

The Dark Ages: 950-1050 AD

"After day comes night. The time of men will pass and they will return to where they came from." – The Necronomicon

Players and keepers are not usually acquainted with the "Dark Ages" era that serves as a setting for Cthulhu Dark Ages adventures. This chapter provides some general historical context. Many "props" for a realistic Dark Age setting can be found in the glossary. Particular historical points are dealt with in the scenarios. When in doubt, apply friendly stereotypes...

The year 955 was a turning point in the history of the Occident. That year, Otto the Great crushed the Magyar cavalry on the banks of the river Lech, thereby putting an end to the age of invasions.

In the Dark Ages that followed, the Occident struggled hard to recreate its unity, a foundation on which, one century later, a new civilization would grow that would become our modern world.

The Dark Ages thus marked the end of a world, and the birth of another. And while feudal warlords shared the land, defining a new temporal order, a monastic reform was silently sweeping through the Christian world, bearing a new spiritual order.

The World

Scholars of the Dark Ages pictured the Earth at the center of a universe made of concentric spheres, corresponding respectively to the apparent orbit of the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars.

MAPPA MUNDI

The few world maps of the Dark Ages represented the earth as a disk divided in three parts by a "T". The upper half disk was Asia, and the two lower quadrants were Europe to the left, and Africa to the right, separated by the Mediterranean. The river Don and the Nile marked the frontier between the West and the East. Jerusalem was the center of the world.

Thanks to the mild climate that prevailed in the Dark Ages, primeval forests dominated the landscape, except for flatland moors, mountain tops and Mediterranean scrublands. Birches were then covering Greenland and Iceland.

People of that time were basically forest dwellers. To travel anywhere, they had to cross forests, and often got lost on the way (nobody seemed to need geographical maps, and the compass was yet to be invented)!

Time

In the Dark Ages nobody possessed anything even remotely resembling a watch. Farmers relied on the cockcrow to give the signal for dawn, or listened to the bells sounding the canonical praying hours in a nearby monastery.

The only time-measuring instruments were the sundial, the sandglass, and the unusual *clepsydra*. Nighttime was mainly measured in terms of "candles". The stars and the moon, when carefully observed could also indicate the time.

In fact the idea of a constant unit of time was irrelevant to most people. Farmers did not need any artifact to know the time of day, and they had no use for that information anyway.

The four seasons gave the year natural articulations that governed harvesting, hunting and warring. Liturgy imposed another rhythm to the year with the Sunday rest every week, religious fetes, etc. The Holy Week, Easter, Christmas and Epiphany in particular were occasions to impress the faithful with splendid liturgical celebrations and striking representations of the Bible, called "tropes".

Clerics still wrote dates according to the Latin custom, by *kalendes*, *ides* and *nonas*. New Year's Day did not start on the January 1st, but varied from place to place. At the Chancery of the King of France for instance, it was the first of March. In Germany and England, a widespread custom was to start the year with Christmas.

A cleric responsible for the liturgy knew which year it was, if only for fixing the date of Easter. According to the most widely accepted chronology, the world would be 4952 years old in 1000 AD, and scholars thought they were living history's last age: the sixth age.

Languages

Occidental languages were split into two zones: a Romanic zone - Italy, France, Spain - and a Germanic zone - the Empire. Each zone was in turn fragmented into a patchwork of local dialects.

Except in Italy and to some extent England, the majority of laymen were illiterate.

Latin was the most widespread of languages. All members of the Church, secular clerics and monks fluently spoke it, and it was the first written language. The Church was the only institution providing any form of education, and it provided it in Latin.

Dark Ages clerics were ministers, ambassadors, economists, jurists, architects and private secretaries. In bishop councils or elsewhere, these men conversed in Latin, and they wrote letters and legal documents in Latin.

Laymen thus heard Latin being spoken or chanted all the time. Of course, none understood any of it.

Religion

Catholicism was the official religion of the occidental world. There were churches everywhere. Parishes were landed estates, and the priest was supported by the tithe

levied on the believers. The priest was a man designated by the owner of the parish, who considered him as a servant, and often claimed the largest part of the tithe for him.

Priests implemented the mission of the Church to baptize, celebrate mass, give the sacraments, communicate the faith and uphold morals in their rural parishes. The duties imposed by Church were few: Sunday mass, Pascal communion, observance of fetes and fasting, and a few rules to observe in cases of birth, wedding or death. Non-observance of these rules was sometimes followed by physical punishments (e.g. pulling out teeth).

In short, priests were in charge of the *cura animarum* - the care of souls. Note that most of them lived with a concubine. Itinerant officers of the local ecclesiastical authority supervised parish priests in their mission. A priest was not allowed to cross parish lines to administer penance without the bishop's permission.

From the humble parish priest to archbishops, the whole clergy was integrated to the feudal system. Young men of means who saw there an opportunity to live in luxury and sin often occupied the Papal seat of Saint Pierre. Prelates possessed land and had the same worries, ambitions and duties as their lay counterparts. There were even warrior-bishops who fought with maces!

EXORCISTS

In 250 AD, the Church instituted a new order of low-ranking priests: the *exorcitate*. Upon a successful exorcism the exorcist was promoted to full-fledged priest. Exorcism consisted of a solemn address to the demon to leave the body, backed up by three sacramentals: water, salt and oil.

PILGRIMS

Pilgrimage, together with the cults of saints and relics, is a characteristic of the Dark Ages. The supreme pilgrimage was the journey to the Jerusalem (six months of travel from South France).

HERMITS

The hermitic movement started somewhere in Italy around 950 AD. Hermits lived in solitude, tried to attain exaltation through cold and hunger, or by accomplishing some exhausting work.

Of all the Christian dogma, that of the immortality of the soul, of its reward or punishment, was the best understood and the most believed in. Those that this knowledge did not make gentle, honest and just - and there were many - thought they could buy divine forgiveness and the protection of saints by ways of gifts and testamentary liberality *ad sepultram*. Many had the intention to become monks on their dying beds!

HERESIES

Around 1000 AD appeared the manichean heretic movement, embracing peasants, nobles and clerics alike. Manicheans rejected the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and did not believe in the necessity of baptism and other Christian rituals. They said the universe was self-created and eternal, and considered debauchery to be harmless.

Christianity had not yet eradicated the pagan spirit (*paganum animum*): everywhere people still worshipped the elements, the moon, the sun or the stars. They celebrated New Year's Day on the first of January by offering a feast dressed as stags or cows, and going on a roof or at a road crossing to read the future.

Some women, fearing that a child dead before baptism would come back and harm the living, would impale the small corpse and hide it. Other women believed that they could fly to the clouds, travel great distances and combat other flying women. The first records of demon worshippers also appear in the tenth century.

Most people feared to leave home before cockcrow, because of the unclean spirits of the night, and everywhere farmers used primitive magic to call the rain.

CONVERSIONS

Many pagan kingdoms were Christianized during the Dark Ages. This process was usually initiated at the highest level, and then forced upon the rest of the population through large scale baptism and the eradication of the old cults and their priests or priestesses.

Why did heathen leaders convert to Christianity in the first place? One common problem of paganism was its lack of structure, hierarchy and decorum. Conversely, Christianity had plenty of those, hence it was able to provide newly formed nations with a unified spiritual identity that strengthened the power in place.

Monks

In the tenth century monasteries experienced a rebirth. The reforming movement, the aim of which was to "free Church from the hands of laymen", started in Cluny. In the foundation act of this monastery, William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine, had stipulated that it would be free of any lay or ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and would directly come under the Holy See in Rome. Other monasteries still depended more or less on a lord or a prince - the "lay abbot" - that was closely watching their income.

The monks of Cluny were soon famous for their rigorous life under the "Benedictine rule". In 1000 AD, there were hundreds of abbeys and priories, and thousands of monks submitted to Cluny. This efficient praying community set an example of sanctity in the spiritual chaos of the Dark Ages. Great abbots became very famous and very influential men. They were often travelling, accompanied by escorts of armed monks.

Monasteries were places where life was easier than elsewhere: founded by lords, who had granted them large tracts of lands, monasteries were rich and in their domains famine was largely unknown.

Monasteries were the usual resting stages of the most privileged. Exemplary monasteries like Cluny had a hostel outside their walls, with two dormitories (one for men, one for women), latrines and a refectory. Monasteries also welcomed pilgrims, travelling priests and monks, and the poor who asked for food and shelter. They were lodged in the chaplaincy - the house of the poor - outside the cloister. A traveler in need who did not expect to return to the monastery within a year received a provision of some sort (e.g. one denier).

According to the Benedictine rule, the monks had to spend time in prayer (six to seven hours a day), work and charity. They were most of the time compelled to a rigorous silence (monks actually developed a sign language of about a hundred words to express what they wanted). Daily chores were entrusted to lay brothers called *conversi*, who held the role of servants. They were originally pious laymen who had given all their possessions to the abbey and had taken a vow of obedience. They were also called *barbati* because they were not required to shave, or *illiterati* because they could not read. All in all, the domestic activities of the monks amounted to very little, like pulling up the weeds in the garden or kneading bread at the bakery. On the other hand, copying and illuminating work was considered so important that the involved monks were partly relieved of choir service.

The monastery had to employ many professional artists to account for the numerous paintings, precious embossed objects, the embroidered fabrics, the chasubles, the crown-shaped central lights made of bronze, gold or silver, and so forth. Some abbeys even housed a workshop that minted deniers - a kingly right inherited from Carolingian times. In fact, many monks were skilled craftsmen.

MONKS

The **hotelier** insured the service in the hostel, and carefully planned welcoming ceremonies. Other monks and servants assisted him in his task.

The **chaplain** was in charge of the chaplaincy and cared for the sick of the neighborhood once per week, helped by a few servants. In prosperous monasteries, the chaplain also organized food distribution to the poor. Clothes worn by monks for more than a year were given away.

The **treasurer** was the most important officer in a monastery. He was in charge of the clothing, the bedding, and the lighting of the dormitory, the infirmary, the storeroom and the novice room. He was qualified for collecting the rent in money coming from the abbey's lands, and the dues in kind. He also supervised the exploitation of the surrounding forests.

The monk in charge of the storeroom had a flock of subordinates. The **refectory monk** directed the service in the refectory; the **loft monk** supervised the corn lofts, the water mill and the bakery; the **constable** ran the stables, and the **gardener** took care of the vegetables garden and the orchard.

The **sacristan** was the officer responsible for the church and the liturgical furniture. The **preacher** was master of ceremonies and librarian.

The **infirmary monk** cared for the sick and performed the ritual bleeding of healthy monks for the Annunciation Day. The most accepted treatment against illnesses consisted in feeding the sick with meat!

NUNS

Nuns, just like monks, were served by lay sisters, but male priests acted as chaplains!

Monks slept in a dormitory where candles or oil lamps were left burning all through the night. A monk's bed consisted of a simple wooden frame, with a felt carpet, a straw mattress, a linen sheet and a cushion filled with

straw. In winter each monk had a right to a blanket of hairy fabric or cheap goat or lambs skin.

Monks were required to wash their faces and hands everyday. They took two baths per year, one before Christmas, the other before Easter. Baths were taken individually in vats filled with warm water. Monks also shaved their beards once per month.

COSTUME

Monks wore a plain black habit with an outdoor hood or cowl and a scapular (long narrow sleeveless outer cloth draped over the basic tunic). They had simple shoes or sandals, wore a leather belt and carried a knife. The belt also served as a disciplinary aid in self-flagellation.

The nun's costume was similar to the monk's, with the hood being replaced by a "wimple" and a head veil. Habits were white, black, or mixed.

DIET

Lunch consisted of two meals: one of beans or peas, and one of "herbs". Now and then monks were also served eggs and cheese. On Sundays and Thursdays, fish was added to the regular menu. Bread - one pound per monk - was a constant, as was wine - one cup. Supper (*cena*) consisted of bread with fruits or "oublies", a sort of thin pastry. On fast days supper was the only meal.

Novitiate lasted for about a year. The novice was a layman or secular cleric willing to "embrace the rule". The monastic order also welcomed "oblate" children - boys - brought to the monastery by the parents with an appropriate dowry. Finally, monasteries also educated gifted peasant boys especially chosen by the abbot. The most famous example was the young Gerbert of Aurillac, who eventually became Pope.

There were two types of monastic schools: one located outside the cloister and open to children from the neighborhood, and an interior school reserved to oblate children, who were taught to read Latin and to calculate. Saint Gall, Reichenau and Fulda had famous schools. Teaching was strictly oral, and consisted of simple arithmetic and catechism.

Farmers

Most farmers of the Occident were feudal tenants: their lord granted them plots of land ("tenures") for cultivation in exchange of certain services, among which the obligation to cultivate the lord's *mansus*.

Every tenant had a few strips of land to cultivate. Ploughing was done with the swing plough or the wheeled plough, and harvesting was done with the sickle. Once the ears of the corn were cut, the hay became common property until the new harvest: anybody could take what he needed for his thatched roof. In the Dark Ages rotation of crops was unavoidable, for lack of a proper fertilizer. The biennial rotation was simplest and widespread in Mediterranean regions; it consisted in sowing a field every other year only. In northern Europe the 3-year rotation prevailed.

THE SOCIAL PYRAMID

Farmers represented about nine tenths of the population of the Occident (in contrast to three-quarters in Byzantium). Some 45000 souls therefore supported a cathedral city of 5000 souls, working the soil or the sea all about. Such cities were at least 50 miles apart, two to three days' marching.

Some 4500 peasants in surrounding villages supported a town of some 500 souls, residence of a local warlord and his garrison of 10 to 20 warriors. Towns were at least 5-7 miles apart, a two hours walking.

Farmers actually showed a great diversity of conditions, from quasi-slaves - serfs - to freemen or colonists, who benefited from reduced rents and obligations. A few possessed a plough or a harrow and a team to pull it, but the majority had to rely on their own strength to pull the plough.

The most gifted farmers went into service with the lord as squires or as sergeants (from *serviens*, servant) who collected taxes and fines, and dealt with merchants. Large abbeys delegated the administration of their domains to a mayor (*villicus*). In the Empire there were also "ministers", i.e. favored servants who fulfilled courtly or knightly functions for their lord.

RURAL CALENDAR.

March: prune vineyard; **April:** animals pasture, weeding, plant and prune fruit trees; **May:** gather fodder for horses and fasten vines; **June:** ploughing, sheep shearing; **July:** hay-making; **August:** harvest; **September-October:** gather and press grapes, sow; **November:** put wine in barrels, thresh wheat, take pigs to graze in the forest; **December:** slaughter pigs.

COSTUME

Men wore breeches and a long shirt that fell down to the thighs, in the fashion of their ancestors. Women wore very simple dresses and children wore one-piece smocks. Wooden soled shoes and small boots were quite common.

Farmers, who could not afford to rent the lord's oven and bake bread, ate porridge every day. The fruits of the forest, products from their small vegetable gardens and eggs and milk, complemented the farmers' diet if they could afford to keep chicken, goats or cows.

Farmers sold surplus at village fairs where they could earn a few deniers for paying off taxes, i.e. the dues, the tithes and the "tallage".

Blacksmiths (about one in every other village) were settled on tenure just like farmers, and their dues in kind consisted of the weapons they crafted. They also sold surplus weapons and horseshoes for their own benefit.

HUTS AND TIMBER HALLS

A representative southern Europe village would consist of one street flanked by stone houses, and one tower at each end (Catalonia).

In northern Europe, wood still prevailed, and a village was a cluster of huts, silos, ditches and timber halls (Brittany). About one village out of two had its stone church with a cemetery.

The basic design of buildings was rectangular with a roof of thatch or shingles that sometimes extended to the

ground. The only opening was the door. Sizes varied greatly: the smallest huts had no walls as such, and larger timber halls had one or two rows of vertical posts that supported roof beams, thus defining aisles and bays. The central fireplace was at ground level, and marked by stones.

Close to the houses and within the village stockades, farmers kept fenced vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and hemp beds.

In principle the forest belonged to the lord. In practice everybody had all sorts of rights to the forest, so that it was exploited in many ways. Villagers hunted there and gathered wood for making resinous torches and tools, to build houses and fences, the castle's stockade, and for roadwork. They made litters out of moss and dead leaves; they extracted oil from the beechnut, gathered fruit from the trees of the forest, and even left animals to graze in the forest.

There were also "woodsmen" who led a nomadic life on the fringe of the village community, in the forest: some were coalmen and produced charcoal for ovens, or burned down branches to make the ash required in the fabrication of glass and soap. Others wove ropes out of creepers or tore down the bark of trees which, once ground, gave the tan for tanning leather. A few were specialized in collecting honey and wax from wild bees.

Warlords

The feudal anarchy arising after the downfall of the Carolingian Empire had seriously eroded the prerogatives of kings, and tore apart the very fabric of their kingdoms. Kingdoms broke up into principalities, and principalities broke up into fiefs: much of the old power of counts and princes shifted to the benefit of small warlords and religious immunities. New strongholds and castles sprouted everywhere: on the site of an antique institution, an outpost, a *vicus*, etc.

These warlords all had different origins: many descended directly from an ancient lineage of clan chiefs or landowners. There were lords who lived in the direct entourage of a greater lord, and lords who were "housed" (*casati*), i.e. who had been granted a fief. There were also bold adventurers who simply took over land with ten or twenty companions, and settled in before anybody could throw them out. A Dark Ages dictum said: "no land without a lord"!

PORTRAIT OF A WARLORD

A shaven man with short hair, tunic falling to his knees, baldric girded around the loins. He is equipped with a horn, a small whip, a sword, a flintstone and the iron to strike it, the oak branch to set afire, spurs. For his warhorse: a fur saddle with stirrups, a cloth cover on the croup, and a bridle. His battle gear consists of a sword, a lance, a helmet, a chain mail and a shield.

EDUCATION OF A YOUNG LORD

At seven or eight the boy was sent away to some friendly feudal court. For some years he was a page serving the lady of the castle. Around puberty he served the lord as a

squire. When old enough and properly trained, he was solemnly made a “knight” by his mentor.

Housed warlords had two things in common: above all they were “knights”, i.e. heavily armed horsemen and military leaders. Secondly, they possessed strongholds where they could hide from enemies and happily oppress inferiors. It was usually a timber hall with one storeroom and a loft or an upper floor for the lord’s chamber. During the Dark Ages however, a new type of stronghold appeared in France: the moat-and-bailey stronghold.

A MOAT-AND-BAILEY STRONGHOLD

The stronghold was built on raised ground or a man-made earth moat, right over ground water. It consisted of a square wooden tower with a first floor hall raised on a basement, and possibly one or two extra stories, all connected by an interior ladder-like stairway. Windows were simple openings that could be covered with boards.

The basement was dug into the moat, where food stocks were kept along with the lord’s “treasure”. A well was usually located in the basement. A watch permanently occupied the upper story, largely open to the outside.

The ditch surrounding a moat was usually reinforced by a wooden palisade (in some yet rare instances, a stone wall) and a gatehouse. The outer defenses enclosed a “bailey” with outbuildings, like the communal oven and the kitchen, latrines, stables, kennels, and the barn.

It took a hundred workers about a month to build a moat-and-bailey stronghold with a 100 feet diameter, 50 feet high moat.

The basic furniture of Dark Ages strongholds were large beds, long tables consisting of planks laid across trestles, and benches. The food served differed from that of the commoner in the quality of the bread, the abundance of meat and the availability of alcoholic drinks. Every guest’s share was cut by an attendant and served on a large slice of bread. The guest did the rest with his hands and his knife.

In his spare time the lord played war games: he hunted, played chess, or participated in tournaments. These battlefield simulations, not necessarily reserved to the aristocracy, were far more informal and improvised than later in the Middle Ages. Therefore tournaments were rather dangerous, if not as deadly as the ancient Roman games they originated from.

Princes

Great lords - princes - had power and riches comparable to those of kings, and they lived like kings. Their main obligation to the king consisted of the military aid they owed him, but in practice they did pretty much what they wanted. In fact, principalities - not kingdoms - were the real political hearts of the Occident.

PORTRAIT OF A GREAT LORD AND HIS LADY

A bearded man, wearing a large lustrous cloak attached to the right shoulder by a precious brooch and under the cloak, a blue shirt falling to the calves. He wears red “chausses” and black pointed shoes with a golden rim. His lady wears a large white veil (*pallium*) covering the head

and falling to the ground, and closed above the neck by a big jewel. The veil opens on a long embroidered shirt hiding the feet, with wide sleeves and golden braids. Underneath she wears a skintight chemise.

Each prince had a capital with a palace in which he resided part of the year. The staff of the palace consisted of servants, guards, clerics and craftsmen. Princes were on the move most the year, meeting their peers or making pilgrimages, stopping off at their many country castles.

THE PALACE

Typically a palace would consist of a defensive wall enclosing domestic dependencies, a long timber warehouse, a chapel and a stone or brick building with the ceremonial room (aula) on the first floor. The prince would have his court in the aula and hold assemblies there, welcoming visiting vassals, bishops and abbots, with whom to discuss matters of politics and religion.

A CASTLE

The tower was made of masonry and served both as residence and hideout. The first floor of the tower was without openings and used as storeroom. The second floor was the living room of the lord and his suite and was provided with a fireplace and groined bays. The tower dominated a vast yard enclosed by one or more defensive walls. In the yard stood barracks for the castle’s garrison, dwellings for the castle’s servants and craftsmen, and barns sheltering the products of the taxes. The garrison was supplied in part by vassals and allies.

During the Dark Ages, war mainly took place between lords, between princes and vassals or between king and lords: Apart a few notable exceptions there were strictly speaking no “international” wars.

The causes of dispute were essentially strongholds and cities. Therefore war predominantly consisted of sieges. The most accepted strategy was to weaken the opponent by burning down entire villages, occasionally slaughtering farmers and raping their wives and daughters.

In fact, great lords only died exceptionally on the battlefield: they wore heavy armor, rode fast battle horses and when caught, the enemy usually preferred to hold them for ransom.

Cities and Trade

The Occidental society in the Dark Ages was a religious, farming and militaristic society, with little room for trade. Everything necessary for daily life - food, clothing, tools and building material - was produced or gathered on the spot. Money played a small part in the economy.

There were many reasons for this economic stagnation, the main one being the downfall of Carolingian Empire that had caused a fragmentation of centralized power and a disruption of established trading routes and posts. North Africa, Spain and Sicily had fallen to the Muslims. The Vikings had devastated the ports of the North Sea. The Danube was still unsafe for navigation because of the Hungarians, despite their recent conversion to Christianity. Last but not least, Church condemned trading under the principle that “deniers do not produce deniers”.

The road network inherited from Roman times had fallen into such decay that they were only practicable by beasts of burden (provided the wooden bridges the road network depended on were intact). Wheeled vehicles were only used for short distances. Moreover, local lords imposed multiple tolls on travelers and traders.

Rivers constituted in fact the most practical and dependable communication route. Towns along large navigable rivers were usually situated at regular intervals, corresponding roughly to a day of travel. The most important towns had a bridge.

In Germany and in the North of France, cities of the Dark Ages only survived as cathedral cities, that is residences of lay or clergy lords, and all activities were tied to the daily life of these lords.

Just like any feudal lord, the bishop was the master of the personnel and he owned all the property in his diocese. The city inhabitants were more or less under the same juridical conditions as country tenants. They were lodged, fed, clothed and armed by the bishop.

A CATHEDRAL CITY

The heart of a city was the cathedral district, which exhibited a cathedral, monasteries and Episcopal schools supervised by the chancellor, who issued licenses to teach. The schools provided higher education to form clerics. Next to the bishop's palace stood the tower of the "solicitor" - lay lord or "burgrave", whose task was to protect the bishopric from attacks.

Further away one found the houses of the garrison's knights, the shelters for clerics, servants and other laymen in service of the bishop, the covered market and the shops of the craftsmen.

A description of the Arras market around 1000 AD lists the following goods: woolen cloth, fish, corn, fruits, dye, ash, wooden platters, salt, wine, cattle, wax, lard, knives, iron, scythes, spears, lamb skins, cat skins, rabbits, leather, honey, butter, cheese, gold and slaves.

The city often had ancient Roman walls and buildings. Streets were narrow and tortuous, winding in the shadow of two-storied houses.

The Dark Ages saw the advent of "outside burgs" (*forisburgus*) as merchants' warehouses progressively outgrew the city walls. Merchants obtained new "privileges" from bishops. In fact townsmen - burges - were about to transform the cities of the Middle Ages into real economic centers.

In Italy the antique tradition of urban life had never been forgotten, and the lords preferred to reside in the cities rather than in their countryside castles. Italian cities like Milan and Venice were relatively large and well developed compared to their relatives in the rest of the Occident.

In the Dark Ages, most Jewish merchants were still based in far away countries like Syria, Egypt and Byzantium. Jews who lived in Occidental cities acted as moneychangers or usurers, practices forbidden to Christians but nonetheless essential for society. They bought vital goods, ovens and mills, precious metals, and some even administered the finances of bishoprics.

The Jews formed a strong community bound together by language, religion and common interests derived from their mercantile activities.

The Christian attitude towards Jews generally oscillated between indifference and esteem, although a latent anti-Semitism was always there, ready to raise its ugly snout when some natural or unexplained disaster hit the Christian community.

To the North the Scandinavian Vikings founded settlements at the mouth of the Elbe, they colonized Greenland, ruled the northern seas and built huge entrepôts (e.g. Haithabu).

At the beginning of the tenth century, the Swedish Vikings were well established in Russia. As soon as the snow melted, Scandinavian boats navigated the Dniepr from Kiev to the Black Sea and Constantinople. In Byzantium, these bold "Russ" traded honey, furs and slaves for spices, wines and silks that they brought back up North on the Volga or the Dniepr.

A GORODA

Russian cities like Novgorod or Kiev (there were about a hundred of them) consisted of a wooden palisade enclosing three districts: the merchants, the craftsmen and the soldiers' districts. Craftsmen worked metals, leather and bone, and made oil and cloth. Around this kernel grew lively suburbs where hunting, farming and gathering products (furs, honey, wax) were exchanged against iron and salt.

EXPORT

The Occident exported salt, wine, corn, fish (salted or smoked); linen, black woolen cloth from the Rhine, reddish woolen cloth of the Swabs, precious Flemish cloth; wood from the Trentino and Appenino forests; sickles, knives, Frankish weapons, Bohemian tin, copper and silver from Harz, Bohemia and Slovakia, Slavic gold, brass, lead, iron from Brescia, Carylthia and Styria, etc.

Byzantium exported silk fabrics, spun gold, wines and other products from the Black Sea and the Orient, like spices, perfumes, incense, oriental coinage, slaves, pepper, furs (e.g. black fox), etc.

Technology

A major technical breakthrough of the Dark Ages was the use of draught horses for ploughing, made possible by the introduction of horseshoes and rigid horse collars. Horses were put to good use in the fields: hitched up in line, they pulled the plough and the harrow much faster than oxen, and they were more resistant too. But both horses and oxen were expensive, so most farmers had to rely on manpower or donkeys.

Milling the corn and the hay was done in water mills, and there were special beer-mills to mill hops, iron-mills for the iron industry, and fuller's earth-mills for the textile industry. Again, renting the lord's mill was expensive, hence many farmers still relied on the ancient custom of hand-milling.

Iron ore, copper, salt, gold and silver were traditionally dug up in opencast mine pits (in some places galleries

were dug, and gold was also sought in riverbed sands). Miners depended on the lord on whose fief the mine was located.

Ore was melted in primitive ovens. Iron was so rare in the Dark Ages that the need for weapons left little over for agricultural tools: wooden tools - *ustensilia lignea* - predominated.

In salt mines water was introduced into the pit to dissolve the salt, and then hauled back with huge cranes. The water was then boiled in big cauldrons until complete evaporation. Salt was also produced in coastal salterns.

Textile production was tied to the exploitation of the land, since it depended on wool, linen and hemp. The tenants'

wives sheared sheep, treated the wool (involving rinsing in urine), spun and wove it. Linen, very widespread, was retted, washed and woven. The women also dyed the fabrics with natural dyes like madder and vermilion, and made clothing.

The tools of the textile industry were the distaff, the spindle and a primitive vertical loom operated by one worker.

Leather (made from ox, goat, lamb and wolf skins) and furs were treated by specialized workers. Fur coats were made of lamb, marten, mole, otter or beaver.

Glass working was uncommon during the Dark Ages, and most glass artifacts were luxury goods.

A Quick Tour of the World

ARAB WORLD: vast urbanized empire, spanning North Africa, two-thirds of Spain, Sicily and the Near East, with the fabled capital Bagdad. Cordoba in Spain was the largest city of the Occident, with half a million inhabitants, 50 times as many as in western capitals like Paris, London, Rome or Aachen. The Arabs were unequalled scholars in Mathematics, Medicine, Alchemy, and Astronomy. Despite the unifying Islamic culture, the Dark Ages saw the rise of political fragmentation in the Arab world. In the Dark Ages, occidentals considered Muslims as ordinary neighbors, and there wasn't any particular animosity directed towards them.

BYZANTIUM: the civilized Eastern Roman Empire, center of religious orthodoxy. The capital Constantinople surpassed ancient Rome in size and in beauty. The centralized political administration controlled the economy via large corporations. Territory divided into military provinces called "themes", ruled by military governors, and provided with a network of castles. Poor road system though (goods were carried on the backs of pack animals or women!).

At the end of the tenth century, the Byzantines were masters of the Balkans, from the Danube to the Peloponnisos. Commercial relations between Byzantium and the Occident (especially Italy) were quite frequent, but tainted on both sides with animosity and mistrust.

GERMAN EMPIRE: two-thirds of the Holy Roman Empire were still virgin forest in the Dark Ages - *terra incognita!* The Empire lay east of the Meuse and reached as far as Bohemia. The North Sea coast of the Empire extended from the fens of the Netherlands to the great northern plain.

The emperor (*Imperator Romanorum Augustus*) was elected by the nobility of the four duchies: Saxons, Franks, Bavarians and Swabs. Bishops and abbots who controlled much land and provided part of the emperor's army held the highest functions of the State. German bishops even ruled the bishoprics of Bohemia, Hungary and Poland.

The eastern marches were Christianized in the tenth century and colonized in the eleventh. Conquered Slavs were forced to pay the tithe to the Church. Within one century, these pagan regions became the heart of Europe.

Attempts to restore the grandeur of the Carolingian Empire yielded mixed results. Nevertheless, the centralized power (i.e. the Emperor, imperial bishops and *pagus* counts - judges) was quite well respected, thereby delaying the fragmentation of authority by the great nobility, as had already happened in France.

KINGDOM OF BURGUNDY: wealthy kingdom around the Rhone-Saone valley, west of the Jura and the Alps, including the warm Provence and its Roman way of life.

KINGDOM OF ENGLAND: Kingdom torn between the Danes, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Normans of the duchy of Normandy in France. Land divided into shires and "hundreds" ("vappatak" in Danish areas). The process of

formation of principalities wasn't felt in England at the same time, or with the same force than on the continent.

Hundreds had the responsibility to enforce local justice (Malls were held once per month). The earl was the royal officer of a shire responsible for raising military forces and implementing royal justice. Shire courts were presided over by bishop and sheriff - a minor royal official. The sheriff was also sent on "turns" to the local courts of the hundreds, and collected the royal revenues and taxes.

In some regions Danish settlers - free farmers - remained, keeping their own laws and traditions.

KINGDOM OF FRANCE: wine and wheat land of the Franks, with numerous cathedral cities, like Paris. Formerly Roman Gaul, it extended from the heaths of Aquitaine, in the south, to the Ardennes forest in the north. Dispute with the Empire about the Dukedom of Lorraine. The power of the King - the Duke of France - reposed on the sole domains of the crown. France was the birthplace of feudalism and feudal institutions.

France was a patchwork of strongholds in the Dark Ages, much more so than Germany or Italy. Strongholds were often not more than ten kilometers apart. However, in the course of the Dark Ages, France moved from being a loose alliance of belligerent princes, to a state with large territorial principalities and well developed administrations.

KINGDOM OF ITALY: mountainous land of the Lombards, still attached to an urban way of life inherited from ancient Rome.

Venice

Venice had no fields, no meadows, no vineyards and no forests. It was a city entirely devoted to trade and navigation. Venice exported heathen Slavs kidnapped or bought on the Dalmatian coast, to the harems of Egypt and Syria. Except for slaves, the humblest people around were sailors, craftsmen and merchants.

PAPAL STATES

The Papal States to the South of the kingdom of Italy were ruled by the Pope of the Western Church, bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, from his Holy See in Rome. The clergy and the people of Rome theoretically elected the Pope. In practice however, he was chosen by Roman nobles, which made him the instrument of political factions. Nonetheless, the clerical bureaucracy succeeded in maintaining Rome's spiritual power over Christendom.

Rome, the Eternal City

In the Dark Ages, Rome was a vast field of antique ruins, in the midst of a countryside clustered with remnants of a wonderful civilization. Within the city walls that had once sheltered a million inhabitants, a few thousands of people lived in small groups scattered over the lower city, along the banks of the Tibre, and on the island.

The Eternal City attracted a constant flow of pilgrims, the bread and butter of Rome's clerics, innkeepers,

pawnbrokers, various intermediaries and nobles that lived in strongholds built on ruins.

RUSSIA: the Russian Empire - centered on Kiev - was a creation of the Swedish Vikings, and consisted of principalities. A prince was a sort of supreme judge with limited powers otherwise: he was responsible for the defense of the city and the land. An assembly of nobles and bourgeois supported the prince in his duty.

The kingdom of Kiev united Slavs and Vikings into one nation, under the umbrella of the Byzantine culture and the Christian faith.

Kiev

A great city, capital of a powerful state, Kiev had eight markets and forty churches. Hagia Sophia was one of the most beautiful monuments of Christendom. Kiev offered large warehouses for storing goods. Craftsmen and merchants were organized into rich guilds called "hundreds", and benefited from special privileges. It was for instance possible to obtain credit from local princes or other merchants.

SCANDINAVIAN KINGDOMS: Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The base of Viking society originally rested on clans of free farmers organized in small isolated communities, each with its own customs and obeying to its own leader. The Viking woman had a social status not

found elsewhere in the Occident, except maybe in Britain. She could possess land, strongholds and drakkars.

Denmark was a unified Christian kingdom, where feudal lords held land. The "Danevirke", a long earth wall crossing the base of the Jutland peninsula, separated Denmark from Germany.

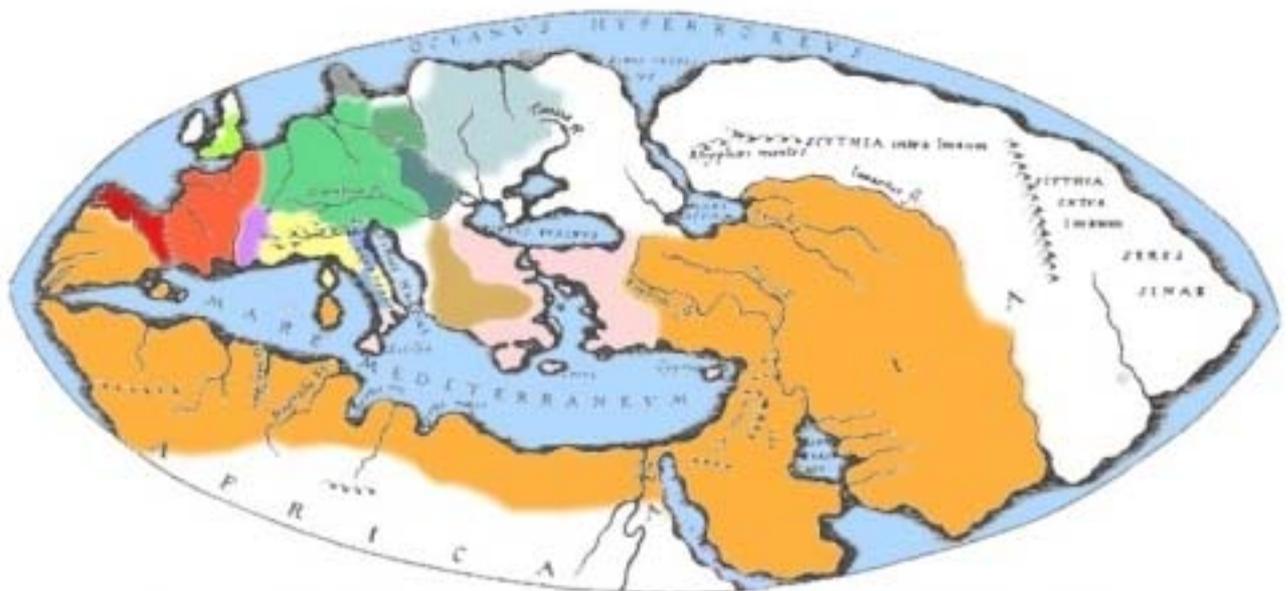
Sweden was the only Scandinavian region that failed to become a United Kingdom during the Dark Ages. Similarly, conversion to Christianity progressed in Sweden much slower than elsewhere, and urban development stagnated.

SLAVONIC STATES: the Dark Ages saw the advent of national Slavonic states: Poland, Hungary and Bohemia. The establishment of the Hungarians between the Tisza and the Danube separated in fact the Slavonic world into two regions that hardly communicated with each other.

Prague

The largest northern city of the Occident, according to Ibrahim Ibn Yakub. A city of whitewashed stone, with an important craft industry (saddles, bridles, shields), and a big slave market. There, great lords could sell their serfs to Jewish and Hungarian traders.

SPANISH KINGDOMS: there were four Christian states in Spain to the south of the Pyrénées, squeezed between the powerful Arab state and the Christian world.



ARAB W.	BURGUNDY	K. OF ITALY	DENMARK	BULGARIA
BYZANTIUM	ENGLAND	PAPAL STATES	POLAND	SPANISH K.
GERMAN E.	FRANCE	RUSSIA	HUNGARY	PAGAN

MAPPA MUNDI

C. 1000 AD

1000 AD Costs, Equipment & Services

Listed prices are indicative for new goods. Two important factors that influence the price of an item are availability and quality.

FOOD

12-24 breads, 2 pounds	1 denier
2 pounds of cheese	1 denier
3 dozens of eggs	1 denier
Food and lodging, 1 day	1-5 deniers
Horse fodder, 1 day	3-6 deniers

CLOTHING

Woolen pelisse - cheap	12 deniers
Monk's cowl, hooded	60 deniers
Short cloak - superior	120 deniers
Double cloak, hooded - winter	140 deniers
Marten cloak, bonnet - noble	360 deniers

TOOLS

Bucket	12 deniers
Awl, plane, auger, file, pliers, shears, hammer, saw	4-24 deniers
Sickle, hand ax, pickax, spade	24 deniers
Swing plow	72 deniers
Plow (iron plowshare and colter)	140 deniers

WEAPONS, SHIELDS AND ARMOUR

24 arrows or 12 bolts	12 deniers
Scabbard	24 deniers
Helm	72 deniers

Refer also to the weapon tables above.

MISCELLANEOUS

Resinous torch, lamp oil, candle for 2-hours worth of light	1 denier
Creeper rope, 30-ft	2 deniers
Fiber rope, 30-ft	12 deniers
6-persons tent, incl. 2 10-ft poles	360 deniers
Traveler's pack: outer wear, water-skin, knife, fishing line & hook, felt blanket, sack, flintstone & iron, whetstone	240 deniers
Warrior gear: war-horse, saddle, horn, sword, spear, helm, chainmail, shield	2400 deniers

DAILY WAGES

Farmer, priest, servant	1-3 deniers
Craftsman, sailor	3-6 deniers
Guard, cleric, mercenary	4-8 deniers
Warrior, merchant	20-40 deniers

These values represent either equivalent earnings or hiring wages.

ANIMALS

Farm dog	12 deniers
Sheep	12-15 deniers
Cow	24 deniers
Mule	36 deniers
Sow	12-54 deniers
Ox	24-108 deniers
Horse	240+ deniers
War-horse	600 deniers

VEHICLES

Wheelbarrow	12 deniers
Two-wheeled cart	120 deniers
Four-wheeled wagon	240 deniers
Four wheeled cart (leathered)	360 deniers

Four-wheeled carts in the Dark Ages lacked a pivoting beam, which made every turn a problem. Ox carts covered with leather are watertight.

CONSTRUCTIONS

Commoner's hut	24 deniers
Commoner's house	120 deniers
Short wooden bridge	140 deniers
Fishery	160 deniers
Timber hall	240 deniers
Water mill	270 deniers
Small farm with land	2400 deniers
Earth and timber castle: tower, moat, stockade, ditch, bailey and gatehouse	12000 deniers

BOATS

Rowboat	120 deniers
Raft	12 deniers
Longship	9000 deniers
Merchantman	3000 deniers
Cog (rowboat and pump optional)	12000 deniers
Trading vessel (incl. rowboat)	24000 deniers

Dark Ages Glossary

Abbey: important monastery run by an abbot.

Alchemy: in the Dark Ages *Arabian* alchemy or *al-Kimia*. Mystical teachings of Arabic scholars and philosophers about the order of nature, the four elements of Aristotle (earth, water, air, and fire), and how to control their transmutation.

Allod: land held in full ownership. Inheritance regime based on the division of the allod amongst all heirs of equal rank, e.g. all sons.

Armarius: librarian. Books were put in closets (*armaria*).

Arts: cycle of seven literary and scientific disciplines that formed the base of teaching and culture during the late antiquity and the Middle Ages (see *Quadrivium* and *Trivium*). Saint Augustine's doctrine stated that the sole objective of an art should be a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

Astrology: scholarly theory by which the celestial movement of the stars (and planets) constrain "human forces" as well as the forces of nature.

Auctores: authoritative classical writers, e.g. Cicero, the Dark Ages reference for the art of writing, and Virgil, the reference in poetry.

Automaton: self-acting machine. Mechanical wonder that imitates the movements of life. One example is the animated throne of Emperor Konstantinos VII Porfyrogenetos (941), adorned with a golden tree, singing birds, and roaring golden lions.

Ban: power to command, to constrain and to punish. Originally a royal power, the ban was usurped by lesser lords with the weakening of public authority. E.g.: the right to rent out somebody's bull or boar, to force tenants to use one's mill, oven or wine press for a fee. Above all, the right to exert (arbitrary) justice and levies.

Benedictine rule: a monastic rule elaborated by Saint Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century.

Bible, the: the Septuagint is the first major Greek translation of the Old Testament, written in Alexandria between 250 and 150 BC. The Vulgate: is the major Latin translation of the Bible, written by Jerome late 3rd, early 4th century at the request of pope Damasus. There are also scattered and partial English translations attributed to Bede.

Boni homines: Freemen recipients of local custom (Roman or German), presiding courts. In feudal countries, they merely assisted seigniorial courts exercising the ban.

Books: primarily bound, copied and stored in abbeys. The catalogue of a monastic library typically contained the books of the Bible, commentaries of the Bible, the works of Flavius Josephus, Horacius, Lucan, Perseus and Juvenal, poets of late antiquity, *historiae* and the life of saints. In the profane closet, one could find classical theatre pieces, Boece's summary of Plato and Aristotle, books treating the seven arts of the *Quadrivium* and the *Trivium*, *quaestiones medicinales* and books on the virtues of plants.

Bronze: many monumental bronze doors and statues were produced in the Dark Ages. The most famous bronze workshop was that of Bernard of Hildesheim.

Canonical praying hours: *prima hora* at dawn, *tertia* in the morning, *sexta* at noon, *nona* in the afternoon, *vesper* at sunset, etc.

Castrum: important fortress with many eligible parties, as opposed to lesser - and often more recent - strongholds belonging to one lineage.

Chanson de geste: Long epic poem, e.g. "Roland".

Charter: hand-written book that contained the ownership titles of a physical person or moral person.

Clepsydra: very rare clock running on the water level of a slowly emptying recipient.

Corn: wheat, rye, oats, and barley grain.

Craftsmen: armourers, bakers, blacksmiths, brewers, butchers, carpenters, cooks, furriers, goldsmiths, locksmiths, masons, millers, painters, parchment makers, saddlers, shoemakers, tailors, tanners, etc.

Crypt: column-supported, vaulted chapel with curved walls, often situated under the choir; usually houses the bodily remains of saints (relics).

Custom: the established custom (*consuetudo*) was often the only recourse against arbitrary seigniorial justice (the ban) and unfair taxes (*malas exactiones*).

Denier/Penny/Denarius: silver coin in use in the Occident. Fictitious monetary units are the sou/shilling/solidus (12 deniers) and the livre/pound/librum (20 solidus). The Byzantine used the nomisma, and the Arabs used the dinar, both gold currencies.

Dues (in kind): sheaves, poultry, honey cakes, livestock, skins, clothing, etc.

Exemption: privilege granted by the Pope to a monastery that more or less freed it from the control of the bishop.

Familia: group of servile workers housed and fed by a master, and who owed him all their work force.

Fetes, Christian: the Holy Week, Easter, Christmas and Epiphany.

Feudalism: relations that took place between the dominated class (peasants) and the dominant class (nobility).

Feudal system: system of man-to-man ties that structured the dominant class (*potentes*). The practical aspects of this system consisted of swearing fidelity (*fidelitas*) and paying homage (*hominium*) to one's lord, in exchange for the fief (*feudum, beneficium*).

Fief: administrative domain of a lord.

Fish: commonly consumed fishes were salmon, lamprey, cuttlefish, carp, trout, eel, barbel, roach, chub, and also mullet and herring.

Frock: outer robe-like garment worn by a monk.

Fruits: fruits were very varied, e.g. quinces, peaches, medlars, walnuts, hazelnuts, cherries and strawberries.

Forest fruits: apples, pears, plums, chestnuts and hop cones.

Greek fire: incendiary substance made of naphtha, quicklime and sulfur, and almost impossible to put out. To be flung at enemy buildings with catapults.

Haus/Domus: house. In the high aristocracy, the "house" consists of the direct family, a chaplain, household officers (seneschal, constable, marshal, etc.) who were sometimes

granted a fief for support, a few clerics, servants and even prostitutes.

Hawking: hunting “sport” imported from the plains of Asia, and growing in popularity.

Herbs: vegetables; lentils, leek (eaten raw), cabbage, lettuce, chervil, parsley, watercress.

Historiae: History annals (manuscripts). Men of Church, who conceived history in a biblical perspective only, wrote *historiae*.

Immunity: institution that closed a territory (usually a religious domain) to royal officers; the beneficiaries of the immunity fulfilled the tasks usually reserved to the public authority (e.g. justice).

Indulgence, partial: the payment of money in lieu of penance. Standard practice from the 11th century onwards.

Itineraria: lists of region and city names. *Itineraria* are inherited from the Romans and regularly updated. Used for military expeditions, travels and territorial divisions.

Joculatores: wandering minstrels, professional entertainers. *Joculatores* might also juggle, ropewalk or sell sexual favors.

Languages, written: most widespread in the Occident is Latin (Roman Catholic Church). “Vernacular” languages are second best but rising: (Old High) German in the Empire, (Old) English in England, (Old) French – a simplification of Vulgar Latin – in France and Burgundy, “Glagolica” script throughout the Slavic world, and Syriac in Western Asia as a replacement of Greek. Arab used in the Arab world, including Southern Spain.

Magyars: heathen Hungarians.

Maleficia: potion, supposedly magical.

Mall: public assembly of justice enforcing the “custom”, as opposed to seigniorial justice (the ban). Defendants were rarely acquitted or executed (nobles were beheaded, others hanged), as most were simply banned.

Mansus: type of landholding. One distinguishes between the master’s *mansus* (representing up to a half of the arable land) and the farmers’ tenures.

Mappa mundi: symbolic world map.

Miles: “soldier”, or mounted warrior. A feudal warlord typically had 10 to 20 *milites* in service or hired.

Ordeal: severe physical test that a crime suspect had to go through to prove his innocence in the face of god (e.g. having no marks from putting one’s hand into fire or boiling water, or holding a white-hot iron). Another favorite of the Dark Ages was the “judicial duel”, whereby the duelist who died was decreed guilty. *Post mortem!*

Pagus: “country”, district of a county.

Parish: one village out of two possessed one, and none in the frontier marches. Most churches were built in stone, and the dead buried next to them. Note that stone itself was not used as a decorative element. Rather, mosaics and mural paintings embellished surfaces. Parishes provided sanctuary to wanderers, fugitives and strangers. Some churches had special huts for that purpose. In theory, no armed or mounted man was allowed to enter the church.

Peace of God: movement started by the Church in the 980s. This movement had two objectives: limit the brutalities of the warrior aristocracy, and protect the victims of these brutalities. The decisions of the assemblies of Peace, expressed in council canons aimed above all at protecting the persons and properties of non-warring parties (clerics, farmers, and merchants). The

“Truce of God” forbade to battle from Friday to Sunday, during Lent or other liturgical events.

Polyptych: booklet formed of linked tablets and inventorying an abbey; used for accountancy and registration of crops.

Priory: small monastery - sometimes with only a handful of monks - lead by a prior.

Privileges, urban: clauses like the inviolability of homes against public officials, the suppression of judicial duels, and the ban on legal proceedings against burgess outside the city.

Quadrivium: scientific disciplines of the liberal arts: music, astronomy, arithmetic and geometry.

Quaestiones medicinales: very widespread teaching technique for medicine consisting of questions and answers.

Reform: aimed at the purification of the morals of the clergy, and the independence of ecclesiastic power with respect to the secular power.

Relics: relics come in 3 classes. First are corporeal parts of saints and artifacts from Christ’s passion and death, e.g. Christ’s crown of thorns at the Cathedral of Notre dame in Paris, chunks of the true cross in Paris again (as well as three of the four nails), Rome, Brussels, Oviedo, and the lance that pierced Christ’s side, of which the blade seems to have been lost. Second, articles of clothing or household artifacts touched by saints. Third, items that have touched first or second class relics.

Runes: religious and magical ideograms. The runic alphabet was used in Germany and Scandinavia.

Saltus: non-cultivated part of the land - forest or fallow land - used for gathering, hunting and rearing.

Saracens: heathen Arabs from south Spain and Sicily. Unequaled scholars.

Scholasticus: literally “that belongs to the school”; person responsible of a monastic or cathedral school. The scholastic philosophy designates all of science and theology in the Middle Ages.

Scriptorium: copying workshop in monasteries.

Slavs: heathen people east of Germany.

Tariff penance: ancient judicial custom of the Germans, adopted by Church, in which sins and crimes were inventoried with appropriate punishments. Hardly applied in practice.

Technographs: authors of *artes*, i.e. manuals for the basic and practical teaching of a discipline.

Tenure: strips of land attributed to one farmer. A tenant owed the dues in kind and the labor service to his lord and the tithe to the parish priest.

Treasures: denier chests, jewelry, silver and onyx vases, crucifixes, chalices and other liturgical objects in solid gold, holy relics in precious reliquaries, wooden statues of saints sheeted in gold, ivory sculptures, miniatures, magnificent sacerdotal clothes, all in purple and gold, precious silken cloth, etc.

Trivium: literary disciplines of the liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric and dialectic.

Tropes: sacred theatre, in Latin, as opposed to the mimed theatre dating back to antiquity, which was partly obscene and strongly reprovved.

Venison: small game, deer, wild boar, and bear. Meat was spiced with thyme, rosemary and bay leaves.

Vicus: new pole of commercial activity that formed the kernel of a budding town (e.g. a stopping-off place to cross a river or a mountain pass).

Vikings: heathen Scandinavians, or *Nordmanni*. Unrivalled sailors, terror of the Occidental world before 950 AD.

War engines (from *ingenium*, “ingenious contrivance”): battering rams, catapults, wheeled towers and trebuchets.

Heavy catapults can shoot 50-pound missiles up to 160 yards. A large trebuchet can easily hurl a half-ton stone (or a dead horse, or bundled humans) 100 yards away.

Wine: reserved to the most privileged and to the celebration of the mass. The largest vineyards were situated in ecclesiastical domains or on the banks of large rivers, since these were major transport routes.

A Hundred Years and More

950 The Byzantine Theodorus Philetas translates the “Al Azif” from Arab to Greek, and renames it “Necronomicon”.

950-986 Harald Blaataand unifies Denmark and imposes his rule on Norway.

951 Otto I is declared King of Italy. He actually managed to impose his authority 10 years later.

954 Hungarian raids in Germany and Italy.

954-994 Maieul, fourth abbot of Cluny (Abbey founded in **909** by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine).

954 France: death of Louis IV; his son Lothaire succeeds him under the tutelage of Hugh the Great, Duke of the Franks.

955 Battle of Lechfeld (August 10th): Otto I vanquishes the Hungarians.

959-975 Edgar rules over England. The archbishop Dunstan crowns him in 973.

960-992 After the conversion of Mieszko I in 966, Poland becomes Christian and has its own bishopric (Posen). Mieszko seeks the support of the Empire by becoming the “friend of the Emperor”. He places his land under the protection of the Pope (985).

961 The Byzantine, under the leadership of the general Phocas, conquer Crete, then Alep in 962. Nicephorus II Phocas is emperor from 963 to 969, and campaigns against the Arabs in Cyprus.

961-972 Kingdom of Kiev: Sviatoslav dominates international trade routes and clashes with Byzantium.

962 Otto I crowned emperor in Rome by the Pope John XII: The Ottonians restore the Holy Roman Empire.

963 Otto I deposes the “unworthy” Pope.

969-976 Apogee of the Byzantine Empire under the rule of John I Tzimiskes. Russians thrown out of the Balkans; eastern Bulgaria becomes a Byzantine province. John also conquers Syria and Palestine.

973-983 Empire: Otto II succeeds to Otto I, and marries Theophano, the niece of the Byzantine Emperor.

975 A Pisano-byzantine fleet attacks Messina.

976-1025 Basil II “the killer of Bulgarians”, defeats the Bulgarian King Samuel after a 20 year war. He promotes the propagation of the orthodox faith in Russia by giving his sister to the Russian prince Vladimir in 989.

977-1002 The vizier Almanzor establishes the Arab domination over Spain (Omeyyad dynasty).

978 First teaching hospital: medical faculty of 24 physicians established at the al-Bimirastan al-‘Adubi hospital by ‘Adud-ad-Dawla, in Baghdad.

978-1015 Vladimir I “the Bright Sun” becomes sole ruler over the Russian princes of the Kingdom of Kiev. He marries the sister of Basil II, Princess Ann, and after his baptism in 988, Kiev becomes a religious centre of orthodoxy.

978-1016 Ethelred vainly tries to stop the Danish invasion of England, started in 980, by paying them large tributes (Danegeld). The Danes conquer England in 1013.

982 Vikings discover Greenland. In 984, Erik the Red of Iceland reaches Greenland and establishes colonies.

983 (spring) Mistav, prince of the Obodrites (Slavs), takes Hamburg and the Weletabs attack the bishoprics of Havelberg and Brandenburg.

983 First custodial prison sentences (Britain): introduced under law of King Alfred for breaking a pledge. Prisoners to be fed by relatives unless they had none.

983-1002 Empire: Otto III is ruling. Until 995 though, he is put in minority by his mother Theophano and grandmother Adelaide. In 996 he makes his cousin Bruno Pope (Gregory V) and is crowned emperor in Rome.

985 Almanzor takes Barcelona.

985-1014 Sven Forked-Beard Christianizes Denmark and leads the Danish army against the Anglo-Saxons in 994. Anglo-Saxon priests define the Danish Church.

986 France: death of Lothaire: his son Louis V succeeds him.

987 Death of Louis V. At the request of the archbishop of Reims Adalberon, the overlords reject Charles, Duke of Lorraine and Lothaire’s brother, and elect Hugues Capet, who is crowned by the prelate.

987 Crowning in Orleans of Robert the Pious, son of Hugh Capet, “associate” King.

987 Institution of the Peace of God.

988 Charles, son of Louis IV, Duke of Lorraine and Carolingian pretender, takes the cities of Laon and Reims. Laon is taken back in 991 and Charles dies in captivity in Orleans (992).

988-1004 Abbon, abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire.

991 (June 11th) Deposition of Arnoul and election of the monk of Aurillac, Gerbert; formation of the “party of monks” that wishes to relieve their institution from the authority of bishops and only depend on Rome.

991-1052 First wave of neo-manicheism (heresies).

992 First commercial treaty between Venice and Byzantium.

992-1025 Boleslav I Chobry, son of Mieszko, rules in Poland. Friendly relationship with Germany at first, but from 1003 to 1018 conflicts arise because Germany is opposed to Boleslav’s conception of a unified western Slavic state under Poland’s rule.

993 January 31st, first saint canonization: bishop Ulrich, died 973, canonized by Pope John XV.

994-1049 Odilon, abbot of Cluny.

995 Eudes, count of Blois, seizes of the county of Champagne in 1023 and tries to occupy in 1032 the kingdom of Burgundy-Provence.

995-1022 Olaf, of the Upsal dynasty rules over Sweden and is baptized in 1008.

996 Death of Richard the First; his son, Richard II, Duke of Normandy.

996 (October 24th) France: death of Hugues Capet; Robert the Pious succeeds him.

996-997 Uprising in the Champagne country.

997-1038 Etienne I founds the Christian kingdom of Hungary, with the help of German knights and Benedictine monks.

999-1003 Pontificate of Sylvester II (Gerbert of Aurillac).

1000 (about) Leif Erikson, son of Erik the Red, discovers Vinland (North America), but fails to establish a colony.

1002-1024 Empire: Henry II rules (crowned emperor in 1014). He conquers Bohemia in 1004.
1002 At the death of his uncle Henry, Duke of Burgundy, Robert II (son of Robert the Pious) recovers the duchy and entrusts it to his second son, Henry, in 1015.
1004-1030 Gauzlin, abbot of Fleury-sur-Loire.
1005-1006 Great famine in occidental Europe.
1007 Foundation of the Bishopric of Bamberg; christening missions to the Slavs in the East.
1007-1028 Fulbert, bishop of Chartres.
1008-1028 Spain: civil war between the Arabs (end of the Omeyyad Califate). Christian attacks.
1009 Destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.
1016 Pisa and Genoa ally to attack the Arabs in Sardinia and Corsica.
1016-1035 Knut the Great, son of Sven, King of Denmark, of England and of Norway (1028). He marries Ethelred's widow. After his death, his sons rule over England until 1042.
1016 Beginning of the Norman expeditions in South Italy and Sicily.
1017 France: Hugh, son of Constance and Robert the Pious, is crowned and associated to the throne.
1019 Kingdom of Kiev: Iaroslav the Wise consolidates the Russian unity. First compilation of the Russian code, a mix of Byzantine law and Slavic custom.
1023 Robert the Pious and the emperor Henry II meet in Ivois.
1024-1039 Empire: Conrad II rules (crowned emperor in 1027).
1024 Knut the Great occupies the March of Slesvig.
1024 Poland: Boleslav crowned King.

1025+ Decline of Byzantium because of rampant feudalism: the state grants lands to maintain its army, church and bureaucracy.
1025-1034 Poland: Mieszko II must renounce to the crown because of Conrad II's opposition, and recognize Conrad's sovereignty in Poland (1033).
1026 France: death of Hugh, designated heir to Robert the Pious. His second son Henry is crowned in Reims (1027).
1031 France: Henry I succeeds to Robert the Pious.
1032-1033 Great famine.
1033 The Kingdom of Burgundy is incorporated to the Empire.
1035-1047 Magnus the Good becomes King of Norway after deposing Sven, son of Knut the Great.
1038 Poland: heathen insurrections and Czech attacks drive Casimir I out of the land. He returns with the help of the Germans, restores the State and the Church in Krakow.
1039-1056 Henry III marries Agnes of Poitou and is crowned emperor in 1047. Bohemia and Hungary become German fiefs.
1040 the clergy proclaims the Peace of God.
1040 Pagan insurrection in Hungary.
1042 Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred, organizes a centralized administration of England with the help of the Normans.
1044 Earliest known formula for gunpowder, published in the Chinese "Complete Compendium of Military Classics".
1046 Synod of Sutri: the Pope Clement II intends to purify the clergy and forbid the marriage of priests.
1050 The Patriarch Michael of Constantinople condemns the blasphemous "Necronomicon".
1054 Schism between the Western and the Oriental Church.

Who's Who

God

The One and Only almighty creator, known to Christians as God the Father, YHVH (pronounced "Yahveh") in Hebrew, and Allah to Muslims (Koran 29:46).

Kings and Emperors

Charlemagne's descendants

Louis IV, King of France 936-954

Lothaire, King of France 954-986

Louis V, King of France 986-987

Capetian kings (France)

Hugh Capet 987-996

Robert the Pious 996-1031

Henry I 1031-1060

Kings of Germany

Otto I the Great 936-973

Otto II 973-983

Otto III 983-1002

Henry II 1002-1024

Conrad II the Salian 1024-1039

Henry III 1039-1056

Spanish kings

Sancho, King of Castile, Navarre and Aragon 970-1035

Ferdinand, King of Castile 1033-1065; Garcia, King of Navarre 1035-1054; Ramiro I, King of Aragon 1035-1063

Monks

Abbon of Fleury (940-1004): monk, scholar and abbot of the monastery of Fleury-sur-Loire. Very learned in the liberal arts, especially the *Quadrivium*, and author of numerous educational pamphlets. Abbon and Odilon of Cluny are the leading figure of the reforming monks around 1000 AD.

Adalberon of Laon: bishop of Laon (997-1030). He played an important role in the political intrigues that marked the beginning of the reign of Hugues Capet. He

was a violent opponent of Odilon and the reforming monks.

Aimoin of Fleury (970-?): successor and biographic author of Abbon. Author of a history of the Fleury abbey and the "Miracula sancti Benedicti".

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). Famous *scholasticus* who tried to explain Faith by using the ontological proof of God's existence.

Fulbert of Chartres (975-1029): founder of the school of Chartres, and bishop of Chartres in 1007. High quality teacher.

Gerbert of Aurillac (940-1003): first *scholasticus* of Reims and friend of the archbishop Adalberon of Reims, Gerbert soon went into service with the Ottonians. Under the name of Sylvester II he was Pope between 999 and 1003. Scholar specialized in the Quadrivium. Using the works of Boece, Gerbert taught his students notions of logic and Aristotle's nine categories: quality and quantity, relations, position, place, time, state, action and emotion. Gerbert brought back from northern Spain a treasury of Muslim science in mathematics, astronomy and music, and diffused this knowledge into Christendom. Gerbert also taught the Occident how to calculate, by re-introducing the usage of the abacus.

Ibn Sina or "Avicenna" (980-1037): last famous Arab philosopher of note and doctor, perhaps the most remarkable man of the Orient. Author of numerous books, including the Book of Healing (a scientific encyclopedia) and the Canon of Medicine.

Liutprand of Cremone (912-972): bishop of Cremone, cleric and writer at the service of Otto I and Otto II, author of the "History of Otto".

Maieul (954-994): fourth abbot of Cluny. Famous for being captured by the Saracens in 972.

Oddon of Meung: author of a long epic poem on the virtues of plants.

Oliba (971-1046): count of Berga and Ripoll (988-1002), abbot of Ripoll, Cuxa and Bishop of Vic, in Catalonia. Prestigious clergyman, founder of Monserrat (1023), and reformer of numerous monasteries. He took part in the creation of the Truce of God.

Peter Damian (11th century): cardinal notorious for writing a manual praising flagellation, in spite of Saint Augustine's advice to congregates not to flagellate themselves too enthusiastically nor frequently.

Ready-to-play adventurers

Name		Age	Occupation	Dark Ages																																																							
STR __ CON __ SIZ __ INT __ POW __ EDU __ DEX __ APP __ Idea % Luck % Know % Dexterity % Charisma % Damage Bonus:																																																											
WEAPONS																																																											
HP __ Magic Points __ Sanity __				<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Weapon</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Skill%</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Damage</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Range</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Shots</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Weapon	Skill%	Damage	Range	Shots																																																		
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Leoda the Bonesetter		Age 33, Bohemian "Witch"	Dark Ages																																																							
STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 16 EDU 13 DEX 13 APP 11 Idea 80% Luck 80% Know 65% Dexterity 65% Charisma 55% Damage Bonus: none																																																										
WEAPONS																																																										
HP 10 Magic Points 16 Sanity 80			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Weapon</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Skill%</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Damage</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Range</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Shots</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Weapon	Skill%	Damage	Range	Shots																																																		
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Brother Deuse		Age 40, Benedictine Monk	Dark Ages	
STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 12 EDU 15 DEX 8 APP 10				
Idea 55% Luck 60% Know 75% Dexterity 40% Charisma 50% Damage Bonus: none				
HP 11 Magic Points 12 Sanity 60		WEAPONS <i>Weapon Skill% Damage Range Shots</i>		
ADVENTURER POINTS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (10) Art (05): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40) <input type="checkbox"/> Conceal (15) Craft (05): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Mythos (00) <input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX x2) 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Drive horses (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05) <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30) <input type="checkbox"/> Fist/Punch (50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Head Butt (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Hide (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Kick (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (EDU x2) 60 <input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25) 60 <input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05) 40 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Kingdoms (01) Other Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> Latin 46 <input type="checkbox"/> Own Kingdom (20) Own Language (EDU x5): <input type="checkbox"/> Italian 75	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (15) 50 <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Boat (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Potions (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Devise (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05) Science (01): <input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy 41 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sneak (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Status (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Track (10) Write Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> Latin 41 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Other skills: <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Language 41 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Weapons: <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Spells: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	

Vinglo of Corneilhan		Age 19, Foolish Warrior	Dark Ages	
STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 6 EDU 11 DEX 16 APP 14				
Idea 55% Luck 30% Know 55% Dexterity 80% Charisma 70% Damage Bonus: +1D4				
HP 12 Magic Points 6 Sanity 30		WEAPONS <i>Weapon Skill% Damage Range Shots</i>		
ADVENTURER POINTS				
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (10) Art (05): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40) <input type="checkbox"/> Conceal (15) Craft (05): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Mythos (00) <input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX x2) 32 <input type="checkbox"/> Drive horses (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05) <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30) <input type="checkbox"/> Fist/Punch (50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25) 55 <input type="checkbox"/> Head Butt (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Hide (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Kick (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (EDU x2) 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10) 40 <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Other Kingdoms (01) Other Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Own Kingdom (20) 50 Own Language (EDU x5): <input type="checkbox"/> French 55	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Boat (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Potions (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Devise (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05) 35 Science (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sneak (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Status (15) 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Track (10) 40 Write Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Other skills: <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Weapons: <input type="checkbox"/> Long sword (20) 50 <input type="checkbox"/> Javelin (throw 15) 45 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Spells: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	

Bella "Redhair"		Age 26, Fisherwoman	Dark Ages				
STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 13 INT 9 POW 12 EDU 9 DEX 14 APP 15							
Idea 45% Luck 60% Know 45% Dexterity 70% Charisma 75% Damage Bonus: +1D4							
HP 15 Magic Points 12 Sanity 60			WEAPONS				
			<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Skill%</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Shots</i>
ADVENTURER POINTS							
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (10) Art (05): <input type="checkbox"/> Net crafting 25 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40) <input type="checkbox"/> Conceal (15) Craft (05): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Mythos (00) <input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX x2) 28 <input type="checkbox"/> Drive horses (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05) <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30) <input type="checkbox"/> Fist/Punch (50)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Head Butt (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Hide (20) <input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Kick (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (EDU x2) 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25) <input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10) 30 <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10) 30 <input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05) <input type="checkbox"/> Other Kingdoms (01) Other Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Own Kingdom (20) Own Language (EDU x5): <input type="checkbox"/> English 45	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Boat (01) 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Potions (01) <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Devise (20) 40 <input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05) Science (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sneak (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25) 45 <input type="checkbox"/> Status (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25) 45 <input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25) 65 <input type="checkbox"/> Track (10) Write Language (01): <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Other skills: <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Weapons: <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Spells: _____ _____ _____ _____				