

Advanced Player's Guide

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Symbaroum



FREE LEAGUE

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The act of creation

IN THE WORLD OF SYMBAROUM people talk about the three primal forces Wyrhta, Wiolda and Wratha; we were affected by them all as we finalized the Swedish *Core Rulebook* in the summer of 2014. Every act of creation is as much about harnessing as about creating; in order to complete a design one must destroy that which does not fit the mold; “kill your darlings,” as the expression goes. The great thing about roleplaying games is that the act of creation goes ever on.

As soon as *Symbaroum* found its way into the hands of its players we received wishes, ideas and suggestions on alternative rules and new areas to develop. These, together with an array of resurrected darlings, constitute the basis of the *Advanced Player's Guide*. We hope that you will find having your characters walk the more obscure paths of Davokar as joyful as we found it penning them down.

Happy Gaming!

TEAM SYMBAROUM



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Welcome to the Advanced Player's Guide

THE WORLD OF Symbaroum provides a lot of options for players, and even if the *Core Rulebook* introduced a long list of occupations, races and abilities it only scratched the surface. This book reaches deeper, offers more contrasts and nuances, gives more alternatives for both characters and non-player characters.

THIS FIRST CHAPTER presents these new alternatives in broad strokes, while the rest of the book is divided into three sections called *The Character*, *The Skills* and *The Tools*. The first two sections describe the many new options in more detail – races, traits, abilities, powers and so on, that in different ways contribute to expanding a player's options when creating and developing his or her character.

The third section starts off with a chapter describing alternative rules – some directly relevant to the new races, occupations and abilities covered in earlier chapters, others which are of a more optional type, intended for gaming groups that want to add more complexity to the game mechanics. Finally there are two chapters that expand on the

players' ability to provide their characters with personalized equipment.

As always, the gaming experience is everything; should you for some reason want to tweak the rules and guidelines presented in this book, speak to your gaming friends about it. So called "house rules" are, and have always been, a central ingredient in what makes roleplaying the world's greatest hobby and form of entertainment.

ARCHETYPES & OCCUPATIONS (PAGE 10)

One new archetype is introduced with the *Advanced Player's Guide*, the Hunter. Previously it was embedded in the archetype Rogue, but it certainly deserves some special attention. For example, hunters differ

from rogues in terms of combat techniques – the former keeps at a distance while the latter engages in melee. Additionally, while the hunter specializes in stalking their prey and putting down fleeing enemies, the actions of the rogue are more closely linked to treasure-hunting and mere survival.

Another addition is that all archetypes have been provided with an Archetypical Ability; a feature that captures the essence of the archetype. Not everyone walking the path of a particular archetype learns this ability, but many do and all would likely benefit from doing so.

In regards to occupations, Symbaroum's game world contains a multitude of professionals and the *Advanced Player's Guide* offers the players more examples, to use directly or as inspiration. Many are closely linked to the powerful factions of Ambria and Davokar, and are hence best suited for players who are already familiar with the game world. Nothing prevents a player from using these occupations when creating their first character, but if doing so they should also read up on relevant sections in the *Core Rulebook*, to learn more about how their particular faction (and its adversaries) regards the world – since one can assume that the character is knowledgeable about such things.

Furthermore, the *Advanced Player's Guide* introduces Professions. It takes a lot to become a member of a profession, both in terms of abilities and in accepting the worldview and ambitions such membership entails. Normally, it is not possible to start as the member of a profession; becoming one takes more Experience than what new characters are awarded. Instead, professions are something to aim for in the long run.

RACES (PAGE 38)

The *Advanced Player's Guide* features five new races: elf, abducted human, dwarf, troll and undead. Aside from providing players with additional options to create the character they want to play, these five races offer unique entries into the world of Symbaroum. The changelings, ogres and goblins of the *Core Rulebook* are tied to the world but tend to be outsiders – much like a player new to the game, their knowledge of the world is limited. Elves, dwarves and trolls belong to the old races of the world and if you opt to play as one of them you are expected to know quite a lot about Davokar and its surroundings; as you would if you had played Symbaroum for a while. Of course, you can play an elf who has not been tutored by his elders, a dwarf who has not listened to his patriarch or a troll who



Making House Rules

The option to create your own house rules is one of many things separating roleplaying games from other interactive media. This creative process is highly encouraged by Team Symbaroum, since we very much like to see you make *Symbaroum* your own.

We tend to make house rules ourselves, at the following levels:

- **Alter presentation:** We change the esthetics more often than the actual rule. If the way an ability or power is enacted does not suit the player's idea of his or her character, the presentation is changed without altering the rule itself. Here the player's freedom is considerable, since the balance of the mechanics is not affected. For example, an independent mystic may spray acid instead of fire with his or her Brimstone Cascade. And an ogre may use its stone-hard lower arm to parry and tackle its enemies, in combination with the Shield Fighter ability.
- **New abilities:** If an ability seems to be missing, we create it. In fact, many abilities in the game derive from such player-driven initiatives. However, in these cases the group must be involved so that the balance of the game is maintained.

has slept through the educational songs. But in general, as a player of one of these races you would do well to study the campaign material in the *Core Rulebook* intensely.

Abducted humans are individuals taken by the elves in exchange for a baby changeling, and their fate constitutes a quaint mix of fighting for the elven cause in Davokar and feeling linked to the world of humans. All abductees normally know a lot about the world and its major conflicts, at least in terms of how they are regarded by the Iron Pact.

Undead, in the form they appear here, as a playable race, are a relatively recent phenomenon in Symbaroum's world. Previously encountered undead are thoroughly corrupt and ravenous, but members of the playable race Undead are not necessarily damaged to such an extent. To be sure, the player character has awoken to life after death, showing signs of having died yet still walking the land. This bitter fate means that the undead character is marked and hunted, likely darkened in mind without yet being entirely corrupted by darkness.

TRAITS (PAGE 48)

The races covered by this book have their own traits to exhibit their characteristics and role in the world. Also, note that when using the *Advanced Player's Guide*, some of the *Core Rulebook's* traits are transformed into Boons and Burdens. These traits function like they did before and the races that previously had them from the start are now granted the corresponding boon or burden for free.

BOONS AND BURDENS (PAGE 50)

Boons is a new category, even if it existed implicitly in the *Core Rulebook*: the traits *Contacts* and *Bushcraft* now become boons instead. Boons are more limited in their use than abilities and more suited for problem-solving when compared to the combat-oriented abilities. The boons are also perfect for adding nuance to a player character, for a lesser cost in *Experience* points. Any character can acquire any boon; it is most often a question of practice. But since they tend to be associated with certain cultures and environments we offer some suggestions regarding which occupations they are best suited for.

A system of burdens is also presented in this book, for gaming groups that enjoy such a concept. In fact, the trait *Pariah* in the *Core Rulebook* is here counted among the burdens. Burdens are characteristics, phenomena or repercussions of life-choices which make life harder for the character – but more interesting for the player. When adding burdens to their characters from start, the players gain a few more *Experience* points to use when selecting abilities and powers. In other words, the burdens allow for players and gaming groups to create characters with diverse life experiences; for instance, older characters can be designed using added *Experience* points but burdened by a traumatic past or damaging life-choices.

ABILITIES (PAGE 60)

The abilities and powers introduced in the *Advanced Player's Guide* are closely related to the new occupations. However, even if linked to a specific occupation most abilities can be selected by anyone, just like the *Core Rulebook* abilities.

Exceptions from this rule are the abilities which define Professions and Archetypes. Sure, in theory these abilities may have been passed on to a character by some dissident, or exist in similar forms within other factions or groups. The recommendation is that the gaming group decides together whether to use the restricted abilities as they are presented in the *Advanced*

Archetypal Abilities

For a character to count as a member of an archetype and be eligible to choose its ability, he or she must have at least three of the abilities listed in the description of the archetype. In this case, having the novice level of the abilities is enough.

Player's Guide or if they should be available to any and all characters. A mix of these is possible, but risks damaging the thrill for players who are striving towards a Profession.

The gaming group can regard the Archetypical abilities in the same ways: either as something available for all (in essence, disconnecting them from the archetypes) or as skills only accessible to player characters belonging to a specific archetype. Hence, we would suggest that the players and Game Master sit down to discuss how to deal with Professions and Archetypical abilities in play. After all, the world of *Symbaroum* is yours and you decide what makes it exciting and fun!

MYSTICAL TRADITIONS (PAGE 74)

The traditions presented in the *Core Rulebook* – *Sorcery*, *Theurgy*, *Witchcraft* and *Wizardry* – are dominant in Ambria and Davokar, but they are not alone in teaching mystical powers to those wanting to learn. The *Advanced Player's Guide* presents three more traditions and a new mystical practice.

From Clan Vajvod's territory in eastern Davokar come the Symbolists: rune-crafters and symbol-carvers knowledgeable about the grand design of the world. Ominous signs and dark omens attract symbolists to Ambria and deep into Davokar, searching to decipher the world's destiny.

From their mythical underground realm come the Troll Singers: skalds and storytellers with enchanting voices. Something is terribly wrong in the harmonies of the world, and for some trolls this continuous disharmony is reason enough to travel the surface.

Out of the depths of Davokar come the Staff Mages, stern warrior monks claiming to descend from the Emperor's Guard of *Symbaroum*. From their castle, hidden deep within the forest, these ascetics have fought an uneven fight for redemption ever since the fall of the empire. The Staff Mages are powerful, but the power of their enemy grows faster and the mages travel south in the hunt for allies and apprentices.

The elves of the Iron Pact have long been under tremendous pressure and few points of light shine in their dark skies. However, in recent years, help has come from an unexpected source: the Artifact Crafters among the trolls have started to share their secrets, awakening an all but forgotten mystical practice. Allegedly, abducted humans tend to be welcomed by the trolls. Ordo Magica has also acquired the knowledge to infuse mystical powers into craft-items and it is rumored that they strive to have at least one skilled Artifact Crafter in each of their chapters.

POWERS & RITUALS (PAGE 78)

The *Advanced Player's Guide* introduces lots of new mystical powers, both for the established traditions and the new ones: *Staff Magic*, *Symbolism* and *Troll Singing*. Exactly like in the *Core Rulebook*, anyone can learn any power, but the mystic is only protected from corruption when learning and using the powers included in a tradition he or she belongs to.

ALTERNATIVE RULES (PAGE 98)

The *Advanced Player's Guide* presents a list of new abilities which need clear and expanded rules to work as intended. Adding to that, this book provides a number of optional rules for the gaming group to consider. All these are assembled in the rules chapter.

EQUIPMENT (PAGE 110)

Just like in the *Core Rulebook*, a character is from the start awarded the weapons and equipment related to its selected abilities, plus a dagger. Aside from that, the character starts with 5 thaler, unless stated otherwise by boons or burdens.

Table 1: Starting Equipment

ABILITY/POWER	EQUIPMENT
Agile Combat	Longbow
Armored Mystic	Medium Armor
Arrow Jab	Optional ordinary ranged weapon
Axe Artist	Optional ordinary axe, single-handed or heavy
Blacksmith	Optional ordinary weapon and Medium Armor (made by the character)
Flailer	Optional Jointed Weapon
Hammer Rhythm	Optional hammer, single-handed or heavy
Knife-play	Stiletto
Man-at-arms	Medium Armor
Polearm Mastery	Spear or Staff
Pyrotechnics	An alchemical grenade and a dose Flash Powder
Rapid Fire	Optional ordinary ranged weapon
Shield Fighter	Shield
Staff Fighting	Optional ordinary Long weapon
Staff Magic	Rune Staff
Steel Throw	A throwing weapon
Sword Saint	Ambrian Fencing Sword or Estoc, plus a Parrying Dagger
Symbolism	Protective Symbol
Troll Singing	Skald's Cuirass
Twin Attack	One ordinary single-handed weapon (novice), two ordinary single-handed weapons (adept)
Two-handed Force	Optional ordinary heavy weapon
Witch Hammer	Optional ordinary single-handed weapon