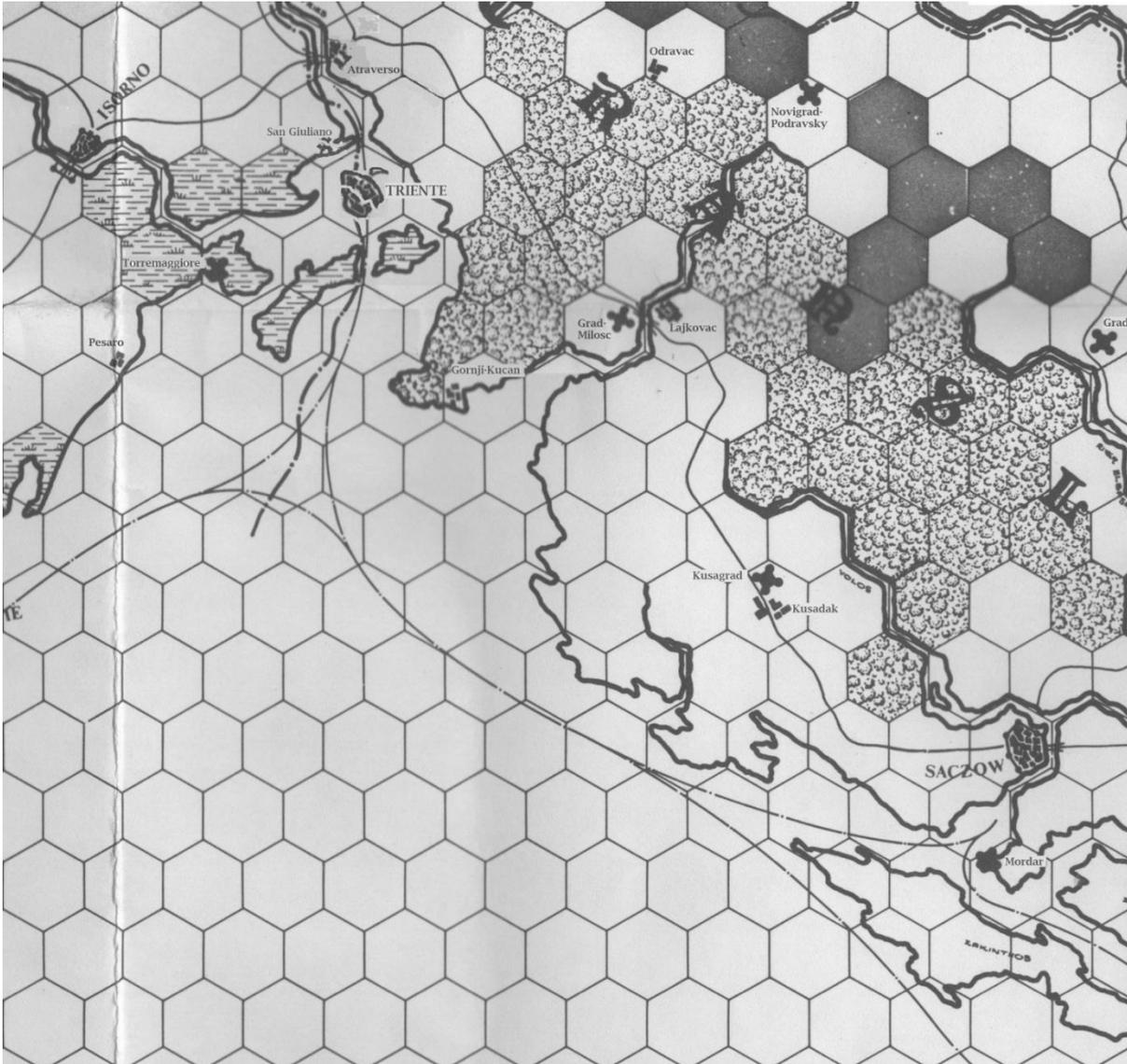


A Players Guide to

HEROES 1.2



By *David Millward*

Preface

HEROES was originally written, over an 18 month period of development and continuous play-testing, for a school wargames group at Alderman Smith High School in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England. This soon expanded to include Birmingham Wargames Club. The layout of the rules is somewhat chaotic, as they were written as they evolved, to meet the needs of play; whatever new situation arose, I wrote the rules to cover... The result of this process was the original edition of Heroes. In writing the new edition, I set out to clarify parts of the rules which had been difficult to understand, correct obvious errors and expand on some areas. Thus **HEROES 1.2** is still somewhat chaotic; the purpose of the Players Guide, is to guide prospective adventurers through the maze...

All page references in what follows are to **HEROES 1.2**. Examples of play *are in light blue*. Direct quotes from, or passages from the Rules *are in a darker blue*.

David Millward March 2013

A Players Guide to Heroes 1.2

The Setting for Heroes

Heroes is set in Ouesterlands, a fictional microcosm of early Medieval Europe. Of course, you don't have to set your game here, you can just as well set it in your own chosen historical setting. Ouesterlands was created for two reasons; firstly to free players from the constraints of strict adherence to rigid historical fact and secondly, in order to have a setting that was smaller and more manageable than the whole or early Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean world.

Creating your Hero

The first step in creating your Hero is to decide on his or her nationality. This is important, as it sets the Hero's language and social pattern. For a normal Heroes game, roll percentage dice and consult the table on p.5. However, if it's important for your own game that your Hero is of a particular nationality, because of your game setting, then simply choose a nationality. This will give your Hero's nationality, both in terms of his Ouesterlands land of origin and the historical land on which it is based; and the social pattern of his country of origin. This is denoted by the number referenced by each land; 1 denotes an Imperial Social pattern, 2 a fully fledged Feudal system, 3 a partially developed, quasi-Feudal system and 4 a pre-Feudal or Tribal system.

The next thing to establish is the Hero's social background. For a standard game, roll percentage dice and consult the table on p.6, cross referencing the score with the column indicated by the Hero's social pattern. E.g. a roll of 40 would make a Hero from an Imperial (1) Social pattern, the 3rd son of a merchant, whereas a Hero from a Feudal background (2) would be an escaped slave and a Hero from a Quasi-Feudal country (3), the child of a journeyman, while a Hero from a Tribal land (4) would be the bastard offspring of an official.

Once again, if it's important for your own game setting, the social background of a Hero may simply be chosen to suit your needs.

Your new Hero will have a certain amount of money and an allocation of weapon points, determined by their social background. The monetary system is described on p.14 and the weapons, up to the weapon points allocation, may be chosen from the table on p.9.

Individual attributes & skills

The next step is to calculate your Hero's individual attributes; these are described on p.10. In each case apart from *Constitution* and *Luck*, these are values ranging from 2 to 12 and are calculated by choosing the most advantageous two D⁶ from three rolled. Depending on their social background, a Hero may be *advantaged* or *disadvantaged* in certain attributes. This process is to be found on p.11.

Heroes also have certain skills as a result of special knowledge derived from their social background, such as farming skill for yeomen or serfs, or military skill for soldiers or warriors. These can be found on p.13.



These attributes and skills, together with the Hero's weapons, armour, money and any other possessions should be recorded on a Character Sheet, blanks for which can be downloaded, free of charge, from our website at:

<http://www.ecwrpg.co.uk>

Starting out

The setting for Heroes is Triente, loosely based on 10th century Venice, where our group of rag-tag Heroes set out to make their fortunes. The traditional starting point for a group of Heroes is the Ferry Inn, Fat Otto's tavern, a ferry crossing from the city of Triente. The general idea is to get our bunch of newly met Heroes to bond, often by uniting in a bar-room brawl against all comers.



From p.4 of Heroes...

It is a cold and dark evening in the spring of the year 950 AD; a group of weary and wet travellers squat shivering, under the trees on the north bank of the Adige. Some have been waiting all afternoon to cross. The travellers are a mixed bag from all over Ouesterlands, possibly beyond. As the afternoon wears away beyond sunset the travellers have become acquainted, they are now 'The Company'. Out of the darkness, at last looms the ferry, which for 1d each will carry them across the estuary. Beyond, the torches of the ferry inn flicker behind shuttered windows. Locals tell them that Fat Otto, the landlord, offers drinks, food and a straw bed for the night. As the storm worsens our heroes decide to spend the night at the ferry inn before pressing on in the morning to Triente to make their fortunes...

We will deal with Bar-room brawls and Ale-houses, Inns and Taverns in general in the next section, but for now, how does the group proceed, once they have met? Firstly, each Hero must determine his social level (SL) on entering the city, this can be found on p.19.

Based on their SL, they must have somewhere to live and this will involve expenses. It will quickly become apparent that the poorer Heroes will have to take drastic action simply to survive. This may involve becoming the client of a richer member of the group, or getting a day to day job... or turning to a life of crime. Everyday expenses follow on from p.19. To keep track of income and expenses you will need to use the monetary system, which is explained on p.14. The pre-decimal system is not easy to follow, but can be fun. However there is a way of accounting in a decimal system, by using marks and pennies. We do intend to put a decimal converter on the website at... <http://www.ecwrpg.co.uk/HeroesMoney>

Richer members of the group may be able to live off their wealth for a limited time and even support poorer members, by paying them as clients, or lending them money. Regular or everyday jobs can be found on p.29. Longer term ambitions may lie in getting an Official Post and these can be found on p.23-28. A life of crime is dealt with in the Crime and Punishment section on p.51 to 54. Please note the title of the section... **Crime & Punishment**; this lifestyle is not without its perils.

There are opportunities during the passage of time for Heroes to increase their individual attributes, through the accumulation of Personal Experience Points (PEPs). In combat situations, they may also collect Combat Experience Points (CEPs). This is dealt with on p.12.

During the course of everyday life in the city, our Heroes are expected to, indeed required to have relationships as in real life. The rules for this are found on p.14-16. They may also come across incidents in the city, which lead to specific role play... these can be found on p.36 and p.41.

Whatever the source of income, all the Heroes need a framework against which to plot and record their progress... from p.33 (Isperich is a fictitious Hero, rolled to use in examples of play) ...

Setting up Incidents

The first requisite is for players to devise a method of time keeping. It is recommended that the week is taken as the standard unit, which can be broken down at leisure if required. For each week the players must write down the main activity of their character which may be;-

Practice with _____ weapon with _____ (arms master of named character).

Rest and recover from wounds or illness.

Work at _____ (employment and employer).

Beg in _____ (establishment or street where begging is to take place).

Travel to _____ (destination) by _____ (means of travel).

Cut purses in _____ (area to be worked).

Carouse with _____ and _____ (named characters or NPCs) in _____ (establishment).

Obviously these examples do not cover all possibilities but they should give you some idea of what is required and can be done. At some stage of the particular activity there is obviously a chance of an incident of some type such as a chance encounter where for instance a meeting in an inn with a group of people the heroes decide to, or are forced to fight. Some incidents are a result of a specific activity as for example, the group catching up with a merchant pack train, which they want to rob.

A character can perform his allotted task or activity and simultaneously also take part in the scheduled activities of other players, as long as these are not deemed to take up too much of his time. For instance it is fine for Isperich to attend a carousing session in the Red Cow with another character, whilst practicing swordplay with an arms master, during the day.



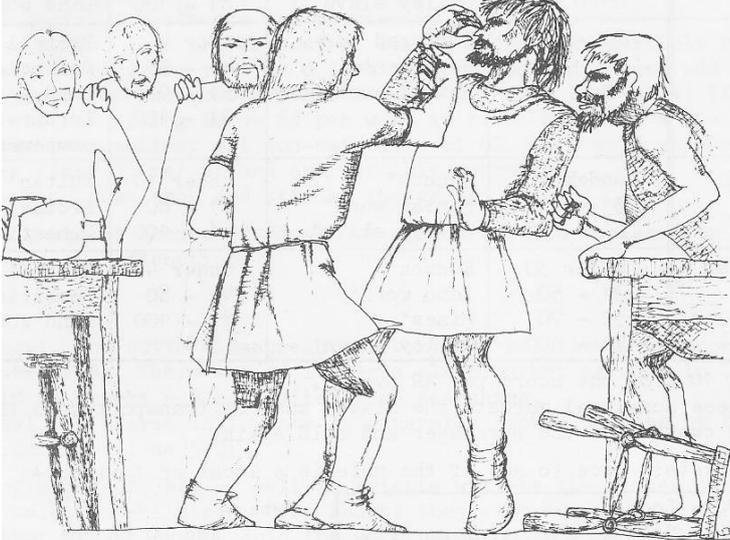
Ale-houses, Inns and Taverns

Beer ale and wine played an important part in life in the Dark Ages and establishments in which it was sold served as lodgings and places to meet. Doorman at such an establishment is an easy post to obtain, for a Hero with a reasonable Combat Value (CV) and comes with an income and free accommodation. Such establishments are described on p.20 but come under the general heading, Bawdy Houses. Rules for finding female company of a certain type there are found on p.15.

Bawdy Houses

The main section on Bawdy Houses may be found on p.47 and following. Here are described the various activities which may be pursued in these Houses of ill-repute, such as drinking and gambling and Bawdy House incidents.

From p.47...



Merry... After drinking quarts of ale or goblets of wine, to the level of $\frac{1}{3}$ of the characters SV, he will become merry; being unlikely to pick a fight; but will join in, if one is started. Once he reaches this state, a merry character with a high BP, will refuse to leave the establishment, until he has consumed ale equal to his BP, or passes out in trying. If involved in combat MS, CV and SV are all increased by one.

Drunk... When a character reaches this state by drinking over $\frac{2}{3}$ of his SV in ale or wine...

he is very likely to pick a fight, more likely to get cheated. At this stage, IQ counts as 3 lower than normal; in a fight MS is reduced by 4 and CV by 2; SV remains increased by 1.

Whilst the Heroes are in a bawdy-house, there is a possibility that trouble will flare between them and the other customers. The Heroes decide on the Social rating (SR) of the establishment they are going into and then roll an appropriate die to determine how many groups are in the bawdy-house, using the guideline at the top of p.48. They then dice for the composition and faction of each group in the bar using the tables on that page. This process will give a result something like this:

A group of 5 unemployed mercenaries, A group of 4 sailors allied to the city, A group of 7 journeymen & craftsmen aligned to the city, A band of 6 Ruffians affiliated to the Duke and A Merchant and four followers aligned to the Orsini family.

Each group has an Aggression Potential (AP) as an indication as to how aggressive they may prove when approached. This varies from 1 in the case of the Merchant, to 5 in the case of the Ruffians. If any of the Heroes have become aligned to any of the city's factions then these APs may be increased or decreased in line with the political factors listed on p.49. If playing a game with figures, then these groups can be placed on a floor plan of the tavern, each represented at this stage, by a counter or marker.

Each of the group of Heroes will have a BP... a Berserker Potential. As the Heroes interact with the other groups in the house, a test is taken to determine whether trouble breaks out. Multiply the BP of the Hero with the highest value by the AP of each group in turn, as they meet. Assuming that our Hero with the highest Berserker Potential has a BP of 9...

On meeting the Merchant and his followers, there will only be a 9% chance of trouble occurring (Merchant's AP 1 multiplied by our BP of 9; $1 \times 9 = 9$). However, when he stumbles into the table of the Ruffians there will be a 45% chance that an affray will ensue (AP 5 times BP 9; $5 \times 9 = 45$). If our Hero rolls 45 or under, then a fight ensues...

If the group includes a Hero with a higher Charisma (PC) and a lower BP than our Berserker, then he can attempt to ameliorate the effects of his friend's aggression (see p.49). Additionally, a Hero with a high PV may also try to calm things down, once trouble begins, also on p.49.

If all else fails, then a fight breaks out between the Heroes and the group they failed the test with. The Umpire, if there is one, can test to see whether other groups join in the fracas, considering the political factors shown on p.49. The Heroes of course may decide to cut and run, if the opposition looks too menacing; as indeed, the aggrieved group may decide that discretion is the better part of valour.

In the event of a fight actually occurring, place figures for the protagonists on the table and let combat commence. It is assumed that fists will be used in the first instance, perhaps followed by improvised weapons, such as beer-pots, stools etc. with blades drawn in the last resort.

Combat in Heroes

If fighting of any kind breaks out, the players have several alternatives. There is a quick combat system included in *Heroes*, pages 109 to 111. Full Combat rules are published separately, as *Swordes Ecgum (The Edge of the Sword)*. We heartily recommend the full set and these are available from our website. The brief combat system in *Heroes* can be augmented by downloading the quick reference sheets for *Swordes Ecgum* from the website. Alternatively players can adapt their Heroes' characteristics to any other rule set of their choosing.

Other Aspects of Life in the City

Players will need somewhere to live, during their time in Triente. At first many will take lodging somewhere, perhaps in an Inn, Tavern or Alehouse. If the Heroes decide to rent accommodation other than in a Bawdy House, then choose a property as if buying one, p.85. The property can be rented at 1% of its value per month.

Thus if the Heroes decide to rent a 4 roomed wooden framed building over 2 floors in a poor area, the house would have a value of £4 and thus could be leased at rent of 1% of its value, i.e. 9½d per month.

If the group have horses or mules, these cannot be kept in the city, so suitable stabling must be obtained in St. Giuliano across the ferry.

Once and if the players begin to make money, or obtain money, there are several ways they may try to increase their wealth in the city. They may buy property, either for resale or to let out on p.85 and following. They may invest in trade on p.87 and following. They may not lend money to fellow Heroes for money (or anyone else for that matter)... see p.89.

However, we find that most groups of Heroes make expeditions out from the city to make money, either in the form of Merchant Venturing, or raiding, by land or sea.

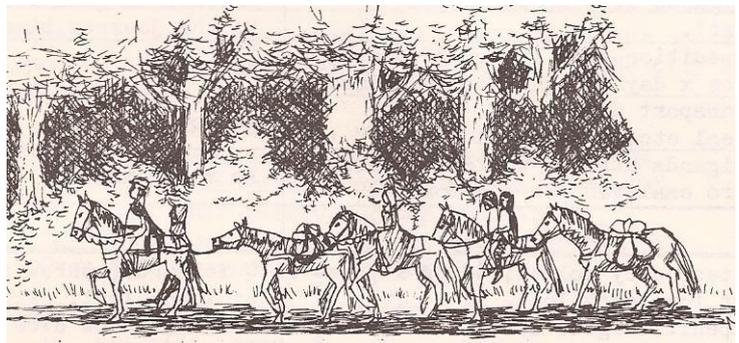
Merchant Venturing

Rules for this are to be found on pages 80 to 83. This involves buying goods with the intention of selling them at a profit. This will usually entail carrying the goods from the place they are bought to their intended market, either by land or sea. However players can buy to sell later in situ, or buy goods for an agent to transport and sell for them.

The basic mechanisms for buying and selling are based on the Trade Tables. The basic trade tables for Triente and Saczow and the towns of Translavonia are to be found on P.81. Trade tables for other locations may be found in the Ouesterlands Appendix, between p.97 and p.106 for the areas covered by the maps. Trade tables and local landholding descriptions for additional areas will be published in Heroes Supplement 2, Ouesterlands.

If the group decide to buy items for trade, then they must first buy their goods at the 'Asking Price' from the appropriate Trade Table. The asking price for glass is £6 per pack load (i.e the amount carried by a single pack mule). The asking price is also a 'fair price'; the hero chosen to actually purchase the glass, must first obtain it at the best price he can manage. This is done using the Fair Price rules on p.30.

Glass is 100% available in Triente with D⁵⁰ loads being for sale at any one time.



Let's say they decide to buy glass in Triente, with the intention of selling it in Saczow. The Asking Price for glass in Triente is £6 per load; our Heroes decide to buy 5 loads for the 5 mules that they already own.

e.g. 1 The Hero chosen to buy the glass has an IQ of 5 and no special knowledge of commerce has a 50% chance of obtaining it at the fair price (IQ x 10). He rolls 55, so he will have to pay over the odds. His roll for this is 42, so he pays the Asking Price +50%... he pays £9 per load; paying £45 in total.

e.g.2 the Hero chosen has an IQ of 8 and Special knowledge of commerce. His chance of obtaining the Fair Price is 90% (IQ x 10 plus 10 for special knowledge). He rolls 55 and obtains the glass for the asking price of £6 per load; paying £30 in total.

Assuming that the Heroes get to Saczow with their wares intact, then the same process applies to selling their wares, but this time at the buy in price (£15). However, there is only a 50% chance that the merchants of Saczow will buy glass and then only up to D⁶ loads.

Our Heroes roll 45 for demand and 5 for the loads required and so may sell all 5 loads.

e.g. 1 Our Hero IQ 5 with no special knowledge of commerce has a 50% chance of selling at the fair price (IQ x 10). He rolls 57, so he will have to sell at less than the buy in price. His roll for this is 34, so he accepts the Buy-in Price -10%... he sells for £13 10s per load; receiving £67 10s in total; a profit, before expenses, of £22 10s.

e.g.2 the Hero IQ 8 with Special knowledge of commerce has a 90% (IQ x 10 + 10) of obtaining the Fair Price. He rolls 57, so successfully sells the glass at the buy in price of £15 per load. He receives £75 in total; a profit, before expenses, of £45.

So, it's best to carefully choose the Hero best suited to commercial transactions, before embarking on any Merchant Venturing. However, unless you trust your wares to a factor (p.82) and sit in Triente to await returns, then some form of travel, whether by land, or sea will be necessary in conducting trade.

Travelling by Land

This may be necessary for our Heroes to carry their trade goods from place to place, or to travel in order to raid or carry out other less savoury enterprises. Loads for pack animals and carts etc. and general indications of speed are given on p. 82.

Movement rates for land travel in various modes are given on p.31 and following. Movement, both of armed groups and merchant trains are given in marches, two per day under normal circumstances and more under forced march conditions. Forced marching, obviously increases the risk to the band of travellers of accidents attrition and losing its way...

Meetings on the Road

Along the way, the Heroes are liable to meet with all sorts of other travellers, inhabitants and denizens of the wayside. These are explained on p.36 and following... Extracts from p.37...

	serfs	merchants	soldiers	warriors	clerics	brigands	raiders	others
main roads ^R	1-20	21-30	31-33	34-40	41-42	43	44	45
mountains	1-10	11-20	21	22-35	36-37	38-42	43-44	45

So each march along a road or in mountains the Heroes roll D¹⁰⁰ on a roll of under 45, they will meet with a party indicated above. So, on a roll of 44 they will meet raiders.

For serfs, soldiers, warriors, brigands and raiders...



Dice	Strength of the encountered
1-40	party, odds -D ³ , evens +D ³
41-50	party + D ⁶
51-70	party + D ¹⁰
71-80	Party + D ¹²
81-90	party x 2
91-95	party x 3
96-99	party x 4
100	party x 5

The table above gives the mechanism for working out the strength of any party encountered by the Heroes. In order to give interesting and challenging skirmishes, the party encountered will vary from a small number fewer than the Heroes, up to five times their number.

Thus a party of four heroes with five followers, 9 in all, on a roll of 88; the raiders they encounter will number $9 \times 2 \dots 18$ raiders.

The numbers will vary for different groups like Merchants and the reaction to meeting the Heroes will differ according to their type and number. The composition and armament of the groups encountered are given on p.34-35 and their likely reaction to the meeting, on p.38-40. The Heroes may always attack any they meet, at their discretion; but they should always be aware that there are always consequences... Other assorted incidents along the road may be found on p.41-42.

In the case of our Heroes being on some Merchant Venture, then they incur the additional risks found on p.82-83. These may be voluntarily taken into account by Heroes on other journeys.

Mounting an Expedition

When our Heroes decide to mount an expedition, perhaps to raid into Translavia or try to seize land they may wish to hire additional companions. The rules for such are to be found on p.57-58 with a detailed example on the following pages. Once put together, the Expeditionary Force moves as above. If the expedition is a success then the hired men will expect a share of the loot; this is explained on p.59.

A description of what may be available in terms of loot in various settlements, together with the reaction of the inhabitants and their Lord may be found on p.60-62. Descriptions of settlement types and the number of inhabitants and livestock etc. can be found on pages 95 to 106, dependent on the area being raided. In case the Heroes decide on Brigandage, the rules may be found on p.62-63.

Ships, Travel by Sea and Piracy

Triente being a major Port and the centre of maritime trade, the Heroes might well decide to travel by sea. Rules for buying a vessel and a general description of ship types may be found on p.66-67. There are no formal rules for hiring a vessel or paying for passage, but as a rule of thumb, a ship may be hired at a voyage, or monthly rate of 10% of its value. Armed parties without horses or cargo, may travel free, in return for the protection they afford. If they carry cargo, then the charge will be 10% of its value. If they are mounted or have mules, then they must hire a ship, as above.

Rules for movement by sea are given on p.68 followed by storms and risk to ships and their crew on pages 69-70.

Extracts from pages 69-70...

Dice for risk, before moving the ship, the storm comes on immediately. Consult the results tables below and move the ship accordingly. If she ends up in a coastal hex as a result of this forced movement, then consult the Further Risks table, below

M*: mast	ship is catastrophically dismasted, she drifts helplessly 1 hex in the direction of the wind. Thereafter she must run before the wind. D^3 men are killed outright, D^6 men are injured. Chance of broaching:		
	Good vessel, 1-10 broaches.	Average vessel 1-25 broaches	Poor vessel 1-50 broaches
B: broached	the ship veers and pitch forward, turning her side on to wind and sea, she is swamped. D^6 men are washed overboard. Any deck cargo is lost. Chance of the ship sinking or wallowing:		
	Good vessel, 1-5 sinks, 6-15 wallows.	Average vessel 1-10 sinks, 11-25 wallows	Poor vessel 1-20 sinks, 21-50 wallows

Further Risk

wallows	Ship drifts before the wind 1 hex whilst the crew try to bail her out.
Crew killed	Killed or washed overboard are considered dead. Each hero dices, percentage chance of also being washed overboard is 1% per crew dead.

Incidents at Sea, Sea Chases and notes on the nature and armament of various crews on p.71, followed on pages 72 to 73 by information on the likely cargoes of ships encountered, should they be taken.
Extract from p.73.

Merchantmen headed for Triente

dice	Great Carrier	General Carrier	Coaster	Merchant Gilly	Other vessel
1 - 5	ballast	ballast	ballast	ballast	ballast
6 - 20	timber	timber	timber	cotton cloth	slaves

Merchantmen headed from Triente

6 - 20	grain	slaves	salt	chestnuts	slaves
21 - 50	grain	pottery & glass	pottery & glass	pottery & glass	slaves

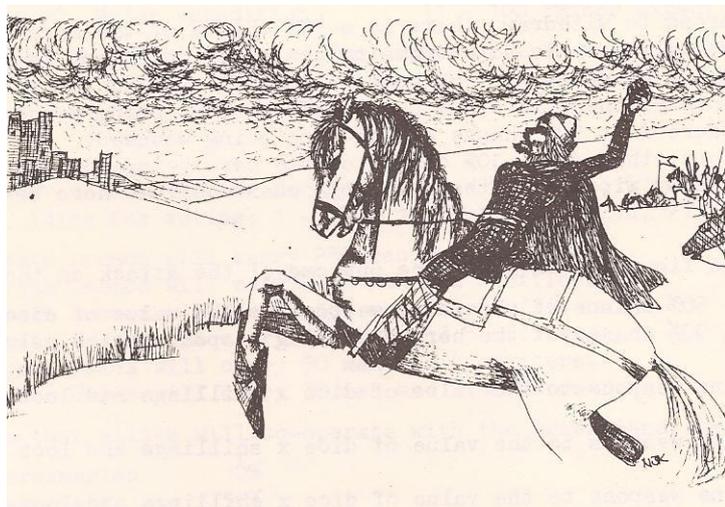
Other Merchantmen

51 - 80	grain	pottery & glass	pottery & glass	silk & spices	cotton cloth
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Other vessels

dice	Galley	Galea	Raider	Longship	Other vessel
51 - 80	provisions	provisions	general loot	general loot	general loot
81 - 95	general loot	general loot	general loot	general loot	slaves & cattle
96 - 100	slaves	slaves	slaves	slaves	slaves

Campaigns by Land & Sea



Periodically, Triente launches campaigns by Land or Sea and the Heroes may wish to involve themselves in such as volunteers, in search of loot or fame. Rules for Land Campaigns are to be found on p.64-66 and for Naval Campaigns 74-79. Both Campaigns have rules for the composition of forces, battles and campaign outcomes, including the division of spoils. Campaigns may be fought out entirely on paper, or the resulting battles fought out with your favourite wargames rules. A Hero who goes on campaign may end up with a share of the Spoils of War, or wounded, enslaved or even dead!

Slavery

Slavery was rife in the Dark Ages and the Hero may end up owning slaves, or dealing in them, or equally likely condemned to slavery himself... Rules for Slavery and Slave Markets are to be found on p.43-46

Wounds Disease and Death

If you were seriously wounded in the Dark Ages, then almost invariably, you just died. However, we did not like the idea of that for our heroes (it's alright for lesser men) so we give them a better than normal chance of survival. These rules are on p.90-91.

Ouesterlands

There is an extensive Appendix on Ouesterlands, giving details of Language, Land-holding settlement patterns, general information and sample Character Names, together with a key to the maps on pages 94 to 108.