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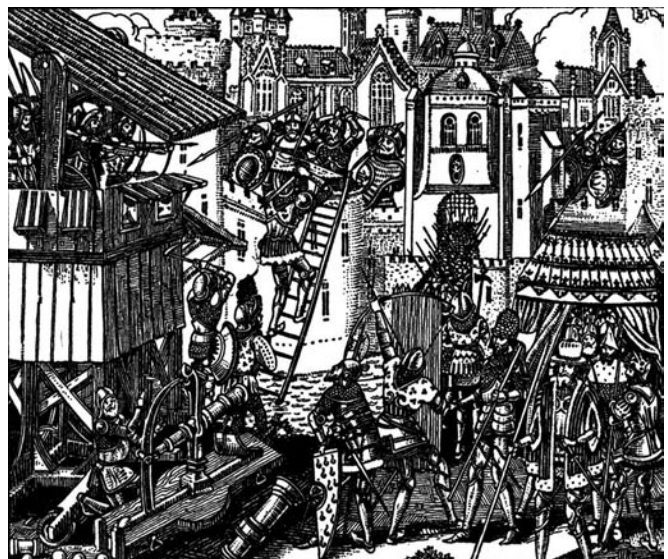
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Introduction: On Setting Concepts

This book aids the creation of a generic Western European medieval world consistent with third edition gaming. This is not a campaign setting, nor is it a history book with a list of rulers, powerful people, and events. This book allows you to add a medieval feel to your world without forcing you to play in a truly medieval world. This volume provides a wealth of resources concerning medieval Western Europe: the spatial systems, the social groups and distinctions, the trade and economics, the law and justice, and the typical medieval mindset. Modeled after Germanic high medieval societies, this book simulates, but does not replicate actual medieval Europe.

However, this book does not discuss costumes, customs, mythology, games, tournaments, linguistics, or any of the other particulars of a distinctive campaign setting. It does not provide all the necessary information to create a comprehensive magical medieval society. Such is the prerogative of the GM's unique campaign world. This supplement provides GMs information and tools for increasing the depth of their existing world.

Some basic core assumptions of third edition gaming integrate poorly with medieval society. Ultimately, GMs must make decisions on how their magical medieval society works.

Gender

The medieval period, though romantically remembered for chivalry and knights, is not known for its gender equality. However, medieval society is not as discriminatory as most moderns believe. Women find places in medieval society as guild members, powerful landowners, and abbesses. Some societies assign gender to certain roles but allow women to assume those roles though assuming a different gender. Complex gender issues aside, third edition assumes ability is not based upon sex or gender. This means a female fighter swings and hits as hard as a male fighter.

The religious views of women that colored feminine perceptions in the medieval times are another gender consideration. There is no inherent Eve or Madonna in third edition. This does not remove all historically sex-defined roles, but it does allow a GM more equality in game play.

What kind of place in society would women have in third edition parameters? Making women statistically equal to men challenges every historical concept of women. Female rulers would be more common, or even the norm in some



kingdoms. Women would bear arms and be a part of military endeavors. A female society and fighting force could exist and kill anyone that has problems with sword-carrying chicks. Religious institutions would incorporate women in their hierarchy, and female apprentices would be accepted as readily as male ones. Because of third edition's gender assumptions, GMs determine societal roles rather than assuming historical gender roles. That being said, if GMs prefer busty serving wenches and damsels in distress (so that PCs can kill dragons and steal their treasures), keep in step with the historical view towards women in a magical medieval society.

Communication

The ease of third edition communication, both written and spoken, leads a magical medieval society away from its historical roots. Firstly, by virtue of being classed, a large percent of society is literate. Even thorsps, not including barbarians and commoners, have on average fifteen literate people. Secondly, everyone speaks common, including nonhuman races, such as elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and many of the goblinoids. This does not exclude variations in regional accent and local slang, but everyone can effectively communicate with each other. This removes interesting encounters such as kings and queens speaking different languages, muddling through marriage with a smattering of each other's native tongue. Everyone possessing a common language is analogous to everyone in the medieval period speaking fluent Latin, even the commoners.

These two factors change the way a magical medieval society progresses. Increased literacy leads to a more educated society, while a common language allows for more communication between races, cities and nations. One expects trade and the rise of cities to occur faster and be more pervasive in such an environment when compared with the historical examples. Better dissemination of ideas leads to gains in technology, religion, and innovations, altering the social makeup of a magical medieval Western Europe.

Race

This book mostly considers humans and human interactions. This is because humans were the only existing creatures in the historical Middle Ages and because there are vastly differing interpretations of the other races (elf, dwarf, halfling, gnome, half-orc, half-elf). Our basic assumption is a society in which race is a non-determining factor for social interactions. This is,