

**The Cerilian Book of Knighthood and
Chivalry**
new empire pbem supplement

written by Bob reed

... "Now God forbid," Ruormad makes answer Wroth,
"That living man should say he saw me go
Blowing of horns for an Elvin foe'
Ne'er shall my kindred be put to such reproach.
When I shall stand in this great clash of hosts
I'll strike a thousand and sev'n hundred strokes,
Blood-red the steel of 'Matchless-worth' shall flow.
Stout are the Avanes, they will do battle bold.
These Elves of the woods shall die and have no hope."
~ Song of Ruormad in the Iron Gate.

Ask any Cerilian the question "What is a knight? What do they do and where do they come from? The answer is almost invariably "Anuire", and the mental image conjured is of a bold and proud Avanes knight, mounted on a magnificent, glossy-hided Destrier, clad from head to foot in glittering maille, and clad horse and man in caparison and surcoat of shimmering Sammite in the knights colorful and glorious coat of arms. He is either questing on an impossible quest to prove himself to his lady love, or battling a dragon or some terrible monster, to protect peasant villagers. Or the knight could be stricken in glorious battle against impossible odds, like the famed hero Ruormad leading Roele's rear guard to battle against the Manslayer in the pass of Fools.

While there is a kernel of truth to the mental image and legend, the reality of what a knight is and their origins is more varied and often less glamorous than the legends might have it.

The Origins of Anuirean Knighthood

"...Here lies our leader, dead.
An heroic man in the dust.
He who now longs for escape will lament forever.
I am old, I will not go from here,
But I mean to lie by the side of my lord,
Lie in the dust with the man I loved so dearly."

~ The Diemiad, The feats of the Telau of Adaere

"...And the Prince offered each of them money and life, and none of them would accept it, but they all went on fighting continuously until they all lay slain."

~ Fragment of ancient Avanes chronicle, explaining the conflict of a territorial war between Avan and the Deretha, -75 HC.

The origins of knighthood indeed lie in Anuire, or more specifically the very beginning lies amongst the ancient Andu peoples. The Andu had always been a warlike race, long before they crossed the land bridge into Cerilia. The society of the Andu was a tribal one, with strong social classes based on ones function with the tribe. The strongest and bravest were warriors, and the strongest and smartest of these was the tribe's chief or king. The rest of the tribe was other free men and women, or they were slaves – either captives taken during wars or raids, or the children of such slaves.

As the Andu fled the darkness engulfing Aduria, they found themselves to be an embattled people, and the type of warfare they had previously engaged in, which had been an often casual and ritualistic form of tribal warfare, with few casualties incurred on either side as champions essentially fought duels, turned suddenly to a grim struggle for survival.

A more rigid and militaristic social organization was created out of necessity. Those tribes failing to adapt to the changing conditions, ended up falling to the darkness chasing them. All free men had been required to bear shield and spear as necessity dictated, to defend the tribe alongside the chief and his war band (oath sworn to the chief unto the death), but the needs of defense now became so great that even more of the tribe was more or less permanently required for defense, and so the idea of soldiers came to pass amongst the Andu.

As the struggle for survival became more brutal, and the change of terrain encountered by the migrating tribes turned to open plains, the two occurring phenomenon combined and thus the needs of war changed, and the new conditions occurring made the knight possible. More defensive war-gear was adopted by warriors more in need of it than ever before, in the form of scale shirts and mail. Such armour had previously only been worn by chiefs, kings, and their immediate families, and the greatest heroes. The common warrior had previously been equipped principally with spear and shield, and perhaps a helmet. As more open terrain was encountered, the war-horse went from being an expensive novelty for a chief to being a tactical necessity on the plains of upper Aduria if a battle was to be won. The chieftain and his war-band went from being mostly dismounted warriors fighting in a shield-wall formation to mounted, mobile infantry, and then ultimately to proper heavy cavalrymen in a mere few generations, perhaps within the lifespan of a man.

Horses were expensive to maintain, as was the new war-gear, and so the social divide between tribal members who's primary duty was to grow food, and when required, to aid in tribal defense, and the warrior caste who's primary duty was to defend the tribe, and augment food supplies through hunting widened. Not only did this social divide widen, but the caste system became less fluid and more rigid.

While simple foot soldiers of the tribe could be part-time warriors and still contribute to food production, the new heavy cavalry had little spare time to do anything but master the newer method of warfare, maintaining his skill as a horseman, and mastering his weapons and armour. The end result of these changes is that in a few generations the social divide became rigid, and kings and tribal chieftains ended up supplying the mounted warriors with a number of free farmers – or slaves, to work the land required to support him and supply him with the newer and more expensive equipment of war.

These changes had occurred and become permanent at approximately the same time the Derethra made the first permanent settlements in Cerilia, doing so having thought that they had at last escaped the darkness that had chased them from their native land.

In the conflict that followed Azrai's reappearance, the greatest Anuirean heroes of the battle of Deismaar were all elite mounted warriors, and so with that monumental battle the image of the mounted heroic warrior became enshrined and cherished in Anuirean myth and legend.

The blooding of heroes after that epic conflict, coupled with the rise of Awnsheghlien, and the new danger of blood-theft created the need for better defensive armour than before, which further increased the cost of the warrior's economic burden, and the expense of his mounts. This caused both the breeding of horses better capable of bearing the increased burden, and the development of a more secure saddle and the invention of the proper stirrup. The cost of the mounted warrior's equipment increased exponentially with these changes, further widening the social gap - widened even further by the fact that the most important of these families were now blooded. Those tribes which had not yet adopted the blossoming feudal system had to adopt it at this point in history to some degree, no matter how reluctantly. As Roele gave out new lands as duchies and counties to his war leaders, they in turn gave land to their followers in exchange for military service. As the new empire grew, so did the feudal system and the new phenomenon of subfeudination (lesser lords granting land to knights so that they would have followers of their own, and increase their political power.)

As the various duchies lands were divided up, to give the great lords the services of these now indispensable 'super-soldiers', it soon came to pass that the old tribal hosts of freemen carrying shield and spear became less and less significant. Soon only the emperor and a few "backward" duchies were the only possessors of a significant infantry capability – and only the emperor had the cash resources to maintain a large number of elite infantry as the Imperial Legion, which conveniently for the empire consolidated the greatest military potential in the emperor's hand. No great lord could do without the knight, for without them his people could not stand against their neighbors in battle. But in relying so strongly on the knight, and investing so heavily in the system creating them, a great lord could not raise the cash to have a large enough army to challenge the emperor.

The emperor, having the resources of the entire empire at his disposal had the ability to raise and maintain a large professional infantry force, and spent most of the imperial

revenues earmarked for the purposes of war on this professional infantry force, and on a navy, keeping only a few highly disciplined units of professional heavy cavalry. He could always rely on a portion of his great lords to remain loyal, and so if any rebellions threatened, he could gain numbers of knights as his feudal due from supporters. The system worked well for a millennium, until the turbulent reign of the last emperor, Michael Roele, and his death without an heir.

Chivalry

*.. “The knight who with his shield will ward off shame
Should always strive to use his utmost strength
For deeds of arms bring honour,
Worth and praise are his due.
but both are dearly purchased.”*

- From the book of Jesse de Evernaude, HC 390

“They were the tall and strong, the handsome and robust, the loyal, the Valiant and the bold... A knight must be merciful without wickedness, affable without treachery, compassionate towards the suffering, and openhanded. He must be ready to help the needy and to confound robbers and murderers, a just judge without favour or hate. He must prefer death to dishonour. He must protect Holy Church for she cannot defend herself...”

- The Romance of the Green Knight, MR 540

The transformation of the mounted tribal/feudal warrior into what is commonly thought of as the chivalrous knight was not an easy or short process. For a long time they retained the primitive and brutal aspects of tribal warriors, emphasizing strength and deeds of arms as the primary virtues, with little thought to anything else, and having few, if any cultural refinements.

The Church was a highly important part of the lengthy transformation. Their desire to curtail violence, especially against fellow Haelynites, and humans in general, was a crucial part of the process. Instead, they wished to channel these impulses and violent energy into fighting against Awnsheghlien, and this was a pivotal aspect of the cultural and spiritual struggle underway. Opposed to this was the tribal desire to fight against renowned warriors of rival tribes, and to gain personal glory in such conflict. This was a strong natural social impulse for the Church to attempt to stifle, and it has never been entirely successful in the endeavour.

The Church created religious orders of knighthood, and some of the first tenants of chivalry as it is known today, but the military orders for a long time merely drained off the elements most inclined to listen to and adopt the social change that was present in the population of the nobility. These tended to join the Holy Orders, and became paladins instead of inculcating these principles into society as a whole.

The emperors of Anuire, seeking internal peace in the empire, were much more successful at channeling the ambitions of the nobility and knights by focusing them on external missions of conquest to expand the empire. As the nobility came into contact with these foreign cultures with their previously unknown luxury goods, they began to develop a more refined taste, and a desire to live better or in more comfort than they had previously done. This process had a subtle effect on altering the warrior culture.

Conversely, wherever the empire expanded, they brought feudalism and the idea of knighthood with them. The idea took hold in some places, and in other places it did not take root at all, but withered and died, or was never adopted in any form, being entirely alien to the native population, as in the Vos lands, for instance. Explanations and examples of foreign concepts of knighthood will be covered later in this supplement.

Some of the most profound changes occurred due to a combination of factors interacting in the Heart of the empire. In largest part the changes most occurred in the countries of Avanil and Alامية, and to a lesser extent in Diemed and Taeghas.

Courtly Love

*“Love bears both the gofanon
And banner of fair courtesy
He is well mannered, sweet,
Frank and gentle, so that
Whoever may decide
To serve and honour him,
No villainy nor treason
Nor any evil thought may dwell with him.”*
- Anon. Avanil, 1000 HC

The rise of the cult of the Lady (Mary) in the Imperial Church, combined with the ideas of romantic love present in Western Khinasi culture and brought back to the imperial heartland by returning knights and minstrels, combined with a voice in a new, popular form of song and literature, emphasizing and glorifying romantic love. These forms grow in popularity over the older form of epic stories of tribal heroes. These separate phenomena combined most strongly in Avanil, to create the cult of Courtly Love.

Thus Diemed was the birthplace of the mounted warrior elite, but Avanil was and still is the spiritual birthplace and home of modern chivalry. From this point of origin, it spread across the bulk of the empire. To this day, the cult of courtly love is alive and well in Avanil, Alامية, and across the empire in courtly circles. The phenomenon has influenced many of the fraternal orders of chivalry, including some of the most famous in history. These fraternal orders will be dealt with and a small number of them detailed further later on in this supplement.

The Entrenchment of Feudalism in Anuire

*“Since the death of the Emperor Michael,
the land has been in sad and constant turmoil.
Pride and greed lock the land in bloody conflict.
Vainglorious, petty knights erect castles, and vie for
power as a cock crowing atop a dung-heap, fighting
any and all challengers in a ridiculous and futile
display. Truly, Haelyn has abandoned us, and we
settle into a dark hell of despair, punctuated only
by the screams of torment as the common people
of the Empire pay the price of this petty struggle.
An ocean of their blood, and the toil they endure
see the fruits of their labour despoiled, turned into
the instrument of their torment.”*

- *Dosiere family chronicle, 80 MR*

With the downfall of the empire under Michael Roele, and the subsequent loss of a centralized efficient state, and the effective loss of the Imperial Legions (a bare remnant of these legions remained under the control of the Imperial Chamberlain, as a scant few hundred men. These few cohorts was all that the chamberlain could convince the City of Anuire was necessary to support for it's own security) insured not only the survival of Anuirean knighthood and the feudal system itself, but it also insured a veritable thriving and flowering of both the Anuirean feudal system and chivalry.

As the Empire which has re-emerged from the ruins of the Old, is a series of federated and essentially sovereign, or near-sovereign countries, each with some say in the imperial succession and affairs, there is little chance of the feudal system disappearing anytime soon. The New Empire lacks the centralized control and power the old empire had. It is currently akin to being like an exquisite vase that has been knocked off a pedestal, and then put together again with glue. It is once again a whole, single object, but it will never quite be the same as it was before the accident occurred. Knighthood as it exists will be around for some time to come.

The Virtues of Knighthood in Anuire

*“Trewely to take and treweliche to fyghte,
Ys the profession and the pure ordre that apendeth to knyghtes;
Who-so passeth that poynt ys apostata of knyght-hod
For thei shoulde not faste ne for-bere sherte;
Bute feithfullich defende and fyghte for truth
And never leve for love in hope to lacche selver.”*

- *The Ploughman's vision, Diemed 450 MR*

There are twelve virtues of knighthood counted in Anuire, but there are five that are considered pre-eminent, and will be gone into detail here. All twelve will be listed toward the end of this section.

Of all the chivalric virtues, the most prominent one, especially emphasized by greater and lesser feudal lords is Loyalty. A knight is expected to be loyal to his sworn lord unto death – this is held over from the earlier tradition, just as a lord is expected to be a good lord to a vassal knight. Few things are despised so much by Anuirean knights and nobles as a traitor.

Unfortunately, betrayal is a not uncommon occurrence in Anuirean politics. Often betrayals are excused by the betrayer as not really being a betrayal, as the betrayed party did not meet the contract a condition of a sworn oath, or somehow broke the existing bond first, and so is really the betrayer.

Nevertheless, Anuirean knights and lords cherish and respect loyalty, and the virtue is truly a hallmark of Anuirean chivalry. A vassal who loyally follows a lord, even into rebellion, is often forgiven their actions, for they were obedient to their lord, who holds primary responsibility rather than the loyal vassal.

Prowess: in the earliest form of chivalry, this was the chief measure of the worth of a knight – his capabilities in the physical skills of knighthood. While Anuirean chivalry has evolved considerably from its ancient beginnings, prowess is still considered one of the chief virtues. How well can a knight serve his lord if he is of little prowess, after all? A knight who is Preux is seen to be of worth, and often forgiven other shortcomings.

Courage, again, is amongst the chief of the earliest virtues held to. A knight without valour is without honour and is not truly a knight. Cowards amongst the noble classes are despised, although when seen amongst commoners it is often a subject of humor, and readily forgiven if the commoner is otherwise virtuous. After all, it reinforces the notion current amongst the nobility that cowardice is base, but courage is a noble virtue.

Generosity: This is also one of the earliest of chivalric virtues to be adopted. It was in fact expected hallmark of behavior in the early tribal societies of the Andu, and not only amongst nobles, but commoners as well. A generous lord is always popular – they are expected to be so. Nothing is less popular to the Anuirean mindset than a miser or cheapskate. the miser is a common stock-figure in moral tales and is heartily despised – only a coward or a traitor is considered baser.

Mercy / Pity: the quality of compassion. This virtue comes from the influence of the church, and it was a long, hard road to have it adopted by the Anuirean chivalry. A knight is supposed to protect those beneath him in society, and also show mercy to a fallen foe who asks for it. Protecting ones people is a virtue nature and natural to Anuirean culture, but the quality of mercy came less easily, and that it is considered one of the five principle virtues of Anuirean knighthood is an indicator of the successful civilizing factor the church has been.

The quality of mercy has become an integral, shaping factor of Anuirean warfare. It has reduced somewhat the impact and horror of war on civilian populations, and it has created the system of ransom that makes war slightly less bloody for the nobility. The desire to capture and ransom a foe often outweighs the choice to kill them outright.

The above are considered the five chief virtues of Anuirean knighthood, and scholars of the subject consider all other virtues to flow from these. The following are the remainder of the twelve virtues, flowing from the chief five – nobility, honour, piety, righteousness, love courtesy, diligence, and perseverance.

Honour

The concept of honour is central to an Anuirean knight or nobleman. If he displays the knightly virtues in his daily life, he is honourable. The perceptions of honor have also spilled an ocean of blood across the course of Anuirean history.

Honour is the knight's own perception of his worth, and others' perceptions of his worth. If either becomes seriously imbalanced with the other, trouble is sure to follow. Trouble takes the form of judicial duels, private feuds, and bloody vengeance when a knight or noble questions the honor of the other. If things go too far, or if no superior lord steps in, terrible events are soon to follow. Knights as a rule are not allowed to indulge in these activities with a superior lord, if such an august personage were to insult his inferior. To indulge in this behavior with a regent by an inferior is considered an act of *les Majesté*, and carries the severest penalties. Between fellow regents it can lead to bloody warfare. Anuirean noble society is thus as a rule polite and restrained with non-intimates. The costs of slighted honor are very high, and no one slights another's honour lightly.

The Making of an Anuirean Knight

*“A knight cannot distinguish himself
in that if he has not trained for it
in tourneys. He must have seen his blood flow,
heard his teeth crack
under fist blows, felt his
opponents weight bear down
upon him as he lay on the ground
and, after being twenty times
unhorsed, have risen twenty times
to fight”*

~ Alasce Boeruine, 400 MR

The process of becoming a knight is a long and grueling one, and most commonly begins in the candidate's childhood. The vast bulk of knights come from the knightly landed

class, as the equipment to be a knight is so costly, and the skills necessary to become one require constant practice. It is thus very difficult, although not impossible, for someone outside of the landed classes to become a knight.

The education of a knight arguably begins from birth, but in reality begins in earnest for most candidates between the ages of five and seven, as it is at this age the candidate begins to truly learn the expected behavior and social skills of a knight, and the salient, all important skill of horsemanship. Noble children will have been atop gentle well mannered ponies, off and on since they were toddlers, but the art of controlling a horse in earnest and preparation for one day riding into battle truly begins at this stage. This also happens to be the age when blooded children begin to manifest some of their abilities of birth, and those blooded children with animal communication most often manifest this ability around this age—this blood ability can greatly aide their equestrian abilities.

The child may be fostered out or taught in their own home, but at this stage the lady of the household takes the children of this class under her wing, and begins teaching them the skills necessary (manners, social skills, etc.) for anyone serving in a noble household. Without these skills a candidate stands little chance of securing a place in society, never mind preferment or advancement.

It is within these first few years that shrewd parents or guardians, if they have care of multiple children begin to note the varying talents and shortcomings of the children, and begin to steer them toward appropriate careers.

In Avani and Alame, the system of primogeniture places hope and inheritance on the eldest son, who is under tremendous pressure to perform as expected. In countries where this system of primogeniture does not prevail, such as on the South Coast where the ablest child inherits the bulk (but all children inherit something), rivalries between children can be intense, but generally a child is more readily steered toward a career that is suited to them. Those gentle children lacking the competitive drive or physical skills, but preferring intellectual pursuits being steered toward the Church, or a career in magic, or administration and the law

It is in this first stage of real training that the knight candidates are taught the basic physical skills of their future vocation, in the form of games. These games consist largely of running at the quintain on foot with a spear, and then being towed at it on a wheeled dummy horse, and playing at canes to become used to the giving and taking of blows, and learning some rudimentary skills to be applied to sword training when it begins in earnest as a candidate becomes a squire. Wrestling is taught, as is the casting of javelins, and the shooting of a bow and a crossbow. When a child reaches the age of twelve, they generally pass into the next stage in their careers, becoming squires.

The next stage of preparation begins between the ages of 11-13, and lasts until a candidate is knighted. At this stage, a candidate becomes a squire, and the training he undergoes becomes more intense. The squire continually polishes his equestrian skills that are the core skills of his vocation, learning to jump obstacles and handle real

weapons on horseback – in deadly earnest, in the hunt. The hunt is the means by which noble children are first taught to kill – something they would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn until they faced battle, in normal circumstances. Hunting is considered a noble accomplishment. While at first less aggressive prey like deer are hunted, in time dangerous animals such as boar, bear, and wolves are added to the list of creatures to be hunted. The hunt has an elaborate set of customs and skills the candidates learn, not only in tracking, judging the fitness of prey, and the proper method of killing, but the social customs and polish expected of the class, in partitioning the prey, hunting calls, and to do all tasks well and skillfully, so as to bring credit to the candidate. Hunting is one of the major means of imparting some of the battlefield skills to the knight candidate, short of actual combat. Hunting is considered a courtly art, with an elaborate set of rituals, rules, and customs – it is not merely the butchering of animals. How well a candidate learns those accomplishments reflects directly on the quality of a knight or nobleman.

At the same time the squires learn to serve their lords properly in both formal and public occasions, as well as in private. The art of carving, pouring, and serving in a refined manner are emphasized. They learn to dress their lord, as well as arm him for battle, and the social skills and arts (singing, dancing, and playing instruments, etc.) to be fit company for a lord or lady. Their lessons in polite society continue. In most countries as pages they would have begun the process of learning reading and writing, for such skills, along with basic arithmetic are necessary for managing an estate or manor. They are not expected to be scholars, but are not discouraged from study if so inclined. They are expected to be able to pleasantly read a story aloud to a lord or lady, or their household upon request. It is fashionable entertainment to be able to share fable and romances in this way. They are also expected to be able to read and understand a basic psalter of their faith.

The training for a squire to face battle begins truly in earnest as well at this time. The squire learns to arm his lord, and learns all about arms and armour and their maintenance, and keeps his lord's harness in pristine condition. The squire also learns to wear armour and be comfortable in it, and to be able to do all things in armour he can do out of it – to ride well in it, to somersault and cartwheel, and even to dance in it so he has no disadvantage in balance. He also learns to mount a horse in armour with ease, even to be able to vault into the saddle. The squire also puts aside the page's cane, and takes up the art of the sword (the art of swordsmanship varies from country to country, and a brief supplement will be added later with 'feats' available to different styles of Anuirean swordsmanship, and the swordsmanship of other peoples.) He learns with heavier weapons than normal to build his endurance, to strike proper blows at a pell, and to execute cuts against cutting targets with normal swords ahorse and on foot.

The squire also learns the art of armoured wrestling, which is integral to close combat on horse and on foot. While the squire continues to hone his skill against the quintain on horseback, he learns to use the heavier lance, and he learns to joust against a live opponent – both against novices like himself, and skilled opponents. He learns to not give up, even when overthrown.

Even more importantly thought of than individual skill with a lance is the learned skill of fighting as a unit. The squire learns to train almost immediately with his fellow squires, and in addition with the men-at-arms of the household to maneuver, charge, and retire, as a conroi or banner (unit of 10-25 mounted men) – riding knee-to-knee, and with loose reins in the charge. While a skillful individual jousting is admired, it is a more important military skill to be able to ride and charge in groups. In order to reinforce and emphasize the skill, training is continued into combat in the baton tournament, and the more taxing béhourd. The last game is potentially the most dangerous to horse and man, and is the closest to replicating combat conditions for the knight. It is very possible for participants to be severely injured and even killed on occasion in this form of tournament, despite the rebated weapons used, and the padded bumper's of the horses.

Squires may also be exposed to real combat depending on current political conditions leading to war. Older squires assist their lords, following them into battle with spare lance, and ready to remount them with the spare horse they ride, or rescue their lord if he is unhorsed. Squires in large noble households fill minor staff functions as well in battle, serving as messengers and bringing forward supplies as needed. In normal circumstances, a squire is knighted between the ages of 18 and 21, although in certain unusual circumstances, the honour can come sooner.

Types of Knighthood in Anuire other than Organized Orders

The most common knight found across Anuire and elsewhere in the world is the simple knight. This is the candidate for knighthood, who under normal circumstances has been trained for the task in the household of his lord, usually from adolescence. Upon reaching a certain age and level of training the candidate is usually dubbed a knight in a simple ceremony, often taking place in a chapel or in the lord's hall. Such ceremonies are invariably public. Usually the candidate at this time in Anuirean society is from a knightly family – the heir to a manor, to be able to support his 'station'. The candidate may have other prospects – he comes from such a family and is a younger son, and expects to enter a lord's service for a money fee, or has hopes of prospects to eventually obtain a manor through service, or his family is well enough off to be able to support at least in part a son taking up knight-service. In many lands in Anuire, almost invariably the candidate is to be of a certain social station. That stated the common belief in social circles is that natural nobility exists, and that a person who carries themselves worthily, and who is noble of courage and manner is at least potentially worthy of ennoblement. This is coupled with a belief that to take up arms in a lord's service – at least knightly arms, is an ennobling act itself. Coupled with this is the common belief that such people are indeed of noble blood – at least noble bastards or lost children of nobility, etc. "Breeding shows" is the governing thought behind this belief, and a bias exists amongst the nobility of Anuire that a base-born person cannot truly behave with nobility. This is a prejudice that allows some daring and ambitious commoners to enter the realms of what has become a closed society in countries like Avaniil.

Who exactly is allowed to create a knight varies from country to country and region to region. In countries in the Heartland, a landed lord is only allowed to create a knight, as he is seen as the only source of knighthood able to properly provide for any knight made. It is considered a greater honour to be made a knight by a great lord, and the greatest honour of all to be knighted by a prince or duke, or even the emperor himself.

In the countries of the South Coast, and in Boeruine where older customs are observed, any knight can confer the honour. This is based on the idea that a knight should be able to chose his successor to serve his lord if he no longer can himself, due to illness, or if he is dying – or if he sees a truly outstanding candidate who deserves the honour, who will bring good service to his lord. The knights of these countries are jealous of their privilege, - it springs from a tougher and less settled time. They are extremely sparing in granting the buffet or blow, as who they make a knight reflects on their own honour.

While the bulk of knights are trained to it from youth, and dubbed in public ceremonies, it is considered one of the greatest honours to be dubbed a knight on the battlefield – impromptu, with other knights and the host as witness, after having fought well. Conversely, in some cases a number of knights will be made before a battle, with the idea they will fight better for the honour having been given. This type of knighthood is merely accepted as a normal form of knighthood, and is not considered a particular honour unless the knight does distinguish himself in that first battle. In that case it is considered almost the equivalent honour of a true battlefield knighting.

In Anuire all knights are not considered equal. The knights of some countries are for various reasons considered inferior to others, while others are considered superior. In general, the following countries knights are considered to be “proper” knights – Avaniil, Alامية, Diemed and it’s dependencies, Tuornen, Taeghas, Boeruine, Talinie (except for the ‘serf knights’), Elinie, Osoerde, and Dhoesone. Dhalaene had suffered in reputation under Ghoere, but the new duke has gone a long way toward revitalizing Dhalaene's chivalry. Knights of Brosengae are considered normal, as knights of Serien. The following countries – Roesone, Aerenwe, Cariele, Coeranys, the Chimaron, etc., are considered “not top drawer”. Roesone, because all titles descend from a rude mercenary and its knights are typically unpolished. Ilien, because it’s lord is not a knight, nor has it’s lord been one in centuries, Cariele because of the decay and near destruction of the institution by guilders, Coeranys, where the institution never really took hold, the Chimaron for being the longest time a pack of rouges and outlaws living under the rule of an Awnsheghlien – the institution is now in the country. The serf knights of Talinie for the obvious reason of their unfree birth.

Even amongst the “normal” chivalry, countries are perceived in a pecking order, with Avaniil being at the top of the list. Alامية closely follows. – the order the countries are listed in as having “normal” knights are a good rough guideline of the pecking order. Above the rank of simple or normal knight, there is a rank of knighthood not associated with formal orders – the knight bannerette. A knight bannerette is an experienced knight seen as a capable war-leader by his lord, and who supplies other knights or men-at-arms (a man-at-arms is a mounted soldier with the equipment of a knight, but without the rank

of one) under him in military service. When a knight is seen as an outstanding leader, or is good enough to attract 20-25 lances into his service, the lord will usually recognize this, and grant him the title of bannerette (usually along with a cash increase or a land grant) and the right to bear a banner instead of a pennon on his lance to mark his rank. This is the highest rank of knight not associated with fraternal orders. Formal orders of knighthood include Fraternal Orders, Orders of State, and Religious Military Orders (the last being detailed in “The Book of Priestcraft” in part.) These orders carry varying levels of prestige based largely on the renown of the order (although new order founded have renown based on the renown of the founder of the order, as well as the renown of the initial members.) In regards to their prestige, a nobody ruler founding an order unheard of, remains at the bottom of the ladder of prestige.

Thus the order of the Golden Pegasus as the first such Order of State, founded by the emperor of Anuire has precedence over all other. The principle applies to fraternal chivalric orders as well. The Order of the Heart in Avani is renowned outside of the Empire as well as in it, and is far above the prestige, say, of the Brotherhood of the Arrow in Aerenwe, which is practically unheard of outside of that country.

Anuirean Orders of Knighthood

Other than the simple title of knight, various organized orders of knighthood exist in Anuire. They generally fall into four categories – Religious Orders, Orders of State, Simple Fraternal Orders, and more recently, Secular Military Orders.

The oldest form of these orders of knighthood, are the Militant Orders of the Church. After Deismaar, with the rise of the terrible Awnsheghlien, the Church deemed it imperative to devise a means of physically combating these abominations. The Churches solution was to create orders of warrior-monks, trained as knights, and with spell capabilities and the ability to fight evil on a spiritual level.

These knights are devoted to their order – many such orders are in essence fully monks, although some have lay-brothers (knights, not paladins, and usually serving for a half-decade to a decade). The Orders vary in details, and in what sort of foes the Orders are allowed to fight – most knights of Haelyn will not fight against their fellow Haelynites, but some orders add heretics, pagans, schismatic’s, and even traitors to the crown to the list of acceptable foes instead of just Awnsheghlien and monsters. These Orders are considered honourable vocations by Anuirean nobility, and many noble families chose to place younger sons or even daughters into them. The Orders are the models for both the militant orders of other religions in Cerilia (they were exposed to the idea during the rule of the old empire), and they are also the rough models for the Newest of orders – the Secular Military Orders.

Orders of State

These are the orders of knighthood created by regents to bind lords to them in fraternal chivalric orders, and to cement alliances and friendships. The first such order was the Order of the Golden Pegasus, instituted by the Emperor Allandaele, during the period of contraction of the Empire, following reverses in the East. The order was designed to bind the more important imperial nobles together, and the nobility of nobles a part of or friendly to the Empire in Brecht and Khinasi lands.

The Order was very prestigious, and worked in its intended purpose for some time, but fell in abeyance with the death of Michael Roele. The Order's chief is of course the Anuirean Emperor, and the annual chapter meetings were held in a special hall in the Imperial Cairn. Rank was not a deciding factor in membership, what was the deciding factor was how loyal and useful to the Empire a member was – hence some knights of lower station who were loyal servants and important captains were members, while some Dukes uninvolved in Imperial affairs or of questionable loyalty were not. The Order was an august and prestigious order in the annals of chivalry. Its chief symbol was a collar of gold plaques displaying imperial eagles, and the seal of Anuire, with a solid gold Pegasus pendant. Members also wore (wear since its reconstitution) mantles of the richest scarlet, furred with ermine, and powdered in gold embroidered pegasi.

The Order was reconstituted in 563 MR, with the following membership:

| Darien Avan | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Bannier Avan | Aeric Boeruine | Blaede Boeruine | Madoc Dieme |
| Onwen Avan | Daene Boeruine | Corwyn de Sonniele | Carilon Alam |
| Caelen Dieme | Noelan Dieme | Jaleela bint Dhouada | Raymond Vallier |
| Rourmad Woodvyn | Elamien Lacy | Rhys Swordwraith | Etienne Tael |
| Archimedes d'Dhalaene | Jonathan Michaele | Konstantine Danig | |
| William Moergan | Braedonal Tuar | Caliedhe Dosiere | Michael Dosiere |
| Allanliegh Connelacht | Chandel Salviene | | |

Other State Orders

The Order of the Lion (Diemed), The Order of the Thistle (Boeruine), The Order of the Phoenix (Saria)

Fraternal Knightly Orders

These orders are associations of knights, either regional in scope or related by blood or marriage, or brotherhoods of arms. This form of order is quite old, and while many fraternal orders last only a generation or two, a few have thrived for centuries. These forms of orders are most common in Avani and Alamié – the members pledge to

mutually support one another, mutually devote themselves to some specific aspect of chivalry, or courtly love. Some are more mutual support institutions for soldiers clubbing together to provide members ransoms at need, and sharing profits of war.

An example of a classic Anuirean fraternal order would be the Order of the Heart. This order is over a century old, and its members are devoted to courtly love, as being the inspiration for the finest knightly deeds. They believe that one can only truly be chivalrous when inspired by an unobtainable love, pure in nature. The order is limited to a score of knights, and the order only admits new members if a member leaves, or dies. The members review candidates unbeknownst to the candidate, and elect them after discussing their merits; they then interview the candidates to make any final determinations regarding membership. The members, although sounding (and often acting) completely impractical are amongst the bravest and most fearless and preaux Avanesse knights. Many members have died on love-inspired quests. Every Valentine's day, the knights take an oath to fulfill a nearly impossible or dangerous task for their love.

The knights seek a noble lady as a sponsor they know to be unobtainable (to keep their love pure) and ask their favour, so all sport some favour—from maunches to stockings or veils. They all wear the badge of a heart on their left sleeve.

The Order of the Jug

An Alamiean order of bon hommie, devoted to the knightly virtues of generosity and good company. The knights are all of the best families, and they are well respected both inside and outside of Alamie. They are competent fighters, often indulging in tournaments to show their skill. They are devoted followers of their duke. The sign of the order is a golden jug badge worn on their chest.

The Order of the Bezan

This order is a brotherhood of arms of Avaniil—a mutually supporting association of knights who club ransoms and split the profits of war. They are sworn to each others aide—if one is besieged in a castle, all will do their utmost to relieve them. If one dies, the members club together and provide the dead members family with funds. Amongst the membership is the Woodvyn family. The association is twenty years old, but thrives still.

The Order of the Stag

An old Tuor/Alamian order devoted to questing after knightly virtues and adventure “As the hunter pursues the stag”. The order's symbol—a stag's head erased is worn as a broach on the mantle of a hood, and the members have seal rings bearing their arms and the order's symbol as well.

The Order of the Pearl; Empire wide

This fraternal order is unusual in that it has wizards as well as knights as members. The order's purpose is to pursue “the three pearls of knowledge, wisdom, knightly virtue, and a unity of truth”. The members' knights and wizards both are of a scholarly bent. All members are of ancient noble families of the original duchies. The members of the order wear a circular brooch or a ring, with three large pearls set upon them. The three pearls represent the order's goals, as well as the Trinity, the circle representing the ceaseless nature of the quest, eternity, and the Almighty.

The Order of the Pentangle

This order has strong religious overtones—the pentangle of Solomon representing the five knightly virtues and the five wounds of Christ. The patron saint of the order is Mary, and the order accepts no members that are anything but strictly practicing Haelynites. The order is particularly devoted to the defense of and honour of ladies, especially mothers, in honour of the mother of the Lord. Members of the order of the pentangle are mostly from the Heartlands, but membership stretches from Diemed to as far north as Talinie.

The above are the most famous orders of Fraternal orders of knighthood across the Empire—Anuire being the heartland and father of chivalry, although there must be upwards of one hundred fraternal orders current at any one time across the Empire. Most are obscure and local, and last for but a decade or two at best. Some are exclusive orders, like the order of the Heart—in that case a member can belong to no other order while an active member. Most members eventually pass out of the order through death or marriage and are replaced by new scions. Members who marry often pass into other orders. Other orders admit as members those belonging to other sorts of orders, or more than one fraternal order. At least one fraternal order—the order of the Spur was attached to, or closely associated with the newest and rarest form of order—the secular military orders.

Secular Military Orders

This is a very new phenomenon, a few years old, and most secular military orders are connected in one way or another to the very first such order – the Iron Guard of Ghoere.

The Iron Guard

The first secular military order was created by the Baron of Ghoere in order to have a highly disciplined heavy cavalry. The “Barony of Ghoere” had been blessed with a strong feudal system, and the institution of knighthood regularly supplied 3000 and more lances for the ruler out of the old lands of Ghieste and Dhalaene, but the feudal levy was severely lacking in discipline and often proved unreliable at awkward moments. The Baron, Gavin Tael determined the best way of overcoming this obstacle was by replacing quantity with quality – but still on a substantial scale.

The Baron revised his tax system and feudal duties, and was able to provide for a formidable core of an army – 5 companies of 200 lances, 1000 lances in total, well equipped and uniformly trained. The primary chivalric virtue emphasized was an unwavering loyalty to Gavin Tael and his government.

Birth was no bar to entry – in fact Tael often recruited those of humble birth in preference to blooded or noble individuals of questionable loyalty or strong ambition. Baron Tael knew he could make any man the battlefield equivalent of a knight with the appropriate training and equipment. By following this policy the Baron was able to expend a little less money on pay as well, and keep free for use a large number of the feudal levy (maybe 60-70% of the previous total) to call upon at need.

The members of the Iron Guard were trained rigorously, and Ghoere being blessed with a thriving arms industry, the guard was very well equipped indeed – if less spectacular in colour and plumage than the average Avanese knight (the guards equipment was black from the forge, and they wore uniform surcoats and the orders charge on their shields). The Iron Guard became 5 truly elite units of disciplined knights – a palpable threat to his neighbors, and an economic means of creating stability in his own realm – their existence alone kept potentially rebellious nobles quiet, and they acted as a police force besides.

Through this method Ghoere was able to keep a large army of mercenaries additionally, and was able to extract tribute and ransoms from his near neighbors – either to buy him off to prevent conflict, or in losing a border conflict having a price extracted. Thus the Iron Guard existed for well over 20 years. It was despised by other Anuirean knights, but equally feared, and its existence spurred the creation of several secular orders – all much smaller, in an attempt to balance off the elite quality of the Iron Guard. The Guard suffered no serious reverse until its first conflict with Diemed, over the succession of Alasce Endier. The Guard continued to exist, and in large part made Ghoere's attempt to seize the Imperial City of Anuire feasible during his rebellion against the new Emperor.

The Iron Guard was finally shattered during the course of the rebellion – not due to being overwhelmingly defeated, but due to being largely abandoned when Ghoere fled the Imperial city. As many as 400 of the best and most fanatically devoted of the Iron Guard fled with Ghoere, as well as the most loyal of his other troops, but the remaining 600 were surrendered with the city. Some of those of good character have been incorporated into the new duke of Dhalaene's Order of the Dragon.

The Guardians of Mhoried

The second secular military order created was the Guardians of Mhoried in a desperate effort to counterbalance the Iron Guard. The Mhor's people simply do not have the same social structure as most of Anuire – it is largely based on the older clan system. The noble class of Mhoried is so small, that every family of nobility and gentry (including many of the clan chiefs) contributing one lance – usually a second or third child – to the Guardians gives a grand total of 100 lances. These form the disciplined core of the Guardians, but

the bulk of the membership is formed out of rangers and adventurers. They are a hard-bitten, tough as nails lot, but they often suffer in battle from a lack of unified action, although each individual fighter is a formidable foe. As a counter to the Iron Guard, the Guardians of Mhoried have never been very successful, due to the fact that between the Iron Guard, and Ghoere's "religious orders" he drew on, the Guardians were at least outnumbered three to one, and often by more, given they had to guard the borders of Mharkazor as well.

As mentioned, the order consists of a scion of every noble family in Mhoried as its core, but these are so few that they make up little more than 1/4 of the total number of lances (the total number for the order is 400 lances). As mentioned, the remaining members are rangers, adventurers, or people trained to the task, but of common birth. The end result is that individual members of the order are formidable foes – some are even capable of wielding magic. All of them are as tough as nails, but the average member is as refined as a cottars hut.

As a unit, they sometimes have difficulty functioning as a unified set of lances, and so their battlefield record is a bit spotty. Regardless, they have served the people of Mhoried well. While individual knights are regarded as proper knights by other knights in Anuire, the order itself is not considered to be a real knightly order – unlike the remaining two militant secular orders, which have all the aspects of knightly orders – the Knights Leopard and the Knights of the Dragon.

The Knights Leopard

This well known and respected order of knights is little more than a decade old (as of 563 MR) – it is an order that is open to the South Coast, but serves the crown of Diemed. Like the other secular military orders, it was formed in reaction to the Iron Guard, but it is substantially smaller (250 lances), what it lacks in quantity, it more than makes up by far in quality.

Unlike the two previously mentioned orders, the Order of the Leopard is a proper chivalric order, having all of the customs and hallmarks of most traditional fraternal chivalric orders. While composed mostly of scions of noble, knightly, and gentle families, the order is open to confer knighthood on commoners of noble carriage and behaviour who are skilled in the martial arts.

The most distinctive symbol of the order is the leopard-skin surcoat of brother knights, as well as the erminois caparisons of their mounts, and their erminois banner. The patron saint of the order is the Archangel Michael, and the order carries a standard with his image into battle as well. The prince chose their distinctive hallmarks in part due to his affinity for the big cats, and the nobility of the leopard in the Anuirean science of heraldry. St. Michael is also the personal chosen patron saint of the prince, for whom he feels a particular affinity.

The Knights Leopard have served the prince of Diemed with distinction in all of his campaigns, and inflicted the first serious reverse the Iron Guard had ever felt. Uncommon to most Anuirean knights, and in common with the old Iron Guard, the Knights Leopard are highly trained and disciplined as a unit (most Anuirean knights are highly trained as individuals, but some have problems working efficiently in a group.)

Unlike the Iron Guard, the Leopards are terribly expensive to maintain, costing 3 times the normal amount of maintenance for a normal unit of knights; the order not only having the finest equipment that can be gotten, but its own castle to boot. Unlike the Iron Guard, they are respected and not feared by the common people of the South Coast.

The Order of the Dragon

This is the newest of the Secular Military Orders, being founded by Etienne Tael, the new duke of Dhalaene, upon his ascension a scant few years ago.

Their duke took as a model the idea of a trained unit of knights loyal to the duchy as forming the core of a new army, but follows the model of the Knights Leopard in quality of equipment and the character of its individual members. Many scions of noble houses that Ghoere did not trust belong to this new order, as well as the best in character of the old Iron Guard (those few that fit that bill) that submitted to the new ruler of the reconstituted duchy. The order is much smaller than the old Iron Guard, at 440 lances, but it follows its rigorous pattern of training, and additionally emphasizes the standard chivalric practices and values of the fraternal orders.

The duke has followed the example of the Leopards in quality of equipment for the order, but as Dhalaene is fortunate in having naturally the finest quality iron and steel in the empire, as well as being the seat of arms and armour manufacturers, the cost of equipping them is cheaper, and they only pay twice the maintenance of a normal unit of knights to maintain.

The knights are clad from head to foot in the best Dhalaenian steel, from their mail chausses and hauberks to the great helms and visored great helms on their heads. A distinctive and unusual feature of their harness is their cuirasses of polished scale, either burnished steel, or gilded, or a combination of these. Some officers and wealthy knights have their scale cuirasses enameled by Diemian artisans, but the cuirass is universally worn as a distinctive hallmark of the order while in harness – they are referred to as ‘the dragon’s scales’. Knight commanders, wear crests of dragons’ wings atop their helms, usually of repoussed and silvered or gilded steel, or enameled to match their scales. The grand master of the order bears the crest of a golden dragon guardant to mark him.

The order is respected as a true knightly order, and while the common people first feared and mistrusted them, they have come to respect and accept the order. They are hated by supporters of the old order in Ghoere. The duke was able to raise and maintain them, and increase his popularity simultaneously by lowering the ruinous taxes, ridding the country

of mercenaries by replacing them with a smaller native army, and replacing some taxes with a duty on steel.

The members of the order wear a dragon broach on their mantles or hoods to mark their membership in the order out of their armour. Like the order of the Leopard, they bear their individual arms on their shields, a radical departure from the Iron Guard with their black harness and the arms of their unit on their shields. Unlike the Iron Guard, members of the Order of the Dragon are noble or have been enobled and have their own heraldry to bear.

The order's standard is a red (gules/sanguine) dragon rampant on a field of bright yellow (or), but each unit of 50 knights under a knight commander has a standard in the form of a windsock, the body of the sock being a dragons body, and the mouth and head being a cast gilt latten head that 'roars' as the unit canters forward. The orders patron saints are St. Haelyn and St. Martin, and a standard bearing their twin images, carefully painted and gilded are also born by the order in combat.

The one thing held in common by all of the secular military orders, regardless of which one is considered, is that the primary purpose of the order is to field a highly disciplined unit of knights, in an attempt to overcome what is traditionally the chief disadvantage of knights. That is, to overcome the tendency of the knight to fight as an individual, seeking honour and glory, and the attendant difficulties this makes in cooperation and command and control. It is interesting to note that Avanil and Alامية, the spiritual homes of traditional Anuirean knighthood, have no secular military orders. Indeed, it would be difficult to institute such an order in these lands. Conversely, these are the very lands where traditional fraternal orders of chivalry most flourish – the two lands together holding about half the total numbers of such fraternal orders existing in the empire.

Boeruine, where such an order might conceivably flourish, has none. The current prince of Boeruine expects and demands the sort of unit discipline found in the secular military orders as the normal rule of behaviour in all his units of knights.

Very few duchies can raise the numbers of lances required to find enough knights of sufficient temperament to join a secular military order – most such people are usually already attracted to the military orders of the church. The churches of Haelyn and Cuirrican are beyond a doubt the largest employers of highly disciplined knightly cavalry, in the form of orders of paladins of Haelyn and Cuirrican. Diemed, the smallest pool from which a secular military order is drawn must still open up membership to other countries of the South Coast to absolutely insure the numbers required to sustain the order as it is conceived.

Of the remaining Imperial duchies, only Elinie and Oesorde are of a size with a sufficient population of nobility or gentry to create a secular military order, and until recently, neither had shown the inclination to do so. Oesorde was recovering from it's ruinous civil war, but in the last year, the young duke William Moergan created the order of the Knights en Soliel, a small but brilliant unit of knights (150 currently, but envisioned as an

order on the scale of the knights Leopard), who are visually distinguished by their extensive use of cuirbolli greaves, jambes, and cuirasses, that are highly embossed and tooled, and then gilded, giving them the appearance of a horde of golden knights in blazing sunlight. No doubt the young duke was influenced in their creation by his exposure to the order of the Knights Leopard during his exile in Diemed, during the reign of the usurper Jaison Rannech. Smaller countries content themselves with small units of honour guards or bodyguards of knights, to defend their regents person (the largest such group is the 100 gentlemen of the chamber of the Diemian princely household – most other bodyguard units of knights average a dozen to a score, and top out at 50.)

Knighthood Outside of the Empire

As the empire spread across Cerilia it brought the institution of knighthood with it. In many places, such as the Rurjik and Vos lands the concept was so alien that it never took root, while in many Brecht lands it was rejected as the empire was driven out, but the concept remained in others. In some places in the Khinasi lands it survives in a modified form, and even thrives.

Of the Brecht lands, Danigau is unique in that it never fell under the empires sway, and knighthood in that land was adopted, both to lend legitimacy to the regents independence in Anuirean eyes, and as a counter to Anuirean knights on the battlefield. Thus Danigau is the home of the only purely Brecht knightly station and order (the Storm Lords), which coincidentally is the sole secular military order found outside of Anuire, and possibly predates the Iron Guard.

The other Brecht countries with orders of knighthood are Müden, Rorhmach, Weirech, and most recently Keirgard. In both Müden and Rorhmarch, chivalric institutions were created by, and are descended from Anuirean chivalry (Kiergard's is entirely descended from Rorhmarch, and is a most recent creation). Müdens is diluted, and influenced by Brecht culture, as a mere shadow of Anuirean custom and tradition. Rorhmarch's is much stronger and healthier, but closest of all in spirit and form to traditional Anuirean chivalry – it's knights, as well as the knights of Danigau are most readily recognized as such by Anuirean knights and orders of chivalry.

Knighthood in Danigau being uniquely Brecht deserves to be covered in some length. Unlike Anuire, Danigau has never adopted a truly feudal form of government, and the social development of Brecht tribes took a different turn from their Anuirean counterparts. Like them, these tribes were ruled by kings – each with his war band that protected the tribe, but the prime efforts of the Brecht were toward food production on land and sea, and the role of kings and warriors was to explore new lands, find new resources, and make them available to their people. The Brecht's tended to cooperate and trade with one another, and reserved the bulk of their aggressive fighting against monsters and foreign foes that reacted with hostility to them, rather than engaging in trade.

As a result, while kings, chiefs, and family leaders took on the same roles as in other lands, a military aristocracy as such never developed. Nevertheless, each Brecht country had a chief or leader, and they had their warriors that were close to them, and tied to them through oaths, and the provision of a living that they could rely on. While a healthy mercantile system that is so characteristic of Brecht lands today survived the Anuirean occupation, the pre-Anuirean system of Brecht government was destroyed in all lands save for Danigau.

As the native nobility and system that remained faced military crisis in facing off against the Anuirean armies, and as a result was forced to turn the prince's war band into principally mounted heavy cavalry, that could at least counter the Anuirean knights to some degree. That said the cavalry tradition has never been firmly rooted in Brecht armies, given the nature of the terrain in the lands of the Great Basin, and the expense of maintaining cavalry that Brecht merchants find more easily invested in ships for both trade and naval warfare.

The Khinasi Lands

The orders of paladins of the church had made the greatest impression on Khinasi minds, as they are culturally a very religious people. The reliance of Khinasi armies, especially of the plains states on cavalry makes the mounted warrior a completely natural (and all-present) phenomenon in Khinasi armies.

That said, the Khinasi culture places a different importance on social ranking in society, with magic-users or priests being at the top of the social ladder, and wealthy merchants holding at least as important a role as soldiers, who are seen principally as civil servants. Thus, while the notion of romantic love had its foundations in Khinasi society, that was so large a part of the creation of modern Anuirean chivalry, a military aristocracy did not command Khinasi society, and so knighthood as recognized in Anuire had no ruling military class to be created in.

What has occurred is that various temples have wholeheartedly adopted the idea of the paladin, protecting the faithful, and battling evil. The temple of Avani in particular is known for its devoted paladins, and can field units of them as the Anuirean church can field units of paladins of Haelyn. In some countries like Ariya, where an original tribal culture has left a remnant of a warrior aristocracy around what were once tribal chiefs, a well equipped cavalry force of land-owners, acting as part-time soldiers exists, almost mimicking knighthood, but their social status does not equate them to the exact equivalent. The fact that Khinasi cavalry, whether light, medium, or heavy cavalry are primarily horse-archers (something no Anuirean knight would ever consider engaging in – long-range combat, which is no test of strength or martial skill in their minds “The first archer was a coward”, is a common Avanesse saying) is a further great distinction between Khinasi cavalry, and Anuirean knights. The Anuirean knights additionally ride heavier horses, and are most often more heavily equipped, further widening the differences between the two lands.

One phenomenon unique to the Khinasi lands is the slave-soldier, the Ghulam, who fill most often the role of a “heavy” cavalryman. Such slave, medium cavalymen (in Anuirean terms), are the property of the state, or the personal property of the ruler, and are often engaged in administrative functions within the state in addition to their military role. As slavery at this point in Anuirean history is non-existent, this phenomenon of slave-warriors is as alien to the average Anuirean as the idea of being ruled by a military aristocrat is to the average Khinasi. Thus, while rulers and the wealthy of the Khinasi lands share some of the values of Anuirean knights, the two cultures are still alien to each other, and Khinasi are not seen as knights by Anuireans, although some individuals, like the Prince-Paladin of Ariya, are seen as chivalrous ‘knights’, worthy of the highest respect.

Heraldry in Cerilia

When warriors are clad from head to foot in mail, and a helm covers the bulk of their face, and the primary form of combat is close contact hand-to-hand combat on horseback or foot, one of the most important considerations is to quickly identify friend from foe, so a combatant does not accidentally kill his friends in the press of combat. The need becomes doubly so to be identified as an individual, rather than as a anonymous member of a military unit when one of the strongest societal beliefs of the ruling class is to win personal renown and glory, and bring honour to ones self and ones family. As a result, early in Anuirean history, leading noble families and members of ‘war bands’ began to chose distinctive symbols and signs, colourful, and easily identifiable at some distance, so they could be readily recognized, and their deeds recorded by bards or minstrels.

Some time before the contraction of the old empire, a set of rules governing the science of heraldry grew up, along with a set of rules as to what families were armetigious (those with a right to bear a coat of arms), and those who were not. The general rule of thumb is that those families whose head of family performs knight service on horseback are armetigious, as are all ancient noble families. The issue has become clouded in regions where the system of primogeniture is not practiced (that is, where the eldest son inherits the families title and bulk of the families estates, while all other children inherit a lesser portion), and an inheritance is divided between children. On the South Coast, in particular, all children of a noble family are considered equally noble, and inheritances are generally divided more generously between children. As some families that were clearly of the knightly class had their lands split up between children, you had scions of houses bearing the title, but lacking the resources to undertake a knight’s service. This problem has been commonly addressed by lords seeking military service of knights making them knights of the household – freedmen – who receive pay, livery (clothing and food), and some of the expensive equipment they could not otherwise afford of their own (like a proper destrier or courser, or some armour).

Also there is a class of the aristocracy, who live like knights, but who lack some of the income, but still perform military service for a lord, or engage in service administering estates. These are ranked as gentry, and they are considered armetigious as well. In some

countries like Diemed or Boeruine, there have been traditionally been a ranking of mounted military service below that of knight, called sergeant, and these families are considered to be gentry, and armetigious as well. The rule of thumb is that to be noble, one has to live a certain lifestyle, earning ones living by means other than the labour of their hands – usually on rents, or through mounted military service. A family making £20 , or 200 crowns per annum by such means is generally considered a knightly family (10% of a gold bar), while one making £10 or more, or 100 crowns per annum by such means is considered ‘gentle’. The players need to keep in mind that while regents deal in gold bars quarterly, Cerilia is on a silver standard, and an unskilled labourer makes 3 silver pennies a day (enough to eat), and a skilled labourer makes 6 silver pennies a day on average. £1 is the equivalent of 240 silver pennies, while 1 crown (the standard gold piece) is one tenth of £1. Thus a common labourer or even a farming family makes about £2-3 per annum, by hard labour, being employed in work about 240 days a year (sabbaths and holidays aren’t worked, and certain seasons agricultural labourers have very little work. Day labourers are rarely fully employed), so the poorest gentry family is strikingly rich in comparison to a day labourer doing well, but some free (yeomen) farming families are well enough off to be on the same financial scale as gentry, or almost knights – but since they gain their living by work of hand, they are not armetigious.

Leaving the murky waters in Anuire of which families are gentle and which are not, we pass onto the rules regarding the science of Heraldry itself. The original Birthright “Secrets of” series had a few okay examples of Heraldry, and some of the worst examples ever seen as well (for instance, the heraldry on the Illien module). We use the standard historical medieval European rules regarding heraldry – it’s purpose is to immediately identify the wearer in the stressful situation of combat, so the charge (the main object on the shield) has to be clearly obvious as to what it is to the viewer, and the colour of the shield has to contrast clearly with the colour of the charge. The following are the 5 heraldic colours – Red, Blue, Green, Purple, and Black. here are two metals gold (yellow), and silver (argent), there are 5 furs (these are patterns of black and silver or gold), Ermine, Ermines, Pean, Erminois, and Vair. There are also 3 ‘stains’ – Tawny (orange), Sanguine (blood red), and Murray (reddish purple). The basic rule to follow is to not put a colour on a colour, or a metal on a metal, but a metal should always be contrasted by a colour. So if you have a yellow star as your charge, your shield colour should be a colour, since yellow is a metal (gold). Charges are either geometric (the “ordinaries” – chevrons, bars, checky, etc), or they are heraldic animals (which can either be monsters like dragons, or lions, bulls, eagles, etc. But it is important to note that even common animals are drawn in a heraldic style, and are not photo-realistic). If you have ideas for heraldry for your character, contact the DM, and she will set you up with something that will both look good, but meet the heraldic rules.

The following are examples of Anuirean Heraldry, ‘tricked’ as by a herald. The field or divisions of the shield and their colours come first, followed by the charge and its colours.

The Imperial Arms – Or (yellow), a double headed eagle gules (red), a snake clutched in the talons vert (green).

The Arms of Avan – Gules (red), a double-headed eagle Or (yellow).

The Arms of Diemed - Party-per Fess (split in half horizontally), murray and pale azure, a lion rampant-guardant (rampant but the head looking at the viewer) Argent (white), armed and langued gules (the tongue and claws red)

The Arms of Roesone – Or (yellow), a stags head erased sable (black).

One difference in Heraldry between the Heartlands (actually, all of Anuire) and the South Coast is how children's arms are differenced from those of their parents. This becomes important as these children have children, in keeping track of who is who in order of cadency, because this is tied up with inheritance laws in various domains.

The bulk of Anuire uses what are called "Marks of Cadency" to distinguish children – in countries falling primogeniture rules, these apply to the sons alone, while daughters difference their arms by quartering them with their husbands, or their mothers. The rules work this way – each child bears their parents arms, but a mark is placed on the shield directly, marking their order of birth. The first son (or heir, in lands not using primogeniture) Lable (a bar with several pendant bars across the top of the shield), second born is a crescent, third born is a star, fourth born is a martlet (a bird), fifth born an annulet (a ring), sixth born a fleur de lis, seventh born a rose, eighth born a cross moline, ninth born an octofoil. A bastard bears the paternal arms with a bar sinister.

In the South Coast, both cadency and bastardy are marked by differencing the arms, either by an alteration to the colour of the field, or the charge, or by differencing by a border, or a slight differencing of the charge itself, or quartering . This can lead to riot of colour differences in a single family, but anyone familiar with the system can readily point out large numbers of related persons, not only children, but cousins and distant kin.

To give an example of the system, we will look to the royal family of Diemed, to see how the system works. The arms of Diem (and thus Diemed) itself are listed above, the white lion rampant-guardant, on a divided per fess shield, of murray over light blue.

The Prince of Diemed himself displays the arms of his lordships, indicating which titles he carries, and so his shield is divided quarterly, in the first and fourth quarter (as you look at the shield, the top left and bottom right quarter) are the arms of Diem, as described above. In the top right quarter (the second quarter) is the arms of Seaward, which is Or (yellow) a seadrake Vert (green), armed and langued gules (red). In the third quarter is the arms of Ghieste – Or, a sable eagle displayed (black eagle with the wings spread). Since he is now an Imperial Prince (as a reward for service to the empire, as well as his belonging to the imperial family through marriage), an escutcheon (shield) is painted in the dead center of his shield, bearing the imperial arms.

The Princess Shannon (Avan) Diem bears the arms of Diem (her husband) quartered with the arms of Avanil, with an imperial escutcheon in the center of her shield.

The Heir, Riegan Diem - coincidentally the eldest son, is similar to his fathers, with two differences.. Since the county of Seaward reverts to Avanil when the current prince dies, his arms are quarterly Diemed and Ghieste. He also bears the Imperial escutcheon centrally, and he bears a lable argent, marking him as the heir. On occasion, his arms are displayed as Diem, with a lable Or, bearing the eagle of Ghieste on each pendant, with the imperial escutcheon in the center of the shield.

Melisande Diem – eldest daughter. Feeling close to her parents, she displays Diem and Avan quarterly – her difference is her white lion is fauchéed (as the second child). When she marries, she will bear her husbands arms in the first and fourth quarter, and her arms in the second and third. Yes, a quarter of a shield can be quartered.

Bran Diem (Second son), Or (yellow), a Lion rampant-guardant fauchéed sable, launged and armed gules, a border treasure-fleury, counter – fleury sable. (so he has differenced by changing the colour of the shield, the colour of the lion, forking the lions tail (a reference to being the second son), removing the division of the shield making it one ground, and adding a border. It is very different from his father and brothers and sisters, but clearly related to them.

Tieghan Dieme (Second daughter) azure (the lighter royal blue), lioncelles argent, rampant-guardant powdered. (little lions in rows across her shield, like the stars on the American flag.)

Shannen Diem (Third daughter) Murray, a lion rampant-guardant and winged argent (white).

Bayard Diem (third son) Party-per fess, gules and argent, a lion rampant-guardant party-per fess argent and gules.

The differencing undertaken by cadet offspring is largely based on the taste of the parents and children, save once the arms are granted they are permanent. Their offspring then bear their arms, with further differencing for their children as they have them.

The Role of Heralds

Heralds in Anuire fulfill several important roles. Firstly, they record and track the coats of arms of all armetigious families in at least the country they are responsible for, as well as closely neighboring countries. Secondly, they record the deeds of arms of armetigious persons within their purview, thirdly, they issue grants of arms, usually at their sovereigns' command to worthy persons or municipalities or institutions. Fourthly, they act as judges at tournaments and organized deeds of arms, or judicial combats. Fifthly, they act as messengers for their sovereigns, usually to other rules. In all instances, their persons are inviolate, and they are treated with respect by commoners and nobility alike. In essence they are the genealogists, historians, and publicists for the noble classes.

As a general rule, any landed secular regent will have a herald (ecclesiastical regents use priests or monks as messengers – equally inviolate to all civilized peoples). Some countries are large enough to have ‘colleges’ of heralds – the Imperial college itself is the leading example, with heralds for the Heartlands, West Coast, North, South Coast, and Eastern Marches – led by the Imperial herald for The City – Red Eagle herald. Each herald is generally assisted by two to four lower ranking heralds called pursuivants, who aid them with their record keeping, and in bearing messages. Each Imperial herald is aided by four pursuivants, given the size of the territories they are responsible for. An example of a non-imperial college of Heralds would be Diemed, which has a herald for each large territory under the prince – White Lion Herald (Diemed Major), Black Eagle herald (Ghieste), Crescent herald (District of Medore), Seadrake Herald (Seaward and Diemed Outre-mare), each assisted by two pursuivants. In addition, some important vassal regents have heralds themselves, such as Greenmantle Herald (Endier).

Regents sending messages by recognized heralds or pursuivants automatically receive a +1 reaction bonus, and additionally, their message will always get to the intended recipient, unless waylaid by ruthless monsters or awghnseghlin (even intelligent monsters living in close proximity to civilization might honour to some degree the heralds’ status, at least allowing them to live.). It is customary for Anuirean regents to reward heralds, regardless of whether the news they bear is good or ill – after all, the heralds will certainly record for posterity if they are poorly treated by a regent. The herald has taken over the role largely held by the tribal bards, although bardic skills are still cultivated in Anuire, although primarily recorders of legends and singers of histories at this point they are still inviolate by custom, since nobody wants to have a satirical song written about them and performed publicly.

Knighly Feats of Arms

This section is dedicated to the memory of Patri Puglasi, who got me on track in Western European martial arts in '94. *Requisat in Pace.*

*“If tongues were as sharp as swords, the dead would be without number”
- Phillipio Vadi, 15th century*

To add flavour to the campaign, and to impress upon players the prowess of Anuirean knights, we have come up with a list of feats for several schools of swordsmanship, each based on known historic schools of martial arts in Medieval Europe. Having read various “feats” in the 3.5 AD&D rules, and finding most of them ranging from the sublimely ridiculous to the outright laughable, and being singularly unimpressed with the strong influence of Animie on the current rule-sets (like “greatswords” weighing more than 30 lbs, with a silhouette of an ironing-board appearing streamlined in comparison), the

author of this supplement has decided to interject a little martial-arts sanity into this campaign at least.

The author has been a student of Western European martial arts for over a decade, and has handled a number of real swords, from 12th century broadswords to 19th century cavalry sabers, and owns several antiques, and quality reproductions of antiques, and has practiced using them both on foot and on horseback, and has been involved in the community of Western Martial arts for a while, reading and translating, and practising/reconstructing method, from I :33 (the earliest European Manual, from the early 14th century), to Talhoffer, Ringneck, Fiore de Liberi, and Phillippo Vadi, so I have some reasonable idea of what can be done, and what was done historically.

This list of feats does not replace the Palladium combat system we use as house rules in our campaign, it is merely added as special attacks that can be tried (if one is a student of the requisite school, with the necessary levels of skill). The list is by no means exhaustive, nor is it a means of accurately recreating historical martial arts in a D20 game system (if you are a purist, and want to do that, make up your own exacting rules) – we have added this list of feats merely for flavour, and to give an idea of what Anuirean knights would be capable of. Not every NPC should use these, only important NPC's that would realistically have them. There are two broadly used Anuirean schools of martial arts – the Northern, and the Southern – we based the Northern tradition broadly on the Historical German tradition, and the Southern broadly on the Italian schools. I sincerely hope they add a little zest to personal combat in game for those who chose to use these. The schools are divided into 4 categories of feats – common, uncommon, horsemanship, and hidden feats. The basic or common feats may be picked up by an observant character, but unless a character chooses to follow a school as a student, they can never learn any other feats in that school. People who try to follow both major schools can never advance beyond one or two uncommon feats in either, as following different schools is confusing for the student (and as somebody who has learned a little of both German and Italian late medieval swordsmanship, I can attest to this). To learn the bulk of feats of a school, one must be a dedicated student of that school.

A student of first to third level learns all the basic feats, and can employ them at will during their combat melees. Uncommon feats are collected from the fifth level up – two at fifth, then a feat a level. At seventh level, the student can gain a hidden feat, and then another at ninth. If the student and master don't get along well, they will never learn a hidden feat, and if a master has reason to doubt the students' integrity, they will never learn one either. The horsemanship feats are automatically gained at fifth level, so long as the student has horsemanship, knight as a skill.

The Northern Anuirean School

This form of swordsmanship originated in Boeruine, and is popular throughout Boeruine, Talinie, Taeghas and Dhoesone. It is also found outside of Anuire in Rhormach and other Brecht lands. This school of martial arts is very fast and aggressive in style of swordplay

and axe play. Unlike other Anuirean schools of sword play, wrestling from the ground is not discouraged.

In all Anuirean schools of swordsmanship there are four kinds of feats – common, uncommon, horsemanship and hidden feats. In the last case, the master reserves this knowledge from himself and only his very best and most responsible students. After all, these might save your life in a desperate situation, and the master does not wish a hidden feat to be used against him, so these are passed on very selectively.

While other Anuirean schools of knightly swordsmanship exist (the Southern school, and a couple of bastard schools), the Northern School is the most readily available to a student with the money to pay to learn, a non-knightly student will only be taught the common feats, and no more than two uncommon ones – masters reserving the better techniques for noble students. Schools of sword and buckler exist for commoners, and some other ‘bastard’ schools of swordsmanship, but these will be covered in a later supplement.

Common Feats of the Northern School

Quick Attack – Any student of this school has been taught that a swift attack is the best defense. Student has +1 to initiative rolls

Wrath Blow- (These and the other feats must be declared as attacks) One of the most characteristic attacks of the school. A powerful stroke delivered from above the head – either one or two handed. The blow adds 1 d 6 to damage. Its disadvantage is that if it is attempted more than once a melee round, the swordsman is at a -3 to defend from an opponents counter attack. A wrath blow that is a critical hit is a helmet splitter – with usually disastrous results for the head wearing the helmet. If it strikes a magiced helmet that would be impenetrable, the wearer must still save vs. coma from the critical strike.

Blow of Death - This is a quick and unexpected blow delivered from over the wielder’s head, made with the cross and pommel of the wielders sword, the wielder grasping the sword blade with both hands (it often is delivered out of a parry of a wrath-blow.) A successful blow stuns the opponent, and if he is wearing a helmet, knocks it askew – temporarily blinding him. The swordsman then gets a free attack with the opponent defending as if blind. This blow cannot be accomplished with an axe, but only a sword, and a bastard sword or sword of war at that. This blow coming from a sword is a surprise, after all, and it is no surprise to be axed with an axe.

Uncommon Feats

Attack From the Parry – The fluid in-round method of attack and parry in the Northern Schools allows an accomplished student to launch an attack immediately while parrying, as an extension of the parry. If the feat is used, the defender’s parry roll is applied immediately as an attack roll as well (it doesn’t matter if the student’s parry is a fail, or

how low the roll is – if it is low, it is just a poor attack). This represents a student's improving footwork and increasing knowledge of his form of martial art. The technique works with an axe as well as a sword.

Stop cut or thrust - If the swordsman loses his initiative roll, he can roll a second initiative roll as his opponent attacks (this is against his opponent's first initiative roll). If he wins the second roll, he can make a weak cut or thrust to throw off his opponent's attack. If it successfully strikes, his opponent's attack is stopped, and if the attack is higher than his opponent's AR (armour rating), the stop cut/thrust strikes his opponent with $\frac{1}{2}$ damage.

Bind and Throw – When using an axe, longsword, or bastard sword two-handed, the swordsman can bind his opponent's blade on a successful parry. Like all feats, the swordsman must first declare he is trying the feat. If the bind is successful, the swordsman can use his leverage and his opponent's momentum to throw him. If the feat succeeds by 5 points or less, the throw is away from the swordsman, but the defender retains his feet and weapon, but he is in a position where the swordsman gets a free attack on the defender. If the defender fails by more than 5 points, he is thrown to the ground, and if by more than 10, or a critical failure, he is additionally disarmed. If the swordsman fails the feat, the swords are bound and his opponent may try a counter-feat.

Bind and Disarm – Similar to the above, but if the feat succeeds, the opponent loses his weapon, but is not thrown.

Bind and Dislocate/Break – With this feat the swordsman steps behind his opponent once blades are winded/bound, and uses his leverage to push up on the elbow of his opponent's sword arm. The only save from this feat is for the victim to let go of his sword and straighten his arm, giving the swordsman a free attack. If the victim does not think of this solution, his shoulder is dislocated and with an additional successful attack from the swordsman is thrown to the ground. Any competent swordsman (3rd level or higher) can think of this solution on an IQ roll. Regardless of the competence of the victim, if the swordsman succeeds critically (17 or better), and beats his victim's roll the dislocation and throw to the ground is automatic.

Horsemanship Feats

The Over the Saddle Throw – The swordsman rides alongside (from behind is best) his victim, takes his foot next to the victim out of the stirrup, and places it under his victim's stirrup foot. On a successful roll he lifts his leg, unbalancing his opponent, and gives a small push, and his victim is suddenly unhorsed. (d6 damage)

The Rein Seize - The swordsman rides alongside (from behind) his victim, wrests his reins from his hands, and spurs forward, and spurs forward capturing his victim by pulling his victim's horse's reins over the horse's head.

The Horse Trip – This can be dangerous to the victims horse (which can be a valuable prize, so most people don't want to kill them), but it can be executed from before or behind when approaching the victim. The swordsman uses his lance, inserting it in-between his victims' forelegs, bringing the horse and rider down hard if successful (d 10 to both). Horse must roll a save not to break a leg.

The Set Aside the Thrust and Counter-Thrust – The swordsman holds his lance across his saddles pommel dropping to the left. He meets the charge by lifting his lance, setting aside his opponents lance, and counter-thrusts.

The Two-Handed Blow – Horsemanship, Knight, 5th level as a minimum. This is a wrath-blow given from horseback.

Hidden Feats

The Pinned Mans Throw – Pinned on your back, with your opponent aside you? Master this throw and the situation is reversed. Only available to chosen students (usually lords) 7th level or higher.

Disarm the Deathblow – The swordsman parrying the deathblow traps his opponent's cross-guard with his, and wrenches his victims sword from his hands. The feat deposits the sword a ways out of reach, giving the swordsman a free attack.

Disarm and Thrust to the Armpit – The swordsman sets aside his opponent's thrust with his gauntleted hand, then counter-thrusts to the armpit. This move is automatically a critical hit if the feat is successful.

The Southern Anuirean School

One of the easiest observable differences between the Southern and Northern Anuirean schools is this – if the Northern Anuirean School appears to be a whirling scythe of death, beating down and through opposition, the Southern School is conservation of motion. To the casual observer, it seems the Southern School is primarily defensive, and the Northern offensive, but this is an incorrect impression. The master of the Southern School appears to glide gracefully through combat, proudly upright – one does not injudiciously extend an arm or sword, for each time you do so, you give your enemy a handle and a lever to use against you. As the master glides through combat and avoids a blow, the counter comes and cuts unexpectedly and with speed. Footwork is considered all-important (indeed, dancing is a prerequisite skill to be a student of the school), for if the combatant is stable, he will be difficult to overthrow.

Another great difference visually is that the sword is almost never extended over the head – the wrath blow so distinctive of the Northern Schools is considered unnecessary and wasteful of energy, and even dangerous for the wielder. The sword instead rests against the shoulder in a high ward, and enough force can be imparted from such a blow – especially two-handed, to sever an unarmoured, or lightly armoured limb, or to split open

a skull. The school is also characterized by grappling, even in combat with a sword (“Because I bring a sword to a field, you must not assume it is my only weapon...” Armand de Moriel, 549 MR), and it’s throws, but wrestling from the ground is considered to be too dangerous to undertake. There is also a great tradition of using improvised weapons when attacked unexpectedly or disarmed – the deadly glove or hood, for instance. The spear takes the place of honour the axe holds in the Northern School.

Common Feats

The Masters of this school will not teach non-nobles or people they consider too be of low character, such as the dissolute, or those of evil disposition. They teach high lords and the knights of their household. Some of these skills are passed on by these knights to their squires and households, but usually only the common feats are available by careful observation by outsiders. The Hidden Feats are reserved for extraordinary students and the masters themselves – no master wants to find himself facing one of his hidden feats in a life-or-death situation unexpectedly. The common people of the region have sword and buckler schools with their own feats available. These will be covered in a later supplement.

To be where the blade is not – The student is able to do a slight side-step to avoid an opponents’ blade, without parrying. This gives the student the benefit of a dodge without the disadvantage of one. If the displacement is 5 points or better than the opponents attack, the student attacks with a +1 advantage from his new position in his counterattack.

The displace and throw – With this technique, the student displaces and steps into the attacker – if the attacker fails critically, he is thrown to the ground with a hip-throw by the swordsman. If the student fails critically, he is the one thrown. Anyone thrown is at a -2 to defend themselves until they regain their feet. Regaining ones feet takes an action.

Strike them in their place of pain - With this technique the student, from a defensive posture unexpectedly strikes their opponent in a particularly vulnerable spot with his swords hilt and pommel – the nose if undefended, the bundle of nerves under the armpit, the sternum if unarmoured, and even the crotch or the knee. If the attack is successful, the opponent is stunned for an action, and the student gains a free attack.

Uncommon Feats - (Available from 5th level)

The single-hand disarm – If an opponent is wielding a one-handed weapon, and the swordsman successfully displaces towards his opponent, he places his hand behind his opponents pommel, and disarms him by stepping backward and grabbing the hilt, the weapon twisting into his hand when the feat is done correctly (this really works). If the weapon is a dagger, it can immediately be used in an overhand attack against his opponent.

The bind and throw – When two swords are winded or bound (when using the swords half-swording with both hands, one on the blade), the swordsman may grip his opponents' blade quickly and step into the opponent, and hip throw them. The opponent loses his weapon if the move is successful, and he is at a -2 to defend until he gets to his feet (1 action).

The counter-attack from the parry – The Southern Schools wards and counters are all equally offensive or defensive, so the swordsman can successfully parry by moving from one ward into another, then counterattack immediately with a thrust or cut. If the move is successful, it does a ½ damage hit to the opponent (assuming AR penetration occurs), and if it is critically successful, the attack does full damage.

The spear-bind disarm – The swordsman binds spears with his opponent, seizes the opponents spear, and utilizing his opponent disarms. If the attack is critically successful, he adds insult to injury by either stabbing his opponent with his own spear, or clubbing him with the butt end of it.

Though I appear unarmed, I am not - The swordsman, when attacked without his sword is able to use unlikely objects as improvised weapons. For instance, the swordsman's gloves or hood can be taken in both hands, and used to bind an opponent's weapon arm, or to bind and throw, or even strangle. Solid objects like batons, sticks, or canes become parrying weapons and clubs to strike the opponents 'places of pain'. a very useful feat to have, since everybody does not go about armed and in armour every hour of the day. This skill, combined with 'strike them in their place of pain' is sometimes taught to non-combatant women of royal households of the South Coast for self-defense.

Defend from attacks from behind – The swordsman has become aware, through use of his previously learned skills and peripheral vision, gains a sense of awareness of attackers around him. Note that this skill does not work when such an attack comes unexpectedly – it only works when the swordsman is already engaged in a combat melee. It allows him to displace himself from an attack from behind without penalty. This skill is a prerequisite for the Hidden Feat “Though I am attacked by three men on horseback, and three men on foot, yet shall I overthrow them all”.

I fear no attack from mounted man when on foot – The swordsman has learned to displace himself with enough speed to evade the charge of a mounted man (but tough luck to him anyway if he is by himself, and being ridden down by a mounted unit of more than 6 horsemen acting in unison – no way exists to evade that, if he stands his ground.) He can either attack with lethal intent with his sword or spear as the horseman passes, or if he wishes to capture his mounted foe, he strikes him in a 'place of pain' with the butt or haft of his spear – either in the throat, armpit or sternum (the horseman's groin is covered by the war-saddle). The sheer momentum of the horseman guarantees he will be dismounted and stunned for 1 d 4 rounds (and take a d 8 subdual damage) if the attack is successful. This is a prerequisite skill for the hidden feat “Three and three” mentioned above.

Horsemanship Feats

Although you are behind me, and chase after, yet still may I strike you – This neat little trick is a counter to many of the horsemanship feats begun by riding up alongside from behind. The swordsman has his lance resting on his right shoulder, angles it backward, and thrusts at his opponent. If it is successful, it does an extra d 6 of damage due to the impetus of the opponent riding up fast.

Where the head goes, the body must follow – This is particularly unpleasant for the rider, but usually not too hard, or at least not usually lethal to the horse, and it can be done going toward an opponent, or coming up from behind. The swordsman must get close – nearly “collision close”, and the horses must both be moving. The swordsman leans down out of his saddle, and puts his arm under his opponents’ horses head, grabbing the bars of the bit on the opposite side. The swordsman then sits back in his saddle, tugging hard and fast, and then letting go in a hurry. If the horses are moving at any speed faster than a walk, the horse falls heavily on its’ side and on its’ rider, doing 2 d 10 blunt trauma to the rider. If the swordsman fails, he dismounts himself—*hard*, doing 1d6 damage to himself if he is riding up alongside or 2d10 if he is riding toward his opponent, in trampling damage as he is ridden over by his intended victim. A character with a strength of 17 or greater can do the horse throw with both horses at a halt, with 1 d 10 damage to the victim from being suddenly pinned by his horse.

This feat also works on the helmeted head of a rider or a man on foot, merely being a variant throw. it is a +1 to success if the victim is wearing a visored helmet with the visor open (these make a great handle to grab). Obviously the swordsman and victim must be of a similar size for the leverage to work – a dwarf for instance, could not pull the feat on an ogre, nor a goblin on a human, but a bigger person can of course do it to a smaller one.

The horse becomes a wall – This trick (used historically by everyone from the Hungarians to the Indians, to Ulysses S. Grant during the war with Mexico) has the rider put his weight onto one stirrup, grab their horses neck with their off hand, and the cantle of their saddle with the other foot, and hangs on the horses side – usually going at a canter or a gallop. The rider is sheltering behind his horse.

The method had been simultaneously been developed independently in Diemed, for mounted scouts dealing with bow-armed worg-riders, and in the Khinasi lands as well, for dealing with each other. The trick is centuries if not millennia old, and gives the rider 75% cover. A rider failing their roll, and falling takes 1d6 damage from a hard fall.

Hidden Feats

I disarm you and throw you on your face unexpectedly - This is a disarm with sword or spear, requiring both of the swordsman’s hands. The disarm itself is straight-forward, the tough part is the throw. The swordsman steps forward and to the side of his opponent as he disarms him, and quickly, dropping down and pivoting in place, catches his opponent swiftly behind the knee, and forcefully yanking while rising up. The maneuver

requires at least a physical prowess (dexterity) of 16 to work properly, but if successfully executed, the blow of his opponent hitting the ground face first stuns him – a critical fail for the opponent knocks him unconscious.

Though I am set upon by three men on horseback and three on foot, yet I shall overthrow them all – This is really a culmination of technique – the swordsman having become skilled enough to fight off more than two or three men, a mix of horsemen and footmen, being attacked from multiple (or all) sides simultaneously. If the feat succeeds, the swordsman manages to have one of his opponents critically strike one of his fellows as the swordsman displaces himself, while the swordsman strikes down another man, thereby evening the odds. The fight continues normally from this point, with other feats being employed by the master.

Feats of Arms of the Heartlands (Avanil, Alamie, Dhalaene)

These knights will not fight on foot unless storming a fortification, participating in a siege, or in defending a fortress' walls. Thus they have no special feats of arms for fighting on foot, but use the standard skill hand to hand knight, which is formidable in itself. They do have some special feats for mounted combat, and combat in general. They will not, however, wrestle on foot, or throw to the ground an opponent on foot, as grubbing around on the ground is only fit for a peasant. The following is a short list of feats appropriate for heartland knights.

Fight with fury – On a d 20 roll of 10 or better, the knight will fight savagely, inspired by chivalric tales, his families' honourable history, to revenge an insult, by inspiration for his lady-love – whatever is appropriate, He then makes all attack rolls at a +2, all initiative rolls at a +1, and will fight to -10 hit points before collapsing.

Ruormad's Leap – (horsemanship knight, 5th level or better) On a declared successful attack, the heroic knight leaps his horse over the first ranks of leveled spears of an infantry or pike formation, landing in the middle of the second and third ranks, killing several men outright in the leap (if the leap is not successful, the knight and his horse probably come to a spectacularly bloody end – save vs. death for the knight, the horse is a goner, and the knight is violently deposited in the middle of an enemy formation, stunned on the ground, surrounded by armed enemies) The horse must make a save, or be critically wounded, but the horse may attack along with the knight for two free actions before the stunned infantry can respond. If it works, it usually makes a hole in an infantry formation – this is very bad for the infantry, as the knights unit slams into the hole, with spectacular results. The feat is named for the ancient Avanes hero Ruormad, who opened the battle of the pass of fools with just such a maneuver, smashing an Elvin infantry formation with it.

The Conroi is a stone wall – A group of 4 or more knights is required for this feat. They remember their training on a declared feat (roll a 10 or better on a d 20) and ride as close together as humanly possible, as a unified group. They are + 2 to strike a target as a small tactical formation, the entire front of the unit rolls to hit, and the unit uses the best roll rolled for its to hit roll. The unit is +1 on defense roll receiving a charge. This feat cannot be combined with individuals using the fight with fury feat, as those people are fighting as individuals, not as a unit.

Grapple Subdue – On a successful roll, the knight puts his mounted opponent in a headlock, and pummels them silly with the pommel of their sword. Strength 14 or better required.

Bulwark – This gives the knight 75% coverage, the knight utilizing his shield and saddle bow as cover from archery fire or lance-spear thrust.

Additionally, Heartland knights have the following mounted feats from other schools –
The Over the Saddle Throw, The Rein Capture

A Note about Knights and Horses

It is important for anyone wishing to play an Anuirean knight or noble to understand how important horses are to them and their culture, and just how valuable quality horses are. There is an Avanesse saying that the only proper way for a lord and commoners to interact publicly is for the lord to be mounted on horseback, showing his elevated station and placing him symbolically above the common man.

Knights and Noblemen spend a great part of their day on horseback, hunting, traveling, practicing skills at arms or playing games. Six to ten hours a day in the saddle is not at all uncommon, usually on a couple of different horses for different activities. The children of the noble classes begin to learn to ride shortly after they begin to walk.

All horses are comparatively expensive, but the costs of horses suitable for the use of a knight, or a nobleman are on a different scale of cost than horses for common use. For example, a horse suitable for a peasants family to pull a cart or a plough might cost 5-10 crowns, which represents a few months to a half a years earnings at least, but a horse suitable for military use is many times more expensive – not all horses are suitable for the task, and the demand for horses for military horses is high. The cheapest Roundsay suitable for cavalry use (and still not suitable for a knights' use) would be 20-30 crowns – a years wages for a common labourer.

In contrast, the cheapest horse usable for a knight for military purposes is £ for a courser, or £3 for the best roundsay (50 crowns or 30 crowns respectively)., but these represent horses a knight would be ashamed to be seen riding. £50 is more typical for a knights' courser, up to £100, that is, 500 crowns to 1000 crowns – or ½ a gold bar!

A Great Horse or Destrier (this type of horse is a knights' preferred battle-mount) runs about £50 for a cheap one to £250 for one fit for a prince. That latter figure is 1 ½ gold bars, which illustrates nicely why horses of quality are considered to be fit gifts for royalty. One last note on horses – the knights great horse is not a draft horse like a 18 hh Clydesdale or Shire, they are heavy boned, but refined heavy hunters, 15-16 hh. The courser is similar, but a little more refined, and a little faster, but of the same height.

As the players can see, horses are worth serious money in the game, and horses of great quality are looked on as a found treasure even by common soldiers. As a result, even infantrymen are not keen on killing horses unnecessarily, If a couple of infantrymen could manage to capture a stray destrier, it would be like winning a year or twos pay, even after giving their captain and the regent his share.

Horses do get killed in battle, all the time, which is why knights spend the cash to armour them, at least in padded armour if the knight is “poor” , or mail and leather cuirbolli if they have the cash to do so. An infantryman is always going to chose killing a horse and living, over dying for sure in improbable hopes of getting rich grabbing a horse that is trained to attack on command.. Knights most often kill their mounts trying to ride over unshaken infantry formations foolishly. A scenario that is usually costly in horseflesh is when a headstrong or foolish general tries to have a unit of knights' ride over units of formed pikemen backed by archers. Horses also are killed by desperate infantrymen whose unit disintegrates in a rout as knights' are riding them down. The fact remains, however, that horse-killing isn't a primary battlefield tactic in Anuire. A common sight after a battle is to see men trying to coax or catch a cavalry mount of a defeated foe, to get a substantial part of the value of the sale of the mount.

A knight would have at least three horses, even a relatively poor one – a horse to ride into battle, a riding horse for travel, and a pack horse. A knight is in dire straights without at least these. A knight of a little means will have two battle mounts, and a couple of riding mounts as well. A well equipped knight has three battle mounts – they need a string of horses in case of injury, fatigue or illness of one of the horses, not to mention if one of them is killed under a knight in battle. A lord has a stable-full of valuable horseflesh, and most regents have at least a small stud farm. Even if they do not use destriers themselves, well bred horses make valuable diplomatic gifts, as well as excellent rewards for lieutenants and servitors. A regent will always ride to travel about the countryside, unless elderly, sick, or injured. A regent who walked about his realm would be the butt of jokes, or even be despised by his peasants.

Ransom

This has been alluded to several times in this supplement, but not explained. Basically, knights are wealthy – even “poor” ones are wealthy by peasant's standards. This basic fact, combined with the code of chivalry and ancient military custom, has created the lucrative habit of ransoming noble captives captured in battle.

People do not usually try to kill knights in combat, unless in the heat of battle, or in a blood feud between individuals or families. Instead, they try to take knights captive and ransom them, and occasionally their horse and harness back to their families. Thus the knight is worth more alive than dead. Generally a knight is ransomed for $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of their annual income. To demand a full years income is considered a little harsh, and multiple years income demanded (like that of the French king John at Poitiers) is considered unchivalrous, and in bad form. You start to gain a bad reputation if you engage in such avarice.

While most monsters will not engage in the custom, occasionally intelligent and avaricious monsters, like the “civilized” goblins of Thurazor will – although they are likely to eat his horse unless the knight offers a pile of money for it in a hurry. The goblins however, do not understand the subtlety of the custom – they mark it down to human weakness, as they would never pay a ransom for their relatives. They levy what would be considered harsh ransoms, and are likely to send a cut off finger or ear with a seal ring, and a threat of torture to get the knights relations to pay up in a hurry. Being a captive of the goblins is a terrible thing indeed, but still better than ending up in a cooking pot, or in a mine as a slave.

While commoners cannot ransom knights themselves (to try to do so is to engage in *les majestie*), it is customary for their lord to pay them a reward for capturing a knight, usually 10% of the ransom, although some generous lords have gone so far as to in essence split the ransom of a knight with common captors.

Some Final Thoughts on Anuirean Knights

In many fantasy game settings knights don't seem to fit into a campaign very well. This is due to any number of factors, from knights being hokey stereotypes to the fact that the entire thrust of most fantasy games seem to be the common hero working his way up through the world, fighting against evil and collecting treasure. When you look to the AD&D game, and look to the progression of levels and the titles associated with higher levels. It really becomes apparent when looking at the rules regarding the building of strongholds, and attracting followers at higher levels. Becoming a knight or a lord is the crowning achievement of a career, not an integral part of the character or his development in itself.

In Birthright, however, knights are a perfect fit, at least in Anuire. Even in the original games take on the world, knights are inseparable from Anuirean society. Feudalism has been alive and well in Anuire for over a thousand years, and is still going strong. Considering regency is tied to bloodlines and connection to the land directly, representative governments and social revolution is unlikely to be seen any time soon in Cerillia. With magic and miracles retarding technological development, the technology level is likewise to remain stagnant, or nearly so, for a long time to come.

Knights aren't only a perfect fit in Anuire; they are an integral part of the fabric. Playing a landed regent, regardless of a characters class, your servants and important noblemen

are largely knights. Odds are, the regent himself is a knight as well, although possible in name only. Landed regents as a rule are double-classed in Anuire, with their 'occupation' class, and the noble class from the Palladium Fantasy system, especially if they were born into the family of a regent. Anuirean regents who unexpectedly inherit a landed realm, from that point automatically takes the noble sub-class as a second class. They begin at first level, representing their crash-course in learning the required etiquette and skills.

The values of knights are the defining values of the ruling classes in Anuire. Even if your character is a wizard, or a ranger, they have been exposed to these values since their infancy, and at least give it lip-service (heck, smart regents can use these values to manipulate their courts and lieutenants as needed). To be seen and exposed as rejecting these values would get as strong a societal reaction from the populace as if a president of the United States were to suddenly declare himself to be a communist, or a Satan-worshiper. Villains can, however, readily manipulate the accepted societal and cultural values to further their plots, and hide their machinations behind a mask of chivalry.

Good knights and noblemen, and even selfish and evil ones see themselves as protectors of their people. A good knight sees himself as a part of his people, who is duty-bound to protect them. Even selfish and evil ones protect their 'people', the selfish knight seeing them as the source of his income, while the evil one may see them as his property, perhaps on the level of a cow or a sheep, to be used as the evil knight wills, but to be protected as his property nonetheless.

I hope this supplement gives the players some insights into Anuirean society, and gives them useful ideas. At the very least, it should give knight characters some cool feats, and should lend some depth to the game. I had fun writing it, I hope you enjoy reading it.