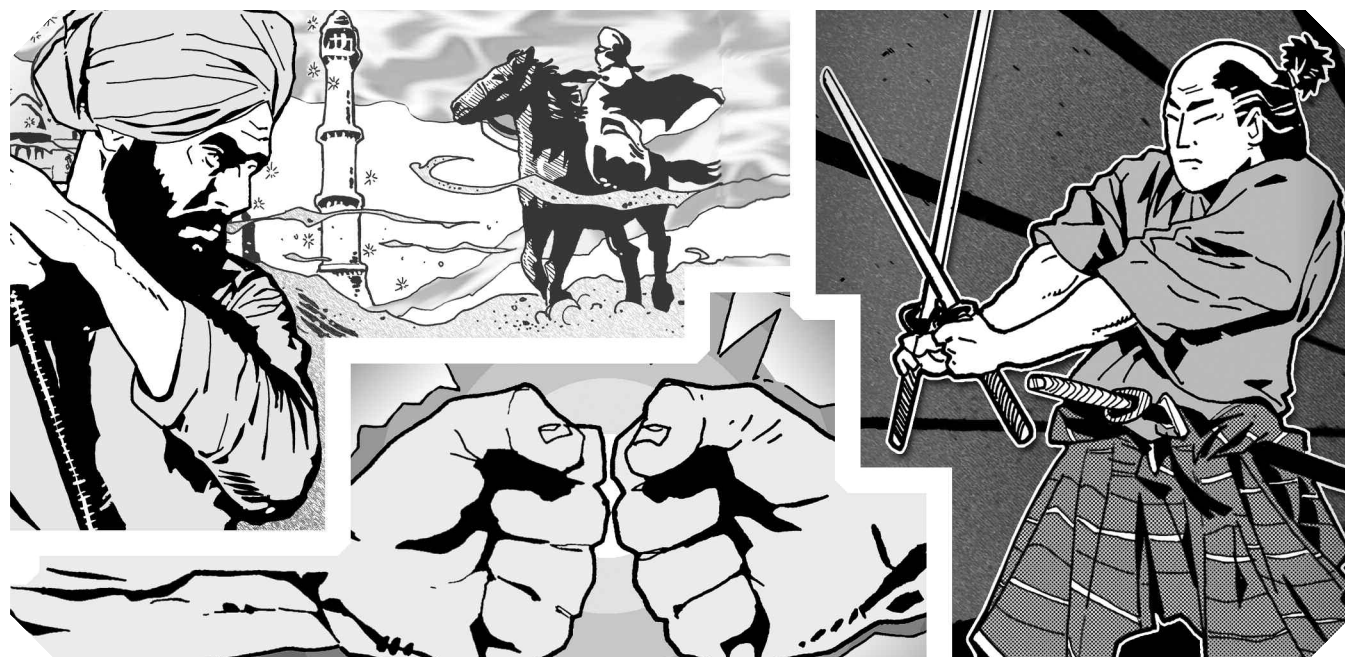


**GURPS®**

Fourth Edition

# MARTIAL ARTS

**YRTH FIGHTING STYLES™**



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*An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®*

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

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*This is the century of the soldier.*

*– Fulvio Testi, 1641*

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# INTRODUCTION

Caithnesser knights riding out to repel the orcish hordes. Sahudese samurai deciding the fates of entire noble houses in single combat. Megalan soldiers hefting crossbows or halberds and awaiting battle in the Dragon Emperor's name. The world of **GURPS Banestorm** is one of conflict and heroism, of dozens of peoples and cultures waging war for land, for their beliefs, or for survival.

**GURPS Martial Arts: Yrth Fighting Styles** takes you into this world, detailing the skills, secrets, and styles of the many fighting men and women of Ytarria. In this book, you'll walk the sand of the Arena at Megalos, cheer with the crowds at the Great Games in al-Wazif . . . even do battle *underwater* alongside sea elves and mermen.

Read on, and prepare to take your place among the heroes of Yrth's growing history . . .

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This work draws on many of the historical and fantastic styles from **GURPS Martial Arts** and fleshes them out for **GURPS Banestorm** campaigns. It discusses their place in Ytarrian society and offers new character templates and lenses. It also provides over 20 new styles unique to Yrth, including styles for shapeshifters and aquatic races.

This supplement is designed to be used alongside **Banestorm** and **Martial Arts**, and refers to a great deal of material in both books. Additionally, several other **GURPS** titles may be relevant or useful. **GURPS Fantasy** discusses fantasy warriors in some detail. **GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators** provides background material and several new styles useful for games set in the Great Arena at Megalos. *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures* details rules for underwater activity, and is strongly recommended for the GM who wants adventures set in Yrth's oceans (pp. 21-22).

**GURPS Powers** is invaluable for the GM who wishes to include divine, magical, and shamanic warriors with exotic powers in his campaign. **GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements** introduces Imbue, a new advantage ideal for magical warriors in a high-fantasy game. **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks** offers several combat perks not given in **Martial Arts**.

**GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles** presents mages' repertoires and methods with a "martial-arts style" treatment, and provides some more perks for spellcasting martial artists. This is particularly relevant for Imperial Legion Field-Wizard Training (p. 18), which is more of a magical style than it is a martial art.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

Some of the material in this book first appeared in the article "Martial Arts of Yrth" in *Pyramid* magazine, Volume 2, and has been revised to **GURPS Fourth Edition** and considerably expanded. Sylvan War Lore appeared in **Martial Arts** for **GURPS Third Edition**, and has likewise been updated. The perks Blocking Spell Mastery and Staff Attunement first

appeared **Thaumatology: Magical Styles**; Combat Vaulting, in **Power-Ups 2**. The underwater combat rules presented on p. 22 are summarized from the article "**GURPS** Fathom Five," in *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Thomas Moore is a lifelong gamer and passionate geek. He first played a roleplaying game in 1986, and first played **GURPS** with his brother in 1990. He has been published in *Pyramid* magazine several times, but this is his first supplement for Steve Jackson Games. Australian by birth, David lives in Reading, Berkshire, in the United Kingdom with his wife, Tamsin. You're glad you met him.

## About GURPS

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*Bibliographies.* Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.



# CHAPTER ONE

# MARTIAL ARTS

# IN YTARRIA

Sir Godfrey sat patiently as his varlet fussed about his harness, coolly regarding the girl beyond the tilt rail. His pennant – vert, a leopard rampant argent – snapped in the breeze above him.

“What do you know of her, Peter?”

“Dame Julianne? Knight of the Stone. One of old Peredur’s great-granddaughters. Don’t be fooled by her size, sir; she’ll know what she’s about.”

“For a woman, I’m sure. Who schooled her?”

“Don’t know the name, sir. She trained in Megalos, I did hear. Under a legion cavalryman, not a knight. See, she carries a targe. She trained to use a lance in war.”

“A legionary? Not a gentleman, then.”

“They say she took two horses in Harkwood last year.”

“Fools too timid to strike a woman, no doubt. By Jesu, she’ll feel a firmer blow than she’s used to today.”

“Just as you say, Sir Godfrey.”

“There’s the herald. Lance, Peter.”

The continent of Ytarria is a troubled land, with border raids, dynastic struggles, secret wars, and the ever-present threat of the Crusades. Warriors in Ytarria are in regular demand, and their skills and weapons are tested in the crucible of battle repeatedly. In less violent times, competitions formal and informal abound – from the tourneys of Christendom to the Great Games of al-Wazif, and from the mats of a Sahudese dojo to the sands of a Megalan arena. These contests further hone the schools and styles of Ytarrian warfare.

## Styles from *GURPS Martial Arts*

A great many of the styles mentioned in this chapter are to be found in *GURPS Martial Arts*. Rather than repeating the page references for every imported Earth style each

time it appears, a list of these styles and page references for *Martial Arts* is given below.

Style	Page	Style	Page	Style	Page
African Stickfighting	157	Furusiyya	159	Muay Thai	185
Ancient Greek Boxing	153	Glaive Fighting	187	Pankration	188
Armatura	150	Hapkido	161	Pollaxe Fighting	191
Armatura Equestris	150	Heroic Spear Fighting	196	Quarterstaff	192
Bajutsu	151	High Medieval Knightly	176	Savate	193
Bare-Knuckle Boxing	153	Mounted Combat		Shaolin Kung Fu	194
Capoeira	153	Hwa Rang Do	163	Shortsword Fighting	195
Chinese Spear Fighting	196	Iklwa Fighting	197	Smasha	210
Chin Na	154	Italian Fencing School	156	Sojutsu	197
Combat Wrestling	204	Judo	166	Submission Wrestling	205
Dagger Fighting	155	Jujutsu	166	Sumo	198
Death Fist	207	Kenjutsu	173	Sword-and-Buckler Play	199
Dragon-Man Kung Fu	208	Kyujutsu	179	Sword-and-Shield Fighting	199
Early Medieval Knightly	175	La Canne de Combat	157	Te	169
Mounted Combat		Late Medieval Knightly	177	Transitional French	158
Escrima	155	Mounted Combat		Fencing School	
Fairbairn Close Combat	182	La Verdadera Destreza	158	Viking Spear Fighting	197
Training		Longsword Fighting	180	Wing Chun	203
Foot Archery	181	Masters of Defence	182		
		Weapon Training			

*There are not fifty ways of fighting, there is only one: to be the conqueror.*

– André Malraux

# THE ELDER FOLK

The military traditions of the original inhabitants of Yrth date back, in some cases, to ancient times. Some groups have preserved their knowledge to the present day, while others have lost or abandoned their heritage in favor of skills learned or purloined from the human newcomers.

## DWARVES

A bullish, fiercely independent people, dwarves readily make war against neighbors who fail to respect their territory. Moreover, they have a great aptitude for it, as Megalos learned to its cost in its early days. Every dwarf trains in the axe or maul from youth, and all dwarf men – and those women who pursue it – serve in the border guards of one of their mountain kingdoms for several years.

Curiously, however, skill in battle is not particularly cherished among dwarven folk. It is considered a duty, which every dwarf fulfils to the best of his ability and even seeks to excel at, but a poor second to craft. Accomplished warriors are admired, and senior officers in the armies of Zarak and the Whitehoods rank alongside regional governors and administrators. Nonetheless, those who never go on to become great craftsmen are assumed to lack the ability. *Oh'kharzain* (literally “non-crafter”) is a popular slur for career soldiers, equivalent to the contemporary Earth “grunt.” The Battle Brothers (pp. 14-15) are a notable exception, treating skill at arms as a craft in its own right; many Brothers are capable weaponsmiths, but still regard themselves as warriors primarily.

Axes and hammers – any weapon that can also be a tool – are common to all dwarven fighting styles. Dwarves are slower on their feet than many of the other races of Yrth, and excel at shield-and-weapon styles that emphasize holding ground rather than tactical movement. This also suits a defensive approach to warfare, focused more on guarding their underground cities than on conquest. Battlecraft (pp. 14-15) is widely taught – albeit in a much simplified form outside the Battle Brothers – but other shield-based styles are known, with the dwarven style lens (p. 13). Dwarven crossbows are some of the finest in Ytarria, and warriors who concentrate on the crossbow may suit a modified form of Imperial Legion Crossbow Training (pp. 17-18). The underground artificers also make excellent wrestlers.

## GNOMES

If there was once a gnomish body of martial-arts lore, it is now lost to time. Gnomes generally learn the styles taught by their human neighbors. Similarly, the gnomes living among or above dwarven kingdoms may study Battlecraft (pp. 14-15) or other dwarven styles. Halflings schooled in Harmony (p. 17) occasionally teach it to gnomish students as well.

## ELVES

Elves invariably take up weapons training eventually, but few dedicate themselves to it. That said, they live long enough to become masters many times over. A dilettante who “dabbles” for 25 years or so has more than enough time to be the equal of a committed human master. The few who have answered a calling to war – such as the hero Kirtaiel (p. 11) – have become peerless warriors, remembered in song and story. Some of these ancient heroes may still be alive and traveling the world, waiting to make themselves known when the elven people need them most . . .

In war as in everything in their lives, elves are dedicated to elegance and beauty. Flashy and unnecessarily elaborate by human standards, elven combat styles are as expressive as dance, and many masters even pursue elegance at the expense of effectiveness. Indeed, some struggle to understand the difference; for those who can spend 10 years practicing a single move, any technique can be effective. Elven weapons – from the simple wooden staff to the slender hand-and-a-half blade favored in swordplay – are finely crafted and ornately decorated.

The Defenders of the Shaded Woodlands – commonly known as *dark elves* (p. 31 and *Banestorm*, p. 18) – are the exception to this casual approach to warfare. Initially drawn from the ancient elven empire’s defenders, the xenophobic sect commit themselves to training for war, both in weapons and magic. Most of the greatest masters of elven martial styles are dark elves.

Sylvan War Lore (pp. 18-20) is a collective term for elven combat schools. It chiefly refers to bow, staff, and sword forms, but includes both grappling and striking unarmed styles and every other weapon the elven folk have encountered. Because elves are an inherently magical race, spells and – in high-fantasy games – magical Imbuement Skills (p. 19) are taught as an integral part of any Sylvan War Lore style.

Elven masters living among outsiders occasionally take non-elven students. However, some may inadvertently be frauds (*Martial Arts*, p. 35), teaching beautiful techniques that are sadly impractical for anyone who doesn’t have decades to learn.

## SEA ELVES

Although long separated from their surface kin, sea elves maintain a similar culture; their own Net and Trident Lore (pp. 21-22) follows similar principles to Sylvan War Lore. Capable of walking on land for only a short time, they generally have little opportunity to learn the styles of the land-dwelling humans. Some southern sea-elven communities, however, have picked up the basics of fencing from Aralaise sailors who have found themselves their guests.

## ORCS

Pugnacious and aggressive by nature, *all* orcs are warriors, challenging and testing everyone around them from birth. Orcish tribes raid over the borders into Zarak and Caithness, make war with their fellow tribes, and fight among themselves. At its best, orcish society is a crucible, in which weapons and fighting styles are reduced to their simplest, most pragmatic forms by constant trial and use. Were they only stable enough to preserve and hand down the techniques they master, the Orclands would produce the greatest warriors in Ytarria. As it is, tribes rarely exist for more than two or three generations before being destroyed or absorbed, and their knowledge discarded. Thus, few sophisticated orcish styles have the chance to develop. Orc warriors tend to learn Broadsword skill or Spear and Shield skills, perhaps picking up one or two techniques on the way, rather than learning a true style.

The styles that *do* survive and get passed on – such as Smasha – are not usually taught by tribal leaders, but by hermits living and training in the desert. Orcs have no real concept of masters, tending to see experienced and able warriors as threats rather than teachers, to be challenged, avoided, or obeyed. As a result, the few orcish masters prefer to retreat into the wilderness of the

Orclands – locating an instructor may be an adventure in itself! Any student is likely to be accepted, although training is brutal. Most of those who take it on will die. Even non-orcs who find Smasha masters may be trained . . . or may be killed without a second thought.

Rumors exist of secret orcish styles that give the spear, or the sword and shield, the same scientific brutality that Smasha gives unarmed combat. The defenders of Caithness scoff at these rumors, but they sleep lightly . . .

## OGRES

The larger cousins of the orcs show little sophistication in their approach to combat, having almost no patience for training. Most use large, heavy weapons, learning the Two-Handed Sword or Two-Handed Axe/Mace skills and one or two techniques. Using ST-based moves like Backbreaker, Neck Snap, and Wrench Limb, an ogre can be more than a match for more experienced human opponents. Some even develop effective fighting systems using these skills and techniques with minimal training. A very few ogres living among the orcs prove worthy to learn Smasha. Ogre slaves in human society – especially gladiators in Megalos – may be patiently taught simple styles.

# HUMANITY

When humans arrived in Yrth in the 11th century, they brought with them a rich and varied history of fighting styles, which they have preserved and developed ever since. Occasionally, fresh imports by the Banestorm add to and further enrich the Ytarrian military tradition. Fusions of imported styles, not to mention new styles created to suit the demands of a magical world, also have arisen.

## MEGALOS

The Christians who first settled the land that would become the Megalan Empire knew a range of early medieval fighting styles, and made heavy use of them in the turmoil of the first

few generations. Peasant styles such as Dagger Fighting, Quarterstaff, and Combat Wrestling are common. The first immigrants also imported armed styles such as Foot Archery, Sword-and-Shield Fighting, and Viking Spear Fighting, which are still widely used by professional warriors. Knights brought by the Banestorm were trained in Early Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat, and founded a chivalric tradition as soon as lords and barons established themselves out of the chaos.

By 1200, the worst of the Banestorm had receded and the Empire of Megalos was beginning to take form. High Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat was the norm among knights who had recently arrived from Earth, and the couched lance became the stock attack of Megalan knighthood. Shortsword Fighting and Sword-and-Buckler Play were growing in popularity in the cities, as convenient alternatives to carrying a bulky shield. Two centuries later, improvements in armor promoted the adoption of Longsword Fighting.

Masters of Defence (*Martial Arts*, p. 17) appeared on the streets of the larger cities in the early 16th century. They enjoyed a brief prominence quarreling with Aralaise fencing masters about the value of their respective arts, but are now little known outside Caithness.

With the Ministry of Serendipity's ban on gunpowder, crossbows are more influential in Megalan warfare than on Earth. Thus, heavy armor, often magically reinforced, is still a significant factor on the Megalan battlefield. Fencing has made it to Megalos from Araterre, but only as an expensive and intermittently fashionable hobby for the merchant classes, currently out of vogue.

## The Arena

Some of the most highly trained, and certainly the most exotic and varied, fighters in the world can be found within the walls of Megalos' arenas (*Banestorm*, p. 87). Every noble worthy of the name sponsors at least one gladiator, whether a slave or paid athlete, and many maintain substantial stables. The emphasis is on spectacle: bloody, unfair, or large-scale fights draw crowds, but sponsoring an exotically trained gladiator is a favorite way to attract praise.

Most gladiators practice familiar styles, like Shortsword Fighting and Sword-and-Buckler play. However, Ancient Greek Boxing and Pankration are popular, and obscure styles from across the world are prized.

See *The Arenas of Megalos* (p. 35) for the annual gladiatorial circuit. *Martial Arts: Gladiators* provides detailed information on historical Earth gladiators, and presents 11 new gladiatorial styles and several character templates. It is an invaluable resource for an arena-centric game.

## Knighly and Ghazi Orders

The orders of chivalry, both Christian (*Banestorm*, p. 42) and Muslim (*Banestorm*, p. 70), serve variously as social organizations, religious orders, political blocs . . . and providers of training and support. The majority of those who join an order are already knights or farisa, trained from youth and equipped at their own expense, but they continue training throughout their lives. Different orders have preferred styles and approaches to training; some may teach secret styles or techniques.

*Megalan Orders:* The traditionalist Hospitallers (*Banestorm*, p. 62) prefer High Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat. On campaign, they generally serve as pure cavalry alongside Megalan legions. The Order also teaches Longsword Fighting for fighting on foot. In high-fantasy campaigns, fanatic Hospitallers may gain divine strength and protection from the Supernatural Warrior perk (p. 26). The Templars (*Banestorm*, p. 63), by contrast, are more eclectic, encouraging a range of mounted and foot styles. Magery is very common in the Order, and Templars learn spells alongside weapon skills. High-fantasy

Templars often have magical powers, especially Imbue-ment Skills (p. 19), with the Supernatural Warrior perk.

*Caithnesser Orders:* The Knights of the Stone (*Banestorm*, p. 115) reflect Caithnesser military fashion. Late Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat and Masters of Defence Weapon Training are both popular. The Order of St. George (*Banestorm*, p. 119) is similar, although many learn Special Exercises (Magic Resistance up to 5), if allowed, for fighting supernatural evils. The Order is reputed to teach the Targeted Attack technique for finding the chinks in dragons' hides . . .

*Ghazi Orders:* The Ghazis of the Crescent Moon and the Pegasus (both *Banestorm*, p. 70) favor Furusiyya; the Order of the Crescent Moon adds Theology (Islam) as a style skill and Poetry as an optional skill, while the Order of the Pegasus adds Poetry as a style skill and Theology (Islam) as an optional skill. Combat Wrestling is also valued. Ghazis of the Wazifi Order of the Pegasus may learn African Stickfighting or Tahtib (pp. 20-21). The Warriors of the Quill (*Banestorm*, p. 71) may be trained in *any* style, although Furusiyya is the most common.

Late Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat arrived in Megalos in the early 17th century. Although popular in Caithness, the style has had less success in Megalos, where knights rarely fight on foot. Nonetheless, a few prefer two-handed weapons on horseback.

The legions (*Banestorm*, p. 87), meanwhile, were deliberately modeled on a Classical rather than medieval army. Built on heavy-infantry formations, the legions use halberdiers to break up enemy formations, and spear-and-shield fighters to take and hold ground. Tactical support comes from cross-bowmen and, famously, from battle mages trained in Azer's Templar College of Battle Magic (*Banestorm*, p. 96). Each battalion includes a cadre of *war wizards*, who remain safely behind the main force and cast ceremonial magics to control the battlefield, and *field wizards*, who support the troops directly and coordinate the war wizards' spells. In low-mana Caithness, these wizards lose a great deal of their effectiveness, hamstringing the Megalan forces.

Legion cavalry are light horse scouts, used for observation and sniping. Noble knights are the battering ram of an Imperial army. They engage enemy cavalry or smash defensive lines, charging ahead of halberd units to scatter shield walls. Training varies widely in quality depending on which lord or noble sponsors a given legion, but most offer some variation of Imperial Legion Training (pp. 17-18). See *Legionaries and Soldiers* (pp. 29-30) for the day-to-day life of a legionary.

In the dread city of Abydos in the north (see *City of the Dead*, *Banestorm*, p. 97, and *GURPS Banestorm: Abydos*), the city's smiths have developed mature TL4 smithing techniques. Fencing has been popular among the merchant classes since the 1890s. A dueling style similar to La Verdadera Destreza is preferred, especially among educated women. Agarthan necromancers often learn harmful Body Control magic as part of their studies, combined to great effect with Judo and Wrestling skills and a local form of Death Fist.

## ARATERRE

The French immigrants to the islands off Ytarria's southern coast brought a mature fencing tradition with them (*Banestorm*, p. 104), which has flourished in the years since. Even without the influence of gunpowder, the practicalities of life in a warm, maritime nation make armor unpopular. As such, fencing weapons have followed a similar progression in Araterre as on Earth, largely forgoing heavier, armor-piercing blades for lighter, faster weapons. The first immigrants practiced the Italian School, but styles similar to all four fencing schools have been developed over the years and are still taught today. The Transitional French School is the most common. Aralaise fencing is generally more flamboyant than its Earth counterparts, due to Araterre's Asian influences. Acrobatic moves are common to all styles. Arguments as to which is the most effective style abound, including duels between rival schools.

Aralaise warriors sometimes have to fight armored opponents from the mainland. Thus, many academies of arms teach heavier blades as well as lighter fencing weapons. A new style, the Aralaise Estoc School (p. 13), was developed in the 17th century. It revived the estoc (*Martial Arts*, p. 215) and incorporated longsword techniques for use against heavy armor.

Savate has been fought on the docks of Sauvons since the 1890s, strongly influenced by Balinese Silat. La Canne de Combat is a recent fashion among students and gentlemen hoping to avoid legal difficulties for dueling within the city walls. Martial arts in Araterre – armed and unarmed – take the Aralaise style lens (p. 13), incorporating acrobatic techniques and training in keeping one's footing on a rocking ship or rain-drenched dock.

The natives of Bilit Island fight with shields, spears, and flint-edged clubs (use Iklwa Fighting), alongside wrestling and knife-fighting styles. The *Ocelots* – the "Jaguar Knights," fear-some jaguar shapeshifters dedicated to the war-god Bulac Chabtan (*Banestorm*, p. 78) – train with similar weapons.



However, they generally rely on their claws and teeth in battle. (See *Ulvinger Fighting*, p. 21, for an example of a shapeshifter fighting style.)

## CAITHNESS

In war-torn, low-mana Caithness, strength and prowess in battle are prized. Caithnesser infantry troops are peasant levies, playing a less pivotal role than in Megalan legions. Armored knights are the height of military power, often deciding the outcome of a battle through sheer valor and skill. As such, although Caithness' martial traditions grew out of the same circumstances as Megalos' (pp. 6-7), they have developed in markedly different ways.

The Megalan knights who settled in the west brought their military traditions with them, including High Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat. However, Caithnesser chivalry demands that a knight must be willing to fight his foe on foot as well as on horseback, if he or his opponent is unhorsed. (Megalan knights see an unhorsed knight as already dead, and dispatching him as the infantry's job.) Late Medieval Knightly Mounted Combat has thus gained widespread acceptance. Jousting with a shield is now seen by Caithnessers as a specifically Megalan practice, and both crude and old-fashioned.

Courage and skill are treasured. Thanks to the practice of taking commoners as squires and the existence of the Order of the Stone, high birth no longer counts as proof of ability. When the Masters of Defence (*Martial Arts*, p. 17) came from Megalos in the early 19th century, they found greater respect and prominence in the new kingdom. Today, the Academies of Defence in Carrick and Durham are important institutions, teaching their skills to the younger sons – and daughters – of Caithnesser noblemen.

## AL-HAZ AND AL-WAZIF

The Arabic, Persian, and Turkish nomads who settled in what would come to be known as al-Haz and al-Wazif preferred to fight lightly armored, often on horseback. Spear-fighting – both with shield and without (use Heroic Spear Fighting and Sojutsu) – and horse archery (use Kyujutsu) styles were popular. They remain common among Wazifi tribesmen to this day.

By the beginning of the 15th century, as al-Haz was forming and the Islamic peoples were becoming embroiled in war with their Christian neighbors to the north, the formal cavalry

techniques of Furusiyya had come to Yrth. Today, highborn farisa and devout ghazis (p. 7) are expected to round out Furusiyya training with a pursuit in the arts. In particular, Hazi warriors are often learned theologians and skilled in religious debate, while Wazifi farisa are expected to be able to compose poetry, sing, and play a musical instrument.

Hazi and Wazifi swords are primarily curved, slashing weapons (see *Scimitar*, *Martial Arts*, p. 223, for a discussion of different types of Middle-Eastern swords). Their wielders use similar styles of combat to their Christian contemporaries, particularly Shortsword Fighting, Sword-and-Buckler Play, and Sword-and-Shield Fighting. Sufi dervishes (*Banestorm*, p. 70) train with one or two curved swords without a shield, incorporating the heavy, swinging blades into their whirling dance (the Broadsword Art skill). Some fanatical Sufi warriors enter into an ecstatic trance when they fight, transcending pain and fear; see *Berserker gang* (pp. 15-16) for an example of a style built around the Berserk disadvantage.

Wrestling is a universally admired contest of strength and skill, from the wealthy courts of Gebel al-Hikmah and as-Siyassi to the wild steppes where nomadic tribes tend their flocks. Courtly wrestlers are trained in a formal style similar to Submission Wrestling, while Combat Wrestling suits street contests and informal competitions on the plains. In addition, nomadic shepherds practice a number of stick-fighting styles using their shepherd's staves, including Tahtib (pp. 20-21) and African Stickfighting.

## CARDIEL

A true melting pot of cultures, Cardiel is home to a mix of Megalan, Hazi, and Aralaise fighting styles. A Christian knight may fight with the curved blades and horseback archery techniques of Furusiyya, and a Muslim soldier may practice Poll-axe Fighting or carry a rapier. Marginal cultures imported to Yrth over the years, drawn by Cardiel's tolerant and cosmopolitan society, have brought styles known nowhere else in Ytarria to the country, further adding to the blend. At the GM's discretion, a PC from Cardiel could feasibly know *any* of the historical styles described in *Martial Arts*.

Out of this variety comes a range of *new* styles, fusing and drawing influence from existing styles. Alquetalle (pp. 12-13) is a perfect example of a Cardien style. It is a Muslim boxing discipline embellished with Christian dagger-fighting techniques. It has grown and changed over the years, and is now taught primarily in Jewish communities.

In 1963, the Cardien Prince Johannes of Alimar (p. 11) ordered a series of improvements to the Order of the Archangel Michael's processes and procedures. These included the development of Wrastling, a grappling style incorporating incapacitating strikes for handling spellcasters, now known as Ars Clemens (p. 14) in all three branches of the Order.

## SAHUD

Drawn from across Asia and North America, the first Banestorm immigrants to Sahud imported a huge variety of armed and unarmed styles, most of which have survived to the modern day.

### Hashishin and Balikites

The image of the highly trained, unstoppable *Hashishin* killer (*Banestorm*, p. 72) is one that keeps many Muslim leaders up at night. In truth, they are rarely particularly skilled. The assassin cult's success depends on surprise and commitment, rather than martial-arts ability. The Hashishin will use stealth, disguise, or even long-term sleeper agents to get in a position to kill a target, and will gladly sacrifice their lives to do so. The actual kill itself generally involves an All-Out Attack (often Telegraphic) with a knife against a totally unprepared opponent, and doesn't require particularly sophisticated training.

The Balikites, for all their contempt for the Hashishin, use much the same tactics.



## Tredroy

If Cardiel is a melting pot, the City of Three Laws is even more so. The most culturally, racially, and religiously mixed city in the world, Tredroy offers a dizzying array of weapons and traditions. It is home to a number of boxing, wrestling, and knife-fighting contests, and to the largest Alquetalle (p. 12) tournament in the world, held every August in East Tredroy.

The Assassins' Guild (*Banestorm*, p. 147) teaches no single assassination technique. Rather, it encourages its masters to study and train in a range of styles to suit different missions. An economic dagger style (use Fairbairn Close Combat Training, with the optional skills Garrote and Poisons/TL3) is common, but assassins may use any style suitable for their calling. Chinese assassins often know Chin Na, and assassin-mages use a style similar to Death Fist.

Tredroy's Chinatown, on the Street of Artificers (*Banestorm*, p. 148), is the largest Ytarrian Chinese community outside Sahud. A number of schools of Kung Fu (*Martial Arts*, p. 155) are known and taught behind closed doors, although it is essentially unknown for white students to be trained. There may even be one or more triads (*Martial Arts*, p. 9) operating behind the scenes.

The samurai warrior caste knew Bajutsu, Kenjutsu, and Kyujutsu, among other Japanese styles. Their Chinese contemporaries knew Wing Chun and Chinese Spear Fighting. A small group of Korean monks brought Um Yang Kwan (a precursor of Hwa Rang Do). By the 16th century, Japanese styles dominated among the aristocracy, but other influences can still be felt today, especially among the more remote eastern clans. Indeed, some provincial samurai practice more-or-less pure Chinese or Korean styles, hidden under the same names as the Japanese-origin styles practiced closer to Kinkaku.

Many Sahudese martial arts are tied to the country's convoluted religious beliefs (*Banestorm*, p. 80). Sumo holds a similar place in the Sahudese religion as it does in Earth Shinto, with formal, ceremonial bouts conducted in honor of the Heavenking. Kinkaku hosts the greatest of these twice a year at the equinoxes. The winner is conveyed into Uulinn to receive the blessing of the Heavenking in person.

Meanwhile, Kung Fu styles are taught alongside both Buddhism and the Sahudese religion. The prowess of the AnFo'Tama monks (*Banestorm*, p. 80) is legendary across

Sahud; treat their style as Shaolin Kung Fu. Monks of the Dragon Temple (*Martial Arts*, p. 208) travel the roads of Sahud, fighting demons with Dragon-Man Kung Fu and living off the charity of those they protect.

Beneath the lofty heights of the noble families and the monasteries, the common folk of Sahud learn a more mixed bag of ancient and modern styles from a range of backgrounds. Judo and Jujutsu rub shoulders with Native American and Mongolian wrestling styles. Hapkido, Muay Thai, and Te practitioners spar on the docksides in the Ah and Yarohito shipping ports. Fresh Banestorm imports are periodically added to the blend, and new styles – fusions out of the chaos of Sahudese martial arts – arise every few years.

Sahudese warfare (*Banestorm*, p. 152) creates two very different uses for the martial arts. In low war, assassination is very much in the cards, and training in hidden weapons and stealth is appropriate. Sahudese ninja learn combat and espionage (see *Ninja and Ninjutsu*, *Martial Arts*, p. 202), although their prankish role in Sahudese politics (*Banestorm*, p. 153) can demand interesting and unorthodox skills. High war, however, involves formal contests under highly restricted terms – unusual or impractical weapons, fighting unarmed, or fighting with peculiar handicaps.

Here, masters of the fighting arts are in great demand. See p. 32 for more on high-war games.

## NOMAD LANDS

The savages of the north brought the fighting traditions of Scandinavia and the British Isles with them from Earth. Most warriors fight with spears, and Heroic Spear Fighting and Viking Spear Fighting are popular. Those who can afford them fight with sword and shield or axe and shield (use Sword-and-Shield Fighting, replacing Broadsword with Axe/Mace and adding the Hook technique). Chieftains and wealthy warriors are likely to fight with a spear from the back of a chariot, changing to sword and shield when fighting on foot. However, some believe that fighting with a greatsword is a better display of their strength and prowess.

Wrestling is a popular pastime and a common test of strength, from formal contests in which combatants use only one hand to all-out matches allowing strikes and biting. Knife skill and the Dagger Fighting style are very common.

## The Ulvings

Lycanthropy (*Banestorm*, p. 200) is common in the Nomad Lands, and not treated with the same superstition and fear as in other lands. In the far, frozen north of the peninsula may be found the lands of an entire tribe of werewolves, who have learned a great deal of control over their powers. The Ulvings ("the people of the wolf") believe that they are descended from Geri, Odin's wolf, who raped a human woman and begat their tribal ancestor.

Although in many ways a typical Northman tribe, led by a jarl and living off hunting and raiding, the Ulvings have a wolfish outlook to life. Children are grouped into "packs"

of four to six, and live and train together from infancy. An Ulving's pack is closer than his kin, and he will only leave the tribe to go adventuring if the pack goes together. A pack's *huscarl*, or leader, is usually the largest and strongest of the group. Another member of the pack may challenge him for leadership, but would otherwise never think of refusing an instruction.

The Ulvings have mastered using their shapeshifting abilities in combat. Their style, Ulvinger Fighting (p. 21), uses such tactics heavily. A sample Ulving character is detailed on p. 36, along with the typical Ulving wolf form.

All Northerners, men and women, carry knives from childhood, and are expected to know how to use them.

The Northmen treasure recklessness and fury. *Berserkers* ("bear-shirts") are holy warriors who dedicate themselves to frenzy in battle (the Berserk disadvantage). The Horned God

bestows them with the ferocity of bears when they fight (*Berserker*gang, pp. 15-16). *Ulfhednars* ("wolf-hides"), similarly, are granted the cunning and viciousness of wolves (the Bloodlust disadvantage). They fight with spears and offer their kills to Odin.

# PEOPLE OF MANY WORLDS

Much like the people of Earth, the inhabitants of Gabrook, Loren'dil, and Olokun brought their own styles with them. Many secrets have been lost and forgotten over the years, as the newcomers learned from or imitated their new neighbors, but some techniques survive to this day.

## CENTAURS

Wild and nomadic, centaurs have little interest in warring over land or beliefs. Thus, like the elves (p. 5), with whom they feel a great deal of sympathy, much of their fighting skill grew out of practical pursuits such as hunting. Many are archers, practicing Foot Archery or the elves' Bow Lore (pp. 18-19). Centaurs train freely with the elves, and Centaur Battle Lore (p. 20) is as much a part of Sylvan War Lore as it is a centaur discipline. Centaur martial arts masters are often also sages (*Banestorm*, p. 188), studying hoplology (*Martial Arts*, p. 56) and military history alongside practical fighting skills.

## GIANTS

Giants have preserved little of their Loren'dilian culture. Some, like ogres, rely on grappling and ST-based techniques like Wrench Limb and Neck Snap, while others imitate human styles. In the Nomad Lands, they fight with vast spears. Legends tell of two ancient giantish fighting arts dedicated to their gods (*Banestorm*, p. 83): the Right Hand of Otrik, a striking style, and the Left Hand of Therneen, a grappling style. If these disciplines still exist, they are well-hidden.

## HALFLINGS AND GOBLINS

Both halflings and goblins have abandoned their ancient cultures to immerse themselves in human society. They generally learn the fighting traditions of their hosts. Small and agile, they excel at styles that emphasize speed and precision over power, especially stickfighting and fencing. They're equally adept at techniques that use locks and throws to compensate for their opponents' greater size. Harmony (p. 17), a halfling self-defense system supposedly developed by St. Helbus (p. 11), teaches locks and throws – both armed and unarmed – and stick-strikes to the ankles and wrists. Goblins are fascinated by styles incorporating magic, avidly pursuing rumors of the likes of Death Fist and Sylvan War Lore (pp. 18-20).

## REPTILE MEN

The reptile men of the Great Desert prefer simple, streamlined training similar to that taught by the orcs (p. 6), including Spear and Shield skills or simple styles such as

Sword-and-Shield Fighting and Viking Spear-Fighting. In addition, Bozdaag worship (*Banestorm*, p. 82) demands self-sufficiency. Thus, every reptile man trains to fight unarmed as a fallback; indeed, to some communities, *any* use of weapons is considered weak. One popular wrestling style (Jo'baak) combines grappling with bites and claw attacks, while the Dragon Cult (*Dragon Fighting*, pp. 16-17) teaches believers to emulate dragons, depending wholly on their natural weapons.

Reptile men in al-Haz, especially Muslims, may learn Hazi weapons and styles. The True Dragons (*Banestorm*, p. 90) are given the best of Imperial Legion Training (pp. 17-18), which they extend with sword-fighting and wrestling techniques.

## MERFOLK, OCTOPUS FOLK, AND SHARK MEN

Immigrants from Olokun brought longstanding aquatic traditions with them (see *Underwater Styles*, pp. 21-22), and have had little cause to learn from humanity. If anything, the opposite has happened, with Aralaise sailors and fishermen occasionally acquiring underwater fighting techniques from indulgent merfolk. Some cultural exchange has occurred with the sea elves, however, and merfolk have adopted forms of Net and Trident Lore (pp. 21-22). They use these alongside their own traditional spear-fighting style.

One notable exception is the shark men of the northern seas, whose chieftains found themselves the bewildered recipients of gift katanas from Sahudese noblemen. Initially, these swords rusted in the Koriryu No Umi. In 1928, the swordsmith Tsushuo Tanega accidentally discovered sacrificial anodes, and started to make *umigatana* ("sea katanas") with zinc plates hammered around the backs of the blades. Now armed with functional swords, the *samebito* warriors set about learning swordplay from the Sahudese. They have developed their own underwater sword style (p. 22) incorporating kenjutsu-style sword thrusts and grappling and biting techniques.

## OTHER RACES

Few of the other races of Yrth have preserved or developed any distinctive fighting systems of their own. Hobgoblins adopt similar styles to orcs, while kobolds pick up a little undisciplined scrapping or learn from generous human teachers. Minotaurs rely on large weapons similar to those preferred by ogres, and many become gladiators (p. 6). Sphinxes and trolls practice techniques using their claws and teeth (see *Dragon Fighting*, pp. 16-17, for a style for natural weapons), although trolls also often become proficient in wielding large or heavy weapons.

# NOTED WARRIORS OF YTARRIA

Many remarkable men and women – heroes, warleaders, and innovators – have contributed to Ytarria's military history. This section describes only a handful of those individuals who have been influential over the years.

## SAINT HELBUS

The first of only two halflings to be canonized in Ytarria's history, Helbus was a student and disciple of St. Michael Olybrius (*Banestorm*, p. 62). Helbus proselytized with St. Michael in the Goblin Kingdoms, but survived his mentor's martyrdom. In 1201, he received permission from the Curia to found his own priory – St. Mary of the Helping Hands, in Ekhsans – in support of halfling friars, traveling throughout Christendom to teach and aid his people.

Helbus, notably, did not believe in absolute pacifism. His friars were all taught to defend themselves, both empty-handed and with the walking sticks for which they became known. They also passed on this teaching to halflings in the communities they visited. Helbus himself is reputed to have disarmed and knocked out men many times his size in defense of his flock. The Harmony martial-arts style (p. 17) and philosophy (p. 27) are both widely attributed to Helbus. Teachers pepper training with stories of his pragmatic wisdom and simple ethics.

## PRINCE JOHANNES OF ALIMAR

Prince of Cardiel from 1952 to 1965, Johannes was largely a compromise candidate, elected to resolve a feud between Calder and Hadaton. Militarily and politically, he was an able if unremarkable prince, leading Cardiel during a time of prosperity and relative peace. His real legacy came in 1961, when he cleared a young man accused by a Hand of Michael at the court of appeal on the grounds that the evidence was unreliable. He immediately reviewed both the Order's practices and those of the various Cardien city militias. He established rules for fair and indisputable evidence, formalized the use of magic and techniques such as fingerprinting, and defined a Michaelite's or militiaman's powers. Johannes singlehandedly modernized the country's entire police system, introducing radically new ideas, some of which have even been taken up in Caithness and Megalos. It has been suggested that he had an Earth-born adviser.

One of the most prominent changes was the development of Wrastling. This grappling and subduing style is designed for taking prisoners nonlethally and for fighting magicians and supernatural creatures. It is nicknamed *Ars Clemens* (p. 14).

## KIRTAIEL

The *Lay of Kirtaiel* is a 12,000-line saga telling the story of one the elven nation's greatest warrior-mages. It relates his quest to rescue his lover, the "Daughter of the Moon," from the clutches of the tyrannical dragon lord Dexnavi (*Banestorm*, p. 145). He supposedly lived from around 500 B.C. to around 100 A.D., and the events of the poem occur toward the end of

his life. The story describes a number of extraordinary feats from Kirtaiel's quest: shooting 20 arrows into the air before the first one struck its target; killing an ogre chieftain with a single arrow, shot from a mountaintop *a league away*; and using his magic to sing down the stars and cause the hills to tremble. At the end of the poem, he drives Dexnavi away and rescues his love, but is mortally wounded and travels "into the West." Many elves say he lives still, maimed and disfigured, forever searching for his ancient enemy.

Kirtaiel's bow (*Banestorm*, p. 26) is said to bestow the wisdom of the ancient elven peoples. Its current location is not known.

## PEREDUR OF DURHAM

Lord Peredur of Durham was a legend in his lifetime, a war hero and statesman. Born in 1908, he trained from youth in knightly combat and swordplay. He ascended to the Lordship of Durham at the young age of 17, when his father Gareth died in the 1925-1926 border war with the orcs (*Banestorm*, p. 14). Peredur led 50 knights and 1,000 footmen and, with King Morill I, successfully routed the last of the orc invaders. He took more than 30 orc heads himself and earned the name "Orcslayer." He was also a great joustier, regularly winning the tournament at Harkwood. He was champion at eight consecutive tourneys, from Summer's Day 1932 to Shroftide 1936, an unbroken record to this day.

Peredur was a stout loyalist throughout his life. He supported four kings, both politically and militarily, through various civil wars and crises. Both Morill III and Conall VI had planned to elevate Durham to a barony, but circumstances conspired against them. Peredur died a lord in 1989. His heir, Bronwyn of Durham (*Banestorm*, p. 116), was finally made baroness in 1994.

## TARN THE MIGHTY

Probably the most notorious Smasha practitioner in history, Tarn is believed to have lived in the first half of the 19th century. Born small by orc standards, Tarn was the runt of her tribe. She was beaten and abused by her fellows until she fled into the desert as a child. She returned many years later, no taller but considerably stronger. She challenged her tribesmen one by one, fighting her way up to the title of chieftain. She then shared her vision – of an orc nation united to conquer the human lands – and called a great meeting of chieftains and warriors.

At the meeting, she was immediately challenged by the other chieftains, and fought them all in turn. According to legend, Tarn defeated over 300 orcs – all chieftains and warleaders – over three days and nights without rest. Many of her challengers died. At length, the other chieftains acknowledged her seniority. The orc shaman Akhar then declared her "chief of chiefs," queen of all the orcs. Fortunately for humanity, before Tarn could realize her vision of conquest, she was poisoned by one of her advisers. This caused an immediate breakdown as the chiefs fought over her succession. Tarn's headdress is supposedly hidden in the Orclands somewhere, waiting for another orc worthy of the title.



# CHAPTER TWO

# STYLES

# OF YRTH

*"My lords and ladies! It is my glad duty today to present, for your entertainment and improvement, a religious lesson: the tale of brave David and fierce Goliath!"*

*Adam grunted, adjusting the straps on his cesti, and tried to squint through the gaps in the shutter in front of him. At 7' tall and 23 stone, it was clear which one he was. Goliath loses, though, doesn't he? Adam hadn't been told to throw this one.*

*"To my left, in the role of David, I am proud to introduce newcomer Mus!" Cheering from the benches. "To my right, in the role of Goliath, reigning champion Malleus!"*

*The shutter rattled up, and Adam was blinded by August sunlight as he walked onto the sand, raising his fists to bait the jeering crowd. He turned to look at his opponent.*

*"A boy?" he demanded.*

*Then the lad shifted stance, smiling faintly and spinning his sling lazily over his head, and Adam saw his feet. He spat and laughed. "By'r Larkin, a halfling!"*

*He charged, bellowing. The sling stone struck his chest as he ran, and he shrugged it off. Halflings could be slippery devils. Best grab him quickly and get it over with.*

*Suddenly he was lying on his back, the halfling rapping his wrists with a short stick. The blows rattled off his cesti, and Mus darted away again as Adam climbed to his feet. Not a pancrator, certainly. A wrestler, then?*

*Adam went for a punch, more cautiously this time. The halfling parried with the stick, and somehow trapped his arm with it, dropping him again and swinging for his face. Adam knocked the stick away and swung at the lad, who danced away again. The audience roared and laughed.*

*So, not a wrestler.*

*Adam raised himself once more, flexed his hands, and circled the halfling. This might be harder than he thought.*

A Caithnesser knight trains in jousting and swordplay. His ghazi counterpart in al-Haz learns the spear and sword techniques of Furusiyya. Sahudese samurai become proficient with the katana, while Aralaise noblemen study the rapier. Many of the styles practiced on Yrth were imported from Earth. They are identical to the forms described in **Martial Arts**.

Many more styles are unlike anything known on Earth. The elves, dwarves, and orcs had their own styles long before the Banestorm. The people of Gabrook, Loren'dil, and Olokun brought fighting arts with them. New styles, responses to magical and supernatural threats previously unknown to humans, have arisen over the years.

## ALQUETALLE

5 points

A simple boxing style when it first arose among Kardi tribesmen in the 18th century, *Al-Qtal* grew and changed through Cardiel's troubled history. It picked up dagger-fighting techniques from the Kardis' Christian conquerors, fencing defenses from Araterre, and influences imported by the Banestorm. The current form is unrecognizable from its roots. It continues to develop and adapt, borrowing from other styles it encounters (not least other eclectic Cardien styles, p. 8). As a result, no two *maestros* teach quite the same moves.

Alquetalle is now most common among Jewish communities, and much of the terminology is drawn from Ladino – training is conducted in an *aula*, defensive stances are known as *gardias* – even among Christian and Muslim practitioners. The style has formal schools, public graduations (from *estudiante* to *maestro*), and regular tournaments with blunted weapons. Competition bouts are conducted in a 30' ring, marked out with a rope on the ground; victory is usually by submission or by driving the opponent out of the ring. To someone from contemporary Earth, it feels very like a modern Earth sport, but all *alquetallistes* can fight effectively.

Alquetalle is primarily a knife style. Stylists fight with knives in both hands and wear bracers on both arms to aid in parrying longer weapons. They also train to fight with the off-hand knife in a reversed grip. When the alquetalliste only has one blade – especially against an armed foe – he may hold it in the off hand for defense. He then strikes and grapples with his empty hand to disarm, stun, and immobilize his opponent before using the knife to finish him off. Kicks, head butts, biting, and dirty tricks (p. B405 and **Martial Arts**, p. 76) are all used, even in competitions, and most *maestros* teach one or two unorthodox techniques to surprise opponents familiar with the style.

Alquetalle stylists strike aggressively. They prefer the Attack maneuver with Rapid Strike or Combinations. However, to avoid becoming too predictable, they change stances frequently, switching to Committed and Defensive Attacks more-or-less randomly. Deceptive Attacks are also common.

Main-Gauche techniques emphasize versatility and control, while unarmed techniques focus on strikes with the elbows, head, and knees. *Maestros* pride themselves on developing innovative and unexpected attacks, so the GM should add at least one unorthodox technique and one Style Perk to the style to reflect "trick moves." If the stylist uses either on an opponent not familiar with his *maestro's* teachings, the opponent loses the benefit of the Style Familiarity perk the first time (only) he sees the move.

## Using Styles From *Martial Arts*

Chapter 1 discusses many Ytarrian styles imported from Earth, drawn from *Martial Arts*. In addition, the GM may allow suitable pan-cultural styles to be taught, with local variations and by different names, *anywhere* on Yrth. This might include Bare-Knuckle Boxing, Combat Wrestling, Dagger Fighting, Foot Archery, Longsword Fighting, Quarterstaff, Shortsword Fighting, spear fighting (use Sojutsu or Viking Spear Fighting), stickfighting (use African Stickfighting), and Sword-and-Shield Fighting. The GM should remove Games specialties, Combat Sport skills, and culture-specific optional traits from the styles, or replace them with suitable alternatives.

### Style Lenses

Whether using the styles suggested in Chapter 1 or adapting one of the “generic” styles above, the GM should include any of the following style lenses that apply.

*Aralaise Lens:* Add the perks Naval Training and Sure-Footed (Slippery), and the optional skills Acrobatics, Cloak, and Swimming. If there are no fencing weapons in the style, add at least one as an optional skill. Styles taught by courtly masters should add Savoir-Faire (High Society).

*Dwarven Lens:* Add the perk Sure-Footed (Uneven) and the optional skill Philosophy (Forbearance) (p. 27). For armed styles, add the Weapon Bond perk and the optional skills Armoury/TL3 (with an appropriate specialty) and Smith/TL3 (Iron).

*Elven Lens:* Add Combat Art and/or Dancing skills; the perk Style Familiarity (any Sylvan War Lore style); the optional skills Naturalist, Stealth, and Survival (Woodlands); and at least two optional spells (or Imbuement Skills; see p. 19) appropriate to the style.

*Imperial Legion Lens:* Add Hiking skill, the Teamwork perk, the optional skill Soldier/TL3, and all other optional traits from Armatura. Any Hard techniques learned at -4 or worse, or any Average techniques learned at -5 or worse, become optional techniques.

*Michaelite Lens:* Add the cinematic skill Mental Strength; the optional skill Mind Block; and the perks Teamwork (style or the fighter’s Hand), Unusual Training (Mental Strength), and Special Exercises (Magic Resistance up to 5) (see p. 26), if allowed by the GM.

*Sahudese Lens:* Add Combat Art and Games (High War) (p. 27) skills, and the optional skill Savoir-Faire (Dojo or High Society) (p. 27).

Few cinematic feats are associated with the style, although stylists believe that keeping their knives in constant motion distracts and confuses the enemy. Most practitioners will be familiar with the (very relaxed) tournament rules, even if they do not regularly compete.

Alquetalle is taught freely at schools throughout Cardiel. Locating instructors is easiest in Jewish communities. The style is found in all three quarters of Tredroy, in some areas of al-Haz and al-Wazif, and in parts of Araterre. It’s not widely popular in Megalos or Caithness, although it has made the occasional appearance in the Arena (p. 6).

*Skills:* Games (Alquetalle); Karate; Main-Gauche; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Aggressive Parry (Karate); Arm Lock; Back Strike (Main-Gauche); Disarming (Wrestling); Elbow Strike; Feint (Karate or Main-Gauche); Knee Strike; Retained Weapon (Main-Gauche); Reverse Grip (Main-Gauche); Targeted Attack (Main-Gauche Swing/Neck); Targeted Attack (Main-Gauche Thrust/Vitals).

*Cinematic Skills:* Hypnotic Hands; Power Blow.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Attack (Karate or Main-Gauche); Dual-Weapon Defense (Karate or Main-Gauche) (p. 28).

*Perks:* Quick-Swap (Main-Gauche); Special Exercises (Striking ST 1); Style Adaptation (All).

### Optional Traits

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved Basic Speed.

*Advantages:* Enhanced Parry (Main-Gauche); Language (Ladino).

*Disadvantages:* Bloodlust; Overconfidence; Reputation (Brutality).

*Skills:* Fast-Draw (Knife); Thrown Weapon (Knife).

## ARALAISE ESTOC SCHOOL

4 points

Fencing styles (*Martial Arts*, pp. 156-159) were introduced to Yrth in the 16th century, when the resurgent Banestorm (*Banestorm*, p. 12) brought thousands of French immigrants to Araterre. Many schools of fencing have arisen or been imported since, and the country has a rich and varied tradition of the art (pp. 7-8).

Ytarria provides a unique environment for fencing, pitting Aralaise fencers against traditionally armored knights and warriors. Aralaise masters preparing their students for fighting armored foes in the early 17th century soon hit on the estoc (*Martial Arts*, p. 215), which had been imported along with fencing weapons by the Banestorm. The weapon had fallen out of favor, however, and the masters had to develop a style from scratch. They adapted rapier techniques and Megalan longsword fighting to new circumstances. The style they developed is more physical than traditional fencing. It moves from parries and disarms to grapples, kicks, locks, and throws to get the opponent unarmed and on the ground. The practitioner follows these moves with an All-Out Attack (Strong) or Committed Attack (Strong) to drive the sword through his target’s armor and dispatch him. Estoc fighters prefer a two-handed Defensive Grip (*Martial Arts*, p. 109), both for the improved parry and for more damage. Even so, they train to fight one-handed with either hand, to grab and shove the opponent if needed.

The estoc is used with Rapier skill. Stylists learn the Weapon Adaptation (Estoc to Rapier) perk as soon as they have spent one point in Rapier (*instead* of the usual 10 points in skills and techniques). Techniques grant the adaptability to disarm and floor an opponent – using the estoc or barehanded – and to deliver a killing thrust once the enemy is helpless.

Masters are said to be able to defeat multiple opponents, and to kill with a single blow.

The Estoc School is taught at most fencing academies in Araterre. It is unpopular among sailors and gentlemen, accustomed to plying their skills on fellow fencers on the streets of Sauvons. However, soldiers who plan to fight on the continent consider it essential.

*Skills:* Brawling; Judo; Rapier.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock (Judo); Armed Grapple (Rapier); Bind Weapon (Rapier); Choke Hold (Rapier); Close Combat (Rapier); Disarming (Judo or Rapier); Feint (Rapier); Kicking; Retain Weapon (Rapier); Targeted Attack (Rapier Thrust/Neck); Targeted Attack (Rapier Thrust/Vitals Chinks); Trip.

*Cinematic Skills:* Mental Strength; Power Blow.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Rapier) (p. 28); Timed Defense (Rapier).

*Perks:* Armor Familiarity (Judo); Grip Mastery (Estoc); Naval Training; Off-Hand Weapon Training (Rapier); Sure-Footed (Slippery); Sure-Footed (Uneven); Weapon Adaptation (Estoc to Rapier).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Rapier); Weapon Master (Estoc).

*Skills:* Acrobatics; Body Language; Broadsword; Cloak; Savoir-Faire; Swimming.

*Techniques:* Counterattack (Rapier); Elbow Strike; Knee Strike.

*Perks:* Weapon Bond.

## ARS CLEMENS

### 5 points

Developed in the 1960s by the Cardien Michaelites, this style is taught to agents in all three branches of the Order. Formally referred to as Wrastling, it is more generally known by its Latin nickname (literally “the Merciful Art,” a faintly ironic label coined by the Megalan underworld), even by its practitioners. Ars Clemens was developed at the direction of Prince Johannes of Alimar (p. 11), as part of his reforms of the Order’s practices. It may have been influenced by imported ideas from Earth law enforcement, along with fingerprinting and other modern police techniques.

Similar to Earth police styles (*Martial Arts*, pp. 144-145), Clemens uses nonlethal moves to disarm and restrain suspects. While the law in much of Ytarria is somewhat tolerant of the death of a fugitive, it is still preferable to bring him in for trial or questioning. The style also teaches *less-lethal* knife strikes and crippling attacks, since the team is likely to have access to magical healing. Hands are encouraged to train together, and the style includes tactics for five people working as a unit. In addition, as Michaelites frequently tackle mages and supernatural opponents, training is given in resisting mind-control effects, along with the basics of magical theory. Further methods include a repertoire of attacks to blind, silence, or distract spellcasting opponents.

Clemens stylists act decisively, engaging their opponents in close combat as soon as they can. They then use an Attack or Committed Attack (Determined) to grapple or disarm, followed up with techniques to control, distract, and disable. Speed is emphasized over caution, to prevent magical or supernatural suspects from using their powers. If unable to disarm or grapple

quickly, the investigator uses Targeted Attacks to the limbs or head to put the suspect down. Dirty tricks (p. B405 and *Martial Arts*, p. 76) are also popular.

Shortsword skill teaches the use of a baton at close quarters, while Mind Block and Mental Strength provide protection from hostile spells. Mages studying Clemens generally learn Body Control and Blocking spells, to complement the style’s techniques. In campaigns using Imbuement Skills (p. 19), Michaelites learn moves to stun targets or rob them of magic. Few cinematic elements are included in the style, which is designed to be practical and direct. Nonetheless, stories exist of heroic Michaelites who can tie up their enemies in combat or stun with a single strike.

Ars Clemens is taught by the Order of the Archangel Michael, although similar magician-fighting techniques are studied by the Balikites (*Banestorm*, p. 72) and by groups among the Underground Engineers (*Banestorm*, p. 54). Some Michaelites train in other styles, adding Ars Clemens’ magical-defense training (see *Using Styles From Martial Arts*, p. 13, for the Michaelite lens).

*Skills:* Brawling; Judo; Knife; Shortsword.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock (Judo); Choke Hold (Judo); Close Combat (Shortsword); Disarming (Judo or Shortsword); Ear Clap; Eye Rake; Targeted Attack (Brawling Punch/Jaw); Targeted Attack (Knife Swing/Hand); Targeted Attack (Shortsword Swing/Face).

*Cinematic Skills:* Mental Strength; Power Blow; Pressure Points.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Binding.

*Perks:* Special Exercises (Magic Resistance up to 5); Teamwork (Ars Clemens or the stylist’s Hand); Unusual Training (Mental Strength).

### Optional Traits

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved Will and Basic Speed.

*Advantages:* Magery or Magic Resistance.

*Skills:* Body Language; Knot-Tying; Mind Block; Thaumatology; Thrown Weapon (Knife).

*Spells:* Clumsiness; Hinder; Itch; Pain; Reflect; Rooted Feet; Spasm; Strike Dumb; Ward.

*Perks:* Blocking Spell Mastery (p. 25); Combat Casting (p. 25); Special Exercises (Magic Resistance, Improved, up to 3).

## BATTLECRAFT

### 6 points

All young dwarves in Zarak and the Whitehoods train in the use of the axe or maul, and many serve in the border guard. However, skill at arms is always valued after craftsmanship by the dwarves. Although career warriors are respected and admired, they are assumed to have failed in their study. The Battle Brothers (which includes several women) are a notable exception, regarding war *itself* as a craft. They find the permanence of the Eternal (*Banestorm*, p. 81) in the knowledge passed down from master to student, honed and perfected over the years. Other dwarves see the sect as perverse, dismissing them as *oh’kharzain* (“non-crafters”); a few Brothers wear the slur with pride.

For all that, Battlecraft combines study of the axe’s use in battle with study of the weapon’s manufacture. A Brother must create his own axe as part of his training.



Thus, practitioners often become skilled weapon-smiths, providing ambitious Brothers a path to promotion in spite of the sect's stigma. Beautiful and distinctive weapons are valued, and Brothers carve runes and patterns onto the blades and hafts.

The style, intended for guarding the tunnels into the dwarves' underground cities, centers around holding ground. Stylists fight defensively with axe and shield. Close-combat training enables them to maintain position when crowded, and to fight in narrow, low-ceilinged passages. The Brother spends the majority of the time in *gaurkhan* ("staying feet") stance, defending, Evaluating, and getting a sense of his opponent's weaknesses. When engaging, he keeps his defenses up, avoiding All-Out or Committed Attacks. If he is confident of a quick kill without exposing himself to counterattack, he changes to *teilkhan* ("moving feet"), stepping to the enemy and committing himself to putting him down as quickly as possible. In either stance, Brothers never retreat. They shove with the shield (*Martial Arts*, p. 112) to keep enemies at arm's length. They also use knee strikes, hilt punches, and close-quarters axe strikes where that fails. A related style teaches primarily unarmed techniques; see *Unarmed Battlecraft*, below.

Stylists study Forbearance (p. 27), a philosophy arising from the dwarven take on the Eternal (*Banestorm*, p. 81) that pursues the permanence of the self. They advocate self-control, endurance, and stoicism, extending their training to Breath Control and Meditation. Even among mainstream dwarves, hushed tales are told of the Brothers' extraordinary feats of strength and fortitude. Mages studying the style may incorporate Symbol Magic (*GURPS Magic*, p. 205, and *GURPS Thaumatology*, p. 168) directly into their weapons.

Battlecraft is taught freely in the dwarven communities under the mountains. While a stylist outspoken enough about the sect's unusual views to be considered a malcontent may find himself adventuring on the surface for a time (*Banestorm*, p. 160), it would be unusual for a non-dwarf to be offered training, unless he had managed to get himself accepted as a citizen of a dwarf city.

**Skills:** Armoury/TL3 (Melee Weapons); Axe/Mace; Brawling; Breath Control; Shield.

**Techniques:** Close Combat (Axe/Mace); Hammer Fist; Head Butt; Hook (Axe/Mace); Knee Strike; Retain Weapon (Axe/Mace); Targeted Attack (Axe/Mace Swing/Arm); Targeted Attack (Axe/Mace Swing/Leg Joint).

**Cinematic Skills:** Body Control; Breaking Blow; Immovable Stance; Mental Strength; Power Blow.

**Cinematic Techniques:** Dual-Weapon Attack (Axe/Mace or Shield); Dual-Weapon Defense (Axe/Mace or Shield) (p. 28).

**Perks:** Shield-Wall Training; Special Exercises (Arm ST 1); Special Exercises (DR 1 with Tough Skin); Sure-Footed (Uneven); Weapon Bond.

### Optional Traits

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Block; Enhanced Parry (Axe); Fearlessness; Hard to Kill; High Pain Threshold; Weapon Master (Axe/Mace and Shield).

**Skills:** Crossbow; Forced Entry; Meditation; Philosophy (Forbearance) (p. 27); Smith/TL3 (Iron); Sumo Wrestling; Symbol Drawing.

## Unarmed Battlecraft

4 points

All Battle Brothers learn shoving and striking as part of their training, but those who *prefer* unarmed training to the axe are deemed eccentric even by the sect's standards. Unarmed Battlecraft follows the same philosophy as the axe style: fight defensively, drive your opponents back, and hold your position. *Gaurkhan* and *teilkhan* stances are taught. In fact, the two styles are similar enough that Style Familiarity (Battlecraft) applies to both; a fighter with training in both need only take the perk once.

**Skills:** Breath Control; Karate; Sumo Wrestling.

**Techniques:** Aggressive Parry; Disarming (Karate); Exotic Hand Strike; Head Butt; Knee Strike; Push Kick; Targeted Attack (Karate Kick/Leg Joint); Uppercut.

**Cinematic Skills:** Body Control; Breaking Blow; Immovable Stance; Mental Strength; Power Blow.

**Cinematic Techniques:** Dual-Weapon Defense (Karate) (p. 28); Lethal Strike (Karate); Targeted Attack (Karate Lethal Strike/Vitals).

**Perks:** Power Grappling; Special Exercises (DR 1 with Tough Skin); Special Exercises (Striking ST 1); Sure-Footed (Uneven).

### Optional Traits

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Bare Hands); Fearlessness; Hard to Kill; High Pain Threshold; Trained by a Master.

**Skills:** Axe/Mace; Meditation; Philosophy (Forbearance) (p. 27).

## BERSERKERGANG

6 points

The feared berserkers of the Nomad Lands believe they spiritually transform into bears when they fight, entering a mindless frenzy and gaining strength from the gods. Fierce and blood-thirsty in their rage, the warriors are valued as much for their ability to demoralize and frighten the enemy as for their might in battle. They see themselves as holy men in their own right, acknowledging druids and shamans as equals. Members of the cult kneel to no king or chieftain. They accept no payment but plunder for their aid in battle, and are respected throughout the peninsula as honorable, courageous, and spiritual.

The style revolves wholly around attacking, declining defenses to instead put one's enemies down *quickly*. Stylists fight with an axe or sword in each hand. A knife in a boot or scabbarded on the thigh is the final resort, and berserkers learn to draw knives reflexively. Bear-Shirt fighters deliberately go berserk (p. B124) before entering combat, then All-Out Attack every turn, favoring the Determined and Strong options. They resort to the Feint option (to Beat, *Martial Arts*, p. 100) against opponents with shields, or Double (possibly with Rapid Strike) when outnumbered. Berserkers are also likely to use extra effort in combat (p. B357 and *Martial Arts*, p. 131).

Berserk is *required* to learn the style, and may be acquired in play. At the GM's discretion, the stylist can "trade in" the points from the disadvantage to learn the style. The Rage Control perk (p. 26) improves the stylist's ability to channel his fury. Some Berserkers take the Berserk disadvantage with the Battle Rage enhancement (p. B124) *instead*, but are regarded as dangerous even by their fellow Berserkers.

Knife and Fast-Draw (Knife) allow a quick substitution when disarmed. Brawling is taught for when the knife is lost, and for elbow, head, and knee strikes when armed. Cinematic techniques enable greater bloodshed. In addition, high-fantasy Berserkers are often truly blessed by the Horned God, gaining supernatural protection or strength, with the Spirit power modifier (not Chi); see *Powers and Power Sources* (p. 24) for details.

Berserkergang is taught throughout the Nomad Lands, although there are relatively few practitioners, due less to the difficulty of the training than to the recklessness demanded by the style. A Celtic-flavored variation, *Riastrad*, centers on the Spear skill. Among the Sufi dervishes in al-Haz, an ecstatic style, *Fana*, teaches Dancing and Broadsword.

**Skills:** Axe/Mace; Brawling; Broadsword; Fast-Draw (Knife); Knife.

**Techniques:** Back Strike (Axe/Mace or Broadsword); Hook (Axe/Mace); Retain Weapon (Axe/Mace or Broadsword).

**Cinematic Techniques:** Dual-Weapon Attack (Axe/Mace, Broadsword, or Knife); Whirlwind Attack (Axe/Mace or Broadsword).

**Perks:** Off-Hand Weapon Training (Axe/Mace or Broadsword); Rage Control (p. 26); Special Exercises (DR 1 with Tough Skin); Special Exercises (Extra HP up to +100% of ST).

### Optional Traits

**Attributes:** Improved ST.

**Secondary Characteristics:** Improved HP.

**Advantages:** Rapid Healing; Reputation (For being courageous and spiritual; Northmen; All the Time).

**Disadvantages:** Bad Temper; Bloodlust; Code of Honor (Northman's); Vow (Never back out of a fight).

**Skills:** Boating/TL3; Intimidation; Running; Survival (Plains); Swimming; Theology (Norse or Old Religion); Thrown Weapon (Axe); Wrestling.

**Techniques:** Back Kick; Close Combat (Axe/Mace or Broadsword); Elbow Strike; Knee Strike.

**Perks:** Supernatural Warrior (DR up to 10 with Only When Berserk, p. 25, and Spirit) (p. 26); Supernatural Warrior (Extra HP up to +200% of ST with Only When Berserk and Spirit); Supernatural Warrior (Striking ST up to +100% of ST with Only When Berserk and Spirit).

## DRAGON FIGHTING

### 6 points

Reptile men have few friends among the other races, regarding them as effete and corrupt. As a rule, only dragons are treated with any degree of respect. For a feared band of reptiles deep in the Great Desert, this respect crosses the line into reverence.

The Dragon Cult *worship* dragons as the gods and ancestors of reptile men, identifying Bozdaag (*Banestorm*, p. 82) as the "Dragon King." The Cult believes that the ruined cities under the desert are the remnants of Bozdaag's empire, which once covered Ytarria. The empire was destroyed by elven trickery, with the reptile men banished to Gabrook by corrupt magic. The Banestorm, the Cult claims, was created (or wrested from the elves) by the dragons to call their descendents home and rebuild their empire once more.

The Cult's shaman-kings seek to restore the empire, starting with bloody wars to bring other reptile-man tribes into the fold.

They have also been raiding human and orc communities on their borders. A few dragons work with the Cult, receiving the reptile men's tribute and directing their violence to their own ends, although whether they inspired the Cult or are merely exploiting it is known only to themselves.

Eschewing weapons as affectations of the weak, the Cult trains its fighters to emulate dragons, fighting with tooth and claw as their "ancestors" do. Dragon fighters climb to high ground and drop on their enemies from above. They roar in battle to frighten and confuse. Dedicated warriors can leap great distances, hypnotize their victims, and strike with astonishing power. A few of the most blessed are granted wings and the ability to breathe flame by their dragon "gods."

In battle, dragon fighters attack by surprise from behind or above the target, taking All-Out Attack (Strong or Double) on the first turn to do the greatest damage possible. The general tactic is to slam or take down the target and then bite, claw, and rake while on the floor (see p. 28 for related techniques). The stylist focuses wholly on one enemy at a time. If outnumbered, dragon fighters withdraw, fighting defensively and scratching (p. 28) to frighten and disorient.

Dragon fighters value self-sufficiency. They learn survival and hunting as well as combat and ambush skills. A Great Vow (-15 points) to use no weapons is *required* to learn this style. It is a central tenet of Bozdaag worship, and especially of the Dragon Cult. Cinematic skills imitate some of the powers of dragons, while high-fantasy fighters with dragon Patrons may be magically altered by their masters, gaining wings and fiery breath.

*Malignant mists and spurts of fire flickered red  
in the vaporous clouds that rose boiling above his  
head, so fierce was his fury.*

— *Táin Bó Cuailnge*

The Dragon Cult in the Great Desert teaches Dragon Fighting, but clawing and biting styles abound among reptile men. Other clawed and fanged races have similar styles: Sphinxes (*Banestorm*, p. 198) grab their opponents and drop them from a height before closing to use claws, while trolls (*Banestorm*, p. 199) ambush from natural cover.

**Skills:** Brawling; Climbing; Intimidation; Stealth; Wrestling.

**Techniques:** Attack from Above (Brawling); Bite (p. 28); Drop Kick; Ground Fighting (Wrestling); Rake (p. 28); Scratch (p. 28); Targeted Attack (Brawling Bite/Neck); Targeted Attack (Brawling Scratch/Face).

**Cinematic Skills:** Flying Leap; Hypnotic Hands; Kiai; Lizard Climb; Power Blow.

**Cinematic Techniques:** Backbreaker; Dual-Weapon Attack (Brawling).

**Perks:** Ground Guard (Wrestling); Sure-Footed (Sand); Technique Mastery (Bite).

### Optional Traits

**Advantages:** Patron (Dragon).

**Skills:** Acrobatics; Camouflage; Hypnotism; Jumping; Naturalist; Running; Survival (Desert); Theology (Bozdaag); Tracking.

*Techniques:* Attack from Above (Wrestling); Ground Fighting (Brawling).

*Perks:* Supernatural Warrior (Burning Attack up to 3d with Costs Fatigue, 2 FP; Jet; and Magical) (p. 26); Supernatural Warrior (Flight with Magical and Winged).

## HARMONY

### 6 points

The martial art found among halfling communities across Ytarria has no formal name, and is taught in no school. It surfaces from time to time in townships throughout human lands, wherever the little folk find themselves oppressed and abused. One day a halfling stranger of indeterminate age, wearing a battered blue cloak and walking with a stick, comes into town and asks for a place to stay. On the first day, he helps with tasks, fixing a fence or tending to a hurt sheep. By the third day, he's teaching the young men and women of the village how to defend themselves. He stays for a month or two, training and guiding his students. Then, he leaves as mysteriously as he arrived. The teacher goes by many names, although he is said to be the same man every time. Legend identifies him as Saint Helbus (p. 11), returned from Heaven to protect his fellows, while a few halfling pagans claim that it's the trickster-god Heclan (*Banestorm*, p. 83).

Harmony is designed for fighting a larger opponent, incorporating locks, throws, and takedowns to overcome the advantages of size and strength. The stylist's preferred weapon is a walking stick, generally made of fire-hardened oak, used to lock, cripple, and disarm. The style, like the philosophy (p. 27) with which it is taught, is reactive, tending to Wait and Evaluate maneuvers until the enemy attacks, and then converting a parry into a grapple or throw, or interrupting the attack with a crippling strike. When attacking aggressively, stylists use their natural stealth to do so by surprise, or the halflings' cultural talent for thrown weapons to soften up the enemy with hurled stones or knives. They then close and land strikes to the wrists and ankles before using takedowns and locks to disable.

The training is imparted as part of the Harmony philosophy, which instills the virtue of usefulness. As such, stylists also learn crafts and practical skills. The master rarely stays in any community long enough for his students to qualify for the Trained by a Master advantage. Nonetheless, legends tell of his feats, knocking over opponents many times his size and fading entirely from view.

The mysterious blue-cloaked master (or collection of masters) teaches Harmony wherever halflings suffer at the hands of human lords. It has yet to take hold in general society. However, students pass on the lore to the deserving, and someone may encounter the odd halfling – or gnome, or even goblin – schooled in the style.

*Skills:* Judo; Philosophy (Harmony) (p. 27); Smallsword; Stealth; Throwing.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock (Judo or Smallsword); Armed Grapple (Swordsword); Disarming (Judo or Smallsword); Targeted Attack (Swordsword Swing/Face); Targeted Attack (Swordsword Swing/Foot); Targeted Attack (Swordsword Swing/Hand); Trip.

*Cinematic Skills:* Invisibility Art; Light Walk; Power Blow; Pressure Points; Push; Throwing Art.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Attack (Swordsword); Dual-Weapon Defense (Swordsword) (p. 28); Roll with Blow.

*Perks:* Off-Hand Weapon Training (Swordsword); Weapon Adaptation (Shortsword to Swordsword).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Ambidexterity; Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Bare Hands or Swordsword); Weapon Master (Swordsword or Thrown Weapons).

*Skills:* Acrobatics; Animal Handling (Ovines); Bow; Carpentry; Farming/TL3; First Aid/TL3; Naturalist; Pharmacy/TL3 (Herbal); Sling; Teaching; Theology (Christian); Veterinary/TL3.

*Techniques:* Choke Hold (Swordsword); Leg Grapple; Leg Lock; Targeted Attack (Throwing Attack/Face); Targeted Attack (Throwing Attack/Neck).

## IMPERIAL LEGION TRAINING

As with their Roman namesake, much of the strength of the Megalan legions (pp. 6-7 and *Banestorm*, p. 87) lies in heavy infantry: a formation of shield-carrying spearmen to take and hold ground, halberdiers to break up enemy lines, and light horse scouts and lines of crossbowmen to support them. Combined with dedicated cadres of wizards and support from knightly cavalry, these legions are the reason Megalos has dominated northern Ytarria for the last six centuries.

Light horse scouts learn a style identical to Armatura Equestris. For halberdiers, use Glaive Fighting with the perk Form Mastery (Halberd). For spearmen, use Sojutsu with Shield skill, the cinematic technique Dual-Weapon Defense (Shield) (p. 28), and the perk Shield-Wall Training. In all cases, apply the Imperial legion lens (p. 13). Crossbowmen and wizards take the styles outlined below.

See pp. 29-30 for more on a legionary's daily life and training. Other levies and mercenary armies exist in Ytarria and offer similar training regimes, although few have the organization and discipline of the legions.

### Crossbow Training

#### 4 points

Crossbow troops are more expensive than archers to equip, but quicker and cheaper to train. Crossbowmen become competent in a month and seasoned shooters in half a year. They shoot more slowly than archers, so they train to load and loose as quickly as possible for volleys. Like archers, soldiers with crossbows line up behind or among infantry formations and inflict damage upon the enemy before engagement. They continue to shoot to distract the enemy during the charge. Outside of formation, crossbowmen take advantage of the weapon's portability, loading in a secure position before advancing and shooting from a kneeling or lying stance. Crossbowmen are also used as snipers. Since they are paid a bonus for killing enemy knights and officers, many learn to strike weaknesses in armor.

*Skills:* Crossbow; Crossbow Sport; Fast-Draw (Arrow).

*Techniques:* Retain Weapon (Crossbow).

*Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting; Zen Archery.

*Perks:* Quick Reload (Hand-Drawn Crossbow) (p. 25); Special Exercises (Arm ST 1) up to three times, allowing Arm ST 3; Strongbow\*; Sure-Footed (Slippery).

### Optional Traits

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved Per.



*Advantages:* Acute Vision; Fit; Heroic Archer (Crossbow) (p. 23); Weapon Master (Crossbow).

*Skills:* Armoury/TL3 (Missile Weapons); Brawling; Camouflage; Hiking; Knife; Shortsword; Soldier/TL3; Stealth.

*Techniques:* Targeted Attack (Crossbow Shot/Face); Targeted Attack (Crossbow Shot/Neck Chinks); Targeted Attack (Crossbow Shot/Vitals Chinks).

*Perks:* Weapon Bond.

\* For cocking crossbows. See *Power-Ups 2: Perks* (p. 7).

## Field-Wizard Training

10 points

Wizards in the legion operate at both tactical and strategic levels in battle. A coven of war wizards casts ceremonial magic to rain fire on enemy formations, control the weather, and modify terrain. Meanwhile, field wizards in the lines support the troops with healing, countermagic, and barrier spells. Most crucially, field wizards provide communication, using Mind-Sending to direct the war wizards' efforts and keep commanders in touch with soldiers. They act as the Yrth equivalent of radio-operators and forward observers. Both the tactical uses of battle magic and many of the more spectacular spells wielded by war wizards in combat originate at the Templar College of Battle Magic in Azer, in northern Megalos (*Banestorm*, p. 96).

A minimum of Magery 0 is *required* for this style. Field wizards wear armor and carry weapons – a staff and a robe are sure ways to attract attention from the enemy – and learn to use them. They also train in offensive and defensive spells, and in techniques to use magic under stress and in combat. As a rule, though, they keep out of direct fighting, offering magical support and coordinating with field commanders.

*Note:* This is effectively a basic *magical style* rather than a martial art. Those with access to *Thaumatology: Magical Styles* may wish to expand it into a full magical style, with spell lists and secret spells, and an associated style for war wizards.

*Skills:* Hiking; Mind Block; Shield; Shortsword; and the spells Mind-Reading, Mind-Sending, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, and Truthsayer.

*Techniques:* Feint (Sword); Retain Weapon (Sword); Targeted Attack (Sword Thrust/Vitals).

*Cinematic Skills:* Mental Strength.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Shield or Sword) (p. 28).

*Perks:* Blocking Spell Mastery (p. 25); Combat Casting (p. 25); Shield-Wall Training; Special Exercises (Compartmentalized Mind 1 with Limited, Magic Only and No Mental Separation; see p. 23).

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Energy Reserve (Magical); Fearlessness; Magery.

*Skills:* Engineer/TL3 (Combat); Riding (Horse); Soldier/TL3; Tactics; Thaumatology.

*Spells:* Complex Illusion; Minor Healing; Ward; any damaging spell; any Wall spell; and all prerequisites.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Attack (Sword or any Innate Attack skill); Dual-Weapon Defense (any Blocking spell).

# SYLVAN WAR LORE

Sylvan War Lore is a blanket term for a family of elven fighting disciplines (p. 5). Although most prominent for the bow, sword, and staff, they also include a wide range of other armed and unarmed styles. Formally, no distinction is made between different weapons and fighting styles within War Lore. The philosophy is that warfare should always develop naturally to meet the warrior's needs. Therefore, all forms are aspects of a single pursuit. In practice, each style carries its own set of techniques and tactics, and its own Style Familiarity perk. That said, since practitioners of different War Lore styles often train and practice together, familiarity with multiple styles is common.

Grace and aesthetics figure prominently in War Lore, which appears flashy and impractical to many humans. Stylists employ dance and acrobatics, and use elegant and ornate weapons. The long lives of elves allow them to learn techniques at exceptional levels, making even the most ridiculous penalties bearable. Elves being a magical race, War Lore also incorporates spells and magical powers (in particular, see *Imbuement Skills*, p. 19), and practitioners often use enchanted weapons. Styles vary in tactics and maneuvers, although Feints and Deceptive Attacks are common. Surprise attacks from ambush take advantage of the elves' knowledge of the wild.

Since the fourth century, the most martial elven community has been the Defenders of the Shaded Woodlands (more commonly known as dark elves; see p. 31 and *Banestorm*, p. 18). The greatest Lorists to this day are members of the cult. However, most elves study battle for at least part of their long lives, and mainstream elves sometimes teach War Lore to friendly outsiders, in particular the centaurs (p. 20).

## Bow Lore

7 points

Elven archery uses the same methods in war as in hunting, targeting individual enemies and sniping from cover. Bow Lorists pursue precision over volume, and are happy to spend minutes preparing a single decisive shot. The stylist chooses a target, stalks him, and Aims for the maximum time before making a lethal or disabling All-Out Attack (Determined). The GM may wish to adapt Precision Aiming from *GURPS Tactical Shooting* (pp. 26-27) or *GURPS Gun Fu* (p. 12), substituting the Hawk Vision, Predict Weather, and Tell Position spells for technological devices.

Against dodging targets, they shoot rapidly, making Prediction Shots (*Martial Arts*, p. 121). If caught in battle, practitioners use their environment defensively, keeping to the treetops to stay out of range.

Naturalist and Tracking are used in hunting. Climbing, Running, and Stealth skills are used in both hunting and sniping to get into position and shoot from ambush. Acrobatics allows the stylist to jump and tumble in the trees in combat – or to shoot while swinging or hanging from branches, with Acrobatic Attacks (*Martial Arts*, p. 107). Bow Lorists learn spells and cinematic skills that aid in concealment and improve accuracy. They frequently learn Imbuement Skills (p. 19).

*Skills:* Bow; Bow Art; Climbing; Fast-Draw (Arrow); Running; Stealth.

*Techniques:* Targeted Attack (Bow Shot/Eye); Targeted Attack (Bow Shot/Foot); Targeted Attack (Bow Shot/Hand); Targeted Attack (Bow Shot/Vitals).

*Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting; Invisibility Art; Light Walk; Pressure Points (Bow); Zen Archery.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Attack (Bow); Pressure-Point Strike (Bow).

*Perks:* Special Exercises (Arm ST 1) up to three times, allowing Arm ST 3; Strongbow.

### Optional Traits

*Secondary Characteristics:* Improved Per.

*Advantages:* Acute Vision; Fit; Heroic Archer; Magery; Weapon Master (Bow).

*Skills:* Acrobatics; Armoury/TL3 (Missile Weapons); Breath Control; Camouflage; Naturalist; Survival (Woodlands); Tracking.

*Spells:* Deflect Missile; Hawk Vision; Invisibility; Walk Through Plants; and all prerequisites.

*Techniques:* Close Combat (Bow); Retain Weapon (Bow).

*Perks:* Style Familiarity (any Sylvan War Lore style); Weapon Bond.

### Staff Lore

6 points

The staff is the preferred melee weapon for many elves, being a simple implement built from natural materials and a central tool in magic. It's widely used by the wardens who guard forest boundaries. As a result, most humans who have heard of Sylvan War Lore assume it to be primarily a staff style.

Staff Lore is aggressive, seeking to drive opponents back or keep them off balance. The stylist attacks from ambush if possible, and fights in constant motion, using the staff to push off and vault over obstacles. Move and Attack and Committed Attack are the signature maneuvers of the style, along with frequent Feints and Deceptive Attacks. Push Kicks and staff shoves (*Martial Arts*, p. 112) control the opponent's movements. Disarms, locks, and takedowns allow the stylist to disable enemies without killing them.

Staff Lorists use Acrobatics for staff-vaults and tumbles, and Stealth to sneak up on enemies. True masters are said to be invisible and silent until striking, and to be able to hurl enemies great distances or cripple them with precise strikes. Mage practitioners carry magical staves – or train to attune mundane staves to themselves – to extend the reach of Melee spells. Several magical Imbuement Skills (below) also suit the style.

*Skills:* Acrobatics; Karate; Staff; Staff Art; Stealth.

*Techniques:* Back Kick; Back Strike (Staff); Disarming (Staff); Feint (Acrobatics or Staff); Kicking; Push Kick; Sweep (Staff).

*Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting; Invisibility Art; Light Walk; Power Blow; Pressure Points (Staff); Push (Staff).

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Staff) (p. 28); Grand Disarm (Staff); Pole-Vault Kick; Pressure-Point Strike (Staff); Roll with Blow; Timed Defense (Staff); Whirlwind Attack (Staff).

*Perks:* Acrobatic Feints; Combat Vaulting (Quarterstaff) (p. 25); Form Mastery (Staff); Grip Mastery (Staff); Staff Attunement (p. 26).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Enhanced Parry (Staff); Fit; Magery; Weapon Master (Staff).

## Imbuement Skills

**GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements** introduces Imbue, a new advantage that allows a character to enhance unarmed or weapon attacks with exotic damage or special attack options. In a high-fantasy *Banestorm* campaign, Imbue requires the Supernatural Warrior perk (p. 26) and is generally taken with the Magical power modifier (see *Powers and Power Sources*, p. 24). The relevant power Talents add directly to Imbuement Skills, which may also be affected by mana level, local sanctity, or the equivalent.

Imbuement Skills are well-suited to Yrth styles taught by magic-using organizations or to blessed or magical warriors. Such training is common in Sylvan War Lore. Here are some specific recommendations. See **Power-Ups 1** for skill descriptions.

*Ars Clemens:* Strike of Negation (Unarmed); Stupefying Blow (Unarmed).

*Sylvan Bow Lore:* Arching Shot (Bow); Binding Shot (Bow); Crippling Blow (Bow); Fatiguing Strike (Bow); Homing Weapon (Bow); Multi-Shot (Bow); Penetrating Strike (Bow).

*Sylvan Staff Lore:* Forceful Blow (Staff); Stupefying Blow (Staff); Telescoping Weapon (Staff).

*Sylvan Sword Lore:* Annihilating Weapon (Broadsword); Burning Strike (Broadsword); Dazzling Display (Broadsword).

*Skills:* Camouflage; Naturalist; Running; Survival (Woodlands).

*Techniques:* Arm Lock (Staff); Armed Grapple (Staff); Dual-Weapon Defense (any Blocking spell).

*Spells:* Haste; Shield; Total Paralysis; Walk Through Plants; and all prerequisites.

*Perks:* Style Familiarity (any Sylvan War Lore style); Weapon Bond.

### Sword Lore

6 points

Believed to date back to the ancient elven culture whose ruins pepper Ytarria (*Banestorm*, p. 174), Sword Lore may predate Sylvan War Lore itself, if not every style still practiced on Yrth! Stylists use thrusting bastard swords (p. B271 and p. B274). The weapons are ornately decorated, and many are heirlooms and incredibly old. They are frequently fine, very fine, or magical.

The style emphasizes strikes and sweeps over armed grapples and binding, preferring to maintain distance and remain mobile. The sword is held in a defensive grip (*Martial Arts*, p. 109) initially, shifting to a regular grip when committing to an attack. Practitioners are highly mobile, dancing and spinning to mislead or disorient enemies. They circle their opponents, Waiting and Evaluating. When they see an opening, they use Move and Attack or Committed Attack.

Stylists learn both Broadsword and Two-Handed Sword – regular and Art forms – to handle the blade, and Dancing for evasion and Feints. Cinematic masters leap and bound around the battlefield, attacking several opponents at once. Sword-Lore mages cast spells to confuse and distract their rivals, reinforcing their Feints and Deceptive Attacks. Imbuement Skills (above) allow practitioners to shear through enemies' weapons, dazzle foes with their flashing blades, and even wreath their swords in fire.

*Skills:* Broadsword; Broadsword Art; Dancing; Two-Handed Sword; Two-Handed Sword Art.

*Techniques:* Back Strike (Two-Handed Sword); Counterattack (Two-Handed Sword); Disarming (Two-Handed Sword); Evade (Dancing); Feint (Broadsword, Dancing, or Two-Handed Sword); Targeted Attack (Two-Handed Sword Swing/Arm); Targeted Attack (Two-Handed Sword Swing/Neck).

*Cinematic Skills:* Blind Fighting; Flying Leap; Power Blow.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Two-Handed Sword) (p. 28); Flying Lunge (Two-Handed Sword); Timed Defense (Two-Handed Sword); Whirlwind Attack (Two-Handed Sword).

*Perks:* Dancing Feints; Grip Mastery (Bastard Sword); Skill Adaptation (Evade defaults to Dancing); Special Exercises (Compartmentalized Mind 1 with Limited, Magic Only and No Mental Separation; see p. 23); Sure-Footed (Uneven); Weapon Bond.

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Two-Handed Sword); Magery; Weapon Master (Bastard Sword).

*Skills:* Armoury/TL3 (Melee Weapons); Camouflage; Fast-Draw (Sword or Two-Handed Sword); Naturalist; Running; Stealth; Survival (Woodlands); Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (any Blocking spell); Reverse Grip (Two-Handed Sword).

*Spells:* Complex Illusion; Fear; Haste; Shield; and all prerequisites.

*Perks:* Style Familiarity (any Sylvan War Lore style).

## CENTAUR BATTLE LORE

8 points

Whether Centaur Battle Lore is a Loren'dilian import influenced by the elves, or a post-Banestorm creation developed with elven assistance, is uncertain. Either way, this widespread centaur spear-fighting style is now firmly established as a branch of Sylvan War Lore. Practitioners train with elven fighters, and often study other branches of the Lore, especially Bow Lore.

Lorists fight with the long spear, sometimes carrying two or three javelins to throw before engaging. Stylists use every part of the weapon, relying on the Spear and Staff skills to wield the spear in offense and defense. Centaur Battle Lore favors thrusting attacks. Thus, stylists often open with Move and Attack for higher damage (*Martial Arts*, p. 107), using extra effort to make a Heroic Charge (*Martial Arts*, p. 131). Elven influence on the style includes an emphasis on aesthetics, and on Feints and Deceptive Attacks.

*Skills:* Brawling; Running; Spear; Spear Art; Staff; Staff Art; Thrown Weapon (Spear).

*Techniques:* Back Kick; Feint (Spear); Retain Weapon (Spear); Sweep (Spear); Targeted Attack (Spear Thrust/Face); Targeted Attack (Spear Thrust/Vitals).

*Cinematic Skills:* Invisibility Art; Light Walk; Mental Strength; Power Blow.

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Staff) (p. 28).

*Perks:* Form Mastery (Spear); Grip Mastery (Staff); Off-Hand Weapon Training (Spear); Skill Adaptation (Back Kick defaults to Brawling).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Staff); Weapon Master (Spear).

*Skills:* Camouflage; Lance; Naturalist; Stealth; Theology (Eternal).

*Techniques:* Armed Grapple (Spear); Hook (Spear).

## TAHTIB

6 points

Imported to Yrth by Egyptian Bedouin, *al-Tahtib* is an ancient staff-fighting form still practiced among the nomadic tribes of the Wazifi steppes. The *asaya* or *nabut* is a wooden staff, used by herders to drive sheep or hardings. Tahtib offers training in how to turn it against wild animals or bandits, and to use it in honor-duels and the frequent challenges among the tribesmen. Generally fought on foot with a 5'- to 7'-long staff, the style also teaches practitioners how to fight on horseback with an 8'- to 10'-long pole (use the long staff, *Martial Arts*, p. 230).

Contests with the *asaya* are an immensely popular feature at the Great Games (p. 35 and *Banestorm*, p. 133). Tribesmen arriving for the Games hold impromptu competitions among their caravans for days before the festivities formally begin.

Whether mounted or on foot, Tahtib emphasizes mobility. Combatants slowly circle each other, standing side-on with staves raised. They take Wait or Evaluate maneuvers, and look for openings in one another's defenses. Light, exploratory strikes (Defensive Attacks and Feints, often with the Deceptive Attack option) are alternated with sudden, full-force swings, seeking to knock the opponent over (Committed Attacks, often with the Two-Handed Sword skill). Techniques favor rapid, flashy moves over clinches and close-combat tactics. Masters are said to be capable of feats of immense strength, hurling their opponents great distances.

Tahtib is also a dance, a form of ritualized combat with light staves, accompanied by the *tahvol* drum and the *mizmar* pipe.

The Wazifi tribesmen take it extremely seriously, as a test of strength and ability. A related "women's dance," *Raqs al-Asaya* – based on Broadsword Art, Dancing, and Sex Appeal – is performed for titillation, by dancers in revealing clothing with short shepherd's crooks.

Tahtib is most widely taught among the nomadic herdsman of the Wazifi steppes. While it is by no means regarded as a secret, outsiders may find themselves going to great lengths to prove their strength and courage to a master before being taken on as a student. Teachers in al-Haz and Cardiel are harder to find, but likely to be less belligerent.

*Skills:* Dancing; Riding; Staff; Staff Art; Two-Handed Sword.

*Techniques:* Feint (Staff); Hands-Free Riding; Retain Weapon (Staff); Spinning Strike (Staff); Staying Seated; Sweep (Staff); Targeted Attack (Staff Swing/Leg); Targeted Attack (Two-Handed Sword Swing/Face).

*Cinematic Skills:* Power Blow; Push (Staff).

*Cinematic Techniques:* Dual-Weapon Defense (Staff) (p. 28); Timed Defense (Staff); Whirlwind Attack (Staff).

*Perks:* Form Mastery (Staff); Grip Mastery (Staff); Sure-Footed (Sand).



## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Animal Empathy; Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Staff); Weapon Master (Staff).

*Disadvantages:* Code of Honor (Arab); Overconfidence.

*Skills:* Animal Handling (Equines or Ovines); Brawling; Broadsword; Musical Instrument (Drum or Pipe); Singing; Theology (Islam); Two-Handed Sword Art; Veterinary/TL3; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Disarming (Staff).



## ULVINGER FIGHTING

4 points

Many shapeshifters exist on Yrth, but most are reviled, and many fear their own natures. Few have the willpower and the patience to truly master their powers. The werewolves of the Ulving tribe (p. 9) are among the latter. They have for many generations trained themselves to change shape quickly and reliably. Their fighting style exploits this ability, fluidly shifting between forms to take advantage of the strengths of each. Training emphasizes unarmed strikes and grapples; Ulvings rarely carry weapons, as they cannot use them in wolf form. Stylists employ the shapeshifting power itself to unbalance and confuse their opponents. Fighting as a pack is valued; children are placed in peer groups, who train together from a young age and are rarely separated.

Ulvings take time to surround an opponent before engaging, to take advantage of Pack Tactics (p. 25). Having engaged, they favor Attack and Defensive Attack, often making Deceptive Attacks. They use frequent Feints. In human form, stylists attempt grapples, takedowns, and disarms. In wolf form, Ulvings make bite attacks. They target the tendons in the legs to bring the opponent down, followed by the neck. Shapeshifting allows the fighter to parry in human form and dodge in wolf form, in addition to aiding mobility and giving bonuses to defenses (see *Shape Mastery*, p. 26, and *Shapeshifting in Combat*, p. 26).

All stylists have Alternate Form (with the modifiers listed under *Shapeshifting*, pp. 23-24). Posture-based techniques allow the fighter to take his opponent off his feet and control him, and Targeted Attacks let him bite for more effect.

Stealth aids in ambushes. Few cinematic skills or techniques are associated with the style, although Ulvings are reputed to possess extraordinary stealth.

Ulvinger Fighting is taught only in the Ulving tribe in the far north of the Nomad Lands. However, dark-elf werewolves in the Blackwoods practice a similar style. Werebears in the Nomad Lands use slams and basic grapples. Ocelots, were-jaguars from Bilit Island, use Attack from Above to pounce (p. B372) and rake (p. 28).

*Skills:* Karate; Stealth; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock; Bite (p. 28); Counterattack (Karate); Disarming (Wrestling); Feint (Karate); Ground Fighting (Wrestling); Low Fighting (Wrestling); Targeted Attack (Bite/Hand); Targeted Attack (Bite/Leg Joint); Targeted Attack (Bite/Neck); Trip.

*Cinematic Skills:* Invisibility Art; Light Walk.

*Perks:* Biting Mastery; Ground Guard; Pack Tactics (p. 25); Rapid Retraction (Bites); Shape Mastery (p. 26); Technique Mastery (Bite).

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Enhanced Dodge.

*Disadvantages:* Bloodlust; Chummy.

*Skills:* Running; Survival (Plains); Swimming; Tactics.

## UNDERWATER STYLES

The oceans of Yrth (*Banestorm*, p. 178) offer adventurers entirely new challenges, profoundly different from fighting on land. Merfolk, octopus folk, sea elves, and shark men have developed various styles for their environment, and to take advantage of their natural abilities.

### Merfolk Spear Fighting

5 points

Although they have adopted sea-elfen net and trident techniques, merfolk historically fought with spears, using an economical thrusting style.

*Skills:* Aquabatics; Spear; Staff; Thrown Weapon (Spear).

*Techniques:* Retain Weapon (Spear); Targeted Attack (Underwater Spear Thrust/Vitals); Underwater Combat (Spear) (p. 28); Underwater Disarming (Spear).

*Perks:* Form Mastery (Spear); Grip Mastery (Spear).

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Staff); Terrain Adaptation (Underwater) (p. 24).

*Perks:* Special Exercises (Striking ST 1).

### Net and Trident Lore

6 points

Divided from the elves of Ytarria by centuries of history, sea elves (p. 5) nonetheless share a culture with their land kin; Net and Trident Lore is distantly related to Sylvan War Lore. The style employs a melee net and a trident to entangle enemies and dispatch them. The trident is wielded with the Spear skill, one-handed, for offense, and the Staff skill, two-handed, for defense.

*Skills:* Aquabatics; Net; Spear; Staff; Thrown Weapon (Spear).

*Techniques:* Retain Weapon (Spear); Reverse Grip (Spear); Targeted Attack (Underwater Spear Thrust/Vitals); Underwater Combat (Net or Spear) (p. 28); Underwater Disarming (Spear).

*Cinematic Techniques:* Underwater Dual-Weapon Attack (Net or Spear).

*Perks:* Aquabatic Feints; Exotic Weapon Training (Trident); Off-Hand Weapon Training (Net).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Terrain Adaptation (Underwater) (p. 24).

*Skills:* Breath Control.

*Techniques:* Disarming (Spear); Targeted Attack (Spear Thrust/Vitals).

*Perks:* Special Exercises (Breath-Holding 1 or 2).

## Octopus-Folk Wrestling

4 points

Octopus folk train to use their natural weapons, grappling and biting. They also make and use coral knives and spears.

*Skills:* Brawling; Main-Gauche; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Bite (p. 28); Head Lock; Reverse Grip (Main-Gauche); Targeted Attack (Brawling Bite/Neck); Targeted Attack (Main-Gauche Thrust/Vitals).

*Cinematic Skills:* Power Blow.

*Perks:* Technique Mastery (Bite).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Enhanced Parry (Main-Gauche); Extra Attack.

*Skills:* Spear.

*Techniques:* Targeted Attack (Underwater Spear Thrust/Vitals); Underwater Combat (Spear) (p. 28).

## Samebito Kenjutsu

5 points

Shark men know grappling, knife, and spear forms dating back to Olokun. They are unusual, however, in using the only underwater *sword* form on Yrth. Relying on the *umigatana* (p. 10), this style opens with traditional moves from Kenjutsu (*Martial Arts*, p. 173). It emphasizes Feints and thrusts, to compensate for the underwater environment. The style also incorporates traditional shark-man fighting techniques, including grapples and bites. The style's philosophy is to play to the opponent's weaknesses, keeping unarmed foes at sword's length and forcing armed foes into close combat.

*Skills:* Brawling; Broadsword; Two-Handed Sword; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock (Wrestling); Bite (p. 28); Close Combat (Broadsword); Feint (Broadsword or Two-Handed Sword); Targeted Attack (Two-Handed Sword Thrust/Vitals); Targeted Attack (Underwater Two-Handed Sword Thrust/Vitals); Underwater Close Combat (Broadsword); Underwater Combat (Broadsword or Two-Handed Sword) (p. 28); Underwater Feint (Broadsword or Two-Handed Sword).

*Cinematic Skills:* Power Blow.

*Perks:* Form Mastery (Katana); Grip Mastery (Katana); Technique Mastery (Bite).

### Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Cultural Familiarity (Sahud); Terrain Adaptation (Underwater) (p. 24); Weapon Master (Katana).

*Skills:* Broadsword Art; Fast-Draw (Sword); Meditation.

*Perks:* Weapon Bond.

## Fighting Underwater

Detailed rules for underwater activity, including environmental hazards, are covered in *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures*. The GM who plans to run campaigns in the oceans of Yrth is *strongly* encouraged to read that supplement. The rules for fighting underwater are summarized below.

Movement underwater is as per p. B354: Water Move is 1/5 of Basic Move, rounded down (minimum 1). When rolling against DX or any DX-based skill, use the lower of that score and your DX-based Swimming skill (3D Spatial Sense gives +2 to Swimming skill for this purpose *only*). Amphibious or Aquatic characters (or those under the effects of a Swim spell, *Magic*, p. 147) move at full Basic Move and are not limited by their Swimming skill.

Vision rolls are at -2. Nictitating Membrane 1 makes the penalty -1, while Nictitating Membrane 2+ eliminates it. Murkiness, etc. can give an additional -1 to -10. Finally, judging distances is attempted at a further -2. Hearing distances are multiplied by 10, although determining the direction a sound came from requires a Hearing roll with a margin of success of at least 4.

Melee-weapon attacks are made at -4 per yard of *maximum* reach, even if used against closer targets. Thrusting weapons inflict damage at -1 per yard of maximum reach, and swinging weapons suffer the same penalty *per die* of damage. These penalties arise from water resistance, and apply even to Aquatic and Amphibious characters. However, the penalties to attack rolls can be mitigated with the Underwater Combat technique (p. 28). Unarmed attacks and Reach C weapons suffer *no* penalty.

Attacks and techniques that depend on gravity, such as throws and trips, have limited or no effect underwater; the GM must adjudicate as required. Characters without the Amphibious or Aquatic traits (or the Cannot Float quirk) must roll against Aquabatics skill in order to attempt a retreating defense, unless benefiting from the Swim spell. Aquabatics skill can also be used to make Aquabatic Dodges, which function just as Acrobatic Dodges do.

Ranges for all thrown and muscle-powered ranged weapons are divided by 10 underwater. Bows and crossbows will generally not work at all unless built with materials designed not to stretch or warp underwater. Shooting into (or out of) water suffers an additional -4 to hit.

# CHAPTER THREE

# STYLE

# COMPONENTS

Hilde glared. "I don't understand why you're going raiding this winter, and I'm still training with ugly old Ulf."

Ragnar laughed as he rolled his iron knife in his cloak and stuffed it in his pack. "Because I'm older. I already know how to fight."

"I know how to fight!"

Ragnar set down the pack. "Really? Go on, then. Attack me."

"As a wolf or as a woman?"

He laughed again. "If you're asking, you're not ready."

She growled and launched herself at her brother, kicking hard at his head. He stepped in and flowed, shifting from man

to wolf and back again, ending behind her with his arm across her throat.

"That's why."

"Wow." She ducked under his arm and turned to face him. "Show me that again. Slowly."

**Martial Arts** takes a long look at advantages, disadvantages, and skills relevant to the fighting arts, and describes numerous techniques and Style Perks. A few traits require special attention in a **Banestorm** campaign, including several new perks and techniques.

## ADVANTAGES

The following advantages bear discussion when setting adventures on Yrth.

### *Amphibious*

see p. B40

Amphibious creatures ignore the Swimming skill cap underwater and can make retreating defenses without rolling against Aquabatics (see *Fighting Underwater*, p. 22). The other effects listed still apply.

### *Compartmentalized Mind*

see p. B43

Imperial field wizards (p. 7) and other fighting mages may train their minds so that they can concentrate on a spell even while engaged in melee combat.

### **Special Limitations**

*Limited:* "Limited, One Spell" is worth -30%, provided that you know more than one spell. "Limited, One College" is worth -20%, provided that you know spells in more than one college. "Limited, Magic Only" is -10% if you also have Divine, Spirit, or Chi abilities, or -5% otherwise. (See *Powers and Power Sources* on p. 24 for additional details about various power sources.)

*No Mental Separation:* You can concentrate on extra tasks, but gain no special protection against mind-control attacks. If one compartment is taken over, they all are. -20%.

### *Heroic Archer*

see *Martial Arts*, p. 45

Crossbow-wielders with the advantage Heroic Archer (Crossbow) enjoy all the benefits of Heroic Archer, with the exception of the *Quick-Shooting Bows* rules. Instead, heroic crossbowmen reduce reloading times with crossbows by 25%. This shaves off one second with a hand-drawn crossbow, or five seconds with a goat's foot. This is cumulative with the Quick Reload perk (p. 25). With a successful Fast-Draw (Arrow) roll, someone with this advantage and Quick Reload (Hand-Drawn Crossbow) has Shots 1(1) and can shoot his bow every other turn!

### *Shapeshifting*

see p. B83

Most weres on Yrth (**Banestorm**, p. 200) have little control over their shapeshifting, taking on animal forms uncontrollably during the full moon and rampaging through the night. Some, like the Ulvings (p. 9), have greater command over their ability. At the GM's discretion, PC weres can buy off the Minimum Duration and Trigger limitations on the Alternate Form advantage, and exchange the Uncontrollable limitation for Uncontrollable Trigger, Full Moon (p. 24). Some also add Reduced Time, buy up their animal forms' IQ, and lose elements of the Wild Animal meta-trait. A were who increases his animal form's racial IQ to 6 or higher and removes the Hidebound disadvantage can learn tactics incorporating changes in form. This is especially useful if he can shapeshift instantaneously (see *Shapeshifting in Combat*, p. 26).



Ulving werewolves have Alternate Form (Ulving Wolf; Uncontrollable Trigger, Full Moon, -15%; Reduced Time 5, +100%) [41]. The template for their wolf-form costs 14 points and is detailed on p. 36.

### Special Limitation

*Uncontrollable Trigger, Full Moon:* As for Uncontrollable, but you make Will rolls when exposed to the full moon, rather than when stressed. See **GURPS Powers** (p. 106) for more details, including other triggers. -15%.

### Terrain Adaptation

see p. B93

Cinematic masters of aquatic martial-arts styles may be able to learn the following version of Terrain Adaptation.

*Underwater:* You fight *unimpeded* underwater! This advantage *completely* negates the attack penalty for subaqueous

conflicts, without needing to learn the Underwater Combat technique (p. 28). You also suffer no damage penalty.

This is a highly cinematic advantage, reflecting the high-fantasy tradition of merfolk and other sea-monsters capable of wielding tridents and spears underwater as easily as normal warriors do on land. It is only available to Amphibious or Aquatic characters with either the Trained by a Master or Weapon Master advantage. *10 points.*

### Trained by a Master and Weapon Master

see p. B93 and p. B99

In some high-fantasy campaigns, *all* the abilities of cinematic martial artists are supernatural powers (see *Cinematic or Realistic?*, p. 34). If so, the GM should require that Trained by a Master and Weapon Master be purchased with a power modifier (see *Powers and Power Sources*, below).

With the Magical power modifier, all cinematic skills (that is, any skill that requires Trained by a Master or Weapon Master), and any rolls to use Supernatural Warrior (p. 26) abilities, receive a bonus equal to the user's Magery. However, the cinematic aspects of these advantages are opposed by Magic Resistance, and vary based on the mana level.

*No Mana:* Cinematic skills and Supernatural Warrior abilities cannot be used. Cinematic techniques function at default only – that is, points spent to improve them have no effect.

*Low Mana:* Cinematic skills are used at -5. Supernatural Warrior abilities are at -5 to the roll required to use them, or function at half-strength if no roll is required. Cinematic techniques function normally.

*Normal or High Mana:* Everything works normally.

*Very High Mana:* The user immediately regains any FP lost to cinematic skills, abilities, or techniques. A critical failure on any roll may cause unpredictable effects.

### Unusual Background

see p. B96

The GM may rule that some martial-arts styles are restricted to select character types – or forbidden to PCs altogether – unless an Unusual Background is taken. The cost varies depending on the lengths the person would have to go to learn the style. A reasonably public style normally only taught within an organization (e.g., for a Michaelite-turned-criminal once trained in Ars Clemens) is perk-level. An innocuous but generally hidden style (e.g., for a white Tredroyan receiving training from a Wing Chun master) is 5 points. A *dangerous* secret style, or one learned by an implacable enemy of those who teach it (e.g., for an orc who has somehow learned Sylvan War Lore or Battlecraft) is 10 points or more.

## Powers and Power Sources

With the Supernatural Warrior perk (p. 26), warriors in high-fantasy campaigns may gain special abilities such as heroic strength or flaming breath. Imbuement Skills (p. 19) are particularly suited to fantasy martial arts. In some campaigns, Trained by a Master and Weapon Master (above) may be supernatural advantages.

As noted in the description, these advantages might have to be bought with a *power modifier*. See p. B254 for an introduction to power modifiers for psionics. **GURPS Powers** expands the power-modifier system to cover several non-psionic power sources. The power modifiers most appropriate for a fantasy campaign are outlined below. Those with **Powers** may wish to use the more detailed powers defined therein.

*Chi:* See also *Body Control* in **Martial Arts** (p. 46). The advantage relies on internal energies arising from great self-discipline. The person must exercise and meditate for a couple of hours each day; take a -10-point Vow or Disciplines of Faith. If he fails to do so, all his chi powers stop functioning, and he suffers an irritating condition (p. B428) until he take 1d days to rebalance his chi. Chi power Talents cost 5 points/level. -10%.

*Divine:* The advantage is a consequence of great faith or discipline. The person must adhere to a moral code, based on a -10-point disadvantage (typically Disciplines of Faith, Honesty, or a Vow). The advantage fails as soon as he breaks the strictures of his beliefs, although not in such a way as to put him in immediate, serious danger. They can only be restored with a suitable quest or *significant* penance. Divine power Talents cost 5 points/level. The mystic powers of the An'Fo'Tama (p. 9 and **Banestorm**, p. 80), Friedrichites (**Banestorm**, p. 213), and Julnari (**Banestorm**, p. 213) have variations of this limitation. -10%.

*Magical:* The advantage is magical in nature. See *Trained by a Master and Weapon Master*, above, for details. In some campaigns, *all* supernatural powers are magical (p. 34). Magery may act as a power Talent (p. B255), adding to attribute rolls, Imbuement Skills, and cinematic skills as appropriate. -10%

*Spirit:* The power is granted by a spirit patron, who demands that the person show respect to the spirits, represented by a -5-point Vow or Sense of Duty. If the blessed fails in this duty, the power abandons him, at the worst possible time. However, amends consist of no more than a minor ceremony or sacrifice. Spirit power Talents cost 5 points/level. The Berserkers' (p. 10) and Ulfhednars' (p. 10) mystical blessings are spiritual powers. -5%.

In the last case, the GM may require the character to also take an Enemy or Secret!

## NEW LIMITATION

The following limitation is suitable for some advantages on Yrth.

### Only When Berserk

-20%

Your advantage or power only applies when in a berserk rage! The Berserk disadvantage (p. B124) is *required* for this limitation. You may deliberately go berserk to use the affected power, but you are limited in your actions and may be a danger to your friends.

*From the second position, bring the left leg forward and send the spell across you, protecting your center at the same time.*

– “Trailing Tonks,”  
*Harry Potter and  
the Order of the Phoenix*

## PERKS

The following new or modified perks apply in campaigns using *Yrth Fighting Styles*. Perks marked with † require specialization. Perks marked with ‡ come in levels, with each level costing 1 point.

### Style Familiarity

see *Martial Arts*, p. 49

The perk Style Familiarity (Battlecraft) covers the dwarven styles Battlecraft (pp. 14-15) and Unarmed Battlecraft (p. 15); stylists trained in both need only take the perk once. Conversely, while Sylvan War Lorists (pp. 18-20) often cross-train between Lore styles, each style still has its own Style Familiarity.

### Style Perks

see *Martial Arts*, pp. 49-52

Ytarrian styles teach the Style Perks covered in *Martial Arts*, along with several new ones.

### Blocking Spell Mastery†

A drawback of Blocking spells (p. B241) is that a wizard can cast only one per turn. You’ve learned to overcome this for one particular spell – much as a warrior can dodge repeatedly and, with difficulty, even parry multiple times. Each use after the first is at a cumulative -5 to skill. You must specialize by Blocking spell.

Having multiple versions of this perk lets you cast several different Blocking spells per turn. Base the penalty on the total number you’ve already cast, regardless of details. For instance, with both Blocking Spell Mastery (Iron Arm) and Blocking Spell Mastery (Ward), you could cast Iron Arm vs. a spear thrust, then Ward at -5 against a Foolishness spell, and then another Iron Arm at -10 to stop an axe blow.

Blocking Spell Mastery has one further benefit. It enables you to choose the All-Out Defense (Increased Defense) maneuver (p. B366) for Blocking spells. This gives +2 to any roll against a Blocking spell for which you know this perk. All other rules for All-Out Defense apply normally.

### Combat Casting†

You are practiced at using magic in the thick of combat. When attempting to maintain concentration on a spell while defending against an attack (p. B366), you roll at unmodified Will rather than at Will-3. You must specialize by spell.

### Combat Vaulting†

You can use a pole weapon to aid balance and make impressive vaults in combat. To benefit from this perk, you must first take a Ready maneuver to grip your weapon properly. After that, you may either add (Reach-1) to combat uses of Acrobatics and Jumping, or add Reach to vertical or horizontal Jumping distance – choose each turn. Returning to a fighting grip requires another Ready; learn Form Mastery (*Martial Arts*, p. 50) to make this a free action after a stunt. You must specialize by Reach 2+ pole weapon: Combat Vaulting (Halberd), Combat Vaulting (Long Spear), Combat Vaulting (Quarterstaff), etc.

### Pack Tactics†

You’ve practiced coordinating your attacks with a team. This is a modified version of Teamwork (*Martial Arts*, p. 52), for tactics involving *surrounding* an opponent, rather than forming up together. To use this perk, everyone in the group must take a Concentrate maneuver to “call in,” letting the rest of the team know his location and plans. Most packs develop unique calls to hide their intentions. (If a target can hear and understand the calls, he gains a +1 to *all* active defenses against the pack for the duration of the fight.) After that, the entire pack acts at the same point in the combat sequence as its *slowest* member.

As with Teamwork, fighters may transfer the benefits of Feints or Ruses to teammates, and ignore the -2 to attack enemies in close combat with them. However, they cannot brace teammates, or parry or block for them.

You must specialize in working with a particular pack. Only those with a matching specialty enjoy the benefits.

### Quick Reload†‡

You have trained at reloading crossbows *quickly*. You must specialize in Hand-Drawn Crossbow or Goat’s Foot.

With Quick Reload (Hand-Drawn Crossbow), a successful Fast-Draw (Arrow) roll reduces the time reload a hand-drawn crossbow by *two* seconds instead of by one. Combined with Heroic Archer (Crossbow) (p. 23), you can reload in one turn!

Quick Reload (Goat’s Foot) may be purchased twice, and reduces loading time by five seconds *per level*. A crossbowman with Heroic Archer (Crossbow) and Quick Reload 2 (Goat’s Foot) can reload his bow in five seconds, or four with a successful Fast-Draw (Arrow) roll.

## Rage Control

You must have the Berserk disadvantage (p. B124) to learn this perk. You are practiced at working yourself into a frenzy, adding +4 to the Will roll to deliberately go berserk. When you go berserk deliberately, you also get +1 to the roll to snap out again.

## Shape Mastery

To learn this perk, you must have Alternate Form with Reduced Time 5 (+100%), allowing you to shapeshift *instantly* at the start of your turn (see *Free Action*, **Powers**, p. 154). Shape Mastery then allows you to shapeshift once per turn at *any time*, even during someone else's turn or in the middle of a maneuver! For instance, you could attack once as a human and

once as a wolf when using an All-Out Attack (Double). This perk is *required* for the options listed under *Shapeshifting in Combat* (below).

## Special Exercises†

A few new specialties of this perk are found in **Yrth Fighting Styles**. Special Exercises (Breath-Holding 1 or 2) enables water-breathing races to learn to fight on the surface. Special Exercises (Compartmentalized Mind 1 with Limited, Magic Only and No Mental Separation) allows mages to train in using spells in the thick of combat. Special Exercises (Magic Resistance up to 5) or (Magic Resistance, Improved, up to 3) makes Magic Resistance a learnable advantage in campaigns where it is normally only available to a starting character. Note that it is the GM's call whether Compartmentalized Mind or Magic Resistance are learnable *at all*; this may be inappropriate for some campaigns.

In high-fantasy campaigns, some styles give access to supernatural powers rather than special training. For this, take the Supernatural Warrior perk (below).

## Staff Attunement

When you pick up any item that could carry the Staff spell, it works as if it did bear that spell while you have it ready. It isn't actually enchanted, and it immediately loses its power when you let go. This is essentially a modified Accessory perk (p. B100).

## Supernatural Warrior†

You have received exotic powers because of training, such as a Berserker's spiritual protection. This is a supernatural version of Special Exercises (**Martial Arts**, p. 51), giving access to a power that might not normally be available in the campaign. The advantage itself must be bought with a power modifier (p. 24) that reflects the source of the special ability. This perk suits a high-fantasy campaign.

# Shapeshifting in Combat

Shapeshifters with the Shape Mastery perk (above) and forms with different Size Modifiers or morphology meta-traits (p. B263) have trained to use shapeshifting actively in combat, changing size and shape suddenly to throw their opponents off-balance.

**Defense:** By altering form during any active defense, the shapeshifter benefits as though he had retreated (p. B377) without having to move away from his attacker. His defense roll is based on his final form.

**Escape, Evasion, and Feint:** When breaking free from a grapple, evading, or feinting with an unarmed combat attack, the were gains +2 if he shifts during the attempt. His roll is based on his final form. If he uses this tactic more than twice against the same opponent, the surprise value wears off; reduce the bonus to +1.

If using **Powers**, these benefits stack with power defenses (**Powers**, p. 167) and using abilities to aid skills (**Powers**, p. 162). The shifter may add half the relevant power Talent, if any, to a defense roll while shifting, or make an IQ roll to add a further +2 to escape, evasion, and feint rolls.

# DISADVANTAGES

Two disadvantages require special attention in campaigns that include **Yrth Fighting Styles**.

## Horizontal

see p. B139

Horizontal creatures have more limited posture options (p. B364) than humanoids. They may neither assume a *kneeling* posture nor *crouch* (p. B368); their choices are *standing*, *sitting*, *crawling*, *lying prone*, and *lying face up*. Further, the only Change Posture option available from lying face up is lying prone. However, Horizontal creatures can go from prone, sitting, or crawling to standing with a single Change Posture, or as the "step" component of a maneuver that allows a step, as though they were kneeling. Furthermore, Horizontal attackers have special modifiers and restrictions for certain attacks (**Martial Arts**, p. 115).

## Special Enhancement

**Gangly:** You have long, awkward limbs, which you must tuck under your body when you sit or lie prone. You may not go from lying prone to standing with a single Change Posture maneuver. Additionally, you may not go from any posture to standing as the "step" component of another maneuver. This is appropriate for giraffes and similarly awkward animals. +50%

## No Legs

see p. B145

Aquatic creatures ignore the Swimming skill cap underwater. They also can make retreating defenses without rolling against Aquabatics (see *Fighting Underwater*, p. 22). The other effects listed still apply.



# SKILLS

The following notes apply to skills in Ytarrian campaigns.

## Games†

see p. B197 and *Martial Arts*, p. 57

Many formal competitions (see *Tournaments and Competitions*, p. 35) exist in Ytarria, each with its own Games specialty. *Tourney* specialties apply to formal knightly tournaments in Caithness and Megalos. Thus, jousts are adjudicated using the Games (Tourney Knightly Combat) skill, while pol-laxe fights are adjudicated using the Games (Tourney Pollaxe Fighting) skill. The *Great Games* in al-Wazif (*Banestorm*, p. 133) have their own specialties, especially Games (Great Games Furusiyya) and Games (Great Games Tahtib).

*Dueling* specialties apply to formal duels, especially in Araterre and Sahud. *High War* specialties in Sahud cover the most common rules for formal high-war duels (*Banestorm*, p. 152), and are often obscure and tortuous . . .

## Mental Strength\*

see p. B209

As suggested in the *Basic Set*, this skill is available to mages without the Trained by a Master advantage. In addition, various Ytarrian styles teach defenses against supernatural mind control, providing the perk Unusual Training (Mental Strength).

## Philosophy†

see p. B213

Various Eastern philosophies have been imported via the Banestorm to Sahud – if often in highly altered forms. Likewise, the philosophies of the great Christian writers, such as St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Michael Olybrius, are widely studied in monasteries throughout Caithness, Cardiel, and Megalos. The Classical philosophers are also discussed, particularly in al-Wazif and Cardiel. In addition, several homegrown Ytarrian schools exist, two of which are relevant to *Yrth Fighting Styles*.

*Forbearance*: The warrior-philosophy of the dwarves is an extension of their belief in the Eternal (*Banestorm*, p. 81), seeking permanence in the perfection of the *self*. Endurance above all is the goal. Pain and suffering are temporary distractions, and some students subject themselves to pain to test and strengthen the will. Strong emotion is condemned as grounded in – and slave to – fleeting desires and frustrations. True wisdom and freedom of action can only arise from a measured and rational mind. Students study meditation, and breath- and body-control techniques. Some followers can extend their long dwarven lives even further, to rival the longevity of the elves.

*Harmony*: The halfling philosophy doesn't have a formal name, renowned teachers, or written works. It is often dismissed as “folk wisdom” or ignored altogether. Students are taught simple, practical lessons: to be prudent but not profound, generous but not spendthrift, and hardworking but not self-denying, and to live peacefully with others. Underlying this is a more complex belief in a fluid and reactive relationship with the natural world, acting in harmony with events rather than struggling against them. This extends to the martial art (p. 17) taught alongside the philosophy, which resembles many “internal” styles of Earth. Harmony is mostly taught in terms of Christian stories and beliefs, especially tales of St. Helbus (p. 11). However, some teachers tell stories of the ancient halfling goddess Halaina (*Banestorm*, p. 83). The philosophy may trace its roots back to Loren'dil.

## Savoir-Faire†

see p. B218

In Sahudese society, Savoir-Faire (High Society) provides knowledge of the conventions and traditions surrounding formal high-war duels (*Banestorm*, p. 152). Both Games and Savoir-Faire are essential in these contests. A champion may carefully observe all the rules defining fair play and honor in the duel, win entirely legitimately, and still find himself declared the loser due to his failure to bow to the judges in the correct order, or to tie his belt correctly.



# TECHNIQUES

The following new and altered techniques are taught in Ytarria.

## Bite

Average

Defaults: DX or Brawling; cannot exceed DX or Brawling.†

The basic bite attack. Note that you must be in close combat to bite. Brawling adds damage as normal.

† With the Biting Mastery perk, use Karate for the default, maximum, and damage bonus.

## Dual-Weapon Defense\*

see *Martial Arts*, p. 83

A wizard in a cinematic campaign may learn this maneuver with a *Blocking spell*, to buy off the penalty when defending against two attacks simultaneously; e.g., to cast Ward against an offensive spell at the same time as parrying a sword blow. The wizard must learn the Dual-Weapon Defense techniques for the weapon and the spell separately, just as would a warrior defending with two different weapons.

## Rake

Hard

Default: Ground Fighting (Brawling or Karate)-3.

Prerequisites: Brawling or Karate, and the Claws advantage; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

This technique requires that both the attacker and target are prone, face-up, or crawling, and that the attacker has grappled the target. Some creatures set up this attack for the following turn by taking All-Out Attack (Double) to perform a flying tackle, pounce, or slam followed by a grappling attempt. Note that creatures with unusual postures or numbers of limbs may not need to meet these conditions; in these cases, the GM may wish to modify the technique as required. Rake is a form of All-Out Attack (Double), and replaces the rules for that maneuver.

The aggressor holds his enemy with both hands, tucks his legs up between them, and tears down with both feet, ripping into his target's abdomen or thighs with his claws. Roll to attack twice, one for each foot. Each successful attack inflicts thrust+2 crushing damage, plus the Brawling or Karate bonus. Claws on the feet add any damage bonus, and may change this damage from crushing. The attacker must choose between targeting the torso with both attacks, or the legs with one attack each. The legs may be targeted without the usual -2.

## Scratch

Hard

Defaults: Brawling-2 or Karate-2.

Prerequisites: Brawling or Karate, and the Claws advantage; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

This a claw attack intended to tear the skin, causing shallow wounds that bleed profusely. Roll damage normally as for a

hand attack. If any damage at all penetrates armor and natural DR, the target takes 1 point of injury only, but rolls for bleeding (p. B420) at -1 *per scratch* sustained. At the GM's discretion, this can have additional effects. For example, a scratch attack to the face (at a further -5) sends blood into the target's eyes, causing Vision penalties of -3 or more, while inflicting scratches all over the target's body for several turns may force a Fright check.

*To hit the bull's eye in the target; that can many another do as well as thou; but he, methinks, is master of his craft, who can at all times on his skill rely, nor lets his heart disturb or eye or hand.*

– Friedrich Schiller,  
*William Tell*

## Underwater Combat

Hard

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Any Melee Weapon skill.

Attacks made with melee weapons underwater normally suffer a penalty of -4 per yard of *maximum* reach, even if used to attack at closer range (p. 22). Someone trained in underwater combat may apply the penalty to his level in this technique, instead of to the prerequisite skill. However, final effective skill with this technique cannot exceed base skill minus *half* the underwater penalty.

*Example:* An adventurer with Spear-15 and Underwater Combat (Spear)-21 wields a long spear: Reach 2, 3, for -12 underwater. His effective skill is 21 - 12 = 9. This is also, happily, equal to 15 (base skill) - 6 (*half* the underwater penalty). If he later picks up a shorter spear – Reach 1, 2, for just -8 underwater – his skill doesn't rise to 21 - 8 = 13, because it is capped at 15 (base skill) - 4 (*half* the underwater penalty) = 11.

Underwater versions of other techniques may default from the Underwater Combat technique. The default is based on the fighter's *effective* skill, as calculated above. For instance, if the person in the example invested 3 points in Targeted Attack (Underwater Spear Thrust/Vitals), altering the penalty for a vitals strike from -3 to -1, his effective skill when thrusting for the vitals with the Reach 1, 2 spear would be 10 (the capped underwater skill of 11, minus 1 for the Targeted Attack). *Both* the underwater skill cap *and* the Targeted Attack skill cap apply.

A cinematic underwater warrior with the Terrain Adaptation (Underwater) advantage (p. 24) has no need for this technique.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# WARRIORS OF YRTH

*Jean-Claude nursed his last bottle of wine – there wasn't likely to be another one, here – as he listened to the lazy drone of the pipes and watched the two robed shepherds circling each other in the firelight, staves raised. The men in the audience shouted, cheered, and goaded in Arabic. Or so he supposed; he didn't speak a word of it himself.*

*"Why are they fighting, again?" he shouted to his guide.*

*Al-Nasri grinned. "To see who's best."*

*Jean-Claude blinked; the air was thick with smoke. "Yes, yes, but what for? What's the stakes?"*

*The Bedouin frowned. "I don't understand."*

*The ambassador sighed in exasperation. "What do you get for winning?"*

*"Ah!" Al-Nasri smiled again. "You get to be the one people fight!"*

In these dangerous times, even priests and wise men may learn the skills of war, but the battlefield truly belongs to the professional warrior. A career soldier's life is defined by his duty to the patron who equips and feeds him, and dedicated to constant training to maintain the skills demanded of him.

## KNIGHTS AND FARISA

A knight's day starts before dawn, with Mass and a breakfast of white bread, fish, and meat. He trains throughout the morning, jousting at the *quintain* (jousting target) and fighting at the *pell* (training dummy) with an older knight or paid retainer. In Megalos, the trainer is sometimes a slave. Weapon skills are rounded out with discussions of tactics, strategy, and siege warfare. After more prayers and an early lunch of several meat courses, the knight spends time with a lady of his family, often an aunt or cousin, learning chivalry and courtly arts. In the afternoon, the knight practices horsemanship, and may accompany his lord as he rides around his estate. The day ends with evening prayers, supper, and entertainment. A member of a monastic knightly order, such as the Hospitallers (*Banestorm*, p. 62) or Templars (*Banestorm*, p. 63), has a similar emphasis on training, added to the responsibilities of a monk, praying eight times a day and studying.

Farisa (Muslim cavalry) and ghazis (Muslim holy knights) live much the same way. A greater emphasis is placed on cavalry training and group tactics, both saddled and bareback, taking place in the *maydan*

training ground. Training games include the *birjas* jousting target, a stack of seven wooden blocks with a ring on the top. The objective is to remove the topmost block with the lance without disturbing any of the other blocks. Farisa and, especially, ghazis are taught theology and scripture throughout their lives.

See *Banestorm*, pp. 40-42, for a detailed discussion of knighthood and chivalry, and pp. 70-71 for their Muslim counterparts.

## LEGIONARIES AND SOLDIERS

Peasant levies are common in Caithness and Sahud, and used in al-Haz and Cardiel. Even so, professional soldiers – whether the standing armies of Megalos' legions or the mercenary companies that ply their trade across the continent – are increasingly vital to Ytarrian warfare. A legionary enlists for 10 or 20 years of service, while a mercenary soldier's contract is for a year, starting in the spring. Occasionally, mercenary contracts are reviewed or broken before the year's end.

## Character Templates

Many existing templates are suitable for career Ytarrian warriors. An assassin (*Banestorm*, p. 202, and *Martial Arts*, p. 31) could be a Sahudese ninja or a member of Tredroy's notorious Assassins' Guild. A battle wizard (*Banestorm*, p. 204) makes a good Imperial legion field wizard. The contender template (*Martial Arts*, p. 32) suits a Cardien alquetalliste or Megalan gladiator. A duelist (*Martial Arts*, p. 34) might be an Aralaise fencer or Caithnesser Master of Defence. Monks (*Martial Arts*, p. 36) can be found in the temples and shrines of the Sahudese mountains. Northern barbarians (*Banestorm*, p. 212) may learn Berserker gang. Swashbucklers (*Banestorm*, p. 215) are an obvious fit for the various fencing styles. Knights-errant (*Banestorm*, p. 208) and mercenaries (*Banestorm*, p. 209) are representative of professional soldiers. The soldier of fortune (p. B260) and warrior (*Martial Arts*, p. 41) templates naturally suit almost any warrior concept on Yrth.

Templates from the *Basic Set* and *Banestorm* don't include a discretionary 20 points for style skills and perks, but typically have more than 20 points of combat skills. To adapt them for *Martial Arts*, simply excise all the combat skills, determine their total value, and use the points for buying a style.



However, any soldier – or employer – who gets a reputation for unreliability quickly finds people unwilling to deal with him.

Legionaries and mercenaries lead similar lives. They wake at dawn for prayer, and then take a breakfast of porridge or black bread. The first half of the day is spent on chores, most often guarding or patrolling, maintaining equipment, or building or maintaining fortifications. After a lunch of more bread or porridge (some dried meat, if supplies are good), the rest of the daylight is used for training, with an emphasis on formation drilling. Formal leave is essentially unknown. Soldiers may be released for a few hours in the evening to go on recreational leave in a nearby town. Otherwise, they entertain themselves in their own camps. Groups of civilians (called camp followers) make a living accompanying armies and providing gambling, prostitution, and other entertainment. Provosts (military police) rigidly enforce discipline, and absconders especially may be hunted down as deserters and hanged.

*Who would stand  
against even one of  
my folk, in a battle?*

– Neil Gaiman,  
*American Gods*

## GUARDIANS OF ZARAK

Every male dwarf is obliged – and many female dwarves volunteer – to serve in the frontier guard for an eight-year stint in their youth, starting on their 30th birthday. A few, especially the Battle Brothers (pp. 14-15), choose to remain in the army for much longer.

Guardians live in shift rotations, reporting for duty at the “first bell” (8:00 a.m.), the “seventh bell” (4:00 p.m.), or the “13th bell” (midnight) each day. Breakfast is mushrooms and sometimes a share of finer fare procured from humans. Although guardians are fed at the expense of the kingdom, an effort is taken to provide them with decent food. After eating, the dwarf guards the tunnel entrances or patrols the surface or remote caves for six bells (eight hours). After patrolling, he eats a second meal and reports to the *khanoan* – the training hall – for three bells. There, he trains in axe-fighting and close-quarters formation fighting. The remainder of the day – and one full day in six – is the dwarf’s to do with as he wishes. Most choose to study or practice crafts when not sleeping.

### Dwarven Guardian

125 points

You are – or were – a dwarven guardian, committed to the protection of your nation’s borders. In a campaign not based around a group of dwarven defenders, you may have been exiled for a failure in your duty, or you may be a Battle Brother invited to spend some time on the surface after being

just a little *too* outspoken in your conviction that Battlecraft masters be regarded as craftsmen in their own rights . . .

**Attributes:** ST 13 [10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [10].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d/2d-1; BL 45 lbs.; HP 13 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 15 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

**Advantages:** Dwarf [35] (*Banestorm*, p. 189). • 20 points chosen from among ST +1 or +2 [10 or 20], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 or +2 [10 or 20], HP +1 to +3 [2/level], FP +1 to +4 [3/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Damage Resistance 1 or 2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3 or 6], Danger Sense [15], Fearlessness 1-5 [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill 1-5 [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Magic Resistance 1-10 [2/level], Military Rank 1-4 [5/level]†, Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Rapid Healing [5] or Very Rapid Healing [15], Signature Gear [Varies], Style Familiarity (any) [1/style], Style Perks [1/perk], or Weapon Bond [1].

**Perks:** Style Familiarity (own style) [1].

**Disadvantages:** -25 points chosen from among Code of Honor (Soldier’s) [-10], Duty (Border Guard; 12 or less) [-10] or (15 or less) [-15]†, Fanaticism (Guard, nation, race, etc.) [-15], Sense of Duty (Border Guard) [-5] or (Nation) [-10], or upgrade racial Intolerance to (All non-dwarves) [-5]. • A further -20 points chosen from among the previous traits or Bloodlust [-10\*], Bully [-10\*], Callous [-5], Chummy [-5] or Gregarious [-10], Honesty [-10\*], or Workaholic [-5].

**Primary Skills:** Soldier/TL3 (A) IQ+2 [8]-12. • 4 points from among Axe/Mace (A) DX+1 [2]-13‡; Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-12; Crossbow (E) DX [1]-12; Polearm (A) DX [2]-12; Shield (E) DX [1]-12; or Wrestling (A) DX [2]-12. • A further 24 points in the skills and techniques of a martial style.

**Secondary Skills:** Armoury/TL3 (any) (A) IQ+2 [4]-12§ and Hiking (A) HT [2]-12. • Two of Engineer/TL3 (Combat or Mining) (H) IQ+1 [4]-11§; Leadership (A) IQ+1 [4]-11; Observation (A) Per+1 [4]-11; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-13; Survival (Mountain) (A) Per+1 [4]-11; or Tactics (H) IQ [4]-10.

**Background Skills:** Four of Armoury/TL3 (any) (A) IQ [1]-10§; Connoisseur (Weapons), Gambling, Heraldry, or Prospecting, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-9; Expert Skill (Military Science), Philosophy (Forbearance) (p. 27), or Strategy (Land), all (H) IQ-2 [1]-8; Carousing (E) HT [1]-12; or Intimidation (A) Will-1 [1]-9.

\* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† Duty must accompany Military Rank.

‡ Bought up from racial skill.

§ Includes +1 from racial Artificer 1.

### Lens

**Rock of Ages** (+100 points): You’re a cinematic, high-fantasy dwarf, able to hold his ground against countless foes.

• Add 80 points chosen from among improved HP (up to +100% of ST) [2/level], Damage Resistance 1-10 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3/level], Enhanced Block 1-3 [5/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 [5 or 10/level], Lifting ST 1-10 [3/level], Magic Resistance 1-10 [2/level], Mana Damper [Varies], Striking ST 1-10 [5/level], Trained by a Master [30], or Weapon Master [20-45]. You *must* take either Trained by a Master or Weapon Master! • Add a further 20 points in your style’s cinematic skills (and prerequisites).

## Customization Notes

*Styles:* Battlecraft (or Unarmed Battlecraft, p. 15) is the formal style of the Zarakun and Whitehoods border guards, but dwarves are as likely to learn Combat Wrestling, Sword-and-Shield Fighting, or a suitable crossbow style (Imperial Legion Crossbow Training, p. 17-18, or a modified form of Foot Archery).

*Style Lenses:* Dwarves generally learn styles with the dwarven style lens (p. 13).

## DEFENDERS OF THE SHADED WOODLAND

Isolationist and fanatical, the dark elves (*Banestorm*, p. 18) are the most organized elves in Ytarria. They form tight, egalitarian communities, led by councils of the eldest members, almost invariably under the guidance of an *anchaliel* (*Banestorm*, p. 81). All property is held in common, and all work is shared. Every elf is expected to contribute to tending and harvesting plants, repairing and maintaining their hidden sanctuaries, and other mundane tasks.

A Defender typically wakes before dawn to take part in a ceremony giving praise to the Eternal in the form of the rising sun. He then spends the first three hours of his day in communal labor. After a late-morning meal, the hours to sunset are spent as directed by the *anchaliel*, either training in various forms of Sylvan War Lore (pp. 18-20), studying and researching magics, or working on shared magical projects such as enchantments and ceremonial castings. Defender training is brutal; with universal access to healing magic, “live” practice with real weapons and no protective gear is the standard, although lethal strikes to the head and vitals are avoided. This spills over into their tactics in combat, with dark elves generally attacking to incapacitate, and finishing their opponents off once they’ve defeated them.

At sunset, the *anchaliel* leads the community in a second ritual of praise to the Eternal, this one aimed at reminding the elves of their mission and of the reason for it. Most raids against human settlements occur in the hours after dark, before the elves retire for the night.

### Dark-Elf Defender

150 points

You’re a dark elf (*Banestorm*, p. 18), one of the sworn defenders of the elven nation, dedicated to ridding the world of the blight of outsiders. Your ancestors were the warrior caste of the ancient elven empire. That noble tradition drives your mission, even in light of the disastrous failure of the Banestorm. Guided by the *anchaliel* of your commune, you strive constantly to better your skills at both combat and magic.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [20]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 13 [40]; HT 11 [10].

**Secondary Characteristics:** Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 13 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

**Advantages:** Dark Elf [31] (*Banestorm*, p. 191) and Magery 2 [20]. • 20 points chosen from among DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], Per +1 to +4 [5/level], FP +1 to +3 [3/level], Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness 1-5 [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Magery 3 [10], Magic Resistance 1-4 (Improved, +150%)

[5/level], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Perfect Balance [15], Style Familiarity (any) [1/style], or Style Perks [1/perk].

**Perks:** Style Familiarity (own style) [1].

**Disadvantages:** -30 points chosen from among Duty (Commune; 12 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-15] or (15 or less) [-20], Fanaticism [-15] or Extreme Fanaticism [-15], Secret (Dark-elf sleeper in mainstream elven society) [-20], Sense of Duty (Wild Nature) [-15], or Wealth (Struggling or Poor) [-10 or -15]. • A further -30 points chosen from among the previous traits or Bloodlust [-10\*], Nightmares [-5\*], No Sense of Humor [-10], Overconfidence [-5\*], or Sadism [-15\*], or replace racial Callous [-5] with Low Empathy [-20] for a net -15 points.

**Primary Skills:** Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-14. • 19 points in the skills and techniques of a martial style.

**Secondary Skills:** 4 points chosen from among Bow (A) DX [1]-12†; Brawling (E) DX [1]-12; Broadsword (A) DX [2]-12; Camouflage (E) IQ [1]-13; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; Staff (A) DX [2]-12; Survival (Woodlands) (A) Per-1 [1]-12; or Wrestling (A) DX [2]-12.

**Background Skills:** 4 points chosen from among Armoury/TL3 (Missile Weapons) (A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Climbing (A) DX [2]-12; Naturalist (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Running (A) HT+1 [4]-12; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-1 [1]-12‡; or Theology (Eternal) (H) IQ-1 [2]-12.

**Spells:** Blur, Continual Light, Darkness, Gloom, Heal Plant, Hide, Hide Path, Identify Plant, Invisibility, Light, Seek Plant, Shape Plant, and Walk Through Plants, all (H) IQ [1]-13‡.

\* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† Includes +1 from racial skill bonus.

‡ Includes +2 from Magery.

## Lenses

*Terror of the Mists* (+100 points): Ancient and powerful, you possess an eerie and terrible connection to the natural world, although you are cursed and twisted by the Banestorm.

• Add IQ +1 [20]; Magery +1 [10]; Lifebane [-10]; and 40 points of advantages chosen from among Claws [Varies], Invisibility [40], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Obscure [Varies], Silence [5/level], Speak with Animals [25], Speak with Plants [15], and Terror [Varies]. • Add a further 40 points in spells, especially from the Animal, Communication and Empathy, Mind Control, and Plant colleges.

*Wolf of the Blackwoods* (+100 points): You’re one of the lycanthropes (*Banestorm*, p. 200) of the Blackwoods, willingly giving yourself to your monstrous side in the war on non-elves.

• Add 80 points chosen from Alternate Form [Varies], Regeneration [Varies], Speak with Animals (Specialized, Canines, -60%) [10], and Terror [Varies]. • Add a further 20 points in combat skills and techniques, especially those relating to fighting in your wolf form; see *Ulvinger Fighting* (p. 21) for an example of a shapeshifting combat style.

## Customization Notes

*Styles:* Sylvan War Lore (pp. 18-20) is an obvious choice. Any mobile, flamboyant style – Capoeira for striking, Escrima for knives and sticks, Sojutsu for spear-fighting, etc. – could be adapted to serve as other branches of the Lore. Werewolves learn a style similar to Ulvinger Fighting, with the addition of Acrobatics and more emphasis on feints and tumbling.

*Style Lenses:* Dark elves learn the elven style lens (p. 13).

# CHAPTER FIVE

# CAMPAIGNS

Mark slowly lowered his sword point from the tattooed monk's throat.

"If you're not responsible for these monsters appearing on the streets, who is? One-Arm Wat said the Black Lotus had assistance from some Sahudese wizard."

Kishuho nodded gravely. "And they have. An evil man named Lord Twelve Fingers, bearing ancient magics. My friend and I have been seeking him these three months, and we have tracked him here."

"Your friend?"

Louis stepped out from the shadows behind the Michaelite, his own rapier raised.

"That would be me. The Dragon Monk speaks the truth. The wizard's creatures killed my wife, in Sauvons. He carries a cursed idol, said to come from Earth, which opens a gate to Hell. That's where these demons are coming from."

"And the two of you sought to stop him? An Aralaise sailor and some holy man?"

Louis smirked. "I have some skill with the blade, and you had best not underestimate Kishuho's abilities. He is more than skilled at killing demons."

Mark pondered this briefly. "Then we should pool our efforts. If this sorcerer can truly open a gate to Hell, all of Tredroy could be in danger."

The monk smiled, wryly. "Tredroy? No, my friend. We fight for the whole world."

*Hotchkiss: The heavier blade,  
Mr. Bassett. I implore you!*

*Bassett: I am fighting this duel,  
Hotchkiss, not you.*

– *Highlander*

The typical **Banestorm** campaign is a story of adventure and heroism, of the brave few striving to overthrow terrible evil . . . a story, in short, about warriors.

## ENCOUNTERING THE FIGHTING ARTS

Adding the styles and options from this book to an existing **Banestorm** campaign is chiefly a matter of introducing the PCs to people trained in them, whether as allies, enemies, or otherwise. Travelers venturing into the oceans (**Banestorm**, p. 178) will encounter merfolk and shark men trained in aquatic styles (pp. 21-22), for instance, while adventures in the far north could fall afoul of the fierce Ulving tribe (p. 9).

### HIGH WAR

The adventurers, visiting Sahud, become unwittingly embroiled in local political games. They find themselves invited – or *obliged* – to represent a noble house in a formal high-war duel (see *Warfare*, **Banestorm**, p. 152) to resolve a dispute. Their opponents will naturally be schooled, not only in Sahudese martial arts (pp. 8-9), but also in all the rules and conventions of high war, with which the PCs are unfamiliar.

As with all Sahudese adventures, the "culture shock" element is key. The participants might struggle to understand why they are required to fight with wooden swords, unarmored and

blindfolded, and may strike their opponents' knees but *must not strike their shins*. Sympathetic advisors hurriedly explain how and in what order to address the judges and what the Eight Tenets of Harmonious Conduct are. Meanwhile, malicious courtiers are giving them *false* advice. Games (p. 27) and Savoir-Faire (p. 27) skills could help, if only the foreigners weren't rolling at default and with a Cultural Familiarity penalty . . .

### TOURNEYS AND DUELING

In Caithness and Megalos, tournaments are an excellent way to earn respect and recognition. They can smooth the way for those hoping to join an order of chivalry (**Banestorm**, p. 42), and offer generous prizes for cash-strapped adventurers to boot. In the meantime, both fencing masters in Araterre and Masters of Defence (**Martial Arts**, p. 17) in Caithness have a habit of challenging strangers – especially capable-looking warriors – to duels by way of publicity, to display their prowess and attract students. An armed and armored PC, strolling into town to visit the local tavern, certainly qualifies.



Of course, as with *High War* (p. 32), it's not enough simply to have skill or strength; the combatants are constrained by weapons, rules, and appropriate conduct. A veteran could readily lose to a less-experienced warrior. With a tournament coming up, or a recent dueling defeat still smarting, the heroes may seek out a fencing, jousting, or pollaxe master, hoping to learn new techniques. Alternatively, with a duel in the morning hanging over his head, and unspent points burning a hole in his pocket, a fighter may need to find a master to teach him a style in a few *hours*; cue the theme music and the training sequence (*Martial Arts*, p. 147).

## TRIAL BY COMBAT

One of the heroes falls afoul of the law in a backwoods region without a



formal reeve or magistrate, where the local lord is the final word on justice. The lord, easily bored by intricate legal debate, orders the adventurer to defend himself in a trial by combat, unarmed, with his accuser, a Michaelite trained in *Ars Clemens* (or whichever style and mode of combat the GM wishes to introduce to the game).

This is essentially a variation on the dueling tie-in (pp. 32-33), with the added challenge that the hero's guilt or innocence depends on the outcome of the battle. If he loses, he could be facing a fine, maiming, slavery, or death.

For a slightly different take, the heroes, having befriended a crippled villager, discover that he is accused of a crime and faces trial-by-combat. They agree to fight on his behalf. The villager, however, might be *guilty* . . .

# WAR STORIES

The easiest way to introduce martial arts into the *Banestorm* setting is to base an entire campaign around them.

## ANCIENT HEROES

The centuries-long lives of elves allow them to become masters of the fighting arts many times over, if they choose. In this campaign, the PCs are all truly *ancient* elves – maybe including Kirtael (p. 11) himself – dating back to the *Banestorm* or before. They have remained in seclusion for all these years and are now emerging, in response to an ancient prophecy, to fight a terrible threat to the elven nation . . . or to all of Yrth.

Another *Banestorm* is coming! Perhaps this time, it brings That Which Elf Was Not Meant To Know from another dimension. Alternatively, the eldest – and *hungriest* – of the dragons might be due to rise again and unite his people in a scourge of the whole world. Perhaps the global anti-technology conspiracy (see *A Suspicious Unanimity*, *Banestorm*, p. 89) is about to put its plans of world domination through mind-control magics into effect. Or all of the above! This is an opportunity for *epic* adventures: a handful of heroes against an army of monsters, single combat with arch-demons and ancient dragons, and magical workings that shake the very earth. The GM will need to ensure the threat is as imposing as the PCs themselves!

Characters should be built on 500-1,000 points. They should be both powerful wizards (with *Magery* 3 or more and dozens of spells) and cinematic martial-arts masters. The heroes can still have specialized team roles. The sword master may be a peerless illusionist; the staff master, a powerful elemental; and the bow master, a great nature mage. With the GM's permission, the

team could include an Ascended One (*Banestorm*, p. 188) or even a sympathetic dragon (*Banestorm*, p. 226).

## BIG TROUBLE ON THE STREET OF ARTIFICERS

After decades of peaceful *détente*, the Black Lotus triad are making a bid to seize control of the Street of Artificers from their rivals the Red Dragon. They have recruited an evil Sahudese wizard with the power to summon demons from the Eight Hundred Hells and unleash them on their foes. Only the unlikely alliance of an Aralaise seaman skilled in fencing, a Michaelite trained in *Ars Clemens*, a local master of kung fu, a tattooed fire-breathing Dragon Monk, and a Tredroy-born Jewish alquettalliste can save the world from destruction . . .

See the vignette at the start of this chapter! East Tredroy's Chinatown (p. 9) is the perfect venue for a cinematic "East meets West" adventure that blends *wuxia* with high fantasy. Hollywood is a rich source of inspiration and material. Characters should be built on 250-500 points. They should all be cinematic masters, with exotic and flamboyant powers.

## HAND OF JUSTICE

A Hand (or Fist) of Michael (*Banestorm*, p. 64) is a ready-made premise for an adventuring group. With *Yrth Fighting Styles*, it's also an opportunity to create a close-knit team of warriors trained in fighting together.

The Hand investigates spectacular crimes and captures magical criminals, cooperating to take out individuals much more powerful than themselves. An all-Michaelite game is a gritty, low-fantasy campaign in which the warriors, even with magical support of their own, require considerable skill and guile to survive.

Characters are built on 150-250 points; see *Banestorm*, p. 211, for a template. An ideal Michaelite is trained in both Ars Clemens (p. 14) and one of Sword-and-Buckler Play or Sword-and-Shield Fighting (both *Martial Arts*, p. 199). However, players are encouraged to mix the styles, especially to choose complementary training across the team. Regardless, everyone should take the Teamwork perk (*Martial Arts*, p. 52).

## WELCOME TO THE LEGION!

An all-legionary game seems, at first glance, like a limiting concept – Megalan legions consist of scores of men, trained to march and fight in unison. Even so, modern ideas inevitably leak across to Yrth from Earth, including “special ops” missions. In this campaign, a small team – consisting of a field wizard (p. 7), a combat engineer, and a couple of crossbowmen – is sent behind enemy lines to spy, capture officers, destroy bridges, or sap walls. Naturally, various challenges and difficulties arise as they pursue mission goals . . .

The heroes are realistic low-fantasy warriors built on 150-250 points, ideally trained in one of the Imperial Legion Training (pp. 17-18) styles. They should know a range of useful skills, to make for a versatile team able to act independently in the field.

## WOLF PACK

The PCs are Ulvings (p. 9), organized into a “pack” at youth; they have lived and trained together since they were infants. In the name of Odin Glad-of-War, they stalk the Nomad Lands, hunting their enemies and raiding their homes. Until, that is, the wise woman of the Ulvings receives a vision from the Gallows God, sending them on a quest to the very corners of Ytarria. They must track down the servants of the evil god Loki and kill them before they can awaken their master and bring about *Ragnarok*, the end of the world.

The characters are heroic shapeshifters, built on 200-300 points. See *Shapeshifting* (pp. 23-24) for the default Ulving Alternate Form ability, and the wolf template on p. 36. Even with shapeshifting as a common trick, packmates can hold specialized roles – a strong, tough “tank”; a master of stealth and ambush; and a shaman with Futhark symbol magic (*Magic*, p. 209). Ulvings are vicious and grim by nature; as heroes, the werewolves are distinguished by how much *worse* their enemies are . . .

## Cinematic or Realistic?

It may seem odd to talk about “realistic” fantasy campaigns, but *Banestorm*, with its real-world historical elements and low-fantasy bias (*Banestorm*, p. 231), is eminently suited to a campaign with grittily realistic combat. In this case, realistic characters are most fitting (*Martial Arts*, p. 29). The GM might also consider using *Harsh Realism for Unarmed Fighters* (*Martial Arts*, p. 124) and *Realistic Injury* (*Martial Arts*, p. 136). This doesn’t preclude *magic*, necessarily. In a realistic-fantasy game, magic works, but is consistent, well-understood, and limited. Only mana-based spell magic is available, and the most spectacular spells are either very rare or nonexistent.

In a *cinematic* low-fantasy campaign (also known as “sword and sorcery,” *Banestorm*, p. 231), magic is still limited, but heroic battle is far from it! Wizards are scheming, studious, or foolish, but a brave warrior with a sharp sword can cut through all their bluster and supposed powers and save the day. Permit cinematic characters (*Martial Arts*, p. 30), and use as many cinematic options as you like (p. B417 and *Martial Arts*, pp. 125-132 and p. 139). High levels of Magic Resistance are available to PCs, and the GM may wish to use the *Chi Trumps Magic* option, below.

In a high-fantasy campaign (*Banestorm*, p. 230), anything goes! Magic is *not* predictable and understood, and certainly not limited to spells; it’s as much in the mighty limbs and blazing sword of a hero as in the eldritch powers of an evil sorcerer. Holy knights are granted strength by the blessing of God, savage warriors are empowered by their totems, and dread assassins wreath themselves in shadows (see *Imbuement Skills*, p. 19, *Powers and Power Sources*, p. 24, and *Supernatural Warrior*, p. 26). Cinematic abilities are entirely appropriate – in some campaigns, the

powers of great martial artists *are* magical (see *Chi Is Magic!*, below).

### Chi vs. Magic

When using cinematic martial-arts abilities alongside magical spells and powers, the GM should consider how, if at all, chi and magic interact. (See *Powers and Power Sources*, p. 24, for descriptions of power modifiers.)

*Chi and Magic Are Equal.* The default *GURPS* assumption is that both chi and magical abilities function normally with respect to each other. As a rule, resolve opposing abilities based on the *effects* of the powers; thus, Pressure Secrets inflicts damage as described, which the Healing spell then heals as described. Where two abilities are directly opposed, roll a Quick Contest of skills.

*Chi Trumps Magic.* Magic functions as described, but the deeper secrets of the martial-arts masters are wholly superior. An attack made with Breaking Blow bypasses *all* DR from the Armor spell, for example, while Invisibility Art renders the subject unseen even to the See Invisible spell. Increase the value of the Magical PM to -15%.

*Magic Trumps Chi.* Chi is all trickery and cunning, effective in its small way but nothing compared to the cosmic might of wizards. The effects of a Pressure Points or Power Blow roll are stopped by a Spell Shield, for example, while Esoteric Medicine is entirely stumped by a magical disease. Increase the value of the Chi PM to -15%.

*Chi Is Magic!* There is no such thing as “chi.” The great martial-arts masters are actually subconsciously tapping mana. Cinematic “skills” are just highly specialized spells. See *Trained by a Master and Weapon Master* (p. 24), for rules for *magical* cinematic martial artists.

# TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS

Between the tourneys of Christendom, the Sumo contests of Sahud, Tahtib matches between nomadic Muslim tribes, and Alquetalle bouts in Cardiel, any number of formal tournaments and competitions occur in which Ytarrian warriors can compete. Probably the two most famous venues for martial contests are the arenas of Megalos and the Great Games of al-Wazif.

## THE ARENAS OF MEGALOS

Many of the gladiatorial arenas (p. 6) in Megalos stage seasonal games, in and among the spectacles sponsored by ambitious nobles. Professional gladiators follow a circuit of sorts.

Every spring, a six-day tournament is held in Dekamera (*Banestorm*, p. 97), ending in a final bout on Shroftyde amidst much noisy celebration. With the recent pirate activity, the games are more muted, but Taveon Magnus insists that they go on.

A three-day competition around May Day in Kethalos (*Banestorm*, p. 96) invariably hosts more free gladiators – including a few knights – than slaves. It features jousting, knightly games, and the ever-popular gladiatorial fights.

In the first three days of July, a tournament in honor of St. Thomas the Apostle is held in Yibyorak (*Banestorm*, p. 100). It is famed for exotic combatants and magical contests.

Finally, 14 days of games, encompassing all the arenas in the city of Megalos (*Banestorm*, p. 89), takes place in August

every year, culminating in a finale in the Great Arena on August 14, the eve of the Assumption of the Virgin. The ultimate champion is a major celebrity, feted and adored for months following the games.

## THE GREAT GAMES

The Great Games of al-Wazif (*Banestorm*, p. 133) are properly a festival of *many* contests. On the first new moon of every spring, for a full month, the city of as-Siyassi is overrun by the Games. Wrestling and combat contests take place in stadiums near the palace. Fields and woods in the area resound to jousting, hawking, and hunting trials. Chess, magic, poetry, music, and other contests fill halls and coffeehouses throughout the city. The Dare takes place anywhere and everywhere! Participants throng to compete, and judges and mullahs eliminate contenders to a handful of finalists in each contest. The finalists compete in the last few days to determine dozens of prize-winning champions.

Most come to compete in one contest only, and specialists like this win the majority of prizes. The greatest glory, however, goes to those who can master many skills. The three champions who won, or placed well, in the most contests are chosen to face a final challenge on the last day – *any* three contests out of those held at the Games, chosen by the judges. The champion who performs best is declared overall winner of the Games.

# TRANSPLANTING THE STYLES

Although the styles in this book are designed for the *Banestorm* setting, they are built around common fantasy tropes; dwarven axemen and elven archers exist throughout the genre.

*I-Cops might recruit Yrth warriors.*

## INFINITE WORLDS

It is extremely difficult to escape from Yrth, but not impossible. An unscrupulous crossworld producer of entertainment could kidnap exotic Ytarrian fighters and pit them against warriors from other worlds in holo-recorded gladiatorial contests. The cynical owner of a chain of McDojos (*Martial Arts*, p. 20), looking for fresh ideas, might pay richly for a hijacked Ytarrian warrior! The dark elves or Templars might succeed in their research and find a way to travel off world. *Anyone* from Yrth might find himself transported by accident. I-Cops may even deliberately recruit warriors with skills useful to them; a Cardien Michaelite, already trained in investigation and able to

train other agents in anti-magical fighting skills, could be valuable back at headquarters.

## OTHER FANTASY SETTINGS

From *Lord of the Rings* to *Dungeons & Dragons*, from Hollywood to the local bookshop, elves have always been stealthy archers and dwarves have always been surly axe-wielders; sea-dwellers have used nets and tridents; and barbarians have entered a frenzy to fight. With only minor alteration, the styles in this book can be used in any sword-and-sorcery setting.

In Roma Arcana (*Fantasy*, p. 195), for example, the berserkers of the Germanic tribes learn Berserkerfang (pp. 15-16) – as do devotees of Bacchus! An especially skilled or powerful skin-turner (*Fantasy*, p. 209) would benefit from Ulvinger Fighting (p. 21). Persian tribesmen settle matters of honor with Combat Wrestling (*Martial Arts*, p. 204) or Tahtib (pp. 20-21). The legions (see *Frontiers and Fortifications*, *Fantasy*, p. 198) train in Armatura (*Martial Arts*, p. 150) and do not use magic in an organized, large-scale way. However, a Mithraic mage (*Fantasy*, p. 206) can profit from elements of Imperial Legion Field-Wizard Training (p. 18).



# APPENDIX

# SAMPLE

# CHARACTER

## ADALSTAN ULVING

150 points

Adalstan is a fit, lean Northman in his early 20s, with black hair and pale-blue eyes. He is also a werewolf of the Ulving tribe (p. 9). He dresses in practical leather or wool, and rarely takes much care of clothing – he periodically has to discard it anyway, due to his nature. He is particularly proud of his hair, which he wears in braids. He is a highly devout pagan, and demands that his pack obey elaborate religious rules about every activity. Adalstan is the huscarl (pack leader) of the Blackpaws, a five-strong pack of werewolves born in the same year.

The Blackpaws' adventuring career began a few months ago. Following orders from the tribal jarl, they attacked and killed a Christian missionary party traveling in the Ulvings' territory. The monk survived the initial onslaught, albeit horribly wounded. Adalstan saw fit to question him before killing him, learning that the Christ-god has a family of servants called "Saints," who perform magic on his behalf. Adalstan took a magic charm from the dying monk – a medal blessed by "St. Christopher," which supposedly protects travelers. Since then, he has led his pack into Christian lands to learn more about the magic that the Christians use, and to see if he can steal it for Odin and the Norse gods.

Adalstan is appropriate as an enemy or NPC in a *Banestorm* game, or as a starting character. He is especially suited to an all-Ulving game (see *Wolf Pack*, p. 34).

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 11 [10].  
Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 10 [0]; Per 10 [0]; FP 11 [0].  
Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 10\*; Parry 11\* (Karate).  
6'; 155 lbs.

### Social Background

TL: 2 [-5].

CF: Nomad Lands [0].

Languages: English (Accented) [4]; Northland (Native) [0].

### Advantages

Alternate Form (Ulving Wolf, below; Reduced Time 5, +100%; Uncontrollable Trigger, Full Moon, p. 24, -15%) [41]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Fit [5]; Military Rank 1 (Huscarl) [5].

*Perks:* Biting Mastery; Pack Tactics (p. 25); Shape Mastery (p. 26); Style Familiarity (Ulvinger Fighting); Technique Mastery (Bite). [5]

### Disadvantages

Bloodlust (9) [-15]; Chummy [-5]; Code of Honor (Northman's) [-10]; Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism) [-5]; Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Pack) [-5]; Social Stigma (Barbarian) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5].

*Quirks:* Always reads out loud; Carries a St. Christopher medal; Restless. [-3]

### Skills

Area Knowledge (Nomad Lands) (E) IQ+2 [4]-12; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-10; Karate (H) DX+3 [16]-15; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; Leadership (A) IQ+2 [8]-12; Religious Ritual (Norse) (H) IQ [4]-10; Running (A) HT+1 [4]-12; Stealth (A) DX+3 [12]-15; Survival (Plains) (A) Per+2 [8]-12; Wrestling (A) DX+3 [12]-15.

### Techniques

Bite (Karate) (p. 28) (A) [2]-17; Counterattack (Karate) (H) [3]-12; Feint (Karate) (H) [2]-16.

\* Includes +1 for Combat Reflexes.

## ULVING WOLF

14 points

Adalstan's alternate form is a large, black-and-gray timber wolf (p. B458). He is more intelligent than a natural wolf. Although Bestial (p. B124), he lacks the Hidebound disadvantage. He can think and plan in both forms.

*Attribute Modifiers:* DX+2 (No Fine Manipulators, -40%) [24]; IQ-4 [-80]; HT+2 [20].

*Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:* SM 0; Will+5 [25]; Per+8 [40]; Basic Move+3 [15].

*Advantages:* Discriminatory Smell [15]; DR 1 (Flexible -20%) [4]; Fur [1]; Night Vision 2 [2]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Temperature Tolerance 1 [1].

*Disadvantages:* Bestial [-10]; Cannot Speak [-15]; Quadruped [-35].

*Racial Skills:* Brawling (E) DX+2 [4]-16; Tracking (A) Per+4 [2]-18\*.

*Features:* Born Biter 1 (*Martial Arts*, p. 115).

\* Includes +4 for Discriminatory Smell.

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