

Magic-Users

A magic-user may set up his tower in some part of Karamaikos exactly as described in the Expert set. The Duke will make no proclamation about the tower or its resident, and will by and large ignore its existence; the wizard will receive no title and have no subjects (other than his personal followers).

However, there is no reason that a magic-user may not achieve landed nobility in the exact manner that a fighter or other character may. Have him follow the guidelines above for Landed Lordship; he'll be able to accomplish them just as any other character may.

Thieves

A thief can build a Hideout as part of his Guild, exactly as described in the Expert set.

However, he, too, can achieve landed nobility just as all the other characters can.

After all, the thief-character does not come with words written on his forehead: "Thief: Beware." To most people, he's just an adventurer who wears lighter armor and carries lighter weapons. Most people, the Royal Family included, will not know that he's a thief.

He could, therefore, become a landed lord, knight, landed knight, even a baron.

If he is an active member of the Thieves' Guild, it's likely that his allies will want him to use his fief as a base for their operations. Perhaps he'll want to: His fief can double as his Hideout. Perhaps he won't want to: In this case, we have exciting adventures as this character and his new-found respectability must fight to get free of the Thieves' Guild.

CEREMONIES AND Fealty

On the subject of attaining titles of nobility, we have two other things to discuss: Ceremonies of Attainment, and Oaths of Fealty.

CEREMONIES

Each rank of nobility has a ceremony associated with it; when a character is to be raised to a new level of nobility, he must go through the appropriate ceremony.

The **Court Lord**, as you'll recall, is merely summoned before the nobleman who recommended his elevation; the nobleman tells him of the change in his status (or, if it's at a feast or other event, the herald declares it before the assembled multitude); the character is presented with a brilliantly calligraphed scroll signed by the Duke, and he is now a Court Lord.

The **Landed Lord** candidate, having fulfilled all the tasks that the Duke set before him, is summoned before the Duke and Duchess, usually at an important feast or

event. The herald recites the character's successes in his efforts to gain clear title to his fief. The Duke then asks the character if he is now ready to take up the duties of Lord of (the name of the fief) and to exchange oaths of fealty. (What fealty is in Karamaikos we discuss momentarily.) If the character is, the character and Duke exchange their vows. The herald presents the character with a scroll confirming his new position in life; often, the Duke will present the character with a personal gift of great value, usually decorated with the character's coat of arms.

The **Knight** candidate is informed a day ahead of time of the impending ceremony. He spends the whole day in a ceremony of purification called a "vigil;" in a place of his choosing (usually a church), wearing white clothes symbolic of the purity of goal and motive he's supposed to strive for, accompanied only by his weapons and armor, he meditates and fasts for a full day. During this time, he's supposed to reflect on his life so far and decide for himself whether he thinks he can fulfill the obligations of knighthood. Assuming he does, on the following day he is summoned before the Duke and goes through a ceremony similar to that of the Landed Lord—though, of course, no fief is mentioned, for the Knight is not a landed position.

The **Landed Knight** candidate has a ceremony similar to that of both the Knight and Landed Lord. The day before the ceremony, the candidate for landed knighthood goes through his vigil; the next day, he attends a ceremony similar to that of the Landed Lord.

The **Baron** candidate is summoned before the Duke at an important feast, celebration, or other event. The herald reads a document proclaiming that the character's unswerving loyalty, firm rule, and personal greatness have earned him the title of Baron of (name of fief). The new Baron is presented with the scroll confirming his title, plus gifts from the Duke and Duchess and other assembled nobles. Often, the Duke will proclaim two days of celebration to honor the new Baron.

The **Duke** who has just taken the throne assembles all the nobles of his realm, usually in his throne room. The herald reads a scroll written by the new ruler, which proclaims in the Duke's words that he has, by the grace of the Immortals, been given this throne and promises to discharge his duties to the peoples and nobles of Karamaikos with unwavering strength and determination. Then, the head of either the Church of Karamaikos or Church of Traladara (Duke's choice) places the ducal crown on the ruler's head, and he is officially crowned as the new Duke. Again, two days of feast and celebration are generally proclaimed.

Fealty

Fealty in Karamaikos is an oath which defines the relationship between the Duke and his nobles of Landed Lord rank or above.

In the Oath of Fealty, the new noble promises to be loyal to the Duke and Duchess; to support them in times of peace with taxes from his lands, and in times of war with fighting-men, supplies, and his own efforts; to acknowledge the heir to the throne and to swear fealty to that heir when he/she takes the throne; never to conspire against the throne; and to obey the laws of the duchy.

The Duke promises to support the claim of the noble and his heirs to his fief; and to help defend the noble's fief should it be attacked.

If a character is so independent that he does not think he can swear an oath of fealty to the Duke, that's fine . . . but he cannot attain a rank above Court Lordship in Karamaikos.

The Clergy

Clerics, as you've seen, belong to one of a number of churches. Karamaikos has three native faiths, and there are usually visiting clerics from other nations who have their own beliefs.

The churches in Karamaikos have differing philosophies. They are all dedicated to the strengthening of the human spirit through meditation and observation of moral lessons.

Titles in the Church

A quick note on clerical titles:

As we mentioned in the Players' Briefing, most character class titles are not used in Karamaikos campaigns. A few of the clerical titles are, however.

When a character enters the clergy (i.e., starts as a first-level cleric), he is called a novice; this isn't a formal title. When a cleric reaches 3rd Level, the character is judged by the Church to be a full Priest or Priestess. When the cleric reaches 7th level, the character has sufficient knowledge to be promoted to the clerical rank of Bishop. And when the cleric reaches 9th level, he or she is deemed a Patriarch or Matriarch.

The other titles (Acolyte, Adept, Vicar, Curate, Elder, and Lama) are not used. When the character goes from 3rd level to 4th level, he is still called Priest by the Church.

The Church of Karamaikos

These are the beliefs of the Church of Karamaikos:

(1) That the acts of assault, abuse, murder, theft, lying, adultery, and living together without the sanctity of matrimony are sins;

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that these sins stain the spirit of the doer; and that these sins require acts or ceremonies of purification (of severity appropriate to the sin) to cleanse from the spirit;

(2) That an unwillingness on the part of a sinner to purify himself of a sin is itself a sin, punishable by separation from the Church, the eventual result of which is the sinner's spirit becoming too stained ever to be redeemed;

(3) That the individual's role in the afterlife will be determined by the amount of stain his spirit bears at the time of his death;

(4) That it is the responsibility of members of the Church to bring the benefits of Church philosophy to the unbeliever, and to remain present even in hostile lands, so that the benefits of the Church be denied to no one who desires them; and

(5) That magic ritual with no confirmed basis in formal magic use or clerical ritual constitutes ignorant superstition, and therefore the use of lucky charms, tea-readings, palm-readings, card-readings, and so forth are all valueless wastes of time and effort.

Most of those of Thyatian descent in Karameikos are members of the Church of Karameikos; approximately half those of mixed descent are; and many of Traladaran descent have been converted by the church's compelling philosophy of the "unstained spirit." In all, about 25% of the population of Karameikos now belongs to the Church of Karameikos, and this segment of the population includes most of the landed nobles and many other powerful political figures.

Many of the members of the Church, especially converts, don't truly understand the intent of the church's philosophy. This philosophy is that no sin committed in the mortal world is so great that it cannot be purified from the spirit by great acts of self-sacrifice. Many converts, however, consider it a game with rules to be bent—that the church philosophy means they can do *anything* so long as they subject themselves to the deeds of purification recommended by their church leaders after the fact.

You, as the DM, need to know which of your characters are adherents to the Church of Karameikos. Whenever they've committed an act which is questionable under Church doctrine, keep reminding them that they have a nagging guilt about the act and should seek purification from a Church cleric.

A lesser sin—telling a lie, for instance—may require a ceremony of purification no greater than the saying of a few prayers. A moderate sin—beating someone who did not deserve it, for instance—might require a day's vigil and fasting under the watchful eye of a

Church cleric. A greater sin—for instance, murder—may require that the character not only suffer secular punishment (i.e., punishment handed down by the courts) but also perform some great ceremony of purification, such as the character risking his life and fortune in an adventure which the Church thinks would benefit his spirit.

Obviously, this is a grand opportunity for an adventure in which the character has a very personal stake.

Don't forget that the Church of Karameikos can exert great influence over its devout believers. The common church member has a terror of separation from the Church, because it would mean that his spirit grows so stained that he will suffer perpetual grief in the afterlife. Though manipulative clerics are not common, those few who exist can demand some heavy and unusual ceremonies of purification from their followers and often get away with great abuses in this fashion.

The Church of Traladara

These are the beliefs of the Church of Traladara:

(1) That the acts of assault, abuse, murder, theft and lying are sins, brought on by weakness or the intrusion of bad-will from evil or animal spirits;

(2) That the sins described above should be punished, in the manner that parents punish children: Physical punishment, imprisonment, and the withholding of rights (even death, in the case of extreme sinners who endanger others);

(3) That the role of the individual in the afterlife will be determined by the individual's state of wisdom, strength of character, and good-will at the time of his death;

(4) That the relationship of man to woman is a personal matter, not involving the philosophies of the Church unless one of the above sins is involved;

(5) That common magic ritual such as the use of lucky charms, tea-reading, palm-readings, card-readings and so forth are all declarations of man's curiosity about the world and determination to preserve himself from evil, and are often rewarded by the Immortals with the gleaning of facts about the future or nature of the world; and

(6) That the events of "The Song of Halav" are absolutely true; that King Halav, Queen Petra and Zirchev are now Immortals guiding the righteous and punishing the wicked in Traladara/Karameikos; and that the Golden Age of the Traladara will one day return to this land.

The basic philosophy of the Church of Traladara is that people should not harm one an-

other, and that when they do the community should punish the wrongdoer in proportion to the degree of the sin. There isn't much more to their philosophy than that, and so the Church is ideally suited to the cheerful and whimsical Traladarans.

The role of the Traladaran cleric is to provide advice for younger people, based on his own experiences and the examples of behavior given in "The Song of Halav." Traladaran clerics advise the young, perform marriages and officiate at other ceremonies, preach the church philosophies, and promote goodwill. They also fight—to save lives or to defeat evils.

Approximately 70% of the population of Karameikos belongs to the Church of Traladara.

The Cult of Halav

These are the beliefs of the Cult of Halav:

(1) That King Halav, dead on the field of the Final Battle Between Men and Beast-Men, was taken up by the Immortals, returned to life, healed, and placed in the deepest sleep;

(2) That the goal of the Immortals was to return King Halav to Traladara when it was time to restore the nation to the glory it held in its Golden Age; and

(3) That the Immortals have decided that this is that time, and that they sent the spirit of King Halav into the newborn Stefan Karameikos, that he would grow up to be the next King Halav.

The Cult is dedicated to the idea that Stefan Karameikos will make Traladara into a mighty nation once more, will arm it and send its numberless legions out to conquer the world for the glory of Traladara. However, the first goal of the Cult is to persuade everyone (including Duke Stefan) of their cause, and this hasn't been easy to do. This tends to frustrate them, but they're determined.

Despite the fact that most people consider the Halavists to be insane, it's a fact that their clerics do work magic. This means they must be receiving aid and inspiration from some Immortal. So, though most common folk think they're crazy, clerics tend to be very interested in the doings of the Cult.

Only a fraction of the people on Karameikos belong to the Cult.

The Order of the Griffon

The Order of the Griffon is a military order of the Church of Karameikos. Clerics and fighters may be members of the Order.

The Order is a very prestigious society of warriors; its Members are constantly adventuring, going on quests to help the Church, the nation, and the common man. It's held to be