12 [0].

This is Tubman during the years before the Civil War, when she transported slaves to the North and Canada. Her Area Knowledge of the Underground Railroad and the whole region rises through this period to maybe 15 or 16. If she is encountered during her years as a spy and scout, add Administration-10, Intelligence Analysis-12, Shadowing-11, Strategy-12, Tracking-11, and probably Contacts or Allies within the Union. A cinematic Tubman could be a mistress of espionage, with better attributes, more and higher combat

skills, Cryptography, Fast-Talk, and Strong Will. Longevity might be appropriate given her lifespan.

Her Secret is, of course, a matter of life and death when she is in the South; she therefore protects it in the North, giving speeches under a pseudonym and being rationally cautious of white people until she is *certain* that they are on her side.

BIOGRAPHY

Harriet Ross was born into slavery on a Maryland farm around 1820. At age six, she was hired out to another farm where she suffered severe beatings, but physical exhaustion forced her return home. At 13, during an altercation between a slave and his overseer at the supply store, she was hit by a lead weight and rendered delirious and paralyzed for two months. Her recovery surprised everyone, but her value as a slave was undermined; she suffered from unexpected sleeping fits for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, during which she could not be wakened. This condition followed her for most of the rest of her life.

Lacking buyers, her owner hired her out to do field work. This turned out to be a boon: chopping wood, plowing fields and driving oxen made her strong and healthy. She married a freeman at age 24, but he did not have any fear of being "sold South" when the farm lost money, so she planned to leave him and escape.

Six years later, Tubman escaped to Pennsylvania and got work as a servant in homes and hotels. In 1850, she decided her freedom would mean nothing without her family, so she joined the Underground Railroad as a conductor for fugitive slaves. She was their most successful agent ever; over the next decade, she made 19 trips into the Deep South and brought out over 300 people, including her own family. She was never captured and never allowed anyone to turn back. This earned her the nickname "Moses" (she was widely assumed to be male), and a record-setting bounty of \$40,000.

She knew the efforts of the railroad would not be enough to free all her people, so when she met abolitionist John Brown in 1858, she saw in him a chance for the anti-slave movement to strike a blow against the South. She helped to recruit soldiers and plan the raid on Harper's Ferry, where it was hoped an "island" free of slavery could be established in the Virginia mountains. Tubman was laid up sick during the action and therefore escaped arrest following the doomed attack in 1859.

Tensions between South and North turned to war in 1861. Tubman made her last Railroad journey and then switched her attention to antislavery speeches. The Union Army called on her to help acclimate blacks who, as the war progressed, had had their freedom thrust upon them. She nursed them and taught them to cook and sew and make money by selling their goods.

Her almost encyclopedic knowledge of the eastern seaboard also made her invaluable as a spy, scout, and guide.

Her apparent age allowed her to hobble unnoticed through a town, taking note of troop movements and weapon depots. She led Union forces on several incursions into enemy territory and took 300 black soldiers down the Combahee River in South Carolina to free almost 800 slaves. Her military sense, officers found, was uncanny for an illiterate black woman.

Following the war, she continued to make popular speeches about her people. For the next 50 years, her home in Auburn, New York was the Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes. She was a friend of politicians and writers, and received a medal from Queen Victoria. She died of pneumonia at her home in March, 1913.



Encountered

Tubman is unconventional, quick-witted, courageous, and has an unwavering faith in God. She adapts easily to changing circumstances, and will generally do whatever is necessary to save her charges; the unusual she will probably attribute to a higher power. Anyone spending any time with her may witness one of her “sleeping” spells (which can come on the GM’s option). Her speech is recorded as being stereotypically stilted, but she possesses both humor and skill at public speaking.

– Andy Vetromile

Further Reading:

Bradford, Sarah: *Harriet: The Moses of Her People*.

Conrad, Earl: *Harriet Tubman: Negro Soldier and Abolitionist*.

Nies, Judith: *Seven Women*.

WHAT IF?

The last 80 years have relegated Harriet Tubman’s contributions to her work on the Underground Railroad; few realize the true impact of her work and speeches on the plight of the black race. Much like Martin Luther King, she acted as a liaison between the races, exerting her universal appeal to improve conditions.

KEY MOMENTS

The fight in the supply store that caused Harriet Tubman’s brain damage was one of the few things that slowed her down. Had she not been there, she might have been quicker to begin her pursuit of freedom. Conversely, the ailments that dogged her throughout her life actually saved it during the raid on Harper’s Ferry. Had she not been suffering another bout of fatigue and sleep disorder, she would surely have been found – and hanged – with John Brown.

IN THE SHADOWS

For a “simple” black woman to make 19 incursions into the South and bring back 300 slaves without once being captured or losing a passenger is impressive. It’s easy to assume that she had help – but that was a scarce commodity if you were smuggling slaves. A number of people in the South served the Railroad, but who were they? A select few certainly never let their names enter the history books.

The assistance didn’t end with the onset of war, either. She was given a pass by Governor Andrew of Massachusetts that would “give her free passage at all time on all Government transports,” and was made welcome in some of the most sensitive areas of Union operations. If she had mysterious benefactors, they were obviously social experimenters or broadminded thinkers with unknown goals.

THE WILD SIDE

Harriet Tubman claimed to have dreamed many of the occurrences of her life. It may be no coincidence that these premonitions began after her head injury and two-month coma.

She was extraordinary by many standards: She lived to over 90, her popularity crossed racial lines, she was well-trusted by the Union, and her proficiency with complex skills like strategy and reconnaissance was a marvel for an uneducated slave. Her date of birth, like so many others, is hard to pin down even to a year. With this much vagueness, any GM who wants to make her the product, pawn, or ally of *really* weird factions has plenty of options. Android? Experiment in alien genetic engineering? Avatar of the Loa?

Sir Richard Burton

Total Points: 270

Born 1821; died 1890.

Age 37; 6', 165 lbs. A darkly handsome Englishman, with facial scars, dressed and armed as circumstances dictate.

ST: 13 [30] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 6.25

IQ: 14 [45] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 6

Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 8

Advantages

Attractive [5], Cultural Adaptability* [25], Language Talent +3* [2], Military Rank 4 [20], Reputation +1 (Famous explorer) [5], Status 1** [0], Strong Will +2 [8].

*Cultural Adaptability gives Charisma +1 and Language Talent +2.

**Includes +1 from Military Rank.

Disadvantages

Addiction (Cannabis and opium) [-10], Bad Temper [-10], Lecherousness [-15], Secret (Despises many classes of people) [-5].

Quirks

Dislikes beer; Very tolerant of Arabs and women (for his time); Fascinated by exotic erotica and old texts (which he translates into pseudo-archaic English); Insists words be pronounced properly; Practicing Sufi (Muslim mystic). [-5]

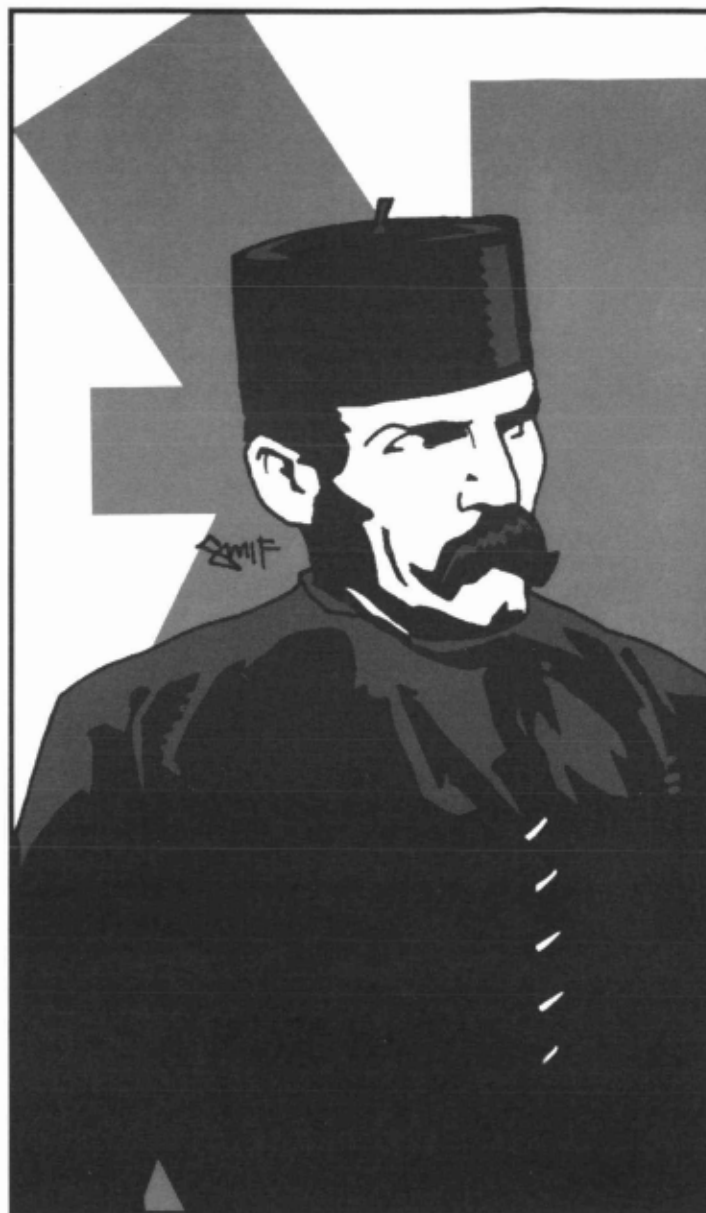
Skills

Acting-15 [4], Anthropology-15 [6], Area Knowledge (Arabia)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (Britain)-14 [½], Area Knowledge (East Africa)-15 [1], Area Knowledge (India)-15 [1], Astronomy-13 [2], Boating-13 [2], Brawling-14 [2], Disguise-16 [6], Falconry-14 [2], Fast-Talk-14 [1], Fencing-15 [8], History-15 [6], Leadership-15 [1], Linguistics-19 [16], Literature-15 [6], Naturalist-14 [4], Occultism-13 [1], Guns (Pistol)-15 [4], Poetry-13 [1], Politics-14 [1], Riding (Horse)-14 [4], Savoir-Faire-17 [0], Survival (Desert)-14 [2], Survival (Jungle)-14 [2], Tactics-14 [2], Theology-16 [8], Wrestling-14 [2], Writing-16 [6].

Languages

English (native)-18 [0], Arabic-16 [½], Belochi-16 [½], French-17 [1], Greek-16 [½], Hindi-16 [½], Italian-17 [1], Jataki-16 [½], Latin-16 [½], Marathi-16 [½], Miltani-16 [½], Pashte-16 [½], Persian-16 [½], Punjabi-16 [½], Romany-16 [½], Sindhi-16 [½], Somali-16 [½], Spanish-16 [½], Teugo-16 [½], plus ten other languages and fifteen other dialects, with half a point in each [12 ½].

This represents Burton c.1857. Two features of his character are of utmost importance. First, his love of languages; he is generally considered one of the greatest linguists ever,



speaking 29 languages and 15 dialects, though it's hard to ascertain exactly which they were. Second, his prejudices; he had negative views of a wide range of people, including blacks, Jews, many Orientals, and most lower-class Europeans. However, as a traveler and a sometime secret agent, he was expert in keeping these feelings hidden; hence, this rates as a Secret rather than Intolerance. Burton was a man of strong opinions and equally strong will.

His Wealth fluctuates around Comfortable (as one anecdote puts it, his grandfather died on the way to his lawyer to change his will to allow Burton to inherit). At certain times, he could have a negative Reputation (as "Ruffian Dick," a shady, opinionated nuisance); in later years, one might add Diplomacy. Note that he has effective Savoir-Faire skill in non-European cultures of at least 15; given his Cultural Adaptability, he should probably operate at the full 17.

BIOGRAPHY

Sir Richard Francis Burton is one of history's most dashing adventurers (so much so that many have cast doubts on his story). Born in 1821 to an English ex-soldier's family, Burton relocated frequently between France, Italy and England as a child, leaving him with an intense wanderlust. There was a rumor that his family had Gypsy blood, as evidenced by his dark features and "Gypsy stare"; coincidentally, he was one of the first to note the resemblance of the Romany to the Indian races.

Attending Oxford at the age of 19, Burton worked overtime to be expelled by the end of his second year, finding academia dull. Shortly thereafter, he joined the East India Company as a soldier, rising quickly in the ranks. It's a sign of his abilities that the British continued to trust him with assignments despite his outspokenness over the treatment of natives and of women at home. Burton was involved with the British invasion of Afghanistan and the aborted invasion of Iran.

Also during this period, Burton reportedly fell in love with a Persian woman. Whatever the nature of their affair, the woman was punished by her family – murdered by poison. Burton became despondent, and intensified his beliefs in women's rights. His many opinions made enemies, resulting in the failure of his military career.

In 1852, Burton traveled to the Middle East. He spent the better part of three years there, most often in disguise, and became one of the first Westerners to enter the sacred city of Mecca, as well as the *first* to enter Harrar, in Ethiopia. In 1855 he was involved in the Crimean War, but in 1857, he returned to Africa in an unsuccessful attempt to discover the source of the Nile. He *did* discover Lake Tanganyika.

In 1860, he set out for Salt Lake City to write a biography of Brigham Young. After visiting South America, he returned to England and married Isabel Arundell, who was strangely convinced he was Catholic. (His sister thought him Anglican; he himself had taken to Islam and embraced Sufism early on, although he wrestled frequently with atheism.) He served as British Consul in Fernando Po, off West Africa, from 1861-1864, then transferred to Santos, Brazil until 1868; Damascus, Syria until 1871; and Trieste, Italy until his death in 1890.

Burton in History

Aside from his adventuring, Burton was an author, translator, and pioneering anthropologist. He published 43 volumes about his travels and 30 volumes of translations. While his reputation was immense, he sold very few books during his life and was widely scorned. Many problems came from his challenges to traditional Victorian morals (he translated a fair amount of erotica); his eccentric approach to style and vocabulary in translations didn't help, neither did his criticisms of rivals. Oddly, there were remarkably few questions as to where his loyalties lay; despite everything, he remained a staunch supporter of British imperialism.

Encountered

Burton's reaction to others will depend on circumstances. There are some who believe that he killed wantonly in the Middle East to protect his disguises, while others (including Burton himself) claim he never actually killed a man in his life. He is certainly determined, tough, and charismatic. No stranger to the unexpected, Burton will likely take almost any strangeness in his stride. Although he does not believe in the occult, he studies paranormal phenomena (he coined the phrase ESP) and would leap at any opportunity for an unusual adventure.

– Victor D. Infante

Further Reading:

Brodie, Fawn M.: *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton*.
Burton, Isabel: *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, 2 vol.
Kipling, Rudyard: *Kim* (a novel based partly on Burton's career).
Rice, Edward: *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton*.
Stisted, Georgiana: *The True Life of Capt. Sir Richard F. Burton*.

WHAT IF?

Burton holds the peculiar distinction of both opening up Eastern culture to Europe and aiding and abetting the British Empire in its conquests. A less successful Burton could easily have fallen at Mecca or Harrar, possibly costing Britain valuable information it needed to hold parts of the Middle East until the mid-20th century. Without adequate intelligence, would British troops have lasted as long as they did against Arab and Persian forces? What impact would a different Middle East have had on later conflicts? Likewise, a more successful Burton could have actually helped hold Iran, hastening British domination in the area.

Beyond his impact on political history, though, Burton's career spans the Victorian era, and his widespread travels make him potentially useful in nearly any Victorian campaign, from a journey through darkest Africa to an older Burton squaring off against Dracula or Jack the Ripper. Even toward the end of his life, he was a man of action – and it's doubtful he'd pass up any chance at adventure or esoteric knowledge.

Incidentally, Burton's wife burned a huge selection of his journals and papers after his death in an attempt to sanitize his reputation. Scholars (including time travelers) and students of many strange fields might have an interest in what was (apparently) lost . . .

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

There was always an undercurrent of rebelliousness in Burton, and it's a credit to his will that he didn't simply cast off Britain entirely and throw his lot in with either Persian or Arab factions. There were several points where he might have been sorely tempted, most notably a battle in Punjab where he implied that his commanding officer, Sir William Napier, led a massacre of native troops. Also, while attempting to incite an invasion of Iran, Burton made no secret of the fact that he was enamored of Persian culture. How much (if anything) did Burton have to do with Britain's not invading?

A FOE OF THE CONSPIRACY?

During the Afghanistan and Iran campaigns, Burton worked closely with members of the Isma'ilis – a Persian group descended from the Assassins of legend. In an Illuminated campaign, it is obvious that a man of Burton's skills would be of great interest to a global conspiracy – and that a man of his temperament wouldn't stand for it for a second.

Born 1856; died 1943.

Age 38; 6'2", 140 lbs. A tall, slender man, with a neatly trimmed thin mustache, intense gray-blue eyes, and black hair, dressed in a stylish suit and derby hat. He speaks English precisely, with only a slight accent.

ST: 12 [20] **DX:** 13 [30] **Speed:** 6.25
IQ: 15 [60] **HT:** 12 [20] **Move:** 6
Dodge: 6

Advantages

Ambidexterity [10], Attractive Appearance [5], Cool [1], Eidetic Memory [30], Filthy Rich and Multimillionaire ×1 [75], Less Sleep [3], Lightning Calculator [5], Mathematical Ability [10], Status 3* [5], Strong Will +2 [8], Versatile [5].

*Includes +2 for Wealth and Multimillionaire.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Generosity [-5], Loner [-5], Obsession (Control himself and nature) [-15], Phobia (Germs) [-10], Proud [-1].

Quirks

Dislikes June bugs and pearls; Fascinated by cut gemstones; Calculates the volume of his food; Likes pigeons; Likes the number 3. [-5]

Skills

Artist-14 [½], Bicycling-13 [1], Chemistry-15 [2], Crossbow-12 [½], Billiards (Hobby)-14 [½], Chess-16 [1], Electronics (Communications)-19 [5], Engineer (Electrical)-21 [5], Engineer (Engines & turbines)-17 [1], Gambling-15 [1], Mathematics-16 [½], Physics-15 [2], Riding (Horse)-11 [½], Savoir-Faire-17 [0], Survival (Mountain)-15 [1], Swimming-14 [2].

(Note: Tesla was educated at late TL5, but his skills should generally be considered to be at TL6.)

Languages

Croatian (native)-16 [½], English-16 [2], French-15 [1], German-14 [½], Italian-14 [½].

(Note that all mental skills are half-cost because of Eidetic Memory.)

The above is a not-too-legendary version of Nikola Tesla early in 1895. For the legendary version, increase his IQ to 17 and his DX to 14, add Gadgeteer (for which there is a *realistic* case), increase his Eidetic Memory to the "photographic," level, reduce his need for sleep further, change his dislike of pearls to a 5-point Delusion that they drain life, and make his quirk of calculating the volume of his food into an Odious Personal Habit. Tesla is at the height of his wealth

here; later, his level fell to Wealthy, and then to only average. He did not change his habits though, so add the disadvantage Extravagance and take away his Status. He might also come to suffer a Reputation as a crank and possible homosexual.

"... communication without wires to any point of the globe is practicable . . . I can conceive of no technical advance which would tend to unite the various elements of humanity than this one, or of one which would more add to and more economize human energy . . ."

—Nikola Tesla

BIOGRAPHY

Nikola Tesla was born in the village of Smiljan, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at midnight between July 9 and 10, 1856. Though a sickly child, he grew into a vigorous and very intelligent young man. By the time he emigrated to the United States at 28, he was probably one of the world's greatest inventors, but no one knew it yet. He had not published or patented the ideas that he carried in his head.

Tesla's first year in America was difficult. He was hired by Thomas Edison, but soon quit. (Edison was dedicated to DC power and did not want to hear about Tesla's AC system; the last straw was a disagreement over a bonus that Tesla thought Edison had promised.) He worked as an engineer in a start-up company, but was soon pushed out by its investors. From spring of 1886 until 1887, he was reduced to working as manual laborer. His luck finally changed in 1887, when he was backed by new investors. Within six months, he patented AC power dynamos, transformers, distributions systems, and motors. Soon afterward, the patents were sold to George Westinghouse for a million dollars, plus royalties that would have totaled over 12 million, but to help win the "battle of the currents" he later gave those up.

For the next seven years, Tesla was the toast of New York and the world as he made one amazing invention after another. He lectured in America and Europe, giving demonstrations that mystified both the public and scientists. At times, he seemed more like a flamboyant stage magician than a scientist. Invitations to his lavish parties followed by demonstrations of his research and inventions were much sought after.

Disaster struck on March 13, 1895: a fire swept through his uninsured laboratory, where all the money from his patents had been invested. Afterward, he had to work with a more limited budget, mostly from donations. Despite this, he continued to show off new inventions and advance ideas for grandiose projects. But all his efforts did not produce any patents that businessmen were interested in buying.

From 1903 on, it became increasingly difficult for him to get loans or investments in his brainchild, broadcast energy.



Over the previous eight years, he had spent over \$400,000 on experiments and had virtually nothing to show for it. His reputation declined, eclipsed by other inventors and smeared by rivals. He became a recluse, ignored by society, all but forgotten when he died in 1943. His last success came after his death, when the Supreme Court ruled that he, not Marconi, was the inventor of radio.

Encountered

Tesla was one of the most *ingenious* men who ever lived, but he could also seem quite insane. His obsession with control caused him to reject emotions and try to be a perfect rational scientist. Though he rejected companionship, he loved the worship of admirers; though he might be unflustered by lab accidents or weird events, he had a streak of drama. Appeals to his pride could likely induce him to show off his lab or talk to people, especially rich, famous, or obviously intelligent ones.

Tesla could be encountered anywhere, but he spent most of his time in his labs, first on South 5th Avenue just a few blocks from Edison's New York headquarters, later on the Lower East Side of New York, near Colorado Springs, and on Long Island. He lived almost all of his adult life in hotels, starting out with the luxurious Waldorf-Astoria and declining to the New Yorker by the time of his death. For as long as he could afford it, he dined every night at Delmonico's Restaurant, but never with anyone else unless he was throwing a party.

— Matthew Michalak

Further Reading:

Cheney, Margaret: *Tesla: Man Out of Time*.

O'Neill, John J.: *Prodigal Genius: The Life of Nikola Tesla*.

Peat, F. David: *In Search of Nikola Tesla*.

WHAT IF?

Had Tesla never lived, or been killed by one of his many childhood illnesses, other inventors would eventually have been able to fill his large shoes, but technology would probably have been set back by many years. He was also an uncommunicative genius who few could understand. If he had displayed fewer of the delusions, strange habits, and eccentricities that kept him from being taken seriously, it is possible that technology could have advanced much more quickly than it did. Radio and fluorescent lighting might have been in use by 1900, working radar in World War I, and possibly even lasers by 1930. *GURPS Alternate Earths* goes even further, taking the idea that his ideas about broadcast electricity were practical and describing a world of weird science called Gernsback.

MIDSTREAM PERILS

Tesla's life was full of turning-points. He nearly died four times before he was 18, once of malaria and soon after of cholera. He invented the whole alternating-current system in Prague in February 1882, but it was five years before anyone took it seriously and almost six before he received his patents on it.

Tesla was wiped out financially in early 1895, which certainly cost him credit for inventing radio and possibly destroyed many other profitable inventions. He never married, though it is speculated he might have married either Anne Morgan or Marguerite Merington had his first meetings with either of them gone better. Marriage might have stabilized him somewhat and also solved the problem of rumors of homosexuality.

ORDER OF THE FLAMING SWORD

Tesla sometimes gets little credit for his ideas, some of which *are* so fantastic as to be dismissed out of hand as impossible. For this reason there is much speculation that his inventions are being suppressed by a conspiracy to this day. Various sources claim Tesla invented everything from "death rays" to transmitters to contact aliens. The most unusual claim is that he accidentally caused the Tunguska blast of 1908 with a particle cannon. Some of his papers are still kept secret by the Defense Department, and the rest that survive are in a museum in Yugoslavia, unavailable to the public.

The circumstances surrounding his death are suitably mysterious as well. He died alone in his hotel room on January 7, 1943. However, he was alone for three days prior to his death. A cover story?

Rudyard Kipling

Total Points: 98

Born 1865; died 1936.

Age 42; 5'8", 145 lbs. A middle-aged Englishman with a mustache and thick glasses, probably holding a cigar.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Language Talent +1 [2], Reputation +3 (Nobel Prize-winning author) [15], Status 4* [15], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Addiction (Tobacco) [-5], Bad Sight (Nearsighted) [-10], Insomniac [-10], Reputation -3 (Among the political left, as a reactionary) [-5], Sense of Duty (Family) [-5].

Quirks

Believes he has occasional psychic experiences; Gets even; Loves to travel; Freemason but not Christian; Sense of privacy. [-5]

Skills

Animal Handling-12 [2], Anthropology-11 [1], Archeology-11 [1], Area Knowledge (England)-13 [1], Area

Knowledge (India)-13 [1], Artist-12 [2], Bard-14 [4], Carousing-9 [1], Dancing-9 [1], Driving (Automobile)-9 [½], Guns (Rifle)-12 [1], History-11 [1], Linguistics-11 [1], Literature-16 [10], Naturalist-11 [1], Occultism-11 [½], Poetry-16 [8], Profession: Journalism-12 [1], Research-16 [8], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Savoir-Faire (Military)-12 [½], Stealth-9 [½], Streetwise-11 [½], Teamster (Horses)-12 [1], Writing-20 [16].

(Note that Kipling is interested in current technology; his skills here are learned at early TL6.)

Languages

English (native)-15 [0], French-13 [½], Hindustani-13 [½], Latin-13 [½].

The outward facts of Kipling's life are well known, as he was a very public figure, but how he felt about them he largely concealed. He disliked biographers and biographical criticism, which he referred to as "the higher cannibalism." Some of his feelings can be gathered from his poetry and fiction, but not the literal circumstances of his life that produced them.

His skills are deliberately designed to make him just short of professional competence in a wide variety of areas, so that he can come up with surprising bits of information. This is appropriate for a former newspaperman and is also reflected in his fiction; no other writer found everyday work so worthy a subject or wrote about it so knowledgeably.



BIOGRAPHY

Queen Victoria was the head of the British Empire, but Kipling was its voice.

Born in India, Rudyard Kipling and his younger sister were taken in 1871 to board with a family in England. Kipling was miserable there and fled into reading to escape, damaging his eyesight; he also gained a lifelong revulsion against the idea of eternal punishment after repeated warnings of the damnation that awaited him. His adolescence, spent at a boarding school preparing boys for military service, was happier.

In 1882, he returned to India and a job on a very small newspaper, which gave him an outlet for his fiction and poetry. The publication of collected editions made him famous and allowed him to return to England. A subsequent world tour took him to the United States, where he married Caroline Balestier and settled on her property in Vermont. He wrote some of his major works there, including *The Jungle Books* and *Kim*, but quarreled with the neighbors and eventually, in 1902, moved to Sussex in England.

He received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1907, a controversial award because of his outspoken political views, but is said to have declined other honors such as the Order of Merit and the role of Poet Laureate. He supported universal military service for men, spoke out for the British side in the Boer War, and was bitterly hostile to the Kaiser, especially after the death during World War I of his only son, John, who had enlisted underage. One of his two daughters also died young. Kipling's later life was secluded and produced only a small volume of writing – short story collections and his autobiography, his last book, published posthumously in 1937.

Kipling in History

Kipling is historically important not for what he did, but for what he expressed: the viewpoint of British imperialism at its historical high point. His political outlook made him unpopular with other writers, especially in his later life; even admirers such as Auden, Eliot, and Orwell felt the need to apologize for him. Some have found a streak of brutality, deeper than the patriotism. The struggle of the Third World nations for independence put him further into disfavor as a symbol of white arrogance. In fact, his early works show a fair amount of respect for non-European cultures, although he does seem to have become more harshly reactionary in later years. As those conflicts recede into the past, a more detached appraisal of his work may reveal the poet hidden within the propagandist.

Encountered

Kipling is not always easy to meet; his wife is very protective of his privacy. He may speak at patriotic events or schools or be met at one of his clubs in London, though he goes there less often than he used to. He will eagerly talk about work – his own or anyone else's – and may express his distaste for liberalism and socialism if sufficiently provoked. Getting him to reveal anything more personal will take patience and tact. Even with people he trusts, there is a great deal he will not say, though he may allude to it.

He is unusually religiously tolerant for his era, writing sympathetically about Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism; many of his writings hint at a belief in reincarnation. His political views are an odd combination of libertarian individualism and patriotic imperialism (in the sense that the imperialist has a civilizing duty), both falling out of favor in the 20th century.

– William H. Stoddard

Further Reading:

Kipling, Rudyard: *Kim*.

Kipling, Rudyard: *The Jungle Book*.

Kipling, Rudyard: *Something of Myself*.

Wilson, Angus: *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Works*.

WHAT IF?

Removing Kipling from history would probably change the course of events very little, but the *flavor* would be perceptibly different. After Shakespeare and the Bible, Kipling was the English language's great phrase-maker; without him no one could say "white man's burden" or "a good cigar is a smoke!" Mowgli the wolf-boy created an entire genre of adventure fiction; without Kipling's influence, Edgar Rice Burroughs might be best known for John Carter of Mars. No other writer so well embodied the virtues and flaws of the British Empire, or provided such a visible target for its critics.

THE GREAT GAME

Kipling wrote a number of stories about covert operations, including his best novel, *Kim*. What if he had personal experience with undercover work when he was a young man in India? A reporter could go nearly anywhere, ask questions freely, and receive odd visitors day or night, making him a useful resource both as contact and as data collector. A group of PCs involved in the Great Game might be sent his way for help. Or perhaps he could tip them off to some crisis in the making, such as a pair of adventurers setting out to conquer Kafiristan.

HIS OWN GHOST STORY

Kipling writes of psychic experiences of various kinds; for example, he discusses the bad feng shui of a certain house in England. Player characters in a horror or occult investigations campaign could get leads from him, or be asked by him to see if there is any truth behind one of his visions. If these visions were more frequent, he could even be a patron for a team of investigators. Of course, he wouldn't know everything that was behind the apparitions!

In a role such as this, Kipling could very well be a Weirdness Magnet, making more of his stories true than is usually supposed. Keeping the players guessing as to which ones really are true will add to the effect.

HOLY PEOPLE'S WILL

What if the aftermath of World War I drove England further to the left than it did, perhaps to outright communism, democratic or even revolutionary? Kipling was an outspoken opponent of socialism all his life. He was too famous to silence directly – but how would he react to political pressure or legal harassment? And if he got involved in a counter-revolutionary movement, would he be a valuable resource or a dangerous loose cannon?

Alberto Santos Dumont

Total Points: 105

Born 1873; died 1932.

Age 33; 5'9", 150 lbs. A young man with black hair and mustache and a slightly melancholy expression, usually dressed in elegant clothes.

ST: 10 [-] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 10 [-] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Reputation +2 ("First man in the world to fly a powered heavier-than-air craft," 10-) [5], Status 2* [5], Very Wealthy [30].

*Includes +1 for Wealth.

Disadvantages

Pacifism (Self-defense only) [-15], Obsession (Inventing better flying machines) [-5].

Quirks

Always wears his wristwatch when flying; Jules Verne fan; Melancholy; Uses dirigibles for visiting friends and to go to the opera. [-4]

Skills

Chemistry-10 [½], Driving (Automobile)-12 [4], Driving (Locomotive)-9 [½], Driving (Steam tractor)-9 [½], Engineer (Early Aircraft)-16 [10], Mathematics-13 [4], Mechanic (Internal combustion engine)-12 [1], Physics-12 [2], Piloting (Balloon)-14 [16], Piloting (Airship)-13* [7], Piloting (Early Aircraft)-10 [1], Savoir-Faire-15 [0].

*Defaults from Piloting (Balloon) at -4.

(Note: Santos Dumont learned his skills at late TL5, but he not only lived through the change to TL6, he helped to bring it about. GMs should apply common sense if his "Tech Level" becomes significant.)

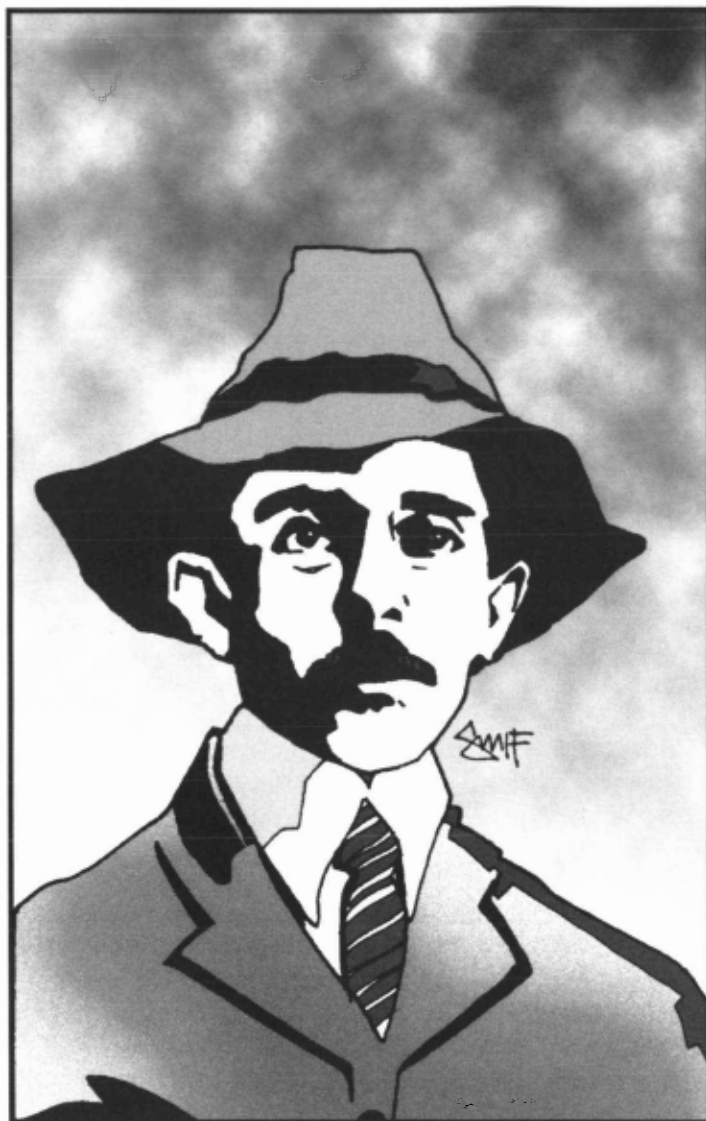
Languages

Portuguese (native)-13 [0], English-11 [½], French-13 [2].

Equipment

Flying machines aside, Santos Dumont owns what is probably the world's first wristwatch.

This represents Alberto Santos Dumont soon after he made the first official heavier-than-air powered flight in Europe. He is still regarded in Brazil as the "Father of Aviation." (When faced with the argument that the Wright brothers made a heavier-than-air flight in 1903, Brazilians like to point out that the 14-bis, unlike the Wrights' craft, was capable of taking off without external aid, and that



aileron were Santos Dumont's invention. It is important to remember that the Wrights' claims were widely disbelieved at the time, even in the United States. Hence, Dumont's Reputation, while technically inaccurate, was widespread, and not at all implausible.)

Dumont was also known for demonstrating that lighter-than-air craft could be controlled and steered reliably, and for other inventions, including designs for hangars and sliding doors. He also worked on helicopter-like and float-equipped designs, but without much success. The exact nature of his Pacifism was rarely tested, but he clearly hated war; this feeling was the cause of his eventual suicide, so some such disadvantage is appropriate.

A cinematic version of Dumont would have advantages such as Gadgeteer and Versatile, and higher levels in Engineer and Pilot. He could make an interesting gentleman-engineer in a pulp-era campaign, combining technical skill with melancholy pacifism. However, realistically, his illness would reduce his physical abilities after 1910.

BIOGRAPHY

Alberto Santos Dumont was born in 1873, in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil, but grew up in the state of São Paulo, on a coffee plantation owned by his father, Henrique. At the age of 10 he had already read all Jules Verne's books, and as a child, he had his parents' permission to drive a locomotive loaded with coffee between the trees, as well as the plantation's steam tractors.

In 1890, his father suffered an accident which rendered him partly paralyzed; in the following year, the family traveled to France where Henrique believed he could be cured, but he died in 1892. In Paris, Alberto completed his studies, and in 1898, ordered his first balloon, named "Brazil," from a French firm where he worked as a volunteer pilot. In that same year, he constructed his first dirigible, which he called "Number 1."

In 1901 he won the Deutsch de la Meurth prize for the first person to fly a dirigible from Saint Cloud Park to the Eiffel Tower and back in less than 30 minutes. While celebrating, Santos Dumont complained to Louis Cartier, a personal friend, that during the flight he could barely check his performance on his pocket-watch, as this meant taking his hands off the controls. In response, Cartier designed a watch with a leather band and a buckle, intended to be worn above the left wrist. The wrist-watch had been invented.

In the next year, Dumont visited Edison's Laboratories in New York, was received by Theodore Roosevelt in the White House, and lost his mother, who died in Portugal.

In 1906, Dumont started work on a completely new idea, a powered biplane. To test it, he mounted it under his number 14 dirigible and freed it in flight. On October 23, the "14-bis" successfully took off before an astonished commission of judges from the Aero-Club de France and landed safely after flying about 200 feet, winning a prize of 3,000 francs for the first pilot to fly at least 25 meters (82 feet) in a self-powered machine. In November he flew 720 feet, winning another prize for the first person to fly more than 100 meters (328 feet).

His next great success was his model 20, the "Demoiselle," capable of flights longer than ten miles and speeds around 59 mph, and considered to be much more influential in aeronautics than the 14-bis. In 1910, however, he fell ill with what has since been diagnosed as multiple sclerosis, which reduced his capacity for active pursuits.

Dumont was a pacifist, and never accepted the use of aircraft in warfare. Extremely depressed by their use in World War I, he returned to Brazil. In 1932, after the beginning of a local conflict in which aircraft were once more used as war machines, he committed suicide.

Encountered

Before 1891, Dumont can be found living on his father's plantation; anyone seeking him should not have a hard time, as his father is rich and well-known. After this date he would most probably be found in Paris, but he sometimes traveled back to Brazil and to other countries. After the 14-bis flight, Dumont becomes famous around the world; locating him then becomes trivial, though catching him may be harder. Once anyone makes contact, the GM should remember that Dumont is an educated man from a rich family, and so is likely to be very formal with strangers. His favorite topic of conversation will be aeronautics, but he will be very interested in general science and technology.

— Leonardo M. Holschuh

Further Reading:

Santos Dumont, Alberto: *My Airships: The Story of My Life*.

Winters, Nancy: *Man Flies: The Story of Alberto Santos-Dumont, Master of the Balloon, Conqueror of the Air*.

Wykeham, Peter: *Santos-Dumont*.

WHAT IF?

If Alberto Santos Dumont hadn't succeeded in designing practical airplanes, it probably would not have changed the world as we know it much; even aside from the Wrights, there were a lot of competent people working in this field at the time. But he was wealthy and influential; without him, development might have been slowed, and airplanes might not have had as much impact as they did in World War I. Wristwatches, too, might have been slower to appear.

CHANGES

There are several crucial accidents in Dumont's story. If his father had never suffered the one that rendered him paralyzed, he would not have sold his coffee plantation and moved to Paris. The pressure to prepare himself to replace his father in running the plantation could have consumed an important part of the time Dumont spent in pursuit of his dream of flight.

Dumont himself had a great number of accidents while testing his balloons and planes, some of them very serious; he was lucky never to have been badly hurt. The "best" accidents to make fatal are probably those he suffered trying to win the Deutsch Prize: in the first, on July 13, 1901, the wind threw him against trees in the Rothschild park when he was circling the Eiffel Tower, and in the second, on August 8 of the same year, his balloon started losing gas and fell, exploding against the wall of a building.

A GREATER CAREER?

An interesting alternative is to make Dumont *more* significant. If the Wrights were removed, his importance in engineering history would be increased. Given an engineer-hero with enduring worldwide fame, Brazilian culture and prestige would receive a small but distinct boost, perhaps with subtle but far-reaching consequences – while the United States' claims to lead the world in high technology would be slightly diminished.

Alternatively, Dumont – perhaps without the later illness – might be convinced to promote his pacifism slightly more actively, and gain some appropriate new allies in the cause. Wealthy, intelligent, and famous, he could make an effective figurehead for any peace movement, with who-knows-what effects on history.

Mata Hari

Total Points: 49½

Born 1876; died 1917.

Age 35; A beautiful, dark-haired woman, about 5'8" and 130 lbs., wearing either bangles (when performing) or a fashionable dress.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 10 [-] **Speed:** 5.25

IQ: 11 [10] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

Dodge: 5

Advantages

Beautiful [15], Comfortable Wealth [10], Reputation +1 ("Mysterious Indian priestess," in Parisian society, 10-) [1].

Disadvantages

Secret (Dutch, not really exotic) [-5], Secret (Spy for Germany) [-20], Social Stigma (Demimondaine) [-10].

Quirks

Loves the excitement of being a spy; Prefers soldiers as lovers; "Unabashed" and more liberated than her time. [-3]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Paris)-11 [1], Carousing-13 [8], Courtesan-12 [4], Dancing-12 [8], Detect Lies-9 [1], Erotic Art-10 [4], Fast-Talk-11 [2], Holdout-10 [1], Interrogation-13 [6], Javanese Dance (Hobby)-10 [½], Performance-12 [4], Savoir-Faire-11 [1], Sex Appeal-13 [6].

Languages

Dutch (native)-11 [0], English-9 [½], French-11 [2], German-11 [2], Malay-9 [½].

Equipment

Mata Hari always performs in scanty outfits covered with bangles, and little else. Otherwise, she wears fashionable dresses (with fashion changing about as often as it does in the 1990s). She owns several pieces of jewelry, some with hidden compartments for carrying small documents.

This represents Mata Hari in 1911, near the high point of her world tour. She is moderately shrewd and manipulative rather than really smart, but she has survived well enough on her wits and looks for several years. While some accounts have suggested that she was framed and was never even a spy, it seems more likely that she possessed and used some



very basic espionage skills. (In that case, she *used* some codes, but would not have had formal training in cryptography.) She was not an interrogator in the usual sense; the skill is used here to reflect her ability to get information through “pillow talk,” involving some judgement as to what another person knows and might be willing to say. Her casual knowledge of Javanese dance is treated as a Mental/Easy skill for convenience; think of it as a Hobby.

Her lesser secret is not at all well hidden, but it would be annoying for her if too many people knew that she wasn't as exotic as she claimed. A case might be made for adding Lecherousness to her disadvantages, but although she was promiscuous, she seems to have used sex rather than being ruled by her impulses. Her secret employers might be classed as Patrons, but given that she was probably sold out by both sides, this does not seem quite appropriate.

BIOGRAPHY

In 1905, a sensation swept Paris. Mata Hari (“Eye of the Dawn” in Malay), the daughter of a Brahmin and initiate into the rites and rituals of Kandaswami dance, had taken to the stage. Paris loved her. She was invited everywhere, and men fought to pay her way. She packed halls from America to Russia, telling her tales and performing ritual dances.

Or so it was said. Actually, “Mata Hari” was born Margaretha Geertruida Zelle in Leewarden, Holland on August 7, 1876. She knew virtually nothing about ritual dance, but she was clever, strikingly attractive, and very willing to prance on stage in next to nothing. As a teenager, Margaretha answered an advertisement to join a colonial officer in the Dutch East Indies. She ended up marrying Captain Rudolph Macleod and settled in East Java. They had two children, but after one was poisoned, the couple returned to Holland, fearing for the safety of their remaining child. Macleod soon turned to alcoholism and flagrant womanizing; Margaretha was granted a divorce and set off for Paris.

With no money and no real skills, she had a hard time at first, and tried several other jobs, including artists' model. Being unsuccessful in her earlier endeavors, she made use of what she could recall of native dancers in Java, adding her memento collection of bangles and bracelets to create her mythical oriental priestess.

She was always taken with men in uniform, and she danced her way into the hearts (and wallets) of many soldiers and statesmen during her tours. Somewhere in this time period, she began to spy for Germany, passing “pillow talk” along to her controllers. As World War I dawned, she was placed under surveillance. No *hard* evidence of spying was ever found, but she was exiled to Holland in 1916. There, a trap was set, as the French offered to have her carry information for them as well. In 1917, when she seemed to refer to herself as agent H-21 in a message to a German courier in a code the French knew, she was arrested, tried, and executed for espionage. Since the Germans already knew that code was compromised, it is highly likely they sold her out after discovering her double-agent status.

Meetings

The pattern of an encounter with Mata Hari will depend heavily on what the PCs are after and how they appear. She will probably latch onto any soldier or soldierly looking man, especially if he is of high rank. If the party has real oriental origins, she may ply them for information to make her exotic dance more believable – and keep only what she wants to know. She is foremost an adventuress, a thrill-seeker, burning her candle at both ends while acting as a double agent. She could probably be persuaded to join some kind of adventuring group.

– David Walker

Further Reading:

Erika Ostrovsky: *Eye of Dawn: The Rise & Fall of Mata Hari*.
Mata Hari, The Seductive Spy (video), A&E Biography Series.

WHAT IF?

A WORLD WITHOUT MATA HARI?

Mata Hari's effect on history was probably minimal. At most, a few thousand out of the millions who died in WWI may be credited to her for passing along troop dispositions and the like, but even that much is dubious. (Still, if it's true, a time traveler might know of one *particular* victim who was significant to an alternate timeline.) If she carried any major secrets in her head, she took them to the grave. Nevertheless, Mata Hari has become almost a mythical figure; all through the pulp era and on into the Cold War, she remained the archetype of the spy willing to use her body to buy information. Had she been less successful, she would have been easily caught. Had she been more successful, no one would have learned of her spying until after the war was over, if then. Had she been less *famous*, the world would have needed a different word for a particular cliché. Time-traveling tourists and pop culture fans with appropriate tastes would surely be interested in meeting her. But, of course, they'd have to join the queue.



MATA HARI, TIME TRAVELER?

Given her unusual, almost modern attitude toward sexual behavior, Mata Hari has a little of the air of a woman out of her time; it might be amusing to have “Margaretha Zelle” actually be as much of a fake as “Mata Hari.” Perhaps she was really spying on the whole of the turn-of-the-century era for some far-future organization, and the secrets she knew, while pretty mundane for the time, were long forgotten in her own; rival travelers might have sabotaged her mission. A less sinister version would be a time-traveling grad student studying pre-war Europe, out of her depth and carried away by her own cover story.

For a more mystical campaign. Mata could *really* know the secrets of eastern adepts, allowing her to have such exotica as cinematic martial arts, psionics, or even magic, that she uses to induce her lovers to tell her their secrets. In that case, the relative ease of her downfall implies that an equally exotic, and stronger, opponent was working against her . . .

Born 1879; died 1955.

Age 55; 5'7½", 160 lbs. A disheveled man, with wide dark-brown eyes, thick mustache, and an unruly shock of hair (wavy black in his youth, now almost white).

ST: 10 [0] **DX:** 10 [0] **Speed:** 4.75

IQ: 15 [60] **HT:** 9 [-10] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Charisma +1 [5], Reputation +2 (Celebrated scientist) [10], Single-Minded [5], Status 1* [0], Wealthy [20].

*Includes +1 from Wealth.

Disadvantages

Addiction (Tobacco) [-5], Age [-15], Charitable [-15], Intolerance (Germans) [-5], Obsession (Unified field theory) [-5], Pacifism (Self-defense only) [-15], Stubbornness [-5].

Quirks

Can't tolerate the paradoxes of quantum mechanics; Dislikes publicity; Leads an ascetic lifestyle; Likes to flirt with women; Teetotaler (likes coffee and sweets). [-5]

Skills

Astronomy-13 [1], Bard-14† [½], Boating-12 [8], Chemistry-12 [½], Hobby (Politics)-14 [½], Literature-12 [½], Mathematics-18 [10], Musical Instrument (Violin)-13 [1], Musical Instrument (Piano)-12 [½], Nuclear Physics-15 [8], Philosophy-12 [½], Physics-22 [18], Poetry-13 [½], Teaching-13 [½], Writing-13 [½].

(All skills TL6 where applicable.)

† Includes +1 for Charisma.

Languages

German (native)-16 [1], English-14 [1], French-13 [½], Italian-13 [½], Latin-13 [½].

Equipment

When asked about his laboratory, Einstein would tap his head; when questioned about his tools, he would point to his fountain pen. His pipe and violin are always close at hand.

This is Einstein at the height of his fame in 1934, soon after settling in the United States. Area Knowledge skills for the many places he's lived default from IQ. His legendary absentmindedness is really the Single-Minded advantage. Whatever physics problem he is working on is his current Obsession; his "passionate sense of social justice and social responsibility" will spark the necessary Will roll to turn his attention from physics to the various humanitarian causes that occupy much of his life.



BIOGRAPHY

When Albert Einstein was a young boy his father showed him a pocket compass. The unseen force behind the northward swing of the needle fascinated him. It made him realize that there was "something behind things, something deeply hidden." And so was sparked a curiosity that would come to change the way we see the universe.

Einstein was born March 14, 1879, in Ulm, Germany. His parents, middle-class German-Jews, moved to Munich the following year, where Albert grew up with his younger sister, Maja. The boy who would one day unite time and space owed much to his Uncle Jacob, who introduced him to mathematics, and to a lunch guest who gave him books on science and geometry. By contrast, he felt he owed nothing to the militant German schools of his youth – except perhaps his decision to embrace pacifism.

In 1894 the Einsteins moved to northern Italy. Albert stayed behind to finish high school, but was dismissed after obtaining a doctor's certificate saying he was about to have a nervous breakdown. He later attempted to bypass high school altogether by taking the entrance exam at the Swiss Polytechnic in Zurich. He failed, but scored high in mathematics.

He resumed high school in the Swiss town of Aarau, graduated at 17, and enrolled at the Swiss Polytechnic. There, he met and fell in love with the only woman in his class, Mileva Maric. He graduated in 1900 with an undistinguished record.

Hard times followed. Albert and Mileva had a daughter out of wedlock, whom they gave up for adoption, and Albert struggled to find steady work. Relief came in 1902 when he secured a job as a clerk at the Swiss Patent Office in Bern. He was finally able to marry Mileva in 1903. The marriage would produce two sons.

Financial stability and isolation from the greater scientific community didn't quell Einstein's ambition. He continued to contemplate physics problems in his spare time, and in 1905 published papers on Brownian motion, the photoelectric effect (for which he would net the 1921 Nobel Prize), and special relativity. The year 1905 would come to be known to physicists as the "miracle year."

Success and recognition eventually sent Einstein crisscrossing Europe as he climbed the academic ladder. He became associate professor at the University of Zurich in 1909, and in 1911 he and his family moved to Prague, where Albert was given a full professorship. A year later he was lured back to Zurich, and in 1914 he returned to Germany to become director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute and professor of theoretical physics at the University of Berlin. By this time his marriage had turned dismal. Mileva returned with the boys to Zurich and would grant Einstein a divorce (in exchange for any future Nobel Prize money) five years later.

In 1915, Einstein completed his general theory of relativity (astronomer Arthur Eddington verified its predictions four years later). He fell seriously ill in 1917 and was nursed back to health by his distant cousin, Elsa, whom he married soon after his divorce was final. "The Lord has put into him so much that's beautiful, and I find him wonderful," Elsa wrote, "even though life at his side is enervating and difficult."

Einstein, by now famous, traveled the world during the 1920s, both as a physicist and a spokesman for liberal causes. At home in Germany, he became the target of anti-Semitism. A well-funded group of scientists assembled to disprove his theories (Einstein referred to them as "the Anti-Relativity Theory Company Ltd."), and a radical group put a price on his head. But it wasn't until Hitler came to power in 1933 that he finally turned his back on Germany.

Einstein was welcomed in the United States, where he accepted a post at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He found the Institute's atmosphere conducive to his research, and settled in comfortably.

In 1939, Einstein's old friend Leo Szilard approached him and related his fear that the Nazis might use uranium fission to develop a devastating weapon. They drafted a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, warning him not to let the United States lag behind the Germans in this matter. Roosevelt listened, and the seeds of the Manhattan Project were planted. Ironically, Einstein's further involvement was curtailed by those who thought the unpatriotic scientist a security risk.

Einstein spent his remaining years in pursuit of the elusive unified field theory (a quarry he would never catch), and campaigning for world peace. He died in his sleep on April 18, 1955.

Encountered

Those meeting Einstein, perhaps at one of his appearances supporting the Zionist movement, or at a rare lecture, will soon be engaged by his charm, wit, and brilliant mind. He will entertain if appreciated (especially for the ladies), and can't ignore a plea for help (from any hard-luck case). He takes long walks, often to discuss physics with a friend, and likes boating on the lake.

At home, Einstein just wants to be left alone to pursue his favorite pastime: Thinking. He is not a family man and views personal relationships as unwanted distractions. His wife is largely relegated to the role of nursemaid, handling the minutiae of everyday life.

— Jack Elmy

Further Reading:

Brian, Denis: *Einstein: A Life*.

Bucky, P.A.: *Conversations with Einstein: Private Glimpses of a Public Life*.

Clark, Ronald W.: *Einstein: The Life and Times*.

Einstein, Albert: *Out of My Later Years* (revised 1993 edition).

WHAT IF?

THE FATHER OF THE BOMB

Einstein is considered the "Father of the Bomb" by many. This is debatable, but time travelers wishing to preempt the Atomic Age may see him as a target.

Pedestrian PCs might try to assassinate the young physicist. Without his definition of the equivalence of mass and energy ($E=mc^2$), the theories that were needed to develop the atomic bomb might never have been formulated. Beware, though; with his special theory of relativity, Einstein threw a rock into the pond of history – the ripples it produced are beyond calculation. Time travelers intent on killing Einstein should ask themselves if time travel would even be possible without his theories.

The second option is more calculable and less bloody: Talk Einstein out of signing that letter to Roosevelt. PCs will have to appeal to the pacifist in him, and convince him Germany won't develop the atomic bomb. Einstein would only be the first stop in this campaign.

If some time-traveling factions are trying to kill Einstein, others will be trying to protect him. In this scenario the PCs have to keep the professor from harm without tipping him off to what's going on.

OTHER SCENARIOS

THE POCKET COMPASS

The legendary pocket compass that Einstein remembers igniting his imagination would make a nifty souvenir. But no one knows what happened to it! The only way to get it is to travel back in time to Albert's childhood home in Munich. And the only way to be sure it's the right compass is to grab it soon after his father shows it to him. Another risky venture – any mishap could result in Einstein never formulating the theories that lead to time travel!

THE PAWN

Was Max Talmey, the lunch guest who introduced Einstein to science, really an agent from the future? Did he, and others, direct the budding physicist's thoughts until the patent office clerk turned the world on its ear in 1905? And if so, why? It's the player characters' job to find out.

THE PICTURE

In the classrooms of the future the unified field theory is just another chapter in *Physics 101*. To pass a fraternity's initiation test, a student has to travel back in time and have his picture taken with Einstein. But what happens if the student becomes a victim of the legendary physicist's charm? The PCs have to break things up before Einstein learns too much.

"Two-Gun" Cohen

Total Points: 126

Born 1887; died 1970.

Age 37; 5'8", 187 lbs.; A stocky Jewish man, clean-shaven and showing signs of baldness; dark hair, hazel-green eyes. Well dressed in a light-colored two-piece suit, carrying a cane and wearing a sun helmet.

ST: 11 [10] **DX:** 12 [20] **Speed:** 5.75

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 11 [10] **Move:** 5

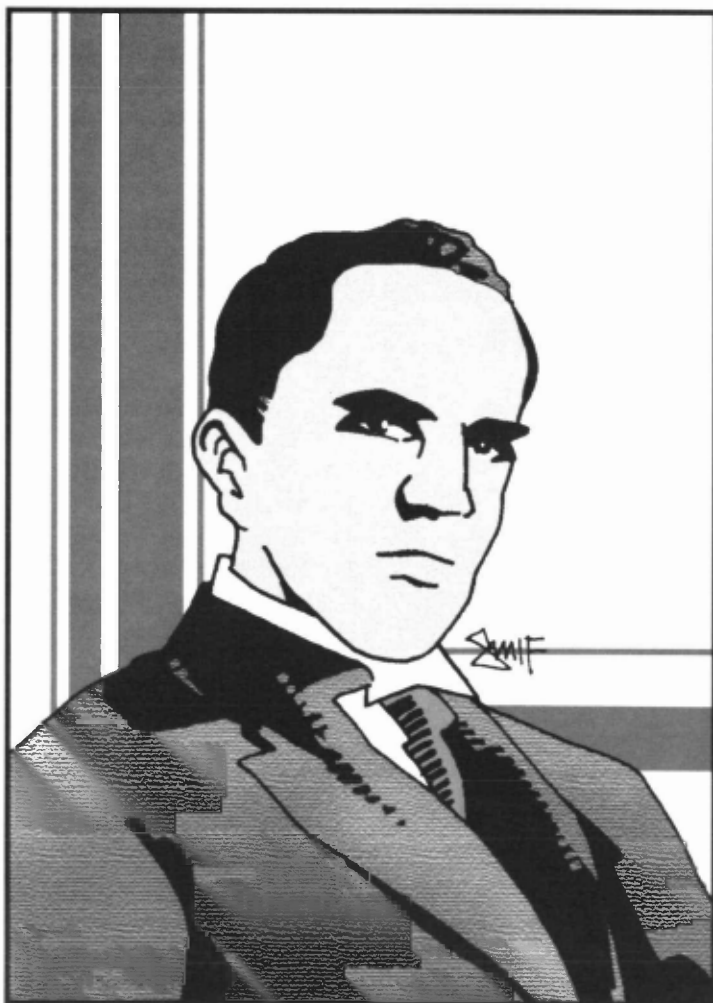
Dodge: 5 **Parry:** 9 **Block:** 4

Advantages

Ambidexterity [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers [5]; Reputation +2 (Among Chinese in the regions where he operates, "rare tolerant white man") [5].

Disadvantages

Compulsive Spending [-5]; Duty (To Sun Yat-sen, dangerous, 15-) [-15]; Gluttony [-5]; Reputation -3 (Among Westerners, braggart, ex-con; small group) [-5]; Sense of Duty (His employers) [-5].



Quirks

Always out to make a buck; Cockney accent; Lapsed Orthodox Jew. [-3]

Skills

Area Knowledge (Canton)-13 [1]; Boxing-11 [1]; Brawling-14 [4]; Fast Draw (Pistol)-15 [8]; Fast-Talk-17 [10]; Gambling-17 [10]; Guns/TL6 (Pistol)-16 [4]; Holdout-14 [4]; Interrogation-12 [1]; Intimidation-13 [2]; Merchant-12* [2]; Pickpocket-13 [8]; Politics-13 [2]; Sleight of Hand-13 [8]; Sport (Cricket)-10 [½]; Streetwise-15 [6]; Theology-10 [½].

*Note -1 from Compulsive Spending.

Languages

Yiddish (native)-13 [0], Chinese (Cantonese)-11 [½]; English-12 [1]; Hebrew-11 [½].

Equipment

Cohen carries two Smith & Wesson Schofield .45s (use statistics for six-shot Colt Peacemaker .45s).

This represents Cohen in his glory days as a *fuguan* to Sun Yat-sen. Some accounts portray him as a puppet-master, directing movements of the Nationalist army and relations between China and the West, but that is largely based on Cohen's own dubious claims.

BIOGRAPHY

Born into a family of Orthodox Jews who fled to London to escape pogroms in Poland, Morris Cohen's youth was almost straight out of *GURPS Goblins*: He lived at 68 Umberston Street, four blocks east of where Jack the Ripper first struck, and grew up dabbling in petty larcenies, street fights, and pocket-picking.

This idyllic youth ended in 1900 when Cohen was arrested and sent to the County Council School at Mayford, a youth work/rehabilitation house. A year later, he was moved to the Hayes Industrial School, a similar facility built to rehabilitate wayward Jewish youths. There, he developed a love of Shakespeare, worked in the orchard, studied Hebrew, and played sports.

Westward Ho!

Released from Hayes in 1905, Cohen was sent to live with a family friend in Wapella, Saskatchewan. After a year on the farm, he began traveling across Western Canada, working as a cowhand, carnival barker, and professional gambler. He fell into a life of petty crime, running a variety of scams and earning at least two jail sentences.

Much of the gambling on the prairies at the time occurred in Chinese-owned social halls and restaurants. Unlike many Westerners, Cohen enjoyed the company of the Chinese shopkeepers. He thrived on the food, atmosphere,

“... in spite of my nickname and my reputation, I’ve not seen that much rough stuff in my life. The fact is, fights come to the chap who looks for them and I’ve never looked for them. I talk quietly and move slowly and keep my temper. If a guy goes on like that, it’s funny how much trouble he manages to duck.”

— Morris “Two-Gun” Cohen

and stories of the land across the ocean. After stopping a white man from robbing a Chinese restaurant, he was embraced by the Chinese community and drawn into its life and politics, eventually becoming a member of the Guomindang, the Chinese Nationalist League.

Recalling the military drills of his youth at Hayes, Cohen helped train Nationalists who planned to return home and overthrow the Manchus. In World War I, he gained some real military experience in Belgium as a sapper, working on light railways used for supply transport at the front. After the war, he worked to improve the position of Chinese Canadians in the face of growing intolerance.

Fuguan to Sun

In late 1922, Cohen boarded a ship for Asia, bringing with him a contract from Northern Construction to build railroads across China, part of Sun Yat-sen’s dream of uniting the nation. After brokering the deal, Cohen met Sun and asked for a job as a bodyguard. Sun agreed, granting Cohen the title of *fuguan* (adjunct). Cohen adopted the pidgin name “Kow-hen,” later changed to the more proper “Ma-Kun.”

For the next three years, Cohen lived a luxurious, albeit at times dangerous, life. One of four bodyguards watching over Sun and Soong Qingling (Madame Sun), he was a constant question mark to other Westerners. Many British diplomats regarded him as a pushy braggart, constantly taking excessive credit for influence. At least some of this disdain was attributable to Cohen’s Cockney accent and Jewish birth, but his constant self-promotion and angling for deals didn’t help.

He also acquired his nickname, “Two-Gun Cohen.” After being nicked in the left arm by a stray machine-gun bullet, he began worrying that if his right arm had been hit, he might have been unable to draw his gun. Therefore, he began wearing a .45 on each side of his body, one on his hip and one in a shoulder holster, and trained himself to draw with either hand.

After Sun’s death in 1925, Cohen worked as a liaison for the Canton police, a courier, a guard/guide, and an arms dealer. He tended to work for whichever general was in control of Canton, up until World War II, when he was interned by the Japanese. After the war, Cohen earned the grudging respect of Western diplomats when he helped coordinate British contacts with the Chinese government. He also spent a good deal of time in the 1940s and ’50s promoting the state of Israel. When Mao came to power, Cohen embraced Mao for unifying China, but he did not fully embrace Communism.

Encountered

Cohen should always be a bit of an enigma. Of course, he will always be happy to explain that, as one of Sun’s most trusted generals, he is personally responsible for much of the military, financial, and political activity in Canton. Those who have heard of him are likely to be surprised to find that this loud-mouthed rogue does actually have the ear of Sun Yat-sen.

The truth probably lies somewhere between the extremes, which keeps people guessing. In many ways, Cohen is a cynical gambler and con man, but his belief in Sun and the goal of uniting China is sincere. Cohen overstates his own importance, but he is an excellent information source, and any Westerner looking to work with the Nationalists is better off not having him as an enemy.

— T. Carter Ross

Further Reading:

Levey, Daniel S: *Two-Gun Cohen: A Biography*.

WHAT IF?

Overall, Cohen was a fairly ordinary person living in extraordinary times. Contrary to his own claims, he is unlikely to have played a history-changing role in the formation of modern China. At most, without his connections, there might have been a few missed contracts for British and Canadian firms, or a particular warlord might have acquired fewer guns.

That said, Cohen is an ideal character to have appear in a campaign. While obviously out of place in Nationalist China, he managed to have the ear of Sun Yat-sen. As a major conspirator, he would be manipulating history indirectly. Even as a minor figure, he could be a great aid or hindrance to PCs in 1920s Canton. If someone needs guns, Cohen is likely to be able to oblige, for a price. (As an arms dealer, he preferred the nickname “Five-Percent Cohen.”) And almost anyone who tries to approach Sun after December 1922 will have to encounter him.

WORLD WAR II

When the Japanese invaded China in 1937, Cohen went to work with the Chinese army to help turn back the invasion. When Hong Kong fell in 1941, he was interned. But he earned the respect of many Westerners who had previously treated him with disdain; he suffered brutal beatings at the hands of the Japanese occupiers once they discovered who he was and his connections to the Nationalists, despite which he worked hard to maintain a degree of civility in the camp, ensuring that the women and children were treated fairly. This reputation helped mollify attitudes toward him after the war, which helped him in fostering Anglo-Chinese contacts before Mao came to power.

ILLUMINATED MACHINATIONS

It would be easy to place Cohen at or near the head of a Canton-based *Illuminati* conspiracy. He was a master of self-promotion, constantly pointing out his own importance to the press; perhaps his stories were merely a cover designed to keep others from guessing his true plans. Cohen had access to people, money, positions, information and influence; he could have been an illuminated master or the well-placed pawn of a Chinese tong.

If Cohen actually *did* shape the course of Chinese history, modern-day China could be continuing on a path determined by him in the ’20s. Cohen regularly surprised Western diplomats with his close connections to Sun, Chiang Kai-shek, and Mao Tsu-tung; were these leaders listening to Cohen because they valued his opinion, or were they beholden to him in some way?

Howard Phillips Lovecraft

Total Points: 65½

Born 1890; died 1937.

Age 33 (but looks about 40). A tall, painfully slender man, about 6' and 110 lbs., with a long face and quiet demeanor, always neatly dressed, with a walking cane in his finely manicured hands. An American with "English" mannerisms.

ST: 9 [-10] **DX:** 11 [10] **Speed:** 4.5

IQ: 13 [30] **HT:** 7 [-20] **Move:** 4

Dodge: 4

Advantages

Reputation +2 (Among writers/readers of weird fiction) [3], Status 1 [5].

Disadvantages

Code of Honour (Gentleman's) [-10], Intolerance (Racist and sometime anti-Semite) [-5], Skinny [-5], Struggling [-10].

Quirks

Likes cats; Loves sweets, ice cream, and Italian food, hates fish; Prolific letter-writer; Snobbish to strangers; Writes with archaic spellings. [-5]

Skills

Anthropology-10 [½], Archaeology-11 [1], Area Knowledge (New England)-16 [6], Area Knowledge (Providence)-14 [2], Artist-10 [½], Astronomy-12 [2], Bicycling-10 [½], Botany-10 [½], Calligraphy-12 [4], Chemistry-10 [½], Geology-10 [½], History-16 [10], Linguistics-12 [4], Literature-16 [10], Mathematics-11 [1], Naturalist-12 [2], Occultism-18 [12], Poetry-14 [0], Psychology-10 [½], Research-14 [4], Teaching-12 [1], Theology-13 [4], Writing-18 [8].

(Note: Lovecraft's skills are generally at TL6, but with some oddities and archaisms.)

Languages

English (native)-19 [5], Classical Greek-12 [½], French-13 [1], Latin-13 [1], Sanskrit-12 [½].

Equipment

Lovecraft was impoverished his entire life, living extremely frugally (to his own detriment). His cupboard would contain little more than cans of beans and dry crackers. Writing implements, stamps and books were his major purchases.

Lovecraft's expressions of Intolerance were sweeping and rancid early in his life, but in truth, he never really acted on them, and news of events in Nazi Germany apparently left

him feeling some guilt over his own ideas; for that matter, his wife as well as some of his friends were Jewish. He was perhaps a confused, prudish, but basically gentle product of a warped upbringing; this disadvantage might never rate as more than a quirk, or might decline through his life. Shyness might also be appropriate.

A version of Lovecraft who genuinely knew something about real, dangerous occult phenomena could have higher IQ, Intuition, and some appropriate variety of Hidden Lore.

"The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents."

— H.P. Lovecraft, *Call of Cthulhu*

BIOGRAPHY

Born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, of British stock, Howard Phillips Lovecraft was a clever, bookish child whose parents were both destined to decline into insanity before death. Lovecraft was to live much of his life in his quiet home town, only briefly living in New York in the mid-1920s during his short marriage.

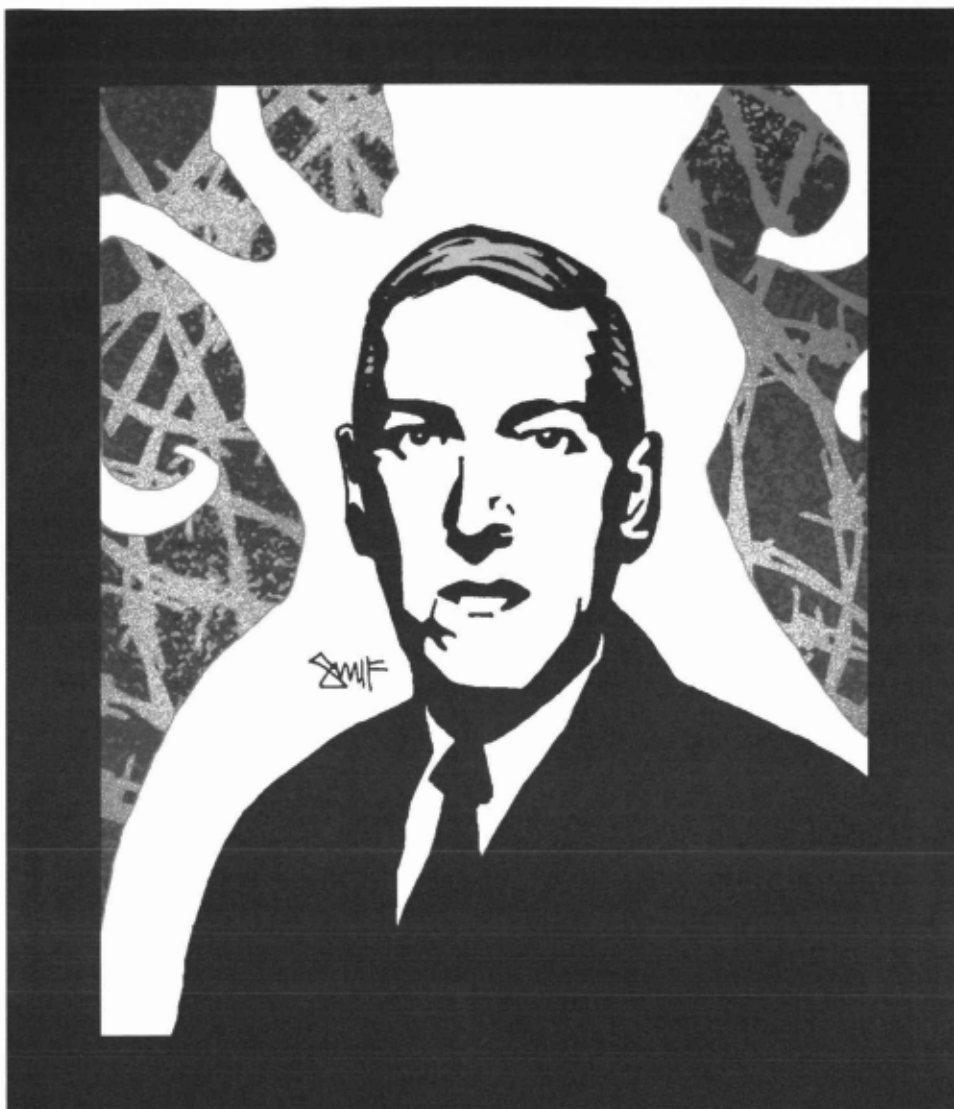
Sickly and old before his time, Lovecraft spent most of his life writing weird fiction and poetry, and working as a commercial ghostwriter to supplement his meager inheritance. He was a retiring individual, who preferred the comfort of familiar surroundings to travel or unusual experiences. Lovecraft avoided cold weather for fear of its effects on his health, passing up the editorship of *Weird Tales* because of its location in Chicago. (One theory is that this aversion was due to a genetic condition.)

During his life, Lovecraft was a prolific writer and correspondent, with a wide circle of literary friends with whom he shared rich, if distant, relationships. He was also highly active in amateur press associations. He worked sporadically, motivated by his own disturbing dreams and his need for the modest income that his work produced. Much of it attracted only limited attention during his life, mainly because of his unwillingness to push it on publishers. His most famous stories, those that would make up the "Cthulhu Mythos," were extended and developed during his life and after his death by his circle of friends and professional admirers.

Lovecraft died young from stomach cancer caused by his lifestyle and poor diet.

Lovecraft's Place in History

Through his stories, ghostwriting, and wide range of correspondents and associated writers of weird fiction, Lovecraft broadened his Cthulhu Mythos stories from a personal narrative to a background shared and enriched by some of the best writers of weird fiction of this century, both during his life and after his death. His work bolstered the pulp fantasy genre, and provided insight and ideas for generations



of writers, musicians, artists and film-makers. His impact during his lifetime was slight, but he encouraged a number of other writers and artists.

Encountered

Lovecraft is somewhat reclusive, and will normally be at home, or walking (briefly) around the streets of his home town. He *occasionally* attended literary events during his youth, but never mingles much with strangers. Lovecraft is most likely to be encountered via an introduction by one of his friends, or through correspondence, his preferred social medium. He rarely travels to visit acquaintances, as much from poverty as from shyness, but he occasionally entertains friends.

His prejudices and mannerisms – further products of his era and upbringing – will not make him any easier to deal with, although he will probably be nervously formal rather than abusive to those he dislikes. Those who do get close to him actually find him charming.

– Peter Chen

Further Reading:

Bloch, Robert: "The Shambler from the Stars" in *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, Volume 2.

Carter, Lin: *Lovecraft: a look behind the Cthulhu Mythos*.

de Camp, L. Sprague: *Lovecraft: A Biography*.

Joshi, S.T.: *H.P. Lovecraft: A Life*.

Call of Cthulhu (roleplaying game, from Chaosium Inc).

NONFICTION?

If Lovecraft was not a writer of fiction, but a prophet who veiled his words in poetry, he would have been the most knowledgeable figure in the United States on the Cthulhu Mythos. His circle of correspondents, scattered across the United States and the globe, could have provided him with information and ancient texts.

What prevented Lovecraft from going to Chicago? Surely not simply the cold weather that could have been ameliorated by the income from the *Weird Tales* editorship. Chicago, the industrial center of the United States, was also a center of communications and transport. Here could be found the best and worst of humanity: progress and science, crime and degradation. Was it true fear that kept Lovecraft away? But what, then, if he had felt other pressures? A *gentleman* can never turn down a plea for assistance!

At the time of his sudden death, when cancer was used to account for his terrible post-mortem appearance, his interests had returned to astronomy: looking, perhaps, for the time when the stars were right. Lovecraft himself was not the only member of his circle to die suddenly, with Robert E. Howard's death by suicide reported in 1936. Both writers' output had been low before their deaths; what had been occupying the attentions of the bookish Lovecraft and the sturdy Texan "Two-Gun Bob"?

In an alternate history of more mundane, *human* horror, Lovecraft's reflexive prejudices and literary skills could make him an interesting pawn for extremist factions seeking to twist the fate of nations. How long might it take him to recognize that he had come to serve evil?

LOVECRAFT AND TIME

Lovecraft is reportedly buried in his family plot, but his grave was not originally marked. As a writer of weird fiction, he had a public profile. As a corpse, he did not. When combating those forces that lurk beneath sanity, that profile could well be a liability.

If he survived, he could have traveled far and wide in search of traces of the occult. The lone figure walking the sea-shore, the aged gentleman in the library with the quiet English manners, the driven leader of an archaeological dig; Lovecraft could have been found on any continent even 40 years after his "death."

Also, time travelers seeking this interesting figure could entangle him in their own concerns. His own vision of time travel involved powerful inhuman entities ranging across millions of years. Perhaps he was right, and human time-wars are nothing but the squabbles of vermin.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FIGURES

This book concentrates on well-documented figures who are interesting for PCs to meet. That, however, is not the same as “historical significance.” Some important figures are known only from passing references or legends; others simply didn’t get out of the house much, while others again resemble characters we *did* include too closely. A few examples:

Mitochondrial Eve

Mitochondria are a component of cells which have their own DNA, found in all organisms apart from bacteria and blue-green algae. They are always passed from a *mother* to her offspring, and so their DNA can be used to trace female lines of descent.

Analysis of mitochondrial DNA suggests that all humans can trace their ancestry to a woman who lived in Africa between 140,000 and 290,000 years ago. There would very likely have been other women alive at the same time whose *sons* are ancestors to modern humans, but we would all be descended from this so-called “Mitochondrial Eve.”

If “Eve” existed (and the theory remains controversial among scientists), she would not have been an exceptional individual in her time – just another early female *Homo sapiens*. However, she is among the earliest of our species to be discussed as an individual today.

Gilgamesh

The Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, one of the oldest literary works in the world, uses the name of a real monarch who ruled Uruk during the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. The Gilgamesh of myth is a demigod who spends much of his life seeking immortality; he befriends the wild man Enkidu, fends off the propositions of Ishtar, the goddess of love, fights numerous monsters, and travels the world. Presumably, the original king was a respected fellow to have such tales attached to his name, but what exactly the real Gilgamesh achieved remains a mystery.

Sun Tzu

In the “Warring States” period, China consisted of a half-dozen kingdoms which fought among themselves. During the 4th century B.C., one officer in these conflicts went by the name of Sun Tzu. There are various stories about his life, but these are probably all later legends. (For that matter, some of them suggest that he served the state of Wu during the earlier “Spring and Autumn” period.)

Sun Tzu’s greatest achievement was writing the *Art of War*, which is considered to this day to be one of the greatest military textbooks. Its emphases on flexibility, the link between strategy and politics, accurate intelligence, and knowing the enemy, have earned Sun Tzu comparisons with Machiavelli and Clausewitz. He certainly influenced Chairman Mao, and through him 20th-century ideas about guerrilla warfare.

Ashoka

Devanampiya Piyadassi raja Ashoka was Emperor of India between about 269 and 232 B.C. The empire he inherited extended over most of the subcontinent, but did not include the extreme south or the eastern kingdom of Kalinga. Ashoka conquered Kalinga, but was so horrified by the suffering this caused (100,000 dead, 150,000 enslaved), he thenceforth renounced violence. He became a Buddhist, and endeavored to rule through Buddhist rules and virtue, rewriting the law to be forgiving and sympathetic, and promoting piety. He had edicts carved on pillars and rocks across his empire, outlining his philosophy and system of rule.

Ashoka is legendary for ruling with tolerance and justice through the power of example. His empire was prosperous and largely peaceful. He inherited a strong, efficiently bureaucratic, almost socialist state, which he employed for the benefit of his people, instituting a number of welfare projects such as farming medicinal plants.

Ashoka is a cultural hero to Buddhists, and as a sponsor of missionary work, he was responsible for Buddhism becoming a world religion. Today, one of the few apparently saintly emperors of history is remembered mostly by this legend and from his inscriptions. His empire disintegrated after his death; apparently, it was just too large.

Jane Austen

One of the most influential novelists in the English language was born in Hampshire, England, in 1775, the daughter of a clergyman. She grew up in the upper middle classes, with visits to London and time spent in the fashionable spa-town of Bath. She wrote, initially, for her own amusement, but her novels began to be published when she was in her 30s; they were moderately successful (with the Prince Regent among others), being admired for their social comedy, which contrasted with the gothic melodrama which had previously been commonplace and which Austen occasionally satirized.

Austen never married, and defended her privacy with the aid of her family; there are hints of suitors rejected and one who suffered a sudden fatal illness. Although she lived through the Napoleonic era, and two of her brothers were Royal Navy officers, there is barely a mention of the current wars in her writing, which focuses on the domestic world. Despite her popularity, it was only after her death in 1817 that she was recognized as the creator of a new, realistic style of novel.

Time travelers might be sent to observe Austen, or adventurers operating in Regency England might encounter her. The problem for those who wish to remain unremarked is that hers is a fairly tight-knit, rather formal world; high levels in Savoir-Faire would be required. Even then, Austen herself could prove a problem; her novels suggest a talent for personal observation and an interest in subtleties of behavior.

Queen Victoria

The monarch of the greatest empire the world has ever known was born in 1819, daughter of the fourth son of King George III. Thanks to the prevalent infant mortality rates, there was no very clear heir to the throne, and Victoria was the result of one of several attempts to produce one. Her mother tried to dominate her, telling her that most of her relatives were dangerous “wicked uncles”; Victoria was brought up very simply, but shook off her mother’s influence when she succeeded to the throne in 1837.

At first, Victoria perhaps meddled too much in politics, but after her marriage in 1840 to the conscientious Prince Albert, matters settled down. Victoria and Albert were genuinely in love, and when he died in 1861, she was devastated

and withdrew from public life; she had already developed a blind eye toward the dark side of industrialized Britain. However, in the long term, she oversaw the development of a ceremonial, constitutional role for the monarchy, while retaining a great deal of public affection. Also, the fact that most of the royal families of Europe were more or less closely related to her helped the diplomatic system which stabilized the continent for decades.

She served as a willing figurehead for Britain’s growth as a world power. She generally meant well, although she rarely forgot a grudge. Despite her intermittent withdrawal from public life, it’s appropriate that she gave her name to her era, as she embodied its stern self-certainty, high ideals, and assorted blind spots. She died in 1901.

APPENDIX B

GAMES MECHANICS & THE GREAT

How does one turn a description from a history book into a character sheet? The approach taken for this book may serve as a guide.

To begin with: “Greatness” tends to come from a mixture of genius, birth, and raw luck. Thus, historical figures may not have the highest imaginable attributes and skills. Great military leaders tend to score high on Strategy and Tactics, but sometimes had smart sidekicks or *stupid* opponents. (And sometimes they seemed to have ridiculous luck.) Other figures may just rate well in one specific skill. On the other hand, PCs who encounter “the great” should have some chance to spot what it was that earned a place in history; don’t be afraid to play up a celebrity’s special talents (or extreme disadvantages).

Bias and Exaggeration

History books aren’t always trustworthy; even respectable sources should be read with caution. Contemporaries often flatter or abuse the famous, while dreamers, patriots, ideologists, and cranks can produce amazingly slanted stuff. One era’s conquering hero is the next age’s brutal villain, and the saint revered by the faithful is often a bigot in eyes just a few miles away. Hindsight changes the lighting.

For game purposes, character abilities aren’t always as extreme as one might expect. Famous figures are frequently remembered for their raw talent, which sometimes means high *GURPS* attributes – but remember, even a score of 11-12 can set a person apart from immediate peers, 13-14 will make someone stand out in society, and 15+ is world-class. At a critical juncture, a slightly above-average individual may be remembered as a wonder. Both sycophantic contemporaries and admiring historians occasionally make claims like, “He was the strongest and wisest man of his time.” The person being described was most likely exceptional, but that neither makes him the strongest, wisest, etc., nor entitles him to a *GURPS* attribute of 18 or 20! Most of these “wonders” were likely 12s, 13s, and 14s in a world of 9s, 10s, and 11s.

ATTRIBUTES AND APTITUDES

High attributes *may* be justifiable, but if the individual’s defining trait was inborn talent in a narrow area, it may be better to use an appropriate “aptitude” advantage instead. Alertness, Strong Will, Charisma, Language Talent, Mathematical Ability, Musical Ability, Single-Minded, and Versatile can replace high IQ; Manual Dexterity can stand in for high DX; and Fit, Very Fit or Hard to Kill can be used instead of high HT.

As a rule of thumb, when such advantages are purchased in “levels,” one level is a minor but useful talent, two may dictate career choices, three is probably the highest most of us will ever personally encounter, and five is the awe-inspiring limit of mortal potential. For example, Charisma +1 is the popular kid of the school, +2 is a career politician who looks trustworthy on stage and who can “work a room,” and +5 is appropriate for someone who started a religion from scratch.

Most of the heights and weights given here, especially for the earlier characters, are simply logical estimates.

OTHER FEATURES

Advantages

Most *GURPS* advantages represent extremes. For example, Eidetic Memory isn’t merely *good* recall, but a high-cinematic talent. It’s amusing to magnify the most remarkable traits of historical personages, but not usually realistic. Contributors were told to use advantages only where clearly merited, and at low levels except where this clearly wouldn’t do. Characters in more cinematic games can always be “upgraded” as appropriate.

(Yes, Eidetic Memory does appear a few times in this book. There are a few historical figures who are reliably described as displaying startling recall and exceptional learning abilities. However, even these are debatable.)

Some advantages may be learned or trained rather than inborn. They are more common as a result, and so are less likely to brand a character as “freakish.” Examples include Alcohol Tolerance, Combat Reflexes, and Pious.

Most noteworthy figures merit social advantages, often in quantity. Few were obscure members of society (although a significant proportion of noteworthy artists and revolutionaries lacked rank, title or wealth). The appropriate *GURPS* historical supplements are the places to go for the precise meaning of various levels of Rank, Status, etc., in a given setting. Where characters in this book had a rank or title which varied over time, we usually detailed them at the time of their most memorable acts or the height of their career.

Someone who is widely regarded as a divinity, or the emperor of a group of nations, has Status 8. The ruler of a sovereign nation-state or a colonial empire (a nation-state with satellite territories) has Status 7. Princes, viceroys, and territorial rulers have Status 6. Communist, democratic, and republican states often claim to be “classless”; you may use Administrative Rank for their leaders. (Of course, “classless” societies don’t always live up to their ideals.)

The rule used throughout this book is that Administrative, Religious, and Military Rank give free Status at a rate of +1 per three levels. This is largely a matter of taste and setting; GMs can always make characters pay for Status in full (or set other “conversion rates”).

Likewise, whether Literacy is free or must be purchased can vary by culture. This book follows the appropriate *GURPS* worldbooks where they exist, but GMs may prefer to follow a basic rule of thumb that ancient societies were mostly illiterate, semi-literacy became the norm in the late Middle Ages or Renaissance, and literacy became commonplace around the 18th century.

Family members will sometimes count as Dependents; less often, they are Allies. True marital/career partnerships are interesting (“behind every great man . . .”); unprepared PCs may be taken unaware by a quiet spouse who turns out to be a shrewd adviser. But the majority of family members stay in the background of history, not appearing on character sheets at all.

Most historical figures could arguably be given a huge range of Contacts. This book ignores this issue rather than becoming bogged down in detailed discussion of who owed whom small favors, but feel free to add a few such lines to any character sheet.

Privileges such as Diplomatic Immunity, Legal Enforcement Powers, and even military authority, are often incidental consequences of a high level of Rank or Status. In this case, they don’t have to be taken separately; the president of the United States may have Diplomatic Immunity when he goes overseas, but that’s part of his Administrative Rank 7. Likewise, Military Rank gives command of troops, but only a loyal personal following rates as an Ally Group. The downside to all this is that the perks can often be taken away fairly easily, and enemies of the organization granting them become a threat to the character without rating as Enemies on the character sheet. Only those who possess perks without rank need purchase them separately; it’s better not to clog up game notes with overlapping details.

Religious Rank replaces Administrative Rank and Status for Roman Catholic clerics, ministers of theocratic governments, and so on. One example: the pope has Religious Rank 8. In the days when he ruled the Papal States, this gave him control of that territory, plus spiritual authority over millions of Catholics (although that could only be exercised by relatively slow and indirect means). Modern popes have spiritual authority and considerable influence with *hundreds* of millions of Catholics worldwide. This power is more subtle, but can be exerted through modern communications. They also have temporal power, equivalent to Status 6, in the Vatican, which needn’t be shown on a character sheet.

Those who have become famous usually have a Reputation, not always positive! Don’t confuse the reputation given to someone in death or in the history books with reputation in life. Likewise, don’t confuse reputation with the respect (or hatred) associated with high Status. A Reputation should always be for something specific (like being a sadist, a usurper or a particularly just ruler), and not just for being king or whatever.

Wealth: Instead of attempting to rate the absolute worth of a character in arbitrary currency units, compare their net worth to the average level in their setting. For example, while a Roman patrician and a modern industrialist have radically different styles of living, both might qualify for a couple of levels of Multimillionaire. Old-time rulers tended to regard the state’s assets as their own, giving them high personal wealth; a modern president may merely receive a respectable but not fabulous salary, while controlling huge resources as a function of Administrative Rank. It’s interesting to contrast the leaders who used state funds with those who *specifically* used their own; for example, Julius Caesar made a point of paying his troops out of his huge personal wealth, ensuring that their first loyalty was to him, rather than to Rome.

Some characters (especially rebels and populist leaders) might have very little cash, but the best weapons, tools and food their followers could find them; this usually balances out as the equivalent of around average wealth.

Disadvantages and Quirks

Disadvantages, too, tend to represent extremes, and while it’s tempting to amplify the flaws of historical figures, the majority wouldn’t have reached the heights they did had they been saddled with truly crippling problems. On the other hand, some figures became famous because they spent their lives exploiting natural talents to save themselves from the consequences of their flaws. Still, mental disadvantages in particular tend to be severe in *GURPS*, and should often be relegated to quirk level.

Age and Youth: Characters in this book are presented at the zenith of their careers. If this dictates a certain level of Age or Youth, then the appropriate disadvantage is noted. Older characters are assumed to have suffered the consequences of their years, and so may have relatively low attributes. (This means that their point totals may be markedly reduced, as they save on both the attributes and the disadvantage.) Characters who remained startlingly spry into old age might be given Longevity.

Physical Disadvantages are generally irrefutable (a missing leg isn't really open to debate). Some famous people are known for their heroic efforts to overcome such limitations. Even Terminally Ill may be appropriate, *if* the character is being portrayed near the time of death.

Enemies are always personal in nature: assassins, feudal foes, political rivals, etc. Wartime opponents don't otherwise count.

This book only applies the "Secret" disadvantage if the character had a "skeleton in the closet" that either became known in his lifetime or turned up after his death. Rumored but unproven secrets don't count, although they can be used to justify a Reputation.

Quirks: The personal accounts of people who actually met an individual are among the best sources for quirks. Try and identify at least one or two for any character; they are handy devices for shorthand characterization. But never force yourself to come up with five.

Skills

If someone's defining trait is amazing talent in a specific field, it's usually best to assign a high skill, not an excessive score in the controlling attribute. Note that Artistic skills can be "inborn talents" (p. B47); actually, some noteworthy historical figures seem to have had similarly innate abilities in areas such as military strategy or politics.

Once again, remember that historical characters aren't starting PCs; they *can* spend more than twice their age in skill points. The "twice age" limit is primarily a game-balance mechanism, not a crucial piece of realism. If players complain, tell them that PCs have to work their way up to historical greatness – that's what earned points are for.

In addition to the guidelines on p. B45, note the following:

The "greatest in history" in a particular field would usually be somewhere over skill 20, with 24 as an upper limit for the truly astounding; more than that just isn't realistic.

Someone who was the greatest of their era in a field, mentioned frequently in textbooks, rates skill 19-20 – the upper end of regular professional mastery. Skills of 16-18 are *extremely* respectable, but don't guarantee that you'll never meet better. Remember that such an expert only tends to fail in unopposed projects through sheer bad luck.

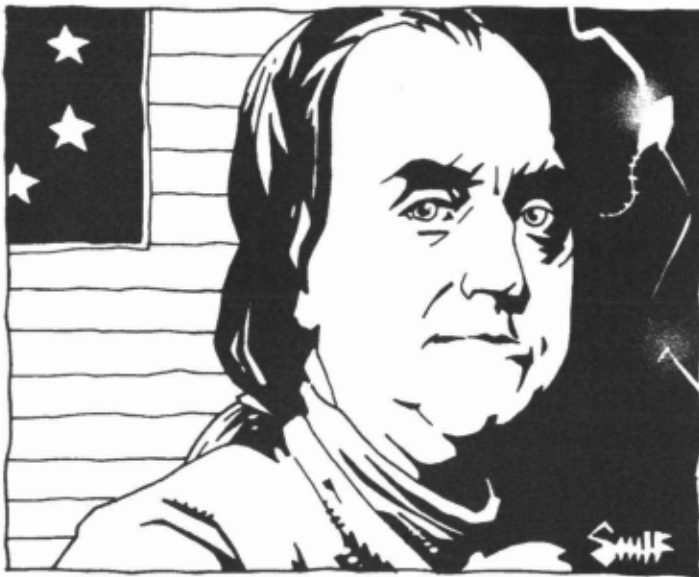
A skill of 15 is highly capable, probably earns a good living, and is usually respected by other professionals. However, it's a level that *can* be accomplished through diligent study and without flair; the character is unlikely to be invoked in textbooks for skill alone.

Lastly, a skill around 12 is enough to earn employment in run-of-the-mill jobs, but is by no means mastery. Lower ratings reflect casual training, minor hobbies, or half-forgotten education. Where a character studied some topic, but never seems to have used it much, spend a half-point.

The knowledge of a real-life expert is usually characterized more by astounding breadth than by depth (see pp. C114-115.). Characters possessing such breadth are candidates for high IQ; this gives them decent defaults in a lot of mental skills. Even levels 8-10 are better than most peoples'

defaults, and can give the uninformed the mistaken impression of exceptional talent.

Be sure to limit characters to skills they could have learned given their class, culture and TL. Remember especially that some skills were often confined to specific sectors of society.



Weirdness

Some things straddle the line between realistic and weird. It's hard to say whether Higher Purpose, Intuition, Luck, Serendipity, or Unluckiness can ever be "realistic." Luck (in various forms) especially is dubious; the great make their own. Still, a few do seem to have made more than their share. A historical figure who got away with a lot might be given Luck to ensure that he "feels right" in play.

Advantages that work on the level of the GM and players, rather than that of the characters, should also be avoided. Common Sense is an example: it's mostly a game mechanic designed to help rash players handle sensible characters. Most "greats" arguably had a lot of it, but it probably doesn't belong on their character sheets unless they were especially noted for pragmatic shrewdness and *never* seemed to act foolishly.

Point Totals

Famous characters may have very high point totals, if only from social advantages; remember, this reflects power and influence, not combat lethality. Such characters probably don't generally get into personal combat; they have people to do that for them.

Possessions

In general, it's reasonably obvious what a historical character is likely to wear or carry, given their wealth, job, and image, but do make a note of any especially famous possessions or "props"; particular brands of cigar, custom-made weapons, and so on. These can be a very effective shorthand way to individualize figures.

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