



THE MINISTRY OF CENTRAL PRISON

THE FALKOVNIAN „BLACK RAVEN“

Navigare necesse est

Transport

The prisoners of Falkovnia are generally transported in carriage known as “the black raven” or just “the raven”.

This is a two horse drawn carriage. It is made of wood and painted black, the door is made of iron bars and locked (to open one must make Open Lock check DC 25; DC 30 if tried to open from inside) and 6 people can be there “comfortably”, although usually there are more prisoners. There is always at least one soldier riding or walking behind the “raven”, who must keep an eye on the prisoners. If dangerous prisoners are escorted then there are at least two bloodhounds (known as Drakov’s bloodhounds) included.

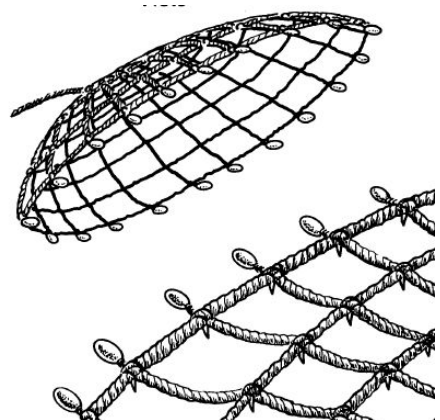
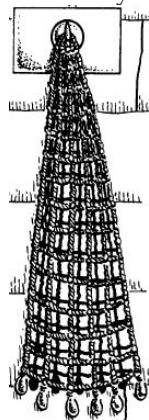
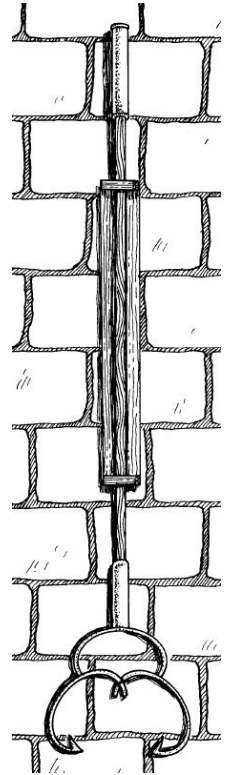
In case the prisoners’ lives must be spared the guards have clubs (wrapped with something soft), man-catchers and or nets.

Club, wrapped: as club, but deals only subdual damage.

Man-catcher: if the attacker makes a successful touch attack with a

man-catcher with -4 circumstance penalty, then it is stuck around the victims neck and attacker may move him/her with successful opposed Str roll (and the attacker gets now +4 circumstance bonus). To break oneself free, the victim must make Str check DC 22. Every round the victim is moved or he/she tries to break free he/she suffers 1d2 points of damage.

Net: The attacker makes opposed ranged touch attack roll against defender’s Reflex save. If the attacker wins, the defender’s limbs are effectively immobilized. To break free the victim must make Str check DC 25 or Dex check DC 20. If the attack fails, the net can be used again but with -3 penalty because it is not correctly folded.



The guards are usually the lowest and cruellest of all the Falkovnian soldiers.





The Falkovnian guard: Human War 3; CR 2; SZ M Humanoid (human); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 20ft; AC 16 (touch 10, flatfooted 15, masterwork scale mail+shield); Atk +5 melee (1d6/x2 short sword, 1d6 club, 1d2 man-catcher) or +3 ranged (1d10/19-20 heavy crossbow, net); AL: LE; SV Fort: +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Ride +6; Jaded, Weapon Focus (club, man-catcher or short sword).

Signature possessions: masterwork short sword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork scale mail, optionally whips or scourges.

Drakov's bloodhounds: SZ M Animal; HD 2d8+2 (12); Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk Bite +5 melee (1d6+1/x2); SQ Scent; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6; AL: neutral; CR 1.

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +7, Swim +9, Wilderness Lore +12; Track, Scent.

These are big and vicious dogs bred by Drakov himself and his men. They have keen scent and therefore excellent tracking ability. They are big, black and look like wolves or mastiffs. Among falkovnians they are known as "Drakov's bloodhounds" and it is said that they never lose their prey (which is not true) and greatly feared among commoners. Sometimes they are used as war-animals, too, in which case they are armoured.

Feeding during transport is poor at best: 200 g of bread per day and some sips of water. It is not nourishing,

hence the hit points return at half their normal rate.

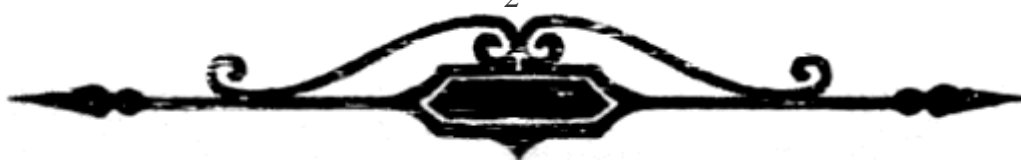
During the break there are two guards guarding the door and they are not allowed to speak with the prisoners, except to give them short orders. As the border between "short order" and "speaking" is shady, some guards may speak with prisoners, but the majority prefers silently kick and beat the prisoners to make them understand their silent gestures. Only the convoy's leader is allowed to speak with prisoners.

If there is a doubt that the prisoners are spellcasters, then guards disturb their sleep, beat their teeth out, cut tongues out and/or break or cut their fingers. Or kill them at once.

The prisoners are searched thoroughly and all equipment is removed (often most clothes, too). Dangerous prisoners are manacled and sometimes the guards use "drakov chains": these are manacles named so in prisoners' slang, because these were invented by Vigo Drakov. The idea is that when prisoner pulls the manacles or tries to break free, the manacles press around the arm more tightly and stay like that. Basically it is possible to stop the blood circulation in hands by pulling the manacles.

If the prisoners somehow escape: some guards go on foot, some with horses and dogs, some ride to cut the escapees escape route and some shoot with crossbows.

During winter-travel there are no special clothes, hence on these trips lots of prisoners die.





THE FALKOVNIAN CENTRAL PRISON

Ubi nil vales, ibi nil veils

Arrival

Central Prison is a massive rectangular building. It is built with large hewed brimstone blocks, it looks dirty and roof is flat and jagged. Around the building there are two walls with towers, inner wall (lower) and outer wall (higher).

New prisoners are transported through two great gates in the walls and let out from "the raven" in prison yard. There is one officer and some guards, the crossbowmen watch the newcomers from the towers, ready to loose their deadly arrows.

There is one tower with two crossbowmen once after 100 meters. And next to the wall is a ploughed soil 10 meters wide (it makes running slower, crossbowmen can shoot the refugees longer and the footprints are also easily seen when tracking is required).

The prisoners are taken to "welcoming room". There are an officer and some guards and Toholl (detailed later).

The officer interrogates them a bit, writes up the names and why they are here and says into what cell they must be put. And since then they are numbers (no. 356 means that he is from the cell number 356 and no. 245a means he is one prisoner from the cell number 245).

The officer also makes a small summary of rules in prison:

1. when there is an awakening bell, everybody must wake immediately
2. no lying down during day, sitting and standing allowed
3. if the prisoner refuses to obey, he/she is killed or tortured or hanged or staked or beaten or sent into solitary (solitary cell)
4. escape is considered treason
5. no complaints: if some officer asks if there is any complaints then one must answer with loud and clear voice "No, officer, I am more than content!". And if they do not say it, it is considered disobeying (officer may even make a show with Toholl: "Toholl, what happened to that butcher who complained?" - "Eh, he was a tough case, I had to tramp him half an hour before his ribs started to crackle and blood came from his mouth. After that he lingered on for two days before he died. Like a cat, damn.")
6. timetable: 8.00 awakening and breakfast, 10.00 walking and emptying the "parask" (shit-pot, all foreign slang words should be pronounced phonetically), 14.00 lunch, 20.00 dinner, 21.00 sleep-time.
7. during morning walk each cell must empty their *parask*





8. once every two days the cell's floor must be washed. The tools are given by the guards.

Then the prisoners are searched from everywhere (including mouth, nose, ears, throat, and butt). Then their hair is cut to zero, grey prison clothes are given and poor creatures are sent to their cells. Usually two guards transport prisoners, who say an obligatory warning (in a really monotonous voice, because they have said it millions of times): "step to the right, step to the left is considered a run, we use weapon without warning".

Cells

Cells are named in prison slang as "kubrik". There are 8 "beds" (actually wooden platforms), but usually there are 10-16 prisoners in one cell. Men of lower "rank" and "cocks" (whores) sleep on the floor.

There are small trapdoors in the door. Neither of them can be opened from inside. The prisoners are watched from upper trapdoor (with bars) and food is given from lower trapdoor.

The "beds" are two storey platforms; *parask* is in the corner and usually more than full. Stench is awful: the scent of piss, shit, blood and sweat is overwhelming.

Approximately 2 meters from the floor there is a small window with bars (small person may squeeze through, but larger cannot). The bars may be pulled away with Str check DC 30.

Newcomers are always watched like freaks or some interesting show.

Then older prisoners usually try to check what kind of man the newcomer is. For example: one guy comes and orders them to sleep on the floor and wash the floor. If this is accepted, they are weak and treated as such. If fight breaks out, the others join in and if newcomer is brave and strong or even wins, the *kubrik* leader (usually the toughest guy) puts an end to the fight and newcomer is accepted. Of course, showing oneself as weak is dangerous: you must sleep on the floor, your food is often taken, you wash the floor, maybe you become a cock or whore etc. There is also an aphorism: "Once a whore, always a whore".

In every *kubrik* there is also a *kubrik* leader. He has "friends" (i.e. bodyguards), he is the strongest (either by physical strength or on rare cases by willpower), and he decides who washes the floor etc.

Sometimes the newcomer may be lucky and be in *kubrik* where people are not so beast-like: intellectuals etc. In this case the welcome is warmer. But usually such "weak" people are cocks or floor washers.

If newcomers are accepted they may be warned: do not use magic (it usually results in immediate death), no disobeying (better treatment and less beating), they are warned from "cows" (the one who gives away fellow prisoners) and are warned from becoming a cow, for cows are killed by prisoners. If some guard beats you - do not fight back, it is useless and they will beat you harder or even cut your limbs (in which case you will probably become a cock). "*Palatnoors*" are





prisoners held for little crimes, they give food and do other works and are often cows.

Timetable

8.00 is awakening and eating (food: 450 g of bread for a day, so-called "bread-*paika*"). 10.00 starts walking: about 5 cells at time are escorted to the inner yard, where they may walk and must empty the *parask*.

Inner yard is in the middle of the prison (so the prison is actually rectangular and has an open yard in the middle), it is about 40 meters in diameter, with two doors. On the second floor there is a balcony where are crossbowmen. In one wall there is a big groove where *parask* must be emptied. The groove goes into the prison wall, turns into a pipe and is half-filled with water (and shit and piss and puke etc.). It is wide enough for a human to crawl on his/her knees. The pipe carries the faecal outside. The pipe's both sides have bars and locks (Open Lock or Str check DC 30). Basically it is a way for escape, but there is a rumour that there live strange and dangerous beasts in the pipes... and also, the patrols often check the outer end.

For lunch (14.00) is soup - or more like grey water, sometimes there is nothing solid, for dinner (20.00) is porridge (also more like water). Food is served in tin bowls.

After dinner is the change of guards. At this time the guards count the prisoners and knock the window bars with wooden hammer (to check if they make the right noise or has

somebody filed them). Usually the guards guard in the corridors.

The guards are changed 8.00 and 20.30 - so they are quite bored at the end of the day.

Daily Life in Central Prison

Generally, long term imprisonment is unknown in Central Prison - prisoners are condemned (on smaller cases by an officer, on severe cases by a judge) and executed or sent to hard labour camps. The process takes usually 1 week to six months. However, in Central Prison some people rot for ages - they are either really forgotten or deliberately forgotten (to break someone's will, he/she is somebody whose life is important but is dangerous outside).

Women are apart from men. Despite the fact that they are generally not sent to hard labour camp nor to gladiatorial arena (because Vlad Drakov is a chauvinist and do not think women are able to do something useful there), their condition and future is even worse. Death is still the main punishment, beatings are also frequent and female prisoners are as cruel as male, but some women are sent to kingfuhrer to be his concubine and the officers of Central Prison use them as their own mistresses. Some of them must make clothes for other prisoners, wash the corridors etc., i.e. do the only thing Drakov thinks they are capable of.

All items are forbidden in the Central Prison. Hence, smuggling flourishes. The prisoners get items from corrupted guards who sometimes





smuggle something in or some prisoner manages to steal something from a guard.

Common is to break bowl's ear and make knife from it (if guards do not notice the missing ear, which they generally don't - there are lots of missing ears on bowls); occasionally somebody has a fail, cards, dices etc. These are hidden carefully, but during "smoon" (occasional searches in *kubriks*), these are often found, because searchers are much more experienced than prisoners, who have been in much less time. The owner is beaten or tortured or maimed or executed. If the owner is unknown then the whole *kubrik* is punished, but usually nobody talks. But sometimes somebody does and if culprit is respected among fellow prisoners, the poor cow is going to have a hard time... beating (to the guards it is said that cow fell), killing (strangling and later the killers say that the cow had heart attack etc.). Technically, killing fellow prisoner is considered treason, because prisoners are Drakov's property, but in reality nobody actually cares. If culprit is found, he is executed, but if not, it's not a big deal. At least usually.

During interrogation guards use many different methods, from convincing to torturing (both physical and mental torturing).

Physical torture: so-called "shoe" (knees are put between big pincers and screwed together, the knees press together, which makes considerable pain);

"bench": rectangular frame, limbs are tied on a wheel and if wheel turns,

the joints break, after that a "doctor" repairs the joints, which is as painful;

victim's hands are tied to his legs and then left for days;

"iron necklace": victim is hanged with metal collar, legs barely touch the ground;

"night-guard": victim sits on a sharp triangle and the tip penetrates either anus or vagina;

"pear": looks like pear, torturer puts it into prisoners mouth, anus or vagina and pushes a button. The shell opens and penetrates flesh; it is very popular because the injuries are hidden and one can say that the prisoner was not tortured;

"cat's claw": with rake looking tool victim's flesh and skin is torn;

"standing cells": prisoner is put into a chamber 1x1,5 meters big. The victim cannot stand nor sit and stays like that for days.

And of course, on easier cases usual practice is beating, tearing off victims nails, maiming.

Mental torture: threat to kill one's family on front of his/her eyes (which is actually practiced, too);

"good and bad officer": after torturing comes other interrogator, who is passionate towards victim, listens to him/her, gives food and drink, promises to help him if he talks etc.

To get secrets, guards use cows and *palatnoors*. In this case, prisoner is put to solitary.

For example, to know who prisoner's relatives are, a "friendly" *palatnoor* offers him/her paper and ink to write to relatives. If poor wretch





accepts, the letter with address is given to the officer.

If prisoner is in solitary then other "prisoner" comes, who actually is a cow, and tries to win criminal's trust.

Against spellcasters guards have also their own methods: immediate executing, tying, keeping awake, beating teeth out, maiming or witchbane leeches (*Denizens of Darkness, Leech, Witchbane*, pg. 90) that must not be removed and are checked after every six hours (basically, while carrying witchbane leech a spellcaster cannot memorize spells and for each leech there is 5% chance of spell failure).

If prisoner is ill he/she is either killed or put to solitary (in fear of infection). The doctor makes a visit and he gets warm blanket and better food. Note, that killing prisoners is not very popular - they are needed for hard labour, gladiators, mistresses, for kingfuhrer's evening entertainment etc.

Sometimes *smoons* are made.

Executing platform is in the yard, clearly seen by newcomers and some prisoners. Usual execution methods: victim is sent to Draccipetri for Drakov's evening entertainment, hanging, staking, boiling in oil, quartering, burning, beheading, whipping to death, cutting the throat and then tramping on stomach, cutting the stomach and pulling intestines out, pouring hot tin into eyes etc. Execution is considered an art by Central Prison executioner and he always finds new entertaining ways to kill. Many guards enjoy the show.

Central Prison collaborates with Ministry of Science and Ministry of Intelligence. The latter gives and gets information and sometimes prisoners. For Ministry of Science the Central Prison is a vast stock of new people for Vjorn Horstman's experiments (for example witchbane leeches are Ministry of Science's discovery).

The Ministry of Central Prison must also choose men to become gladiators, organize gladiatorial fights and fill and organize hard labour camps. Also they have a pact with Vladimir Ludzig, who gets victims for his feeding houses from the Central Prison. On every Thursday one vampyre comes and collects some prisoners.

As one can see - it is not good to waste the prisoners. Falkovnia needs prisoners. They need them for Drakov, for gladiators, for the Ministry of Science, for the Ministry of Intelligence, for vampyres, for daily jobs, for hard labour camps. And unfortunately the prisoners die anyway, due to disease, exhaustion, torture, and occasional fighting.

Escape

Escape from Central Prison is next to impossible. In every tower on the wall there are two crossbowmen, on the roof there are ten. Prisoners' counting is at 20.30.

If somebody has escaped, horns will be blown. Twice as much as usual men will be patrolling outside; little squads are collected (five men or so) who will search the whole prison; the ploughed area is checked to find





footprints; squads on horseback will go searching; for common folk it is forbidden to help refugees and must immediately report if seen (in prison clothes); on severe case the pictures are made and shown to the commoners; one squad goes and checks the shit-pipes outer end. And Vigo Drakov starts to execute incompetent and treacherous guards and officers. However, escaping is very rare.

Dread possibility: in Lekar lives a vampire, who feeds on prisoners rotting in solitary. If the prisoner talks about it, he/she is not believed and if somebody believes, he/she remains silent. Or possibly the guards kill the prisoner (to avoid panic, to prevent him from becoming a vampire, to defend them from possible vampire dominated prisoner, to defend them from his evil eye etc.). The majority of prisoners believe that white mist pouring in from the window and pale man are just part of their nightmares. But still, there are gossips about the pale visitor at night.

Important Characters

There are many different people in Central Prison: murderers, thieves, thugs, but also many educated men and women, intellectuals, so-called traitors, rebels, poor peasants who had no supplies to pay the tax, or just unlucky people.

Vigo Drakov: Vlad Drakov's son and the falkfuhrer of the Ministry of Central Prison.

Officer Vladimir Vostok: ordinary Falkovnian officer. Cruel, loves to torment and torture the

prisoners. Friend of Toholl. Likes to drink a lot (and is especially cruel when drunk), but is drunk only at the evenings. Tall, skinny, otherwise nice-looking guy, but red nose gives a hint that he loves alcohol too much.

Toholl: Ftr 5, caliban, very big and strong. "Official" beating man, used to be *palatnoor*, but now is Vostok's friend and basically works for the Central Prison, although he formally is still a prisoner. He has his own comfortable room and is very content. He is especially cruel, strong and evil, delights on beating the helpless. For a caliban, he is only a bit deformed. Among prisoners he is also known as the Butcher. Sometimes he beats victims to death.

Mercy: prisoner, caliban Ftr 4; HD 4d10; hp 34; Init +3; Spd 30ft; AC 15 (touch 15, flatfooted 15, Dex+natural armour); Atk +9 melee (1d2+5 fist) or +7 ranged; AL: NE; SV Fort: +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +8; Sense Motive +5, Bluff +6, Jaded, Improved Unarmed Fighting, Back to the Wall, Stunning Fist, Power Attack.

For a caliban "beautiful" (except his face), tall, strong, a bit hunchbacked, too long arms, hard skin, bald, with little fangs, half a face is like without skin, hole in the cheek (the teeth can be seen).

He was caught on crossing Darkon and Falkovnian border. Murderer, thug, have been in Darkon prisons, too. Fighting machine, but not stupid, he has some animal-like cunningness. Somewhat kind-hearted





- may sometimes do good even without his own purpose (or maybe because he wants to silent his conscious). *Kubrik* leader.

Plumfeld: „intellectual“, originally clerk of one officer, but stole a bit money for his kids. *Palatnoor*.

Tolik Karpov: „cow“, official man for sending to solitary to win somebody's trust. He is a very convincing actor. His usual story is that he was caught because he is Falkovnian freeman.

FALKOVNIAN HARD LABOUR

CAMP

Mens sana in corpore sano

Arrival

Women are generally not taken to hard labour camps - for aforementioned reasons.

There are two different kinds of camps: temporary and permanent.

Temporary are used for temporal works: road-building, wall repairs etc. In this case the convicts' legs are chained at all times, they live in the middle of the camp, around the prisoners are patrols, guards live around them in blankets and the outer ring consists of officers' tents. And around all this the guards patrol. In every such camp there are always *Drakov's* bloodhounds.

The convicts work in leg chains, occasionally they are chained together in pairs. At the evening guards count the prisoners.

Such camps are very exhausting and dying due to hard labour is common.

Permanent camps are usually situated near some mine. It is surrounded by walls and manned by permanent garrison.

Convicts are sent to camps in caravans of "black ravens" (so-called "tapp"). On arrival the prisoners will stand in a row while an officer counts them, makes a little summary of rules, they will be searched, the officer asks if somebody has some profession (blacksmith, carpenter etc.). And if somebody has then he will be working on that profession (unless the camp already has one or two), officer also asks their names and writes them into a book and marks with a number, then "narjachik" (convict whose work is to say who works where. In hard labour camps the state also uses prisoners as workers, just like in the Central Prison are *palatnoors*) says in what group somebody will work. Usually in the same groups are prisoners with similar accusations - murderer with murderers, political prisoners with political prisoners etc. Then the newcomers get blanket and "mattress" (which is quite hard) and the convicts are sent to barracks. All this takes lots of time.

In barracks there is the same initiation that in the Central Prison. They also have *kubrik* leaders.

Timetable

Eating is 5.00 AM, 12.00-13.00 and 21.00, but food is a bit better and nourishing than in prison (i.e. 700 g of





bread, soup consists little bit more cabbage and it has a bit more fat, the porridge is more nourishing). Work starts at 6.00, the work lasts in two parts for 14 hours. 22.00 is sleeping time, then moving outside the barracks is forbidden and violators of this rule will be killed or maimed or put into "kartser" (solitary cell where only bread and water is given, this weakens the prisoner a lot, after two days in *kartser* one is fatigued (-2 Str, -2 Dex), after six days one is exhausted (-6 Str, -6 Dex), which makes working very difficult). It cannot be recovered through usual ways - prisoner must rest full 24 hours to recover from fatigue and full 24 hours to become fatigued from exhausted.

12.00 ends the first part of the work and convicts will be moved from work-zone to life-zone. It takes about half an hour - when moving from one zone to another the convicts are searched in groups of five.

Camps

Permanent camps are divided into two parts or zones: life-zone and work-zone, between these two is strict control and patrolling.

Camps are usually under very steep mountain, so that the side of a mountain is like natural wall. Around the camp is three meters high wall, after every one-hundred meters is a tower with crossbowmen. Next to the wall there is a ploughed ground 10 meters wide. There is also an inner wall that surrounds the work zone. On the walls the guards patrol.

In the camp are wooden barracks, where prisoners have some limited freedom, soldiers generally do not go there. In the middle of the camp is a stone building where officers, camp captain and doctor live. It also serves as a retreat point to guards in case of upraise. There are pigeons who deliver urgent messages to the falkfuhrer of the Ministry of the Central Prison.

Ordinary guards live in barracks; one of these serves as hospital, too.

Daily Life in Camp

The usual work in the camps is mining (salt, iron, copper, silver, limestone etc.) or lumbering.

Generally spellcasters are not allowed to camps - they are executed instead. But exceptions exist. In this case guards use the usual methods to make one incapable for spellcasting.

Work-zone is smaller area, usually only mining dungeons and some space in front of exit. Between work- and life-zone is wall and guards: every prisoner who passes the gate will be searched. It is forbidden to bring tools to life-zone. The convicts bring the mined material out from the dungeons on little wagons, where controller writes down behind each name how many wagons each convict brings. Then transport-worker (also convict, guards are supposed to control him especially carefully) pushes the wagon out where the material is loaded on bigger carts and sent to Lekar, Silbervas or some other city. Peasants or convicts drive these caravans. Convicts' legs are chained and escorted by a convoy.





Convicts are divided into brigades lead by the brigadier. In every brigade are approximately 50-70 prisoners, commonly there are 6-12 brigades in one camp. Every working day takes down half imprisonment day - so the convicts have motivation to work. However, usually the sentence is long enough to make convicts work till they die.

Work is incredibly hard (especially when mining limestone) - mining with picks, crowbars, spades; bigger stones must be broken with big hammers; heaving the stones into wagons and pushing them out. But the norm must be filled - otherwise one gets less food (400 g of bread, less soup). And if one gets less food, his/her strength will fail and he can't make it up and eventually may die. If one makes more than norm, he gets more food (900 g of bread, two soups). Older convicts have their own tricks how to work more efficiently ("bring hammer with special jerk up... uuh, see, like that... and then let it fall on the stone... see? Do not hit! Just let it fall.").

Norm is 5 wagons. There is no use to make more than seven - these will be taken (controller writes other wagons on somebody else's account). If the controller is accused, he says that a prisoner cannot get more wagons with threats and some guards come closer... this is a common method for a controller to avenge to his enemies. For example he may put 4 wagons on one's account instead of five.

To make back the missing wagon one must produce more wagons next

day (six, if last day it was four, 7, if it was three etc.).

Filling the norm: one wagon Str check DC 2, it is cumulative (i.e. 5 wagons DC 10). If a convict can't make it, then he gets less food and if he gets less food in five days he is exhausted, if 20 days, he is exhausted. It cannot be recovered through usual ways - prisoner must rest full 24 hours to recover from fatigue and full 24 hours to become fatigued from exhausted.

Working in mines is very unhealthy: one's Con lowers by 1 per year permanently, but never decreases less than 6.

Those who refuse to work will be put to *kartser*, beaten, tortured and eventually killed - there is no use of a man who does not work. Option is to simulate some disease and talk to the doctor, but the doctor is not very professional and very, very sceptical.

Convicts are guarded very carefully. On the border of life- and work-zone there is always counting, trees are cut around the camp to allow better line of sight. Torches light the walls (in some camps the Ministry of Arcane tests new method - lightning with *continual light* spell, and this has met very warm welcome). Soldiers check leaving carts with dogs and thrust long metal wires or thin bars into salt or between stones to make sure no-one is there. All who leave are searched carefully. On the evening is also counting (the horn is blown and then the prisoners are supposed to stand in rows).

In case of escape squads of riders and dogs will be sent out.





Some convicts never get to work-zone - these are professionals (blacksmiths, cooks, carpenters etc.). Their life is considerably easier.

Life in life-zone is quite "free": smuggling flourishes, even money is used, but usually there is a barter economy.

Toilets are behind the barracks, but are more than awful - no-one ever cleans the toilets, these are full of big rats; if one sits, they bite and they constantly spread diseases (which are very common in camps).

In life-zone there are often gangs: often with racist background. Sometimes it happens that dwarves steal elves' savings while the latter are working. Sometimes it is the other way around. Then they fight, sometimes even kill, and sometimes guards must separate them. However, there are always more prisoners than guards so guards are a bit afraid of prisoners. Of course, usually they may kill all the unarmed prisoners, but the guards definitely carry some casualties and Vlad Drakov is definitely not pleased, if hundreds of his slaves are killed.

However, generally convicts do not oppose guards, but sometimes it may happen that some especially cruel guard is found dead near the toilets. There is not much the guards can do then - cows will be killed by prisoners, so everybody is afraid to talk.

Often prisoners know their fellows' sentences - and often do not take these seriously. However, murderers and rapists are scorned.

Smuggling is based on money, wagons (one promises to make one

wagon for the other), items, food and services.

Card games are widespread - although this is not allowed. Often a card game is a bloody affair. Cheating is not allowed (although some cheat), spectators must not intervene (even if he sees somebody cheating, he must stay quiet, or he later gets killed). If one loses more money he has, he will be killed. Loser must pay within day and winner must take the money within a day. Otherwise he is weak.

Sometimes it may happen that losers take money back by threatening or even kill the winner.

Still, killing is forbidden and quite rare. But some prisoners have enough respect (or are feared) to kill even in a barrack full of people. And no-one "sees".

If guards find the cards (during *smoon* for example), the cards are confiscated and owner is beaten and sent to *kartser* for ten days.

Dice throwing is also common amusement (dices are made of bone or stone).

One very popular time spending method is story-telling. If one is a good story-teller he gets food, money, items etc.

Prisoners can buy bread from corrupted guards or cooks, even vodka may be bought. These are brought in by corrupted guards, if such a guard is caught, he is executed.

Skilled men make knives, vases, bowls, ornaments, spoons, warm hats, etc. These are sold or exchanged to guards and prisoners. Some make so-called warmers: little hut and inside is





a stove (made of metal barrel). Without this many would die during winter.

Business is on high level: there are men who write pardon pleas; diviners (they are very popular, some prisoners visit many of them just to be sure); whores (whores are often tattooed – three dots on forehead. However, raping is uncommon in camps, but not unheard); tattoo makers (also very popular, often there is a week long queue, ink is made in special way: they burn the boots to get soot, make paste from bread, then stir them in water); doctors. Some teach stealing, even history, geography, blacksmithing etc. Everything is charged, of course. Even stranger articles are sold: for example one convict swallows frogs for money: spectators must pay to see him doing it.

Owning things is forbidden in camp (except clothes). Any violation of this rule is supposed to result in sitting in *kartser* or death, but actually the *smoons* are not frequent and not very efficient.

Drugs are popular: alcohol, *abfalduz* (see *Gazetteer II*, pg. 90), and immensely strong tea are usual methods.

So-called “slayer” is also well known: mixed bread, salt and hot water). It makes the eater to feel full stomach, but this is addictive. After some time the victim’s legs swell and when swelling ascends to breast, he dies. Actually, this is very common dying method.

There are also cows in the camp, but not very effective.

Sometimes one brigade is sent to bring lumber. This is most exhausting work, especially during winter. Guards are very strict, it is very cold, there are hungry wolves and bears, people die under falling trees etc. Usually more than 25% of prisoners die on one trip.

There are many different people in camps: murderers, thieves, thugs, but also intellectuals, so-called traitors, rebels, poor peasants who had no supplies to pay the tax, or just unlucky people. Just like in Central Prison.

Important Characters

Vassa: convict who stole one reel of cotton. But it was strange to convict someone for stealing only a reel of cotton, so in papers it is said that he stole 200 m of textile.

Jakov: priest of Ezra, framed of raping: girl started to scream and tear her own clothes, “accidentally” passing patrol “saved” the girl and priest was sent to the Central Prison.

Muha: skilled pickpocket, ridiculously polite, speaks many languages, very talkative, speaks about his adventures.

Sibi Uts: a bit stupid. Used to be toilet cleaner, but at nights he dug the graves and stole valuables and clothes from the freshly dead. Last time he dug the grave open when some youngsters arrived and started to make out. Uts waited in the grave and youngsters left during sunrise. Uts ran, but patrol caught him.

Priima: old man, former soldier. He was robbed. Some days later he saw the bandits in the tavern, he called





the soldiers. But soldiers were bandits' friends and Priima was imprisoned instead. Priima is still Drakov's fanatic, strange that he is not killed yet.

Indus: walks around and murmurs: "Hail great Vlad Drakov!". No-one knows if he is crazy or just simulates one to get free.

Mallo: gnome, locksmith. Skilled with locks, makes locks. Officials let him open secure chests and when opening locked chest he has the right to be alone (no-one knows, how he got this right).

Dread possibility: cook Mikolay went mad and boiled *narjachik*. One morning *narjachik* came to "taste" soup (cooks know that they must not throw him out, although *narjachiks* eat the meat from the soup). *Narjachik* asked if the meat is ready, Mikolay told him to check himself.

Soup pot was big and high; *narjachik* stepped on a chair and looked into the pot. Mikolay grabbed his feet and pushed him in. *Narjachik's* feet jerked once or twice and then he died. Mikolay went to the officers and told them to divide the soup themselves. Mikolay was staked. Now he haunts the camp as a shadow.

FALKOVNIAN GLADIATORS

Ave caesar, morituri te salutant

About Gladiators

Gladiators fight in the Great Coliseum of Lekar. They are used for amusement and for training the Falkovnian soldiers and the Talons.

Gladiators are strongest prisoners with good fighting skills. They also train constantly on training arenas.

Coliseum is round-shaped; the arena is in the middle and about 4 meters lower than ascending seats. During fights the crossbowmen guard the arena. There are four doors leading to the arena.

Vlad Drakov is getting bored of this amusement, so fight for spectators are not as frequent as they used to be. Still, Vigo Drakov and Vlad II like this and amuse their soldiers with these shows, too.

Arena is often used to train Falkovnian soldiers, to give them real battle experience.

Fight is almost always to the death; generally gladiators do not have armour, maybe only some parts of it. Some gladiators are infamous because of their fighting skills (or maybe because they kill in strange and bloody manner).

During war gladiators make perfect candidates for suicide missions.

Arrival

There are two ways to become a gladiator. On rare cases somebody volunteers for gladiator: somebody who seeks fame or who sees no point in his/her life. But there are only very few such persons: there are better ways in the Lands of Mists to claim fame or death.

Most usual gladiators are from the Central Prison. An officer from the Great Coliseum chooses the strongest and best fighters and these are sent to





the Great Coliseum, first to train and then to the arena.

It is said to all the arriving gladiators that they have a chance to become free - if they fight with remarkable courage and skill. But actually this seldom happens. First: very few are pardoned; second: even if one is pardoned, Falkovnia may not allow letting a trained man free and possibly join with resistance. It means that in the eyes of spectators and other gladiators the freedom is granted, but actually he is later poisoned or killed in some other way. However, there are few exceptions: those who are trustworthy enough to join the army or some who are sent to exile from Falkovnia. The latter are unusually lucky and must be real favourites of Drakov.

On arrival the prisoners are taken to the castle yard built next to Coliseum. This serves also as training grounds. There they are counted, searched, recorded, told about freedom chance, divided into groups and sent to their cells with familiar phrase: "step to the right, step to the left is considered a run, we use weapon without warning". An underground corridor connects the castle and the Coliseum.

The welcome is much friendlier than in the Central Prison or in camps - they will die anyway soon, shoulder by shoulder. And cooperation is often essential on the arena, so good relations are important.

Daily Life in the Great Coliseum

The cells are under the Great Coliseum, but for training they are sent to the castle yard (via underground corridor) where they practice with copper and wooden weapons. Most usual weapons are swords, spears, knives, maces, axes, but nets and bows are also used. Sometimes mounted combat is practiced. Training is supervised by experienced gladiator, so-called "magister" or "master", who does not have to fight on the arena any more.

The guards give bonuses to better gladiators: those who fight well, skilfully and theatrically get better cell, better food, better bed, better armour and even mistress.

Every gladiator group (which have dramatic names like The Brotherhood of the Bloody Claw etc.) has an officer, who is responsible for them and grants aforementioned boons.

The practices are in the castle yard. The gladiators get wooden or copper weapons and practice. Magister teaches them. They run, work out, wrestle, throw spears and knives, shoot arrows, duel, throw nets on dummies, make dexterity exercises, hit wooden posts, make little battles, magister shows where and how is efficient and theatrical to hit (every gladiator who trains at least one year there gets special ability to sneak attack as rogue on half his actual levels and +1 to Dex and Str). Some magister may even give advice how to perform on the arena (theatrically, shouting, acting very heroically and





outstandingly). Beating is normal during trainings (*magisters* have special sticks for that) – this teaches gladiators to endure the pain. If somebody is injured during practice, however, the combat is stopped and doctor called.

Sometimes magister waves sword in front of gladiators' eyes and if latter blinks it is considered weak.

Real weapons are given to gladiator just before they enter the arena.

Food is good and nourishing – gladiators must be strong.

If the fighting day comes then chosen gladiators are escorted under heavy guard behind different doors on the arena and another guard gives weapons.

Usually they do not have armour: Drakov wants to see the muscles, besides, it is too expensive for people who are about to die anyway.

But sometimes they have at least some armour: shields are usual, sometimes they have arm and leg protections, helmets (but open faced – Drakov wants to see their faces in agony and wants them to see their opponents/friends). Some renowned gladiators get real armour, too. But in this case it is old or damaged.

Timetable

Waking and breakfast is at 8.00 AM. Food is good: bread, water and porridge, quite a lot.

9.00-15.00 are practices: group by group is taken to the training area where they practice at east two hours.

15.00 is eating: meat, bread, water.

16.00-21.00 are practice again, group by group.

21.00 is eating and sleeping time at 22.00.

Fighting Day

Gladiatorial combat is a great celebration day among Falkovnian upper class – people know about them weeks before, spectators are dressed most fancifully and the Great Coliseum is adorned with flags and pennants.

The organizer (usually Vlad, Vigo, Mircea or Vlad II Drakov) makes a banquet where the favourites are invited. They drink best wines and eat exotic foods. After that they move upstairs to the arena, where Drakovs have their own lounge for themselves and their favourites.

The only people allowed seeing the fights are military men and their families of course. Sometimes foreign ambassadors are invited as well.

When gladiators enter the arena, herald introduces the gladiators or gladiator groups in elaborate and exaggerated way, by giving dramatic names to gladiators by which most famous ones are known.

Then Drakov lets Falkovnian pennant fall on the arena and that is the sign to begin.

There are many variants of that bloody performance: gladiators fight a duel; as groups; as armies; against humans, elves, dwarves, animals, or monsters; bare handed or with weapons; one against many; mounted combat; mounted men against gladiators on foot; sometimes there are little buildings on the arena and





gladiators must attack or defend these etc.

The stronger and more famous the gladiator is, the bigger and more dangerous the challenge.

Gladiators fight to death, but sometimes the wounded survive. In this case it is up to Drakov whether the defeated lives or dies. And this depends on his mood and how did the gladiator fight.

Arena is big and covered with sand. After every combat the corpses are removed and blood covered with sand. At the same time the spectators drink wine, discuss the fight and grovel before Drakov.

When all the fights are over some spectators may challenge a gladiator. Sometimes nobody challenges, but sometimes even high ranking officer is a challenger. The rumour is that in this case the gladiators fight with copper weapons.

Then Drakov may present "*rudis*" or wooden sword to some gladiator, which sets him free. Appointed gladiator is called forth, cheered and sent to inner rooms, dressed and called on a banquet. But probably he is later killed.

After hours of amusement spectators leave and some are invited to the banquet.

Important Characters

Butcher: *magister*. In his fifties, he is former gladiator, very experienced and skilled. He is a bit dour and

ruthless due to years of killing his friends, but generally friendly towards other gladiators. Gives good advice to new gladiators how to survive. Likes to talk stories about his own fights.

Ratslayer: gladiator group officer, the captain of the Great Coliseum. Without nose (mark from the Dead Man's Campaign), cruel, very tall and massive, immensely strong and ruthless.

Vassili Jakov: herald. Short, a bit fat, dressed in white. Sign of post is ornamented rod. Likes to be in the centre of attention and lingers to be as famous as some gladiators, but is too cowardly for that.

Dread possibility: Maka Grigorjev is a soldier who must burn the corpses. Once he helped his cousin escape and now the Freeman of Falkovnia use Maka to get some gladiator out and add him to their ranks. However, Maka is afraid and may one day betray the Freeman.



The arena of the Great Coliseum of Lekar.

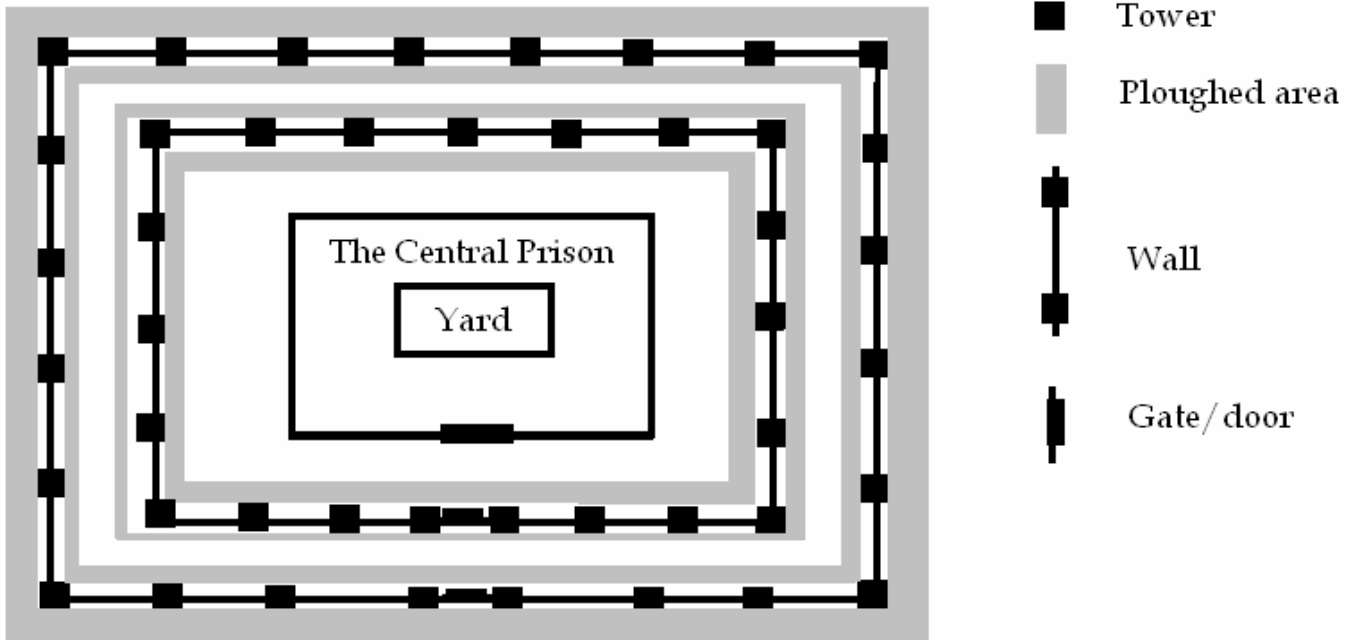




MAPS

These maps are only for guidance and to get the general idea. The scale is not accurate either.

The Central Prison





Sample hard labour camp

