The Gothic Age

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Introduction

Welcome to THE GOTHIC AGE, a role-playing game set in the Holy Roman Empire of the 15th century. The Empire is chaotic and violent. The roads and even the streets of cities are unsafe. Justice is uncertain. Bribery and corruption has tainted the clergy. Nobles struggle for land, power, wealth and influence.

The Game

THE GOTHIC AGE uses a simple 2d6-based engine. All you need to play is a game master, a group of players, two six-sided dice (ideally two for every player and the game master), pens, paper and your imagination.

The Players

You take the role of a band of warriors. Your goal is to survive, become rich and famous, feared and powerful, or maybe just poor but alive.

The Game Master

You run the game, make up the story, play all the non-player characters and decide how the environment reacts to what the players do. More than anybody else at the table, it is your responsibility to ensure everybody has fun.

Character Creation

In GOTHIC AGE, you control a warrior fighting against the darkness that has befallen the Empire - or you embrace it and claim your rightful place in this uncaring world.

Attributes

Roll 1d6 for each of the six attributes in the order shown below. Sixes are re-rolled.

Strength

STR is your physical power. Add it to attack rolls with heavy mêlée weapons.

Constitution

CON is your toughness. Your CON score equals the number of wounds you can take.

Dexterity

DEX shows how nimble-fingered your are. Add it to attack rolls with ranged weapons.

Agility

AGI shows how quick you are. Add it to your initiative rolls and defence.

Intelligence

INT shows how knowledgeable and perceptive you are.

Charisma

CHA is your force of personality and willpower.

Equipment

Roll 1d6 to determine your starting gear. All starting equipment is of low quality.

Table 1: Starting Equipment

1d6	Equipment
1	Bow
2	Long sword
3	Dagger, cuir bouilli
4	Battle axe, leather
5	Pike, leather
6	Short sword, shield

Name, Gender and Appearance

Choose your character's name, gender and physical appearance. They have no mechanical impact on the game - female and male characters are equally capable.

Equipment

You should never travel without weapons and armour. Weapons are not only useful for self-defence, but can help to avoid violent conflicts altogether.

Weapon Traits

Every weapon has one or more traits that make it a little different (but not necessarily better) than other weapons. Because of these differences, consider having more than one weapon on your person at any time.

Anti-cavalry

An anti-cavalry weapon is especially effective against mounted enemies. If used against a horse, you have Advantage on your attack roll.

Defender

A weapon with this well-suited to parry strikes and grants you a +1 bonus to defence roll bonus.

Destructive

Hits by this weapon are especially devastating. The attacker rolls critical hits not only with a roll of two sixes, but also with rolling a five and a six.

Dismount

This weapon is build to lift riders out of the saddle. When hit by such a weapon, a mounted opponent has to make a second defence roll or will be thrown out of the saddle. If the attacker scores a critical hit, the rider is automatically thrown out of the saddle.

Flexible

Chain weapon have this trait. Due to their unique design, they ignore an opponent's shield.

Light

Light weapons can be used with either STR or DEX.

Table 2: Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Traits	Price (Thaler)	Weight
Arbalest	Slow, two-handed	80	3
Axe, hand	Versatile	1	1
Bow	Two-handed	30	1
Crossbow	Slow, two-handed	50	2
Dagger	Versatile	2	0
Gun, brass	Powder, slow	250	1
Gun, iron	Power, slow, two-handed	100	1

Table 3: Mêlée Weapons

Weapon	Traits	Price (Thaler)	Weight
Axe, battle	Destructive, two-handed	20	2
Axe, hand	Versatile	1	1
Dagger	Light, versatile	2	0
Flail, great	Flexible, two-handed	50	2
Flail, military	Flexible	25	1
Halberd	Dismount, reach, two-handed	25	2
Hammer, military	Mounted Combat	25	1
Hammer, war	Destructive, two-handed	60	3
Mace	Destructive	10	1
Pike	Anti-cavalry, reach, two-handed	25	2
Quarterstaff	Nonlethal, defender, two-handed	3	1
Spear	Mounted combat, reach	12	1
Sword, long	Defender	90	1
Sword, short	Light, Versatile	40	1
Sword, Zweihänder	Destructive, two-handed	150	2

Mounted Combat
If you use this weapon on horseback against an opponent on the ground, you have Advantage on your attack roll.

Nonlethal
Anyone who uses this weapon can deal lethal or nonlethal damage at will.

Powder
This weapon is a gun and requires gunpowder to be used.

Reach
Long weapons like polearms have reach and can be used from the second row.

Slow
You have to spend one round reloading this weapon after firing a shot.

Two-handed
You need both hands for this weapon and cannot combien it with a shield.

Versatile
You can use this weapon for both mêlée and ranged combat.

Table 4: Armour				
Armour	Defence Bonus	Max. Agility Bonus	Price (Thaler)	Weight
Brigandine	+3	+1	180	4
Chain	+4	+1	300	4
Cuir bouilli	+2	+2	100	3
Leather	+1	+3	75	3
Plate	+5	-	800	5
Shield	+2	+4	120	2

Armour

Add your armour's defence bonus to your defence. Heavy armour will limit the defence bonus from your AGI.

Shields

When you use a one-handed weapon, you can use a shield in the other. Shields work like armour can likewise be sacrificed to deflect a blow.

Equipment Quality

Not all items have the same quality. Add the quality modifier of your items to your attack and defence rolls. Low equipment quality never reduces your defence or attack roll bonus to a negative value, no matter how low their quality is.

Increase and Decrease of Quality

A piece of equipment that drops below two negative points of quality falls into pieces and cannot be repaired (though the material can sometimes be used to make a completely new item). Equipment drops in quality under certain circumstances; it can damaged in combat or hit by an alchemical substance. Equipment can be repaired. Bringing back a point of quality this way costs about half the item's original price.

Table 5: Equipment Quality		
Quality	Bonus	Price
Rusty or rotten	-2	50%
Low	-1	80%
Average	-	100%
High	+1	200%
Fine	+2	500%
Masterwork	+3	1000%

Increasing the item's quality beyond its original quality costs at least the items original price. Improving weapons and armour is difficult, takes time and can only be done by experienced and talented armourers. As a general rule, non-metal armour is easier to repair than metal armour.

Adventuring

Once everyone has created a player character, the adventure can start. From this point on, the game master and to a certain extend the player have all the power and can determine what happens. You decide what your character does and the game master decides how the non-player characters, monsters and the environment react.

Experience Progression

Over the course of your adventures, you will slay bandits, be bandits, help others or rob others. When the game master decides that it is time for your characters to level up, roll 1d6. This roll determines a random attribute that is increases by one. Use the order of attributes show in the chapter on character creation.

Attribute Checks

When your character tries to do something like climb a wall, sneak past a guard or bargain with a merchant, your game master determines how difficult the task is and what target number it has. Roll 2d6 and add the attribute that fits the situation best. Consult the table below. If your roll is equal to or greater than the target number, the attempt is successful. If not, you failed. A roll of two ons is always a failure. A roll of two sixes is always a success.

Table 6: Attribute Checks

Difficulty of the Task	Target Number
Easy	7
Moderate	9
Hard	11
Very Hard	13
Impossible	15
Legendary	17

Opposed Checks

When two characters (like a thief try to sneak by a guard who is looking for him) try to achieve opposing goals, they make opposed check. Both parties make their roll and the one with the higher result wins. If both results are the same, the situation remains unchanged

Group Checks

A group check is a check made by one character for the entire group. If your especially agile character makes a check to sneak past a guard, assume that he instructs the rest of the group when to move and where to put their feet.

Encumbrance

Every character can carry six plus his STR units of weight. For every additional unit, one point is subtracted from the character's AGI and he suffers appropriate drawbacks. A character's AGI cannot drop below +0, but a character

carrying twice the weight he can haul without suffering penalties cannot move at all. Some items have no designated weight: They are too light and taking their weight into account would just result in additional bookkeeping. That does not mean that character can carry an unlimited number of light items. Be reasonable.

Rest and Healing

When a wounded character has shelter, enough food and drink and eight hours of sleep with no major interruptions, he can heal a wound. The healing check is a DC 5 CON check. If the check is made, the character heals one wound. For each hit point a character has lost, the DC is increased by one.

Combat

Not all conflicts can be solved with words and the moment where steel needs to be drawn will come. In its core, combat consist of nothing more than opposed skill checks: Your ability against that of the enemy.

Combat Rounds
Combat is divided into rounds. Rounds are handled in an abstract manner, but it can be assumed that they last just a couple of seconds. During a round, you can take a number of actions:

Free Action
You have one free action per round. A free actions are used to perform task that only take a small amount of time or can be perform in addition to other tasks. Free actions include drawing a weapon or doing a passive skill check.

Standard Action
You have two standard action per round. A standard action takes a little longer than a free action and can be used to make an active skill check, move further than usual or pick up a weapon.

Full Action
Instead of taking two standard actions, you can also take a full action. A full action is something that takes relatively long, like making an attack, searching for an item in your rucksack or mounting a horse. A full action always includes movement (unless a character does not want to move).

Initiative
The order in which combatants act in a fight is determined by initiative. Everybody rolls 2d6 and adds his AGI. The combatant with the highest result acts first. Combatants with equal initiative roll off against one another to determine who goes first.

Surprise
When one side in a fight surprises another one, initiative is rolled as usual, but everybody on the side that surprised their opponents gets an additional full action. After this surprise round is over, the fight continues as usual.

Combat Actions
Attacking
To attack someone, roll 2d6 and your STR or DEX depending on the weapon you use. The defender rolls 2d6 and adds his AGI and defence bonuses from equipment. If the defender's total value is higher, the attack is not successful. If the attacker's value is higher or if the values are equal, the attack is successful and the defender suffers a wound.

Attacks of Opportunity

Attacks of opportunity are free attacks that do not cost any actions. A combatant can make such an attack when his opponent disengages from mêlée without taking a full action to do so, runs directly past him, uses a ranged attack in mêlée combat or in similar situations.

Blocking Attacks

When a combatant is hit and would suffer a wound, he can decide to block the blow with his armour or shield. If he does so, the combatant does not suffer a wound. However, the defence bonus of the armour or shield will be reduced by one point.

Damaging Armour

Instead of dealing a wound, you can also damage the opponents armour or shield with a successful attack. If you dos so, the defence bonus of the armour is reduces by one. If it is reduced to nought, the armour crumbles and becomes unusable.

Disengaging

When you take a full action to disengage from mêlée combat, you can do so without repercussion. Disengaging with a standard action provokes an attack of opportunity.

Grab

To grab an opponent, make an unarmed attack. If the attack is successful, you grab your opponent and he is *incapacitated*. Once per round, the victim can try to break free by making an unarmed attack himself. If the attack is successful, the opponent breaks free. This attack is made as an opposed attack against another unarmed attack of yours.

Superior Numbers

If a combatant is engaged in mêlée combat by more than one opponent, his opponents receive a +1 bonus to their attack rolls for every attacker in the front row after the second.

Unarmed Combat

Unarmed attacks work like attacks made with weapons. Apply your STR to the attack roll. An unarmed attack (which represents a kick or hit with a fist) deals a nonlethal point of damage. When the opponent has a weapons, he can make an attack of opportunity after the unarmed attack. The rules for unarmed attacks do not apply toanimals that use a natural weapon, like a horn or a bite. Those attacks deal actual wounds.

Movement and Distances

Movement and distances in THE GOTHIC AGE are handled in an abstract manner. Generally, characters who take a standard action to move advance further than those who take a full action and move. Those who take both their standard actions to move more even further. The game master decides whether or not you can reach a destination in your turn or if a ranged weapon can reach its target.

Critical Rolls

When you roll two sixes with an attack roll, you scored a critical hit. A critical hit automatically hits. If the attack is a mêlée attack, roll 2d6 to see what addition effect the attack has:

Table 7: Critical Hit

2d6	Effect on the Defender
2	Suffers an additional wound
3	Armour is destroyed
4	*Sickened* for 1d6 rounds
5	*Blinded* for 1d6 rounds
6	Weapon loses a quality point
7	Armour loses a quality point
8	Shield loses a quality point
9	*Incapacitated* for 1d6 rounds
10	Shield is destroyed
11	Weapon is destroyed
12	Opponent is slain outright

If a critical hit affects the opponent's weapon even though he does not have one, his shield is hit instead. If he does not have shield either, the armour is hit. If the enemy has either weapon, shield nor armour or is an animal or other creature that does not use equipment, the attack simply deals an additional wound.

A critical fumble happens when the attacker rolls two ones. Analogous two a critical hit, the attack automatically misses. Roll 2d6 to see what other effect the fumble has on him:

Table 8: Critical Fumble

2d6	Effect on the Attacker
2	Weapon destroyed
3	Weapon loses a quality point
4	Fails next defence roll
5	*Sickened* for 1d6 rounds
6	Falls *prone*
7	Weapon dropped
8	Wounds nearby ally
9	*Blinded* for 1d6 rounds
10	Suffers an attack of opportunity
11	Shield loses a quality point
12	Suffers a wound

If you hit a nearby ally, the ally is determined randomly. Bystander and neutral combatants count as allies for the purpose of fumbling. If no other ally is nearby that could be hit, you drop your weapon instead.

If the defender rolls two sixes, he automatically blocks the attack. If he fumbles, the attacker automatically hits.

Damage and Death

You have three hit points (HP) plus one for every point of CON. Hit points are an abstract representation of the ability of a your character to avoid being killed. When you have no hit points left, roll a DC 9 CON check. If you are successful, you are left with no hit points and will stay unconscious until you recover at least one hit point. If you fail your check, you die. If an unconscious character with no hit points is successfully attacked, he dies.

Nonlethal Damage

Most weapons and hazards deal actual wounds. Some of them (like the quarterstaff) can also deal nonlethal damage. Nonlethal damage can take a character out, but will not kill him by itself. If nonlethal and actual damage combined reduce a character to nought hit points, he falls unconscious. If the lethal damage alone reduces him to nought hit points, the character has accidentally been killed. Weapon that cannot deal nonlethal damage at will accidentally cause a wound half the time. Thrusting or piercing weapons like a spear or a longbow are not suitable for dealing nonlethal damage.

Status Effects

Some abilities, items or attacks cause a status effect. Most of these hinder player character and monsters in one way or another. Status effects can stack. If they cannot be combined, the most severe one applies.

Blinded

A *blinded* creature cannot see can cannot use abilities based on sight. It makes attack and defence rolls with Disadvantage.

Frightened

A *frightened* creatures has Disadvantage on all checks while exposed to the source of its fear and cannot move closer to it willingly.

Incapacitated

An *incapacitated* creature cannot take actions with the exception of defence rolls. In addition to that, it automatically fails checks based on STR, DEX and AGI with the exception of attack rolls made to break free from being grappled.

Paralysed

A paralysed creature is *incapacitated* and additionally cannot make defence rolls.

Bestiary

On your journeys, you will encounter some friends and even more foes. This chapter contains a couple of sample adversaries that can be used as a basis to create more foes.

Enemy **hit points** work just like hit points for player character. However, enemies die when they run out of hit points. The **mêlée** and **ranged** values are the enemy's bonuses to mêlée and ranged attacks. Likewise, **defence** is added to defence rolls. **Armour** indicates how much an enemy's defence bonus can be dropped by damaging its armour. **Skill** is added to non-combat rolls and is a general indicator how competent an enemy is. Lastly, there are the **items** which an enemy often carries. Some enemies also have **talent**s which allow them to make special moves or garnt them certain bonuses.

Archer

Hit Points:	2	Skill:	3
Mêlée:	2	Ranged:	3
Defence:	3	Armour:	2

Items: Bow, short sword, cuir bouilli

Marksman: The archer can use ranged weapons in mêlée combat without suffering a penalty.

Quick Shot: The archer uses his bow twice and will be automatically hit by the next mêlée attack. Usable once.

Archers are experts with the bow or other ranged weapons. The bow has a higher rate of fire, but requires significantly more training than the crossbow.

Bandit

Hit Points:	1	Skill:	2
Mêlée:	2	Ranged:	1
Defence:	2	Armour:	2

Items: Short sword, leather armour

Bandits are criminals that waylay merchants and other travellers. Many of them did not chose to live as a bandit but were driven into banditry by pauperisation.

Bandit Leader

Hit Points:	2	Skill:	4
Mêlée:	3	Ranged:	1
Defence:	3	Armour:	2

Items: Longsword, leather armour

Leader's Spirit: All of the leader's underlings receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls and saves as long as their leader is present.

Groups of bandits are often lead by the most charismatic member – or the most ruthless one. Leaders are essentials for keeping bandit gangs together.

Brigand

Hit Points:	2	Skill:	2
Mêlée:	3	Ranged:	2
Defence:	3	Armour:	2

Items: Mace, bow, cuir bouilli

Dazing Strike: The opponent is *dazed* for one round (DC 9 DEX check negates). Usable once.

Brigands are organized in gangs and live by pillage and robbery. More competent than the average cutthroat, brigands are feared by travellers all over the country.

Brigand Captain

Hit Points:	3	Skill:	4
Mêlée:	3	Ranged:	2
Defence:	3	Armour:	2

Items: Longsword, cuir bouilli, shield

Leader's Spirit: All of the captain's underlings receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls as long as their captain is present.

Vengeful Strike: When bloodied first, the captain attacks the offender with a +2 attack roll and damage bonus.

The leaders of brigand gangs are usually led by the strongest and most experienced member. Brigands expect their leaders to fight in first row.

Commoner

Hit Points:	1	Skill:	2
Mêlée:	1	Ranged:	-
Defence:	-	Armour:	-

Items: Pitchfork

Commoners are not made for combat. They might defend themselves when there is no way to escape, but everything more serious than a tavern brawl will probably just terrify them.

Guard

Hit Points:	2	Skill:	3
Mêlée:	3	Ranged:	2
Defence:	3	Armour:	2

Items: Halberd, light crossbow, brigandine

Formation: While next to at least one other guards, the guard receives a +1 defence bonus.

City guards are better trained and better equipped than the average goon, but are no match for an experienced soldier. They are law enforcement first and fighters second.

Huntsman

Hit Points:	1	Skill:	4
Mêlée:	1	Ranged:	2
Defence:	2	Armour:	-

Items: Bow

Hunters are trained to kill animals, not humans. Due to their training in archery, they are often gathered in special units in times of war.

Knight

Hit Points:	7	Skill:	5
Mêlée:	5	Ranged:	3
Defence:	5	Armour:	2

Items: Longsword, spear, plate armour, shield

Mounted Warrior: The knight receives a +2 attack bonus while fighting from horse back.

Battle Fury: When reduced to two hit points or less, the knight answers every successful attack against him with a free attack of his own.

While knights no longer dominate the battlefield like they did in days past, they are still formidable fighters dangerous on horseback and in single combat.

Landsknecht

Hit Points:	5	Skill:	4
Mêlée:	4	Ranged:	2
Defence:	4	Armour:	2

Items: Pike, brigandine

Pike Master: The Landsknecht has a +2 attack roll bonus against mounted defenders.

Pike Square: When adjusted to at least two other Landsknechte, the Landsknecht has a +1 defence roll bonus.

Landsknechte are mercenaries with a formidable reputation. Fear by common troops, the Landsknechte are known for their use of progressive military tactics.

Landsknecht Elite

Hit Points:	6	Skill:	5
Mêlée:	5	Ranged:	2
Defence:	4	Armour:	1

Items: Zweihänder, chain armour

Crusher: The Landsknecht additionally deals critical hits on any combined roll of three or four.

Some Landsknechte carry the much-dreaded two-handed swords. Rumours says that they

Mercenary

Hit Points:	3	Skill:	3
Mêlée:	3	Ranged:	1
Defence:	4	Armour:	3

Items: Great flail, brigandine, shield

Battle Rage: When he has two wounds, the mercenary gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

Chain Weapon: While using his flail, the mercenary ignores shields.

Mercenaries fight for money and not out of loyalty or because they have been conscripted. Whether that is a disadvantage or not depends on their employee.

Robber Baron

Hit Points:	7	Skill:	5
Mêlée:	5	Ranged:	3
Defence:	5	Armour:	3

Items: Longsword, spear, chain armour, shield

Sword Master: The robber baron makes two attack per round.

Knighthood is in decline. Well-organised bands of soldiers have reduced the military value of knights and more than one noble has started to break the law to survive.

Soldier

Hit Points:	4	Skill:	4
Mêlée:	4	Ranged:	2
Defence:	4	Armour:	2

Items: Pike, chain armour

Formation: When at least three soldiers are next to one another, they all gain a +1 bonus to attack and defence rolls.

Soldiers are troops loyal to a ruler (or sometimes rather to their commander). They are subjects of a noble temporarily employed for a military campaign, but their training and equipment makes them a little more formidable than the average henchman.

Thug

Hit Points:	2	Skill:	2
Mêlée:	2	Ranged:	-
Defence:	2	Armour:	-

Items: Dagger

More organised and ruthless than the average troublemaker, common thugs are a threat in larger numbers.