

CALPADA



## Note from the Author

What you are about to read is both a work of fiction and a guide for Mount and Blade. As much as I enjoyed writing it a lot of the information within it is not official. Mount and Blade is one of the best RPG/Strategy hybrids I had the chance to play. With a very active modding community there would be countless incredible mods released, changing the setting, adding new mechanics and much more. I first started playing Mount and Blade nearly five years ago and I still play it today. It is one of those games that ages well thanks to its community.

It is not the easiest game but it feels rewarding when you conquer your first castle or town, when you create your first kingdom, or take part in enormous battles, even if they have to be scaled down due to the game engine's limitations. It is not a historical simulation however, and as such anybody who is familiar with the Middle Ages might find its mechanics odd. This did not stop me from writing this short book.

Why write it in the first place? I looked at the guides we typically see. They bear raw information. Sometimes you are given straight answers to your questions, which might make you think that if you deviate you will lose. It might be the case in linear games but Mount and Blade was never a linear game. You can take a number of roles, in any kingdom. I am not a supporter of giving answers; I prefer teaching people so that they can find their own answers.

At the same time I wanted to combine a guide with a unique take on narration. Initially I made a quick experiment with creating a report for another game, Company of Heroes 2, where I wanted to make the player feel he was handed over a real document, but with information that could be used in the game itself. With Mount and Blade this was far more difficult, since historical accuracy and lack of all the possible features (such as religion) created a gap between what I wanted to write and what would be considered useful. While in the first half of this book you will find all the fluff I wrote, some of the information within it, especially if you have already played the game for a while, would be relevant, the rest is purely there for accuracy. I tried to justify a lot of the game mechanics in the game, or why certain features do not appear, which again might make it feel unrealistic to somebody who has studied the Middle Ages for years.

In the second half I provide short chapters to the different concepts in the game. I try not to provide straight answers to questions, I merely put forward certain pieces of information that you may use as you see fit. You may even combine some of the information from the guide to what you find in the first half of the book to gather a wider and more intriguing picture. This said, the



explanations given here are not official. This is a work of fiction by somebody who wanted to give the world something new and refreshing.

I hope you will enjoy reading this as much as I had enjoyed writing it.

Alex "WriterX" Bielski



Published by the Royal Academy of Science, Suno  
In the name of her Royal Majesty,  
Lady Isolla III of Suno

May her reign be long and strong.

By Her Grace, this tome was written and published  
in the year 1745



## Introduction

The conflicts that have shaped our world today reach as far back as the early middle ages, when the six divided kingdoms of Calradia fought each other for wealth and land. Great was the despair of the common folk, but even greater was the injustice of the rulers who led their people to death countless times.

Not many scriptures remain from that period, as countless sieges have left the people of Calradia with much of their culture ruined, substituted by the lust for war. The small bits of evidence that remain are from travellers who could note down the key events of the land, without the nobility threatening their lives. At the time few knew how to read and write. The clergy and the nobles were the only ones who could afford such a luxury, yet the former were occupied with the sick and wounded from war, while the latter desired to wage said wars.

This tome is dedicated to the people of Calradia, as they once were, rather than the wars that engulfed them. I was also instructed by Her Majesty to provide a brief historical background of the wars that plagued the land, and their possible causes.

I was truly honoured by this privilege, to read through some of Calradia's oldest texts, and to now formulate them in one of my greatest works.

I hope that through reading this you, dear reader, will strive to join the Academy of Science, as I once did, and pursue these topics further.

Her humble servant,

Ser Gregory of Praven



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## Calradia in the Middle Ages

Calradia was a very backward land during the time of the Great Wars that ripped the land apart. Infrastructure between the kingdoms, or even their cities and villages, was almost non-existent. While there were a number of people trained in the medical arts illness was rampant, and many people died from the plagues that often killed all but the hardiest of men.

Nothing remained of the Calrad Empire that once kept the land together. Only today do we begin to learn more about those ancient people and how they once managed to unite such a wide diversity of faiths and cultures. Sadly, during this time period, none of the old glory of Calrad remained. Instead petty lords fought each other, plaguing their own people like reavers.

A few positive things can be noted about this time period however. Despite the wars that were waging between the lords a strong merchant class was born from the wars. These independent merchants managed to transport goods, even between besieged cities, often by bribing the besieging armies, or using their political connections with the lords to sell their goods without threat of attack. Mercenaries were also very common in Calradia in this time period, and many of them signed up with both the burghers and the nobility. While working for the nobles was often most profitable it also carried with it the highest risk, so certain groups of mercenaries decided to work together with the merchants to earn an honest living.

Another faction which greatly benefited from Calradia's strife were the countless bandit bands that plagued the land. In each region a different group dominated the landscape. Among them the most common were mountain and forest bandits, who would plague villages and merchant caravans. In the Kingdom of the Nords the aptly named "raiders" were the common plague, but unlike the other groups of bandits they were known for being far more bloody, often times butchering entire settlements at a whim. I recommend reading "Raiders from the North" by my colleague Ser Robert Smith to learn more of these strange people.

The desert and steppes were haunted by horse bandits, who used spears and bows to chase down travellers, though they too often raided smaller, unprotected settlements whom the lords abandoned.

It would be incorrect to say that the continuous wars in Calradia did not bring around a certain benefit, as many weapons have been rapidly developed in the ever changing conditions of war. Medicine also progressed, as there was never a shortage of those wounded and in need of help. However, the cost of this so-called progress was much too high. The only reason the peasants did



not revolt against their masters was that they were often too tired and distraught to oppose them.

The citizenry of Calradia may be divided into three general classes. The common classes, freemen and in some cases serfs, formed the majority. The commoners of rank, made up of landowning freemen, merchants, and craftsmen, were the second largest group. The nobility, while being the fewest, held the majority of power. The peasantry and cities paid fealty to the aristocracy, who then, by noblesse oblige, had to provide the king with arms and men. It is interesting to note that all the kingdoms, in times of war, would elect marshals to lead their military campaigns. Who was chosen as the marshal depended on who held the most sway with the king. It was a highly corrupt and suspicious system, where a chosen marshal might have gotten no support from the other lords if they disliked him. The king, while holding a major city and numerous castles, would rarely take direct control of a military campaign.

The most corrupt among the Calradian kings would be King Halraus, who would often claim any castle or city that one of his lords conquered, then began a feast to celebrate his victories. As time passed however the situation worsened. One excerpt by Artimenner, a scholar of the time, noted that "(King) Harlaus was becoming senile with age, and his kingdom fell into chaos and anarchy, as the lesser lords used their king's weak mind to manipulate him to their benefit". This ended in a number of disastrous campaigns against the Kingdom of Rhodoks, where the overly confident Swadian nobility would often underestimate the strength of the Rhodok spear line.

Swadia was not the only kingdom to fall under the sway of corruption, but it is the most notable. Other kingdoms were just as easily swayed by the greed of lesser lords, but it is Swadia that numerous times was only saved by the great sacrifice of its peasantry.

Most alliances were sealed through marriage, but what is interesting to note is that marriage between kingdoms was extremely rare. While alliances between lesser lords were common, those between kings were unheard of. Internal kingdom politics seemed far more important than that between other kingdoms. The warlike desires of Calradians at the time might be one of the reasons for this. In all the kingdoms marrying into a noble family was difficult. The heads of noble houses, typically the father of the bride, would choose the suitor. As is always the case, bards wrote many ballads of young brave men stealing the hearts of maidens, and running off with their new found love, chased by the angry father. Usually such tales ended with the young man being hanged and the maiden being married off regardless.



For those seeking to achieve nobility there were ways of gaining some semblance of it. The simplest method was to join a lord's army and win, through prowess of arms, a knight errancy. These un-landed knights were common throughout Calradia, and were often only knights by name. The villages and towns belonged mainly to counts and barons, while lesser knights were only an elite cavalry formation of greater nobles. Still, with a knight's spurs came a degree of respect and power, and the only way to be elevated to the peerage would be to petition the king directly or to, once again, win it through achievement of arms.

It was not unheard of that middle class citizenry married the third or fourth daughter of a noble, thus gaining a title. This was very rare, and usually a suitor needed substantial financial backing to gain the father's favour.

### **Tournaments and Feasts**

Throughout Calradia, usually during peace, Tournaments and Feasts would be organised by nobles, to celebrate a recent victory or merely to win

over the favour of other nobles. Feasts would have not only the richest food but also entertainment. A feast sanctioned by the king would normally mean that everybody was bound to attend, although there was no insult if a guest would not or refused to arrive. Tournaments that were sometimes associated with feasts would test the prowess of not only the nobility but anybody who was interested in taking part.

Depending on the kingdom and town the rules of the tournament would differ. In Praven the use of lances was enforced. Meanwhile in the kingdom of Nords all the tournaments consisted of close combat melees, occasionally permitting archery. A warrior who won a tournament would often be allowed into a feast, even if he was not of noble birth. This would allow many aspiring mercenary captains and skilled warriors to later find employment and favour with the nobility.

### **Clothing, Armour and Weapons**

While each of the kingdoms of Calradia had their own culture and faiths we can note certain similarities among them. For example, burghers often favoured richer clothing, especially merchants. Important clothing would often result in a mix of different styles, and aside from a different architecture one might have had a hard time with telling apart a Swadian from a Rhodok town. The main exception here would be the Sarranid, who greatly favoured long robes and turbans. This was due to their much harsher climate that called for the use of looser clothing that would permit work both during the day and



night. Among Sarranids the use of sandals was also more practical than boots, which were far more popular in the rest of Calradia.

Jewellery was rare among all the kingdoms. What is interesting to note is that while gold coins were in use, especially during greater monetary exchanges, the mining of gold or manufacturing of jewellery was nearly non-existent. Even silver, a far more common metal, was not traded among cities. While iron was in abundance it was mainly used for tools, weapons, and armour rather than any form of decoration.

The reasons for this may be that gold and silver were sought out by lords to pay for their enormous armies, thus none of it was ever traded away. At the same time iron would be needed to produce weapons and equipment, so its use for decorations might have not been permitted.

Still, this did not stop other luxurious resources from being produced, imported, and traded within Calradia. As you will have a chance to read in the following chapters, spices, velvets, and dyes were produced and sold by different kingdoms. While expensive metals were used to pay for armies no lord would pay his men in velvets or spices, even if their value was high.

Armour in Calradia appeared in many forms.

Lighter suits of armour tended to be made out of thickly woven cloth and padding to reduce potential wounds from blunt weapons. Examples of this may be seen among Swadian militias, who used gambesons or aketons. While cheap to produce, especially with plenty of wool available, they did not offer much protection.

Medium and heavy armour were usually made out of metal. What differed is the amount of metal used and how it was shaped. Chainmail was, by far, the most commonly used medium armour in Calradia, even if it did come in many different forms. Heavy armour usually was made out of some combination of metal plates and chainmail, although the richest lords and kings could afford plate armour; plate armour was very difficult to penetrate by most bladed weapons, save perhaps by stabbing. This put certain armies, like that of the Khergits and Sarranids, at a disadvantage, as most of their swords would be used for slashing and not piercing.

While one might think that heavy armour would rule the battlefield there were reasons why the Rhodoks, with their spears and crossbows, could withstand a Swadian charge with ease.

Let us assume you had a wooden board in front of yourself. Attempting to slash through it with a sword might take a lot of effort, especially if said plank



is very tough and thick. How does one then pierce through it? A nail would do the trick. It is not always about the strength of the hit, but how big an area you spread it over. As such, a sword would have a hard time slashing through plate armour, but a hammer or pick would have a much easier time wounding the man inside. Of course, the problem would be that the tip would have to reach far enough to wound the knight and this would often take much more effort than expected. Another clear problem with plate armour was that, while the plates were difficult to penetrate, a thin dagger could still pass between them, if used skillfully. Sometimes it was easier to force a knight in heavy armour to the ground, then stab him in the chest, bypassing his armour, with a miserchorde--a triangular cross-sectioned dagger designed specifically to penetrate mail and plate. Bows and crossbows appeared in many different forms, sizes, and shapes. While crossbows tended to be very powerful weapons the amount of time it took to reload one is longer than an archer could fire a number of arrows. Crossbows were favoured by the Rhodok and Swadians for one simple reason; it was much easier to teach a peasant to use a crossbow than a bow. While the Khergits were often taught from a young age how to use a bow it would take many months, at least, to teach an untrained peasant to achieve a similar level of expertise.

Lances, as such, were usually reserved for tournaments. Far more common were different types of war spears or light javelins, which were easier to use in the heat of combat, especially when a rider lost momentum. It should be noted that even Swadian knights did not exclusively use lances, and some of them favoured maces and swords, especially if they lost their horse or had to take part in a siege.

What may be one of the most curious novelties in Calradia is the use of shields. The Swadians did not use big shields. Their knights often used lighter horseman shields, that although offered some protection would often prove less useful on the ground. Swadian footmen would have somewhat bigger shields but they did not offer full protection.

The Vaegir knights did not use shields at all. They favoured two-handed weapons, which made them extremely deadly when in an open pitched battle, but during a siege they would often lack a method of protecting themselves. It is unknown why they chose not to use shields, as infantry formations often opted to use them.

The Nords, Khergits, and Sarranids used round shields. While these shields protected the chest and head relatively well they left the legs exposed. The Nords used almost exclusively round shields, and they perfected the use of the "Shield Wall". A shield wall was a method of creating an impenetrable obstacle for enemy archers and soldiers. Anybody foolish enough to approach the Nords would soon after be met with their axes. It is easy to



underestimate the shield wall, but the toughness and ferocity of the Nords often proved that it was not a joke.

The Rhodoks used board shields. These were, in essence, capable of covering the warrior's entire front, making it impossible for any arrow or bolt to reach them. This made any Rhodok force impossible to dislodge with archers or crossbowmen alone. Even when fighting up close it would be difficult to defeat a Rhodok.

Thrown weapons also came in many varieties. Javelins and axes were, by far, the most common. Just like the bow however, these would take a lot of practice to master. The Swadians, Rhodoks, and Vaegirs chose not to use them. The Nords used throwing axes, often confusing enemies who might have thought that the Nords were throwing their weapons out of frustration. The Khergits would use javelins on horseback, just as much as they used bows. Some Sarranid warriors would opt to use javelins as well.

## **Prisoners and Slaves**

All over Calradia the trading and capturing of prisoners was common. Lords would be ransomed, just like lesser nobles and soldiers. In some kingdoms however slavery was chosen over a ransom attempt, when it was clear that the prisoner's family was too poor to afford a ransom. Two nations were best known for slavery. The Kingdom of Nords used slaves on their galleys and boats, as it was too expensive to pay free people to work them. The Sarranid used slaves in many more different tasks and some theories claim that entire Sarranid armies were, in fact, composed of slaves and not volunteers or free men.

Other kingdoms did not use slaves as such, but might have used prisoners as forced labour, during castle building construction. This was very rare however, and prisoners would most often wait in a lord's dungeon until somebody would buy them out.

In some cases keeping many prisoners was dangerous. There were a few noted incidences where an entire army was captured and filled a lord's dungeon. When the castle was besieged and the prisoners eventually freed they willingly joined whoever freed them and wreak havoc upon their "slavers".

## **Trade and Economics**



The use of the Denar in Calradia is, most likely, the only leftover of the old Calrad Empire. While it was recognised within Calradia easily, each kingdom would mint their own versions of the Denar, with symbols of their kings and kingdom crests.

It is likely that the relatively small size of Calradia welcomed the idea of a single currency. However, it is not said who maintained the quality of the Denar. Whether there was a burgher or religious institution tasked with maintaining its value, or whether, in the end, it was the overall weight of the coin's silver, and not their theoretical value, since each kingdom minted coins of varying sizes, was unknown.

Due to the incredibly hostile nature of Calradia, villages rarely held any coin, unlike the larger and better protected towns. The reason was simple: coins attracted bandits, and any silver obtained would either end up being spent on much needed goods or taxes for their lord. Villages would bring any goods they manufactured or farmed to the town market, where they would attempt to sell these goods either themselves or through larger store and merchants. Even so it was the merchants who benefited the most from the villagers, not the other way around. Unless a village managed to produce a pricey good, such as iron or salt, there was very little it could gain from the open market.

Villagers paid taxes based on the amount of crops they could harvest that season. Sometimes a noble would send armed tax collectors to extort payment during times of hardship. Taxation in goods was not allowed, and lords always demanded silver. If such was not available, depending on the tax collector's mood, the farmer might have been flogged, killed, or his property destroyed. Tax collectors were often little more than thugs. It was not unknown for knights to act as them, since their training and towering presence would intimidate any peasant into submission.

The situation within towns might be considered much more civilized, since the burghers held far more influence and power than the village farmers. The merchants were one of the most influential social and economic groups during the Great Wars. Even before that time it became apparent that taxing every single person within a town created too much chaos and confusion and oftentimes taxation would become too strict. The idea of merchant guilds was born. It was an association of tradesmen, led by a guildmaster, which would control trade within the town and negotiate with the lord any taxation and levies.



A merchants guild had a charter that its members had to follow. Failure to do so might have resulted in serious fines and even imprisonment. What is interesting to note is that nobles very rarely engaged in the affairs of the town itself. The head of the merchants guild would act as the mayor of the town, thus deciding, in a way, on its internal laws, economy, and even security. This did not include the standing army that a lord would often garrison in a town to keep his land safe. Instead a guildmaster could organise a night watch to guard the streets from bandits and thieves.

However in the period of the Great Wars the heavy taxation, influx of refugees, and often poor overall economic situation did not allow for such luxuries, and a town would only be protected by soldiers rather than policemen. This meant that a lord, in practice, held much tighter control over the events within a town, and could easily threaten a merchants guild, if he chose to do so.

While in the later medieval period there were payments collected for traveling through secure and protected roads or paths, during the Great Wars there were no such roads or security. Merchant caravans would hire mercenaries or rent soldiers from their lord to travel with. This did not stop bandits or enemy lords from attacking such caravans, in search of easy spoils.

However, this did permit unrestricted trade between kingdoms, since there were no guards or laws to stop a merchant from trading with his kingdom's enemies.

Small villages also formed around castles. These would usually be the families of the soldiers stationed in the castle, but also traders and merchants who could greatly benefit from the castle's protection.

## **Levies and Armies**

During the Medieval Period aside from taxation towns and villages would often have to also provide levies to their lord, when such were needed. Normally a levy would only be raised after the harvests were done so as not to hinder crop production. In the period of the Great Wars the need of levies was substituted by a need of money and professional soldiers. Due to the period of intense and brutal wars that followed many people preferred the life of a soldier over that of a peasant or burgher. In turn, lords gladly accepted



new manpower into their armies.

The reason for this militarism is clear: the lack of security, combined by banditry and constant enemy invasion, would often mean that from one month to the next your household and belongings might have been destroyed or plundered. By joining a lord's army you would have the relative security of pay, food, and training.

How soldiers were recruited differed slightly in each kingdom. The Sarranid were the major exception since men were not recruited into armies, but sold into slavery as soldiers. The slave's family benefited from the silver earned from the sale, and the slave himself might have risen through the ranks to become a Mamluke.

Among the other kingdoms recruiters would be sent by lords to seek out those interested in joining their lord's army. If such were found they would be marched into the castle and their new lives would begin.

The life of a Calradian could have been very short and brutal but compared to the other options present it was the only sensible one.

Each army followed its own hierarchy and organization. Typically an army would be divided into battles, which could be understood, roughly, as large groups of men. However to maintain some form of organization each group of infantry or cavalry would have their own lord or captain leading them. Individual lords would often lead no more than two hundred men. However an army might have had as many as over two thousand men, though this was rare. Each lord strived to maintain a balanced force of archers, infantry, and cavalry, which might have created a lot of confusion during the later battle, since each lord would maintain their own small army, rather than organize larger archer, infantry, or cavalry groups.

## **Kingdoms of Calradia**

There were six kingdoms in Calradia at the time. We already spoke of the Kingdom of Swadia briefly, but let us explore them in depth again.

The Kingdom of Swadia was the richest agricultural area of Calradia. The flat plains benefited the use of cavalry, which the Swadians admired. All lesser nobles were expected to be trained horsemen. The knights of Swadia were



some of the most feared warriors of the time, and rightfully so. Their charge alone often broke entire armies, thanks to their training and equipment. Meanwhile, their foot warriors, mainly men at arms and crossbowmen, were acting as the support for the knights. Often when a lord departed with his army for a campaign he would leave behind his foot soldiers to guard the castle and local lands.

Despite their rich agriculture, Swadia often lacked a major export, such as the Nords, Khergits or Vaegirs possessed.

Because of this Swadia often relied on war to fill their coffers, invading local kingdoms for their riches. While the success of their campaigns may be debated there is no doubt that the lords of Swadia were some of the most influential people in Calradia.

The Kingdom of Rhodoks was a largely mountainous area. Invading armies had difficulty not only passing through the steep and hazardous mountain paths but the disciplined formations of Rhodok spear men could halt almost any army. Their lack of plains made the use of cavalry completely void. Rhodok lords relied largely upon their infantry to defeat their foes through discipline and training, rather than an overwhelming charge. Incidentally both of its neighbours, the Kingdom of Swadia and Sarranid Sultanate, relied on their cavalry elite to defeat the enemy, so many times the Rhodok armies managed to halt an invasion.

Rhodok cities were known for their rich velvet, which was often exported to the neighbouring Swadia and Sarranid Sultanate in times of peace. It was also known for some of the sweetest wine from Veluca, but it was largely a local export that did not find much support in neighbouring Swadia, mainly due to fierce competition from Swadian brewers, who discredited the Rhodok brew.

The Sarranid Sultanate settled in the vast desert bordering Calradia. It is unknown why they chose such a largely inhospitable area but the Sultanate were often a strange and mysterious people to the rest of Calradia. Their faith and culture often put them at odds with other kingdoms, and Sultanate merchants had many problems dealing with other merchants. Despite this, the Sarranid Sultanate was one of the richest lands of Calradia due to their export of mined salt. Some would argue that the Nord sea salt was produced in greater quantity but both kingdoms benefited from it greatly.

The Sarranid were mainly known for their knights, just like the Kingdom of Swadia. Unlike the Swadians, the Sarranid trained skilled archers instead of crossbowmen. What they lacked was a strong infantry force, and Sarranid men at arms were often outmatched by their counterparts from other



kingdoms.

The Khergit Khanate was originally a nomadic group that settled in Calradia when they managed to conquer enough land from the other quarrelling kingdoms. The green steppes that the Khergit occupied suited their lifestyle perfectly. It was said the Khergits were born and died in the saddle. It might just be the case, as all their men and women were trained, from a young age, to ride. They favoured lighter armour and archery, but when need be they could gather a group of lancers to charge an enemy force, trampling or impaling anybody unfortunate enough to stand in their way.

The squabbling of Calradia had too consumed these noble people, and they abandoned their previous lives to fight the other kingdoms for land and wealth. However, Khergit tradition continued to exist, through their artisans. One of the major Khergit exports was pottery, often inscribed with most recent events. The Khergits also brought in all manner of spices, distributing them to the far reaches of Calradia. This economic strength was, most likely, one of the key reasons why the Khergits decided to settle down in Calradia.

The Kingdom of Nords, according to some sources, were the sailors of Calrad vessels, during the times of the great Empire. It is more likely that, just like the raiders that plagued them, the Nords were raiders themselves who settled in Calradia when they managed to fight off the other kingdoms. This observation is based not only on their location, but also their military tradition. The Nords used longboats and carried round shields as well as axes. The Nord huscarl was one of the most feared warriors of the time. Numerous bards speak of the combat achievements of the huscarls. Some claim that a huscarl could cleave through a Swadian knight, and his horse, with a single swing of his mighty axe. Others say that a huscarl could withstand any attack, no bolt or arrow piercing his skin. One tale, in particular, mentions the only recorded female huscarl, known as Matheld, who stormed a castle's wall despite a hail of arrows, all on her own, and after fighting all the way down to the courtyard she opened the gate for the rest of her army. It is hard to believe that such a feat is at all possible.

The Nords were known for their export of sea salt that rivalled the Sarranid mined salt.

The Kingdom of Vaegirs were the most backward nation of Calradia. While the peasantry in other kingdoms was remotely civilized, that of Vaegirs was very much tribal. The lesser tribes obeyed their lords, or warlords, who then obeyed their king. The cold climate of the region resulted in all Vaegirs wearing thick furs, which often gave them an even more barbaric and uncivilized look. Their access to iron gave them an advantage when it came to producing weapons and armour, but their lack of discipline often resulted in



their armies being routed before anything could be achieved. Still, the Kingdom of Vaegirs was an equal to the other kingdoms, mainly due to the strict hierarchical structure of their tribes, and also the difficult, cold terrain, which no other kingdom was properly prepared for, especially the neighbouring Sarranids.

## **The Great Wars**

The Great Wars were, in fact, a series of smaller conflicts between all the kingdoms. During a single year there could have been as many as thirty small conflicts, often resulting in thousands dead on each side. A village that was razed just a month prior could be pillaged again by another lord. We cannot begin to imagine how devastated the countryside had to be from these countless conflicts.

To the lords and kings, the wars acted as a method of increasing personal riches. Very few lords cared for the lands they possessed, as long as taxes were paid on time, and in adequate measure. It is difficult to imagine how any kingdom could function on such a brutal and heartless ideology, but very few voices were ever raised in protest. The lesser lords were just as guilty as the monarchs they followed, while the countless soldiers and peasantry were merely resources to be used in the wars spanning the whole of Calradia.

What is interesting to note is that there were very few naval engagements during this time, even though four nations had access to the sea. The reason for this is, most likely, the proximity to each of the kingdoms. There was simply no need to travel by sea, especially since the costs of building and maintaining a fleet might have been too high, and transporting a sizeable army would likely double the cost.

The lords, even with their desire for riches, were often not the richest of people. They were all stuck in a military stalemate, where none of them could afford a smaller army for fear of being invaded by their neighbour. Much revenue was lost on maintaining an army, and often a ransom for a captured lord would take weeks to be paid. It was not unheard of that during some conflicts a king would patiently wait to sign a peace treaty so that there would be no need to pay thousands of coins in ransoms. It was cheaper to concede defeat than to bring a lord back into active service.

The most humble estimates claim that tens—if not hundreds—of thousands of souls perished from these conflicts. Mercenaries often had to be called in by lords when fresh bodies were not available, and it was not unheard of for warriors to abandon their lords and turn to banditry. It seemed a far better



option, to rob merchants, than to fight for a lord as his pawn. Even such honoured individuals as the Nord huscarls and Swadian knights would give up on the benefits their positions offered and live off the land.

These conflicts never brought about any conclusion, and the sheer number of them makes it impossible to guess just how many wars there were. What the scribes of the age called the "Great Wars" we simply call a "Medieval Melee".

### **Of Liars and Pretenders**

The Middle Ages in Calradia were not only known for their wars but also the injustice caused by the kings to their equals. Each of the kingdoms had a single pretender who sought support to gain back what was rightfully theirs.

There are numerous tomes discussing the claims of the pretender lords, the support they managed to gain, and how they gained it. What should be interesting to note is how the lesser lords often reacted to these claims, that being, they did not react at all. Lesser lords often joined the side that benefited them at the time. If one side was losing, then a lord would willingly join another kingdom, or even a pretender's army, if there was a chance of gaining more influence or power.

It is very difficult to say who, in the end, were the puppet masters in this complicated web of politics. The kings controlled their nobles, but to what extent? How much did the nobles control their kings? The middle and lower classes had no say on the grander stage of politics, and their petitions would often fall on deaf ears.

It is possible, as some sources claim, that the pretenders were, in fact, lesser nobility who tried to change the state of things in Calradia, but their ways were too radical, and both the kings and lords shunned them for not operating according to their set rules.

Such claims are hard to discredit, considering how corrupt and rotten the entire system was, and how war-stricken the land was.

### **On Religion**

In the past the church has had a major influence over political affairs, as it still does today. However, this was not the case during the Great Wars in old Calradia. The simplest answer scholars can provide is that the continuous warfare between the Kingdoms of Calradia left people more concerned about their own safety than about faith as such. That is not to say faith in different gods dwindled. People were just as believing, if not more than before. It was a simple fact of the day to day life that prayer alone would not put food on the



table. With the sheer number of young men dying monthly, banditry, and looting, it was difficult for anybody to sleep easily. In turn, when a time of relative peace and prosperity appeared the people of Calradia would seem to try and consume as much as possible, since they knew this was only a short pause from war that was bound to erupt sometime soon.

What of the church as an institution? Considering that most kings were chosen by divine right, didn't the church have some sway among the nobles and kings? It should be noted that in Calradia, at the time, there were very few monasteries and churches outside of towns. The power of the church was, in essence, tied down to the local town. Much later entire towns would be established, dedicated to specific faiths, where followers could congregate. Calradia also lacked any higher authority among priests. While priests could be found in any town there was perhaps a single bishop in a kingdom capitol at any given time.

Another possible explanation for the lack of power of the churches was the greed of the lords and nobles, who were more interested in war among each other, and nothing that the church would say could change their minds. With most of the clergy tending to the needy and wounded there was also a shortage of preachers and priests who could attend the few churches in Calradia.

The different faiths and religions had little to no influence over the Great Wars that ravaged the land. Rather than being an active participant on the political scene the clergy were forced to remain as spectators and watch how events unfolded.

## **Law**

Because each kingdom had its own culture and faith so too did their laws differ. With them also changed the types of punishment that would be dealt to commoner and noble alike. While nobles were usually treated better than the common people it is incorrect to assume that nobility protected from torture or punishment.

According to the traditional feudal system a lord or king would listen to the grievances or requests of his subjects during special sessions. These requests could have been anything, from asking to intervene in a feud, to merchant affairs, to military or financial support. A lot depended on the lord in question and the size of the request. A lord would sometimes stand court, when it was necessary, but villages or towns would often govern themselves. A lord's direct involvement would only be called during especially troublesome cases when the elder or guildmaster alone would be unable to reach a decision.



There was no unified court system, as we have today. Neighbouring towns might have had different laws, and what was defined as crime would also differ greatly. During the time of the Great Wars the sheer number of bandits, deserters, and thieves often lead to quick execution, rather than performing any hearing or seeking a lord's verdict. Lords often did not have the time to listen to burghers, and if they had to speak with somebody it would be the guildmaster alone. Villages were very often ignored, and a lord would only intervene if there was meant to be a revolt, in which case he would quell it ruthlessly.

Beheadings were the most common and quick punishments. Stocks and hanging by the neck were also common. Of course, each kingdom had its own series of curious and gory punishments, none of which I will describe due to their sheer barbarism.

A prison sentence might have been even worse than death. Medieval prisons were dirty, filled with disease, and for the most part uninhabitable. A prisoner would be forced to stay in his cell, often chained in place, and if the guards showed mercy he would be given food and water. It was very rare for a prisoner to leave a prison without it leaving a clear mark on his body and mind.

## **Kingdom of Swadia**

### **Geography**

Swadia was situated in the centre of Calradia. It contained four major towns that are now believed to have formed the capital states of the old Calrad Empire. The old glory of the empire must have been long gone, as very little remains of the old architecture of the empire.

Swadia's towns were: Praven, Uxhal, Dhirim, and Suno. Praven, the capital, was also Swadia's only major port, allowing for sea trade with other nations. Dhirim was the most detached of the four towns, and was often the cause of major conflict with neighbouring kingdoms. Due to its distance to the capital it would often take days for a call for help to reach the king's ears. The Dhirim Valley was more often a major obstacle for Swadian forces rather than invaders, since an army would have to go either through it, or around it, to help the besieged city.

Another geographical feature of Swadia was the Uxhal fork, a formidable natural defence to the south.

Uxhal itself was surrounded by the prongs of the forked river, forming a useful



defensive barrier for the Swadian garrison.

The loosely called "King's Forests" consisted of all the forested areas within Swadia. Due to poverty caused by war many peasants became poachers or bandits who decided to hide in these very forests. It is said that many lords died when ignoring warnings of angry peasants hiding among the trees.

Aside from the forests, single river, and valley, Swadian lands were very flat. This made trade very attractive for merchants, even if the risk of encountering bandits was very high.

All manner of wildlife was present in Swadia. Even today it is still a major hunting area for deer and boar.

## **History**

Swadia was once ruled by King Esterich, before the Great Wars period. Having no son he chose his daughter, Lady Isolla of Suno, to become queen.

However, King Harlaus "The Fat" managed to win over the support of Swadia's lords and he, in turn, was crowned king. Harlaus' old age resulted in him not being as active as the other kings of the period, and he was often easily manipulated by his lords.

Eventually Harlaus would develop gut rot, which killed him only a few years later. During the time of unrest Lady Isolla would gain enough support to win back the throne and reign over Swadia.

## **Culture**

The kingdom of Swadia praised chivalry, even if its nobles rarely followed it. Tales of knights fighting bravely against barbarians, demons, and dragons were common place. Some enamoured by these tales would strive to become hedge knights. Hedge knights are warriors or horseman who were not granted a title by a lord. They are self-claimed knights, and their name comes from the fact that many of them had to sleep along hedges, lacking the finances to hold any land of their own.

The nobles of Swadia enjoyed dressing in rich clothing. Velvet, if available, would be used, as well as jewellery. Much attention was paid to their castles, since they would have to be both defendable against invaders and impressive to guests. The interiors would be decorated with tapestries. Richer nobles could afford cutlery and plates made from silver or gold, although plain metal was far cheaper, and considering how often different castles and towns



swapped kingdoms few lords wanted to invest too much money into luxury items.

Duels, while rare, did occur from time to time, especially when one noble insulted another. Sometimes political disputes would be settled with blades but they were never duels to the death.

Among Swadians nobles ransom was a part of any campaign. The capturing of nobles for monetary gain was favoured over killing them, as it was both more chivalrous and profitable, even if the lord would return during the next war with a fresh army.

## **Kingdom of Rhodoks**

### **Geography**

The Kingdom of Rhodoks was a very hilly region of Calradia. While many of its mountains are named, key among them is the Spire, located to the north-east of Yalen. It forms the central tip of the western mountain range. Any Swadian army would be forced to pass through a series of hazardous paths, where a Rhodok army could easily contain a twice larger Swadian force.

Veluca stood at the mouth to the Grand Valley, its surrounding villages each with a series of towers to signal the approach of an enemy army. While arguably the most difficult to defend of the three towns, it withstood countless invasions, although the outlying villages always had to bear the brunt of the invaders, being razed time and time again.

Jelkala was surrounded not only by the eastern mountain range, but also the river which, at the time, was named "Death Pool". The reason for this was a battle in 1260 between Rhodok and Swadia. After conquering Veluca the Swadian army marched proudly forward, until they were stopped at the only bridge leading over the river. They advanced so quickly that the infantry was left behind, unable to catch up with the speeding knights who desired the riches of Jelkala. The Swadian King, Harlaus, had two options. He could either force the bridge, or take the long path around the entire river, passing through the village of Ruldi, and then march straight for Jelkala. This would take at least a two day march with the sheer number of troops in his army, so he opted for the far quicker path. The remnant of the defeated Velucan army, under the command of King Graveth, formed a near impenetrable wall of spears. King Harlaus was so confident of victory that he ordered his knights to smash through the weakened Rhodok lines. Wave after wave smashed into the unflinching Rhodok line, their will reinforced by the presence of their king. What made matters worse were the scores of crossbowmen, on both sides of the spear wall, firing at both the knights and their horses.



The first day of the assault failed, and Harlaus was forced to stall the attack until the infantry caught up. What he was not aware of was another Rhodok force coming from the direction of Yalen. Originally intended to reinforce Veluca, the thousand man strong army fell upon the marching column of infantry, which was quickly routed due to the lack of cavalry to support them, and then poorly defended Veluca, that was quickly retaken.

A runner reached Harlaus' knights, and panic overtook the Swadian knights. The king ordered an immediate retreat, but what was meant to be a strategic withdrawal turned into a rout when each knight and lord tried to save themselves. Enclosed from both sides by Rhodok armies the Swadians were forced through the eastern mountain range. Those that lost their horses during the attack either surrendered to the Rhodoks, abandoned all of their armour to travel lighter, or died in the freezing peaks.

Rhodok lands, just as Swadia, were often ravaged by war. This forced some to hide in the mountains and prey on merchant caravans, passing through largely unprotected mountain paths.

## **History**

One of the most difficult monarchical disputes was present in Rhodok. The Rhodok king was chosen by popular vote, rather than entitlement. Before the Great Wars began the baronial council was still deciding on whether King Graveth or Lord Kastor of Veluca would become king. However, a Swadian raiding party wanted to catch Rhodok by surprise and kill their leadership in a military coup.

Graveth appeared in the council tent and informed the council of what had transpired, stating that if he was not chosen to be king he would allow the Swadians to reach them. Under this pressure the council elected Graveth, who then mustered his men and beat back the invading Swadians.

According to the council's laws, no weapon was to be ever brought to the elections. Graveth broke this law and in essence threatened the council with death. This built the basis of Lord Kastor's claim on the throne.

It is debatable to what extent Graveth was a bad or good king. It cannot be denied that he blackmailed his way onto the throne, but compared to the Swadian king he had the necessary experience, of a soldier and commander, to let the Kingdom of Rhodok survive the Great War. Some sources suggest that Lord Kastor was in fact bribed by the Swadians to undermine King Graveth's rule, causing a civil war, and granting the Swadians an element of surprise.



## **Culture**

The Rhodoks were, for the most part, a peaceful people. They did not have the same ideas of chivalry as the Swadians and instead they preferred a more egalitarian system, allowing for lesser lords and more influential citizens to have a say in the realm's politics. This, of course, changed with the election of Graveth for king, and the endless stream of petty wars and conflicts made it difficult for the common man to voice his opinions before the king.

Rhodok armies were heavily based on discipline and training. While there are conflicting accounts of whether the Rhodok army was a levy or composed of volunteers it is hard to argue with that fact that everybody within the army was equal. The lack of a noble elite, like the Swadians had, would often fool their opponents into thinking that the Rhodoks were inferior.

In many ways though, the Rhodok nobles were similar to their Swadian counterparts. They too favoured all manner of riches and heavier armour. What is interesting to note is that, in the entire Rhodok formation, the noble leading an army would be the only one on horseback. This had its strengths but also presented problems. First and foremost, their own men could see them, so the Rhodoks felt more sure of themselves when they could see their lord at the front. On the other hand, the lord was exposed to bow and crossbow fire.

## **Sarranid Sultanate**

### **Geography**

The Sarranid Sultanate was a very hostile land. Not only was it too hot for the vast majority of Calradians, the desert bandits would often pretend to be merchant caravans themselves, and when their target least suspected it they would pounce.

In Sarranid culture the greatest punishment known to man was to leave somebody in the desert, to wither and die. Even the bandits took pity on raided merchants and they would lead them to the closest watering hole, so that the next caravan could pick them up.

Aside from a number of oases and water holes the Sarranid land lacked any landmarks that could aid in navigation. The southern mountain range, called by numerous names at the time, would be the only natural obstacle between the Sarranid and the rest of Calradia. The Sarranid knew this and at each of the three major entrances to their lands they placed mighty castles to stop any incoming invaders, each one with a major town a day or two away,



allowing for reinforcements to arrive promptly.

## **History**

The Sarranid were always a complicated people, and too their history during the Great Wars is not straight forward.

Before the Great Wars, Sultan Ayzar purchased a slave named Arwa. He was so impressed by her abilities that he made her his steward. Lacking a male heir, Ayzar proclaimed on his death bed that Arwa would rule if she married his most trusted general, Emir Baybak. Soon after her marriage however Baybak was killed in battle while fighting the Khergits.

The lack of a strong male ruler resulted in Arwa being deposed by Sultan Hakim, who quickly managed to restore order in the realm.

In Sarranid history there were no cases of female rulers, only occasional regents. Some historians claim that Arwa's claim was not strong enough to begin with, and that Hakim was deliberately presented in a poor light, since Arwa's supporters did not like the unbribable ruler.

Hakim was, perhaps, the most just of all the Calradian rulers, as many of his lords noted that they had great difficulty manipulating him to their bidding. This did prompt some lords to act far more honourably, and they sought out Hakim's favour only when they had achieved anything of note.

## **Culture**

The Sarranid were a difficult people to understand, to the rest of Calradia. While religion was one obvious difference there were also many other areas where the Sarranid would both shock and intrigue.

Perhaps the most intriguing difference was slavery. While most kingdoms preferred to capture men for ransom the Sarranid preferred slaves over prisoners, when possible. Sarranid slaves were not always used for heavy labour, like in the case of the Nords. A slave in Sarranid captivity would often be trained in finer or more complicated arts, to provide help and guidance to their lords and owners. Surprisingly, Sarranid slaves would be loyal to their masters, although tales of certain slaves revolting against their cruel masters were not unheard of, though these often had a romantic undertone to them.

One example of a slave achieving an incredibly high status, even if for a short time, would be Arwa, mentioned in the previous chapter—a slave who first



become an advisor to her sultan and then, even if for a short while, a queen.

Among the slaves was the Mamlukes. Unlike the lesser nobles from other kingdoms, such as the knights and huscarls, the Mamlukes were akin to an upper-class slave caste. Mamlukes were a purely military class, putting emphasis on archery, horsemanship, and the use of the lance. The Mamlukes, due to their status and training, were some of the most powerful people in the Sarranid Sultanate, and blindly loyal to their lords.

This raises an important question to the entire structure of the Sarranid army. Mamlukes were often trained from a young age to reach their status and training. However, in the Sarranid Sultanate one could advance into being a Mamluke. Some theorise that the entire Sarranid army was not composed of freemen but slaves. While we might find this theory controversial let us remember that the Sarranid treated their slaves differently, to the rest of Calradia. A slave under Sarranid rule might have been far better off than a Swadian peasant.

There was even a practice among Sarranids themselves where family members from lowly peasant families would be sold into slavery in order to achieve the semi-noble status of a Mamluke. This would not only grant a small financial boost to the family itself but also prestige to the slave himself.

We might think that the Mamlukes, being slaves, were nothing like the Swadian knight. In fact, the Mamlukes, and other lesser nobles, followed the Furusiyya. This was akin to knightly chivalry but the interpretations of what was morally just differed from one case to another. It is unknown how closely this system was followed, since the Swadian knights themselves, while technically the epitome of chivalry, were not always honorable or chivalrous themselves.

## **Kingdom of Nords**

### **Geography**

The Kingdom of Nords is a largely sea-based nation. Each of their towns is connected to the sea, allowing for quick transportation between the towns over water. Most still favoured land travel, and while the Kingdom of Nords was rich in numerous landmarks it lacked any natural defences. The only exception would be the river between Sargoth and Tihir known as the Devil's Whip, but because it was a major trade lane there were numerous bridges



built along it, thus allowing armies to travel freely over it.

Numerous fisheries are still present in the once proud Kingdom of Nords, and some of the finest ships are still being produced in their harbours.

## **History**

When the old Nord king died his son, Lethwin Far-Seeker, was studying abroad. Upon hearing about his father's death he sailed back to Calradia, but his ship sunk during a storm. Believing he was dead King Ragnar claimed the throne for himself, by gaining enough support with the other thanes. When Lethwin eventually reached the court, Ragnar refused to surrender the throne, stating that he was now the king.

Fortunately for Lethwin, while Ragnar was a skilled warrior and commander he quickly lost the support of his lords due to greed. Just like King Harlaus, Ragnar was obsessed with land, and many times he would refuse to surrender any of his fiefs to his allies, resulting in ever greater support for Lethwin. At the end of his reign he was, in essence, forced into a corner by Lethwin and his allies and had to surrender the crown.

## **Culture**

The Nords were a warrior culture. Their dedication to war and the sea were unrivalled in Calradia. During the Great Wars they used mainly axes to cut down their foes, while their heavy chainmail suits, together with round shields, protected them from enemy arrows and bolts.

Their dedication to close combat may also be seen in their lack of a disciplined archery force. Aside from mercenaries the Nords lacked trained archers that could match those of other kingdoms. Still, this rarely stopped a Nord huscarl from winning an engagement, and while the Swadian knight, Khergit lancer and Sarranide Mamluke were powerful on horseback they could not match a huscarl on foot.

It would be incorrect to say that aside from their warlike nature the Nords lacked a softer side. One of their other strengths was a disciplined and experienced navy. While they did not have an opportunity to use it during the Great Wars it managed to stop raiders from landing on their coast, at least most of the time. Due to the numerous conflicts present during the Great Wars the navy would often be stripped of men in order to take part in grander land battles, thus leaving the coast unprotected.



While many claim that the Nord culture was dominated by men it was not always the case. Female warriors while rare did appear, but usually with the task of protecting the local lands and homes while men were away fighting. In many cultures women were not mentioned, despite their exploits. Although it is true that in most cultures, such as among Swadians and Rhodoks, women were not expected to fight. Meanwhile among Nords a strong woman was preferred over the princess the Swadians would prefer.

## **Kingdom of Vaegirs**

### **Geography**

The Kingdom of Vaegirs was a land ever consumed by winter. Because of that it was once a major area of fur production, and today many of the most luxurious fur coats come from the region. Sadly, poaching has led to the extinction of a number of species of bear and fox so the queen has banned any hunting in the area.

The one key feature of the Kingdom of Vaegirs was the Khudan River, so named due to Khudan being the first town to be built on the river. The river had been a major trade lane between the Vaegir and Nords, even though the two kingdoms always had a great dislike of each other since the battle of Rivacheg Rock. Rivacheg, to the north, was the sight of numerous Nord sieges, all repulsed by the city's stalwart defenders.

### **History**

The Kingdom of Vaegirs had its fair share of monarchical disputes, just like the rest of Calradia. When the old king of Vaegirs died, his son, Valdym, was too young to take power and a regent was chosen: the deceased king's brother, King Burelek. While still young Burelek attempted to take the throne for himself. He accused the queen of adultery and had her executed, branding young Valdym "The Bastard". The gods alone punished Burelek for this injustice as he died soon after, leaving his son to take the throne, King Yaroglek.

While Yaroglek managed to secure the throne for himself his father's actions were not forgotten by Valdym's followers, and he was kept, in secret, from Yaroglek's knowledge in an unknown location until he could lead the loyalists against the grand betrayal.

Yaroglek, being much older than Valdym, grew too confident on the throne,



and when rebellion erupted there was very little the king could do. While it is unknown what the different stages of the rebellion were, Valdym eventually claimed the throne, deposing Yaroglek. However, despite a righteous rule, his old title remained, and he was forever known in Calradia as Valdym "The Bastard".

## **Culture**

The Vaegirs could be considered a barbaric kingdom but that was not the case. Their use of furs and axes came from the harshness of the land they lived in, rather than some deep-seated barbaric fantasy. However, it is true that the Vaegirs lacked discipline. A Vaegir army would often be composed of more or less experienced tribesmen who would join into their small or larger bands and head into the field. This would sometimes create chaos during a battle as tribes might have begun to fight each other, instead of the enemy, over loot or prisoners.

The Vaegir lords were more akin to warlords, leading the mostly divided tribes under their banners with the promise of riches. Vaegir castles were often built by engineers from outside the Vaegir kingdom, which lacked a skilled workforce. Even if we call the Vaegir barbaric we cannot consider them poor. Their large supplies of iron allowed them to produce plenty of their own weapons and armour that they exported to the surrounding kingdoms. This provided a large bulk of their income which allowed them to afford not only sizeable armies but also outside labour.

In some ways we could look at Vaegirs as a reflection of the Nords. Both kingdoms enjoyed strength of arms over other arts but the Vaegirs were far less disciplined, while the Nords would often work together and develop different battlefield tactics to defeat their enemies.

One of the most notable strategists of the period, Lord Lezalit, noted in his works and diaries that the Vaegirs lacked competent and disciplined warriors. However in his book, "The Joint Forces of Calrad" he spoke highly of Vaegir archers who, in conjunction with troops from other kingdoms, could form the ranged core of an undefeated army.

## **Afterword**

The Great Wars in Calradia might be compared to the Dark Ages. It was a time of anarchy and chaos. Of great uncertainty and death. Build on the



foundation of the Calrad Empire the Calradia of the Great Wars was nothing like its former self. It was a gather of nobles and kings, hungry for wealth and power, while the common folk were nothing more than cannon fodder and money purses waiting to be emptied. While there has been some technological and cultural progress over this time period it was largely overshadowed by the wars and conflicts that plagued it.

It is unfair to say that all the nobles were intent on conflict, or that all the kings desired to be in a constant state of war, but once the initial string of conflict broke out there was nothing that could stop the paranoia of one's neighbor eventually invading your kingdom. The Great Wars ended just as suddenly as they had begun. Eventually even the nobles and kings were too tired to fight. The period after the time of the Great Wars was known as the Rebuild, because of all the construction work and repairs that were done. Slowly Calradia recovered from this dark period, and at least for the next few years its people could rest for the next conflict that was slowly brewing, just over the horizon.



CALPADA



## Tips Introduction

While working the above guide I could not neglect to provide some accurate information about the game, especially if you bought this guide for more than just fluff. So, I gathered tidbits of information from my experiences and internet scowering and gathered them all here. While I will not tell you exactly how to "win" in Mount and Blade you should learn enough here to know what your options are. While Mount and Blade may sound complicated you do not have to do everything to achieve greatness. The pure basics of raising an army and having the funds to maintain it are enough to become a king or a loyal lord.

Being defeated is not something anybody enjoys in any video game, but in the case of Mount and Blade losing your army is not the end of the world. As you gain skills you can quickly train recruits into knights; your land will feed you money, even if you just sit in a town or castle for weeks on end. As a way of relaxing your nerves you could go bandit hunting, or join your fellow lords on ganking raids. You do not have to always be the knight in shining armour, the rescuer of your kingdom. Sometimes a bit of greed pays off in the long-term, combined with self-preservation, over needless sacrifice (ie. Taking part in battles you cannot win).

I hope every one of you finds something useful in these tips. Hold in mind that there are many excellent guides out there that could provide you with more detailed information, on unit types, costs, etc. I cannot provide them as the statistics of different units or actions can change from one patch to the next. Still, these general tips should provide a general direction for your plans.

Enough from me, enjoy!



## **Calradia and You**

In Mount and Blade you are not restricted to only a warlike state. You can choose to trade between towns and cities, and set up a workshop in a town and reap the rewards of a mainly mercantile life. Each kingdom and town produces different goods. This also means that a town will usually have a single type of workshop that is most beneficial. For example, it is a good idea to build a Tools Workshop in Vaegir, because of their iron production.

Mercenaries (like you) also have a lot of work. You, as the character, could make a pretty penny by taking quests from lords, towns, and villages but also gain a lot of experience to rapidly level up. The problem in this case is that these quests will eventually not pay you enough when you have an experienced or large army. It's a good start, but do not rely on them. You may also like to hunt for bandits. While forest or mountain bandits do not have much loot, sea raiders will. Their equipment will not only sell well but you can also use it yourself and save a lot of money.

Eventually you might choose to become a noble. Through having enough fame as a mercenary and money as a merchant having a sizeable army and land will cause you no problems. War in Calradia is always expensive (but it may also be very profitable!). How do you become a noble? When you have enough fame a king might ask you to become a peer of the realm. The alternative is to ask the king for an investiture after you have proven yourself a worthy commander (so, fame).

## **Village and Town Prosperity**

When you become a lord (or king) all the villages under your direct control will make money for you, paid into your account weekly (in Warband) or you will have to collect it yourself (in the first Mount and Blade).

How much money you get depends on the wealth of the town or village. Castles will also bring in a bit of money, although in Warband they will offer much more of it than in the first Mount and Blade. The wealth of a location depends on its prosperity. Prosperity, in turn, is influenced by trade and structures. In other words, all locations tend to have steadily increasing prosperity, thus wealth. A village will eventually become very rich, but a single raid could make it poor again, thus cutting your income significantly.

How to ensure prosperity? There are, as mentioned before, different structures that can increase prosperity (like the windmill for villages, different mods add more buildings that can increase prosperity). The other key factor is ensuring that caravans/farmers travel to and from your locations in peace.



Bandits and enemy armies pose a major threat to your prosperity, especially your villages that lack a garrison. While you might be informed that your land is being looted or besieged you might simply be too far away to react.

In times of peace the only real threat to your prosperity is banditry. Villages are especially threatened by it, since bandits occupying a village will also influence its prosperity and wealth. If you built all the possible structures, and your farmers and caravans travel freely, what else can you do? Quests. Any quest you complete for a village or town will not only increase your standing with them but will also slightly improve their prosperity. While this might be a very troublesome chore, hold in mind that a better standing with a town or village increases your income. In the case of villages you may also receive higher quality troops, to quickly bolster your ranks.

### **Bandits, Deserters and Neutral Groups**

Bandits spawn randomly in the world from different bandit camps. Depending on the bandit type their camps may spawn in different areas. For example, forest bandits have their hideouts in forests, mountain bandits in and around mountains, etc. The best way to track down a bandit hideout is to look for large numbers of bandit groups. Somewhere between them should be the camp.

Destroying the bandit camp will stop the spawning of bandits for a short while. Usually new bandit camps spawn in the same area as the old ones so you might choose to check up on them, once in a while, to see if there are any fresh pickings for you.

Bandit camps, if left to reign the countryside for too long, will begin to gather riches. Usually though the bandit camps will have little in terms of monetary value. They will not hold prisoners, and sometimes taking out the bandit camp can be difficult. This is the case with sea raider landings. You will only have a handful of soldiers, and if they are not strong enough to fight the sea raiders you could find yourself surrounded and quickly defeated. If you are defeated during such a raiding attempt the camp will disappear regardless, but you will not gain anything from it.

Deserters spawn randomly. They do not appear to be connected to how well or badly the war is going for a kingdom. Depending on the kingdom you travel through you will meet said kingdom's deserters. For example, in Swadia you could meet Swadian men at arms, while in Nord-Land you could find huscarls roaming around. While deserters can be far more dangerous than bandits they can let you go if you pay for passage. The money they ask for can sometimes be insignificant, depending on how rich you are, so you might be better off bribing deserters than fighting them. Bandits are not as friendly, and



you will usually end up fighting them without an option of negotiating safe passage (this is especially the case with sea raiders, so beware of them).

Aside from bandits and deserters there are also neutral or friendly groups you can encounter. Man hunters attack bandit groups. They are not associated with any kingdom, so they provide protection for any and all. You could attack them but there is no real benefit in doing that. Merchant caravans are connected to specific kingdoms. That means you could attack caravans from rival kingdoms but this is not always a good idea. Caravans rarely carry anything worthwhile. It is better to demand payment for safe passage from a caravan than attack it. You can do this even with neutral or friendly caravans, though it is better to do so only with rival caravans.

Lastly, there are also farmer groups. Once every few days the farmers from all the villages will head to the closest friendly town. If they survive the journey and get back to their villages this will add to the prosperity of said village. In other words, if your local land is plagued by bandits it would be a good idea to get rid of them so that your farmers can earn more money for you!

## **Marshals and War**

War in Calradia is no laughing matter. Your villages could be razed, your castles besieged, and armies crushed. As a young noble or mercenary you will have little say in how a campaign is led; you will merely be a pawn of another marshal. When a war begins a marshal will be chosen from among the lords. He will then send invitations to the lords of the realm to join in his newest campaign. For you this is an opportunity not only to gain experience through completing quests but also to gain prisoners from successful battles and perhaps even a village or castle.

Campaign Quests are always the same. First you will be asked to scout three locations on the map. These locations usually signal where the campaign will occur but that is not always the case. The problem is not about scouting these locations; you merely have to stay in close proximity to them for a short while (when close to a village/castle you can press the space bar to make time flow while not doing anything). After enough time has passed you should get a small message saying that the location was scouted. Once you have that out of your hair the real problem arises: where the marshal rode off to. If you have invested at least one point in the Tracking skill you will be able to find the army a bit easier (one point lets you see the tracks of every individual lord and the direction he went in, but only during the day and you do not know



how fresh the tracks are). Other than that you will have to rely on in-game reports, such as when the marshal besieges a castle or town. You can also approach a friendly lord from your kingdom and ask him about the location of your marshal or any other lord.

The second, typical, quest is victualing your army. This involves either purchasing oxen from a village or stealing them. Either option works, and you will even get a bit of money for completing the quest. However, only purchase from/raid villages that are close to the marshal. Otherwise you might be ambushed by an enemy army as you are leading the oxen.

The optional quests are normally calls of aid. When your army is besieging a castle or town you might be asked to help. If you take part in the battle you will get a decent amount of experience points, so you may choose to wait a short while before joining an attack just to see if the marshal asks for your help.

You may choose to ignore a marshal's invitation in joining the military campaign but this will make him like you a bit less. If you join the campaign and complete the above quests each one will improve your relations with the marshal. After successful battles or sieges in which you took part in you may speak with the lords who also took part. This may improve their relations toward you.

Eventually, when your experience and power grows, the king may opt to make you the marshal. You will be able to gather the realm's lords and lead them in your own battles and sieges. How successful you are does not influence your relations with the king so there is no wrong in fleeing from a vastly superior enemy army, if it cannot be defeated (although the other lords may be less than impressed).

## **Marriage and Romance**

Yes, you may choose to find a princess to become your wife. It's not easy however. First a lady must be interested in you. As you continue to court you will have to offer her poems you learn from bards. Bards appear in taverns and every week the people you find will differ. Each bard will usually teach you a single poem.

After some time some type of crisis will appear. You might be forced to duel



with the lady's other suitor or to persuade her father to give you her hand in marriage. It's a big hassle, and if there is no war in progress this will most likely steal most of your time.

Why marry? Your wife allows you to host feasts of your own, improve relations with hostile lords of the realm and she increases your right to rule, the moment you marry. It might not be much but if you want to play politics she may greatly help you in that task.

## **Tournaments and Feasts**

Tournaments tend to happen alongside feasts. A tournament gathers all the lords and some of the best fighters of the realm to compete for fame and glory. There is money too, of course.

Winning a tournament will improve your status with the town it's being hosted in. You may choose to bet money on yourself before each round of the tournament to vastly increase your earnings. Furthermore if there is a feast you will be able to join it, as the victor for the tournament. This could offer you a chance to speak with the realm's lords or to find a free lady to flirt with.

## **Combat**

Combat in Mount and Blade is not the simplest but one can clearly learn it, through constant practice. Depending on your mouse movement you can block and attack in different directions. You may also opt to turn on an automatic defense setting, where after clicking the right mouse button your character will block in the direction of the incoming attack. Shields, when used, will stop any attack. However, shields do not protect you whole, not always at least. Small shields will only protect your chest but your head and legs could still be threatened. In Mount and Blade: Warband your shield also offers passive protection, which means that even when you simply hold it and not use it arrows could be deflected by it. Some may choose to have one shield in their hand and one on their back. This will greatly reduce the threat of archers firing from behind you.

Your armour is divided into three categories: chest, legs, and head. Most suits of armour will offer protection to your chest and legs but only a helm can



cover your head. All three are important, especially when you are on horseback. Just like Achilles you could get shot in your foot and killed.

Momentum is very important during combat. Even if you only walk forward and swing your sword you will do far more damage than if you stood in place. Striking from horseback greatly increases the strength of your attacks, especially during a gallop. Certain weapons are easier to use up close. Pole-arms need space in order to perform a full and effective swing; swords on the other hand are far more practical in tight spaces.

Types of armour are not important, armour values is the only thing you should pay attention to. However, heavier armour, weapons, and shield will slow you down greatly. The Athletics skill will allow you to move faster, even in heavy armour

Horses may only be bought with barding or without it (you do not buy horse barding separately). Barded horses tend to move slower but the added protection will allow you to survive a charge, even into Rhodok ranks, almost unscathed. A lighter and quicker horse may be a better choice if you prefer to ride around your enemies and fire at them with your bow.

Then there is the question of quality. Different types of armour, weapons, and horses have different quality levels. Lordly is the highest level for armour and while it will offer the most superior protection it will cost ten times what the item normally costs. In practice, buying lordly items should only be done when you are absolutely swimming in money, since losing the next battle could result in you losing said priceless item. Normal items, without any higher quality levels, are still useful. You also have to take into account that a lordly suit of chainmail (for example) will not be as good as an ordinary full plate, while costing much more. If you are not in a hurry to buy armour visit different towns to see what the best armour they offer is or simply wait from week to week for new offers to appear.

## **Prisoners**

Prisoners are gained during battles, when enemy troops are knocked unconscious. This can normally be achieved through the use of blunt weapons, and certain unit types, such as Swadian knights or mountain bandits, have numerous blunt weapons, allowing you to capture many prisoners.



How many prisoners you can capture after a battle depends on your Prisoner Management skill. Each point allows you to manage five slaves. When faced with a choice of different slaves you should try to keep those with the highest level possible, such as knights, mamlukes, lancers, etc. This is because higher level prisoners will fetch far better prices with ransom brokers who appear randomly in taverns. If you are in desperate need of somebody to sell slaves to you can find Ramun in Tahr at all times. However, Ramun always offers fifty denars for each prisoner, regardless of the prisoner's level. This does mean that you could sell recruits for a bigger profit, but higher level prisoners should be sold to ransom brokers.

Lords who are defeated in battle could also become your prisoners. While they occupy one spot in your prisoner train you can take excess lords when you are full (so, when you can have a maximum of 20 prisoners you could take a lord when you are full, thus having 21 prisoners, or even more). The problem is that waiting for a ransom could take a long while. If a war is concluded you will lose the lords you captured.

Another problem is that you might run out of space for more prisoners. In order to stop that from happening you can store an infinite number of prisoners in your castle or town. This creates a serious hazard however, since an invading army that manages to capture your castle, filled with prisoners, would suddenly get a huge manpower boost. In turn, besieging a city or town filled with prisoners could quickly bolster your ranks, especially if you lost numerous warriors during the siege.

## **Right to Rule**

Right to Rule signifies how much "blue blood" is in you. If you have little right to rule no other kingdom will recognise you, and there is a decent chance you will be conquered by your enemies. By having a high right to rule you can not only live in peace (as a king) but lords might flock to you from other kingdoms.

You gain right to rule in a number of ways. Firstly, peace. Even when you are part of another kingdom, surviving a war will grant you a bit of right to rule. Marriage will also give you a small right to rule boost. Once you are a king you can reinforce your claim by sending emissaries, who will convince the other kings and the common folk that you are not just a usurper.



If you plan on becoming king then you must make sure that your right to rule is as high as possible (its current maximum is 99)

## **War and Peace**

War is very common in Mount and Blade. Sometimes a single nation, like the Swadians, can wage a war on multiple fronts. Sometimes a seemingly peaceful nation can suddenly be invaded by all of its neighbours. Lasting peace is a rare commodity in Calradia. This is especially a problem when you are a king of your own kingdom, or when you are a fresh lord without a strong force to protect your lands. Kings do not agree to peace quickly. Sometimes you might find that a nation being utterly crushed by its opponents will not ask for peace until it is too late.

The hardest job you will have, as a fresh king, will be to protect yourself from a very angry kingdom whose town or castle you have conquered. It will be a very bumpy road that could cost you dearly.

Peace, in some cases, could be your curse instead of blessing. Large, powerful armies cost a lot of money. While in times of war you could raid and plunder villages, during peacetime you are restricted to income from your villages, castles, and town. While this should be enough, it is far more likely that eventually the costs will be higher than the profits, especially if you did not invest in any workshops to produce valuable goods.

However, if you have a castle you could store your wartime army, thus cutting your expenses by half, and reducing food consumption to almost zero. Keeping a few of your best troops as protection is not a bad idea, but considering how war can break out suddenly you should follow the wise words of Vegetius, who said, "If you want peace, prepare for war". This means that as soon as your company is fully trained put them away in a castle or town, grab an army of fresh recruits, and train them up. When war does come you will have a much bigger force and your castle's defenses will be that much tougher.

## **Turning War into a Profit**

As a lord (or mercenary) who is not yet prepared for a major war, being forced into one could cause a lot of problems, especially financially. There is nothing more annoying than your brand new army being crushed by an overwhelming



enemy force when all your allies have fled.

However, if the marshal did not ask you to participate in his newest adventure, or you can afford to ignore him, there is much fortune in raiding enemy villages for goods. Any enemy village that hasn't been already razed (you can tell by fire, smoke, or the state of buildings on the world map) can be approached.

You have a number of options. You can demand supplies from the villagers or steal their cattle. You can even do this with your own villages, so consider this an emergency method of obtaining much needed food, if you do not have the money for it. The warlike action is looting the village. This can only be done if you are in a state of war with a target kingdom. When you loot a village your company/army will be stuck in place for a certain amount of time (looting does not happen in an instant) and only when the village has been completely ransacked will you be able to move. Depending on the prosperity of the village and your Loot skill you might obtain a lot of worthwhile goods to sell in your own towns, such as oil, velvet, or tools. Aside from precious goods you will also get plenty of food. If you are a fresh lord, and did not invest any points into inventory management, you might find it impossible to take all the loot back to your kingdom.

Together with all this loot you will also steal oxen. These you have to escort however, as they will not follow you peacefully. Since you might have a sizeable force and be overburdened with loot you might just opt to kill all of the oxen and take the fresh beef they leave behind and sell it.

If you are after only oxen, because your marshal is in need of them, it is easier and quicker to steal oxen alone (there is such an option) or even buy them (sometimes the prices can be very reasonable).

Performing any of the negative actions above will, at the least, result in a relations drop with the village's lord and the village itself. Worst case scenario will be a relations drop with the kingdom as well.

Take note: when you are looting a village an enemy lord could attack you. However, instead of an open pitched battle you will fight in the village itself. This could be used to your advantage, since some villages have very tight paths and hills you could exploit. Furthermore, the initial enemy force will be largely composed of farmers and will attack in a disorderly manner. As soon



as the battle begins rein in your troops and form them up in a position you consider defensible.

Lastly, if your force is too small (below fifty men) you could find the villagers resisting your attack and perform a feeble attempt at stopping you. If you have even a handful of skilled soldiers this should pose absolutely no threat to you, but to be on the safe side carry around at least the fifty or so recruits than just ten Swadian knights.

## **Morale**

Morale is the measure of your company's or army's willingness to fight. Morale is just as important on the campaign map as it is during a battle. An army with a low morale will have soldiers who might flee far sooner, which could technically mean that a more numerous army will flee from a smaller force, if the push is hard enough.

A low morale will result in people deserting your army, and your army will also move far slower than otherwise it could on the world map. This could be very dangerous during a military campaign, especially on the retreat, or when your most expensive and skilled troops are leaving you.

Low morale is caused by a number of things. The most common reasons are military defeats, hunger, no pay, and abandoning troops (when trying to evade a battle). High morale can be achieved through victories, numerous types of food (the more varied your selection the better), and your leadership skill. Another factor that adds to morale is your army size. The bigger your army the more positive morale you will need to counteract the loss of morale.

Even a small victory will provide a morale boost, so chase down weaker lords or bandits. Take part in battle you are sure you will win. Even if later you suffer a loss the positive morale will be overwhelming.

## **Helping out the Pretenders**

Siding with a pretender is never an easy task. You are, in essence, leading your new lord's only army against an entire nation. I think you can begin to see how things can go terribly, terribly wrong with that plan.



It is not an impossible task, but in order to achieve victory you will need a very powerful army by your side, capable of taking on far bigger and experienced forces. Then you must conquer the entire nation. The only real tip I can provide here is: build up a huge monetary reserve and an even bigger army.

Once a pretender is victorious you will be his permanent marshal and you may choose to proceed to conquer the rest of Calradia under the rule of your new lord or lady.

## **Travel**

Calradia is a vast land. Travelling from one end to the next will take you a lot of time. This is especially troublesome when you are a merchant, with a caravan full of goods, that could be attacked by a force of bandits. In turn, having a vast army that is too slow to catch up with any enemy lord can also be frustrating. How does one travel quickly in Calradia then? There are a few methods to increase your travel speed.

First and foremost, the bigger your army the slower it is. If your army is entirely composed of footmen (such as Nord or Rhodok armies tend to be) you could find yourself to be very sluggish on the world map. In turn, a Khergit army is very quick, because almost all of their units are on horseback. This could mean that during a campaign you might opt to leave behind all your infantry and only take your knights to hunt down enemy lords. It could be risky and expensive, especially if you run yourself into a trap.

There are other ways of increasing your campaign speed. Pathfinding is a skill that increases the speed of your army, and the more points you add the faster you will move. It is one of the most beneficial skills to have when you have a sizeable army. Combined with a highly mobile force (such as the Khergits) you will be zooming between towns in no time.

Another way to increase your movement, especially when you carry a lot of cargo, is to hold a few horses in your inventory. These horses do not have to be expensive, even the cheapest horse will aid your caravan/army.

Another factor to take into account, especially when you are retreating, is morale. A low morale, caused by defeat or leaving soldiers behind, will drastically reduce your campaign speed. This can create a very dangerous cycle of you constantly abandoning men and trying to flee, but being too slow the enemy will continue catching up with you. The problem is that you cannot suddenly boost your morale when on such a retreat. You can try to defeat the



enemy, but if that is not possible you should abandon your army, by dismissing the footmen at least, and then using your smaller numbers to outrun the enemy. You can also attempt to discard heavier items from your inventory.

## **Battles**

When fighting an enemy force there are a few things to keep in mind. Depending on the region your army is in, the map will reflect it accordingly. Flat plains on the world map will give you a, most likely, flat battlefield; mountains or even hills will create a very uneven battlefield. It is important to realise this so that if you are forced to fight an enemy you will choose the best type of battlefield for your army. Using a Swadian force composed mainly of knights on hilly terrain, within a forest, could mean a brutal defeat, or at least much higher losses.

When it comes to AI tactics they are usually very predictable. Bandits always charge en masse. This should allow you to easily repel them if you quickly position your soldiers accordingly. This also means that you can easily drag away the attention of the bandits by circling them on a horse, and while they chase you your archers will mow them down. The only case when bandits follow any discipline is when they join a lord's army (this can happen when they are rescued as prisoners). Otherwise, expect only a disorderly mob. The same will apply to farmers, caravans, and man hunters. This makes them very easy to defeat, unless their mob is larger than yours, or you are unable to position yourself on time.

AI nobles can be far more challenging, especially on different mods. There are three types of behaviour you can observe. The most standard behaviour is the "advance in formation". The AI noble will form a single long line with his infantry and advance. Sometimes there might be a few lines, but this is usually caused by some units advancing quicker than others. Once the lord is within a certain range of your front line his army goes into default bandit mode. This also means that reinforcements coming in from your enemy's camp will charge forward, rather than regroup. If you manage to efficiently take out the first cluster of enemies the rest will pose absolutely no problem for you. You can force the enemy into losing formation sooner by riding around their main force with your cavalry, or taking down a few of their men with bow or blade. It will not always work, but if you want to sow chaos try taking out a few enemy soldiers.

The second AI mode for nobles is the defensive. The enemy will form a solid defense on their spawn, forcing you to march over to them. Here, just like in the first case, you can force the enemy to lose formation by taking down some of their soldiers, or simply by charging in with your cavalry and then



pulling out. Then you will be able to maintain your own position, while the enemy charges blindly forward. The danger of attacking the enemy in their own spawn is that reinforcements will reach them very quickly. If your attack is too quick and brutal you might find the enemy spawning right on top of you. This mode tends to happen when the enemy is losing, or when you have a far superior army.

The third mode, which is in essence bandit mode, occurs when the enemy believes they outnumber you significantly, or if they think they can just sweep you off the ground. While this might be the case, keeping your head in place and quickly organising your troops might turn the tide and allow you to win the engagement.

Usually there is a single battle when armies meet, but during especially large engagements (such as when a few lords fight each other) there will be numerous battles. If there is a situation where you might lose entirely it is sometimes enough to win the first battle. If you manage to defeat the enemy even once you will have the option to leave the engagement. This is better than leaving men behind to evade a battle, because you will not suffer the morale drop. Sieges operate on a similar idea. When besieged and you defeat an enemy assault you will have a few hours of rest before the next engagement. If you have high enough healing skills this could let you recover some lost men for the next assault.

## **Sieges**

Sieges only occur when you attack (or are attacked in) a castle or town. Castles are much easier to conquer than towns, because castles have only a single stage, which if won automatically lets you claim the castle. Towns have three stages. The first stage, in both cases, is similar. You move up ladders or push up a siege engine to the walls and then quickly charge at the defenders. The problem is that if you fall during a siege you could automatically lose the attack or defense, so it is imperative that you stay somewhere safe, or wear the best possible armour. Even then, do not attack in the first wave. However, taking part in the battle might be better than sending your men alone when you have less but more elite troops, such as huscarls. With an automatic outcome you might lose to Khergit defenders while using Nord attackers.

Depending on your engineering skill it will take a few hours or even days to prepare for an attack. The higher your engineering skill the quicker you will be able to attack. Even though it is possible I do not recommend besieging a castle for too long. Castles and towns have a food supply for thirty days. That



means that in order to conquer a castle you would need a big enough force not to be kicked away from the castle, and enough food to keep it fed for over thirty days. This does not include the pay for your soldiers which would also weigh you down. There is simply no reason for you to sit in front of a castle for so long when you can train and prepare a grand army, within the same time period, and conquer the castle or town in a single swoop.

## **Companions**

As you adventure through Calradia you will meet many different people. Chief among them are the companions. Companions move between taverns and their stories differ as to why they are looking for work. Each companion has a different set of abilities and different likes and dislikes. Due to their varying origins, professions, and personalities you will not be able to have every single companion available in your army without them disliking one another.

When you are still a mercenary or young lord your companions will aid you in your travels and they can cover for your lacking in skills. Artimenner, for example, can act as your company's engineer and builder, increasing the building speed in towns, villages, and castles as well as preparing siege engines. Jeremias, in turn, is a very useful medic for your company, but if you wanted both Artimenner and Jeremias in your party they would dislike each other greatly.

Some companions actually will like each other, and through interacting with your companions, once in a while, you could learn how they feel about your company/army.

The problem with some companions is that they might dislike you for performing certain actions. Jeremias, for example, does not support village raids or attacking farmers. While performing one negative action will not cause a crisis you should be careful regardless.

Eventually when you become king you can put your companions in positions of power and choose one to act as your emissary, who will promote your rule throughout the realm. Here again you have to be careful. Companions who are not of noble birth or origin will not be welcomed by other lords when they are given a title. In turn your choice of emissary could also make one of your companions angry.



## Warlord or Scholar?

When pondering on your beginnings in Mount and Blade I am certain one of your questions would be, "Should I invest in fighting skills and abilities, or economic/support skills?" The simple answer would be, "Depends what you want to achieve." Being a warrior means you can take the fight to the enemy far sooner. You might become the weight that always shifts the balance of battle in your favour. Since there are so many different companions around, they could plug your deficiencies in skills while you focus on the fighting. However, certain skills are connected directly to you, such as Leadership, Prisoner Management, and Inventory Management. While some companions might have skill points in these skills they will not benefit you in any way. When looking at your character sheet you can see which skills are Party, Personal, and Leader skills.

Personal skills benefit you directly. These are normally combat skills, so if you want to improve your combat abilities you have to look at these. Party skills are influenced by you and your companions. These are skills that your companions can contribute toward, if you lack them. Leader skills benefit the party, but it is only up to you how much good they are (as explained above).

If you plan on waging war you have to focus on your leader skills, but whether you want to be a scholar or warrior depends on whether you want to focus more on personal or party skills. You might as well combine the two. You do not have to be proficient in every single weapon, only a chosen few. You also do not need to know every single support ability. You could be a master swordsman with a high training skill, to rapidly reinforce your army if you suffer losses, supported by Jeremias, who will reduce the chance of death in your company.



## **Final Word**

Just like I said at the introduction to this Guide, there is a lot to do in Mount and Blade. You have many possibilities and options layed out in front of you. What you choose to do with them is your own choice. While I hope you found this guide useful I also hope that you will learn much more through your own adventures in Calradia.

Best of luck!