SIEGE
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
THE PLAYING PIECES

This piece represents a barrel of oil.
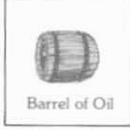
When flipped over, the barrel of oil becomes a flame piece.

Barrel of Oil

Flame

Playing pieces for panic and rout.

These pieces are used only if the optional panic rule is being played (see 6).

PANIC

ROUT
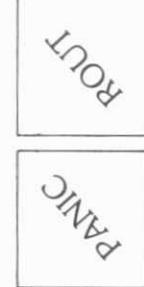
N.B. Combat and movement values always follow the same colour-code.

Attack strength - Black
Defence strength - Red
Movement value - Blue

Obviously pieces without movement values may not move, e.g. a stunned character, and pieces without attack strengths, may not attack anyone.

This system of flip-over and piece replacement is used for all characters, including knights, men-at-arms, archers and so on.

SORTING THE PLAYING PIECES

It is recommended that players sort the playing pieces into different types. This will greatly shorten the time spent in setting up the game. Character pieces can be kept sorted, using separate containers for 'wounded' characters and 'healthy' characters for each type of soldier.

ORIENTATION OF PLAYING PIECES

Players will find that it is easy to tell which characters are on which side, if all characters on one side are oriented in one direction, while the characters of the other side point in a different direction. However, in the unlikely event that a character does inadvertently shoot at a friendly character, results should be allowed to stand, medieval armies did not wear uniforms and such unfortunate accidents are realistic!

CASTLES IN THE 13TH CENTURY

In the feudal world castles were the supreme instrument of war. The lord of a castle had an iron grip on a surrounding area of at least fifteen miles. No invader could afford to pass nearby without taking the castle, for its garrison might ride out and attack from the rear, harrass supply lines or block the army's retreat.

A measure of the significance of the castle is that the number sieges undertaken in the Middle Ages far outstrips that of battles. Many engagements actually occurred during sieges. Although castles were the homes of feudal barons, residential requirements were sacrificed to the needs of defence. The military role remained predominant in the minds of castle builders. One unfortunate architect was executed upon the completion of the castle to prevent it being reproduced elsewhere.

Many sieges were abandoned when it became clear that it would be a lengthy process to take the castle and that the garrison could not be starved into submission. Besieging forces sometimes ran short of food themselves. An army tied down to a siege was vulnerable to attack both by garrison sorties and, more importantly, by relieving forces.

Some sieges succeeded because of treachery within the castle; for instance a stretch of castle wall might be left undefended for awhile. A well defended castle might be forced to surrender. The garrison might surrender if the lord of the castle, who would generally try to be absent if he believed a siege to be threatened, was captured and taken before the walls.

Many sieges were abandoned when it became clear that it would be a lengthy process to take the castle and that the garrison could not be starved into submission. Besieging forces sometimes ran short of food themselves. An army tied down to a siege was vulnerable to attack both by garrison sorties and, more importantly, by relieving forces.

Some sieges succeeded because of treachery within the castle; for instance a stretch of castle wall might be left undefended for awhile. A well defended castle might be forced to surrender because stores ran out, wells ran dry or other water sources were poisoned. The garrison might surrender if the lord of the castle, who would generally try to be absent if he believed a siege to be threatened, was captured and taken before the walls.

Castles varied widely in size and defensive capabilities. Some were never built of anything more than earth or timber, which alone could prove a formidable defence though vulnerable to fire. Border castles, such as that which the castle here is based upon, generally had strong defences but were small in size with far less residential quarters than the major castle of a baron's domain.

If a besieging force did not care to starve a castle into submission it was necessary to take the castle by force. This was achieved by scaling the walls, destroying the walls or a combination of both. Escalade could be achieved with the aid of ladders or siege towers. Destruction of the walls resulted from battering or in some cases mining (mining is beyond the scope of this game). Mining exposed men to attack as they began the mine, although some cover could be rigged. The engines for battering could, and did, collapse or even fall upon their users!

The castle depicted in 'Siege' is a comparatively small border castle. The role of such castles was to discourage small-scale raids across the border, to form a base from which friendly forces could operate, and to delay any invader. The walls could be defended successfully by just a handful of men, unless the attackers breached the walls - a lengthy process, which would give time for a relief force to march to the aid of the besieged. Any potential attackers could expect a hard struggle even if they heavily outnumbered the defenders. After all, the defenders would have all the

---

advantages of cover and height, and they could not be expected to come out for a fair fight!

SIEGE ENGINES

Screen (or Mantlet)

Screens or mantlets were large wooden shields, sometimes mounted on wheels, which provided cover from the defenders' arrows. These screens were usually braced, so that they could stand upright, and the largest varieties even had arrow-slits through which shielded bowmen could shoot.


Mangonel

This engine, of classical ancestry, worked on the principle of torsion. Two upright posts were employed to hold a long arm, which was pivoted towards the base of these posts (which had a bar between them at the top). The pivot arm was enmeshed in twisted cords. It had an oval bowl or pouch at the longer free end. This was lowered, secured and filled with a missile. After the web of ropes had been twisted tightly the bowl was released. The twisted ropes forced the free end upwards until it was violently halted by the bar between the upright posts, thus hurling the missile forward.


Trebuchet

This stone-throwing device, new in the Middle Ages, could vary greatly in size. It consisted of a framework, sometimes on wheels, supporting two great upright posts. A long arm worked on a pivot between the top of these posts; the pivot being set so that the arm was unevenly divided. At the end of the longer section was attached a leather bag, or pouch, while the shorter section had a great weight fastened to it. The chosen missile, usually a shaped rock although carcasses (preferably plague-ridden) might be used, was placed in the pouch which was dragged down by ropes. When the arm was released the weight at the other end crashed down causing the sling to swing up and release the missile.
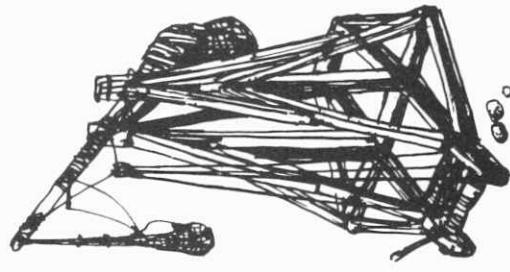
Ballista

Although this could be used to throw rocks, the main use of this device was to shoot iron shafts in the manner of a crossbow, which indeed developed from the ballista. This worked on the same principle as a crossbow therefore - tension.

Siege Tower (or Belfry)

These great movable towers served as lookout posts and shooting platforms, commanding a view of the interior of the castle. If the ditch was filled the tower could be pushed up against the wall and provided greater ease of access for the besiegers than the simple but dangerous scaling ladders. These towers were frequently covered with dampened animal hides as a defence against fire, although this was not always sufficient. Their superior height meant that the garrison might feel forced to mount a sortie to destroy them.

Battering Ram

A large tree trunk, where possible capped with a pointed iron head, was the major part of this device for battering gates or walls. Its use required the moat to be filled. The ram was slung between uprights with crossbeams and was protected from missiles by a shed-like structure above, generally covered with raw hides as a protection against fire. This covered battering ram was known by a variety of names, such as, 'penthouse' or 'cat'.

A Rich Knight or Baron

A superior knight of the thirteenth century would have ridden to war clad from head to foot in mail worn over a quilted undergarment called a gambeson. This was worn to prevent the mail chafing or being driven into a wound by a heavy blow. Several types of helmet were worn, the wide brimmed kettle-hat and the simple conical helmet, little changed from Norman times. A shield was carried and this and the horses' cloth covering, or trapper, both bore the knights coat of arms. The trapper on the horse would be of several layers of cloth or leather and would be sufficient to protect the horse from minor injuries caused by such things as spent arrows and weak blows from edged weapons. The mounted knight was the most powerful soldier on the battlefield. Trained from birth in weapon handling and horsemanship, the weight of his horse added to his skill at arms made him a foe to be reckoned with. On a mounted knight's playing piece this is reflected in his very high attack strength, as is the excellence of his protective armour in his defence strength.

Seen here in his dismounted state the knight has lost a lot of his strength as he can no longer ride down his enemy. His defence strength is not reduced to such a great extent as the sufficiency of his armour is not affected. The weight of his mail and shield etc., reduce his movement factor, making him move a lot slower than the more lightly armoured or unarmoured bowmen and men-at-arms.

An Average Knight

This is the type of knight who would have held a small manor from his lord or, if forced to do so, actually have fought for wages. His lower status is reflected in his equipment. His horse has no trapper and he wears no embroidered surcoat. A warhorse or destrier was an expensive item and it is doubtful whether this character's mount would have been as powerful as that of the previous one. Indeed, his chain mail may have been only partial, reaching to his knees or perhaps replaced with a gambeson. These factors, are taken into account in the character's combat strengths.

The Sergeant

The sergeant was a man-at-arms of a superior type. Generally quite well armed, he was often mounted, although in our game he appears only on foot. He was usually a professional soldier and would be a rough equivalent of a modern N.C.O. In fact, there were many ranks of medieval N.C.O., but for simplicity's sake, they are all represented in the game by this character.

The Halberdier

This man-at-arms is wearing defensive armour in the form of a gambeson and a light helmet, the lightness of which allowed relatively fast movement. The pole-arm could be used to cut or thrust and its effectiveness is shown by his high attack strength.

The Spearman

The spearman was one of the cheapest forms of solider to equip in medieval times. Little or no defensive armour was worn except a helmet. Poorer regions such as Wales and Scotland traditionally fielded large numbers of spearmen.

The Billman

The bill was originally a hedging implement hastily tied to a pole as a makeshift weapon, but it developed into a purpose made pole-arm that was almost as effective as the halberd.

The Crossbowman

Included in the games are both armoured and unarmoured crossbowmen; obviously, the armoured crossbowmen merit a higher defence value. The crossbow was a powerful weapon with a slow rate of fire. To load, the crossbowman dropped the string over a hook on his belt and placed his foot in the metal stirrup on the end of the weapon. Pressing the foot down hard cocked the weapon, which, when a bolt was placed in the central groove, was ready to shoot. A crossbowman had to be used in a relatively static role to make full use of his weapon and in the game he may not move and fire during the same turn.

The Longbowman

The precise origin of the longbow is unknown, though it may have been first restricted to South Wales. The armies of the kings of England used it to devastating effect against the knights of France at Crécy, Poitiers

and Agincourt. As its stave was 6 feet long or more, the penetration of its arrows was much greater than that of the shortbow. Chainmail was not an adequate protection and later in the Middle Ages, arrows from longbows would even penetrate plate armour. Only in England and Wales was the longbow established as a regular, and traditional, infantry weapon.

The Shortbowman

Unlike the longbow, the shortbow was in use in most European countries. Its lack of power, certainly against armoured targets, was to some extent offset by its fast rate of fire. As a result these unarmoured bowmen may move, and also shoot twice during the course of a game turn.

The Engineer

Siege equipment often required specialist knowledge, which the ordinary man-at-arms did not have, or was not willing to acquire. Mining operations were undertaken by specialist miners, and the building, maintenance and operation of siege engines was usually carried out by men who had special knowledge of these 'gyns'.

The Peasant

The peasants in 'Siege' represent those able-bodied farmers called up for military service as part of their obligation to their lords. In England they formed the shire levies and served for a maximum of 40 days. They were usually under-equipped and would never have stood a chance against a well-armed force unless deployed in large numbers. During sieges they acted as manual labourers, digging, fetching and carrying.
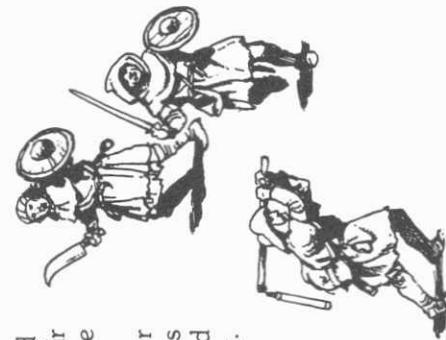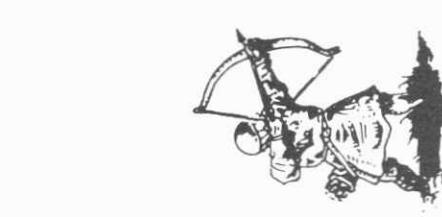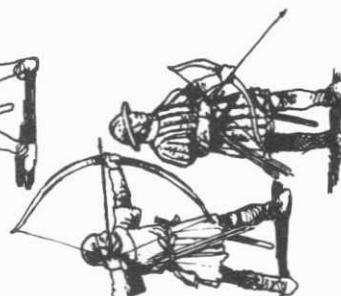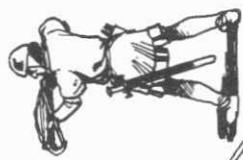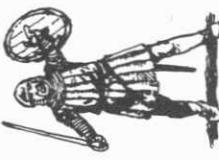
DESCRIPTION AND USE OF THE PLAYING PIECES

A Note on Time and Distance

As 'Siege' and 'Cry Havoc' are games of man-to-man combat, a Game Turn represents a very short period of time - five to ten seconds. Just enough time to shoot an arrow or to strike with a sword. Each hex represents an area about six feet across.

Playing pieces for a mounted character.

This represents an unwounded mounted character, hereafter referred to as healthy.

This piece represents the horse without its rider. If a character dismounts or falls from his horse as a result of combat or missile fire, flip over Piece 1 and replace the rider with the dismounted version of the character appropriate to his condition. (This may be healthy, wounded, stunned or dead. See "Playing Pieces for a foot character or dismounted rider").

This represents the character when wounded. Note that the character's attack and defence strengths are greatly reduced. If in doubt of a character's casualty status, a glance at the combat values will tell you at once if he is wounded or healthy. If a mounted character is wounded as a result of combat but does not fall from his horse, replace Piece 1 with Piece 2.

7

This represents a horse which has been killed as a result of combat or missile attack. If the horse was being ridden by a character at the time it was killed, he is replaced with his appropriate dismounted playing piece. (See "Playing pieces for a foot character or a dismounted rider").
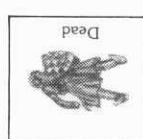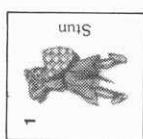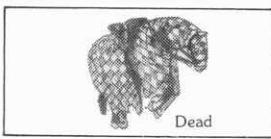
Playing pieces for a foot character or a dismounted rider.

A foot character is represented by two playing pieces.

This piece represents a healthy foot character.

This piece represents a character who has been stunned as a result of combat. If a healthy character is stunned, flip Piece 1 over to represent his casualty status.

A character who is stunned remains so for one complete game turn. During this time he may not move, shoot or attack an opposing character. He has a low defence strength to simulate his dazed condition.

This represents a wounded character. If as a result of combat or missile attack, a healthy character is wounded, replace the playing piece with this one.

This represents a character who has been killed. If he was healthy or stunned when killed, replace Piece 1 with this piece. If already wounded, merely flip over the wounded counter.

8

Playing pieces for draft animals.

Each draft animal is represented by one playing piece. This piece represents a draft animal in a healthy state.

Draft Horse

This represents the draft animal when as a result of combat or shooting it is killed. Simply flip the piece over.

Dead

Playing pieces for carts.

Cart
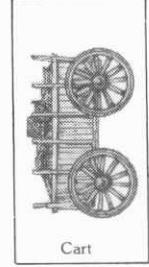
Playing pieces for siege equipment.

Ballista

Battering Ram

Mangonel

Trebuchet
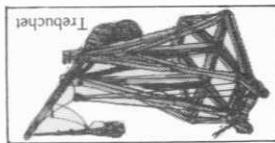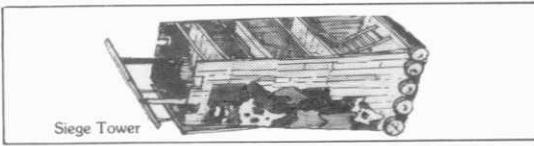
Siege Tower

These pieces represent siege engines. The pieces are flipped over if the engines are burnt during the course of the game.

Note that the siege tower and battering ram pieces occupy 3 hexes.

This piece is used when a scaling ladder is being carried; see 1.9.

Carrying
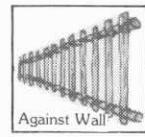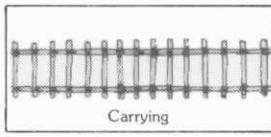
This piece is used when a scaling ladder is upright against the castle walls.

Against Wall
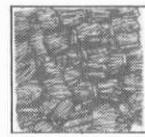
This piece is placed on a moat hex, if the hex has been filled.

A few 'double' pieces covering two hexes are included for convenience.
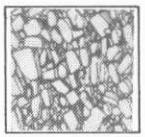
This piece is placed on a battlements hex, if the hex has been reduced to rubble.
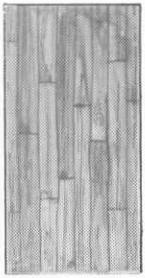
This piece represents the drawbridge when it is down. It must be placed in the marked area at the gates, if the drawbridge is down.