DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ADDITIONAL

Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil And Miniature Figures

SUPPLEMENT VII

FORBIDDEN LORE

BY

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FORBIDDEN LORE

RULES FOR ORIGINAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS COMBAT USING THE CHAINMAIL RULES

BY
JASON VEY

Dedicated, as with the original rules that this pamphlet references, to all the fantasy wargamers who have played and expanded upon CHAINMAIL and original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS throughout the years. Also dedicated to the posters at the Original Dungeons & Dragons message boards; Fight On and keep the spirit alive!

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INTRODUCTION

For years—perhaps even since the game first appeared on the scene—gamers have debated exactly how CHAINMAIL was intended for use as the combat system for the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. There are tantalizing hints within the pages of the original three booklets, but as with much of those early games, a great deal is left blurred and to interpretation. Perhaps, in this case, too much is left for the individual players to work out. Clearly Gygax and Arneson had strong ideas in mind, but these ideas are not as clearly spelled out.

It has been pointed out by veterans of those early days that indeed almost nobody actually used CHAINMAIL for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS combat, but in recent years the movement known as the "Old School Renaissance" has seen a great deal of debate and theory as to the original intent.

This pamphlet (formatted to neatly fit into an original D&D boxed set) is designed to hopefully clear some of the cobwebs by compiling the hints throughout the original brown booklets and spelling out the missing information. It presents a unique and potentially quite fun variant on combat in original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, and one the author hopes will provide enjoyment in actual play as well as one potential answer to this philosophical debate.

Note: to use this pamphlet you will need BOTH the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS booklets AND the original CHAINMAIL rules. It does not reproduce rules from either source; it merely serves as a bridge to link the two, cross-referencing rules from D&D with those from CHAINMAIL.

SYSTEMS OF COMBAT IN CHAINMAIL

There are three distinct systems of combat in the original CHAINMAIL rules. They are:

The Troop Type System: Wherein troops are classified by their general category (Heavy Foot, Light Mounted, etc.) and battle based on these classifications, rolling handfuls of six-sided dice and checking for "hits," usually on results of 5 or 6. This was the original mass combat rule for CHAINMAIL.

The Man to Man System: Wherein figures are granted an Armor Class (AC) based on their protective gear, and attack opponents rolling 2d6 on a table, referencing their weapon type against the opponent's armor.

The Fantasy Supplement: Wherein figures attack specifically fantastic creatures such as dragons, lycanthropes, Rocs, ogres and other heroes, rolling 2d6 on a table referencing the two figure types.

CHOOSING A SYSTEM

How does this all come together? What system is intended for use in "Man scale" DUNGEONS & DRAGONS? It would seem that the Man to Man system is the most obvious answer, but this contradicts specific references to the Troop Type System and the Fantasy Supplement system implicit in the rule books.

The answer to the conundrum is deceptively simple: use all three.

The biggest mistake often made when trying to work this out is deciding on a single system. What many who attempt this task forget is that D&D in the early days was a mishmash of sub-systems designed in a toolkit, "whatever works for the situation" philosophy. There is nothing wrong with combining the three subsystems in CHAINMAIL; indeed, it is reasonable to suspect that is exactly what Gygax and Arneson intended.

Below we will examine each system, with a detailed breakdown of how it all works in "Man Scale" D&D. The Troop Type and Man to Man systems are largely interchangeable and in many situations it will be a simple matter of taste and preference which is used. Certainly the Troop Type system plays much faster, but does not include the detail and potential drama of the Man to Man system, which better represents the struggles of heroic figures such as Conan.

In the end, it is recommended that for situations such as the battles fought in Tolkien between the Fellowship and dozens of orcs, the Troop Type system works better, while when Aragorn goes one-on-one against an Uruk captain, the Man to Man system is preferable. Conan struggling against a gigantic snake or massive carnivorous ape in the dank caverns of an undercity, on the other hand, would be best served using the Fantasy Supplement rules.

THE TROOP TYPE SYSTEM

In actual play the Troop Type System is exceptionally easy. It does, however, require the most explanation to understand. Thus, we will approach this system first.

RECONCILING CHAINMAIL TROOP TYPES

In CHAINMAIL there are the following classifications of troops (excluding arquibusiers, or primitive riflemen, and culture-specific troops):

INFANTRY

- Light Foot
- Heavy Foot
- Armored Foot

ARCHERY

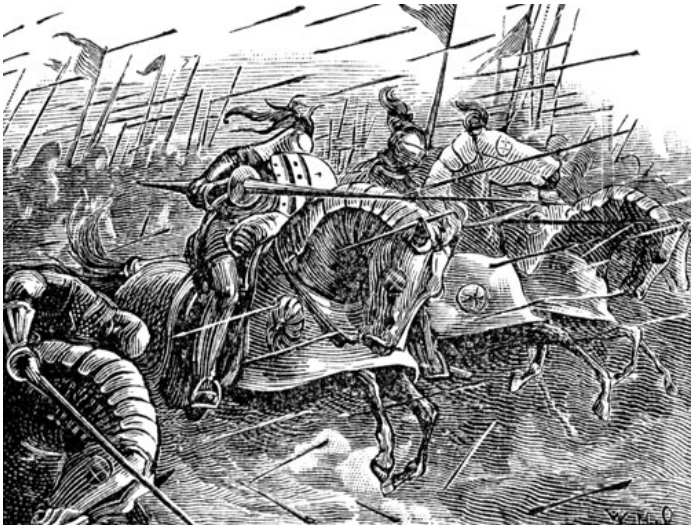
- Archers
- Crossbowmen
- Long bowmen
- Heavy Crossbowmen

CAVALRY

- Light Horse
- Medium Horse
- Heavy Horse

In THE ORIGINAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS RULES, there are eight classes of armor, ranging from AC 9 (no armor or shield) to AC 2 (Plate armor AND shield) (**Men and Magic**, page 19).

In **Men and Magic**, characters attack as x number of "Men," or "Heroes" or "Superheroes".



Page 24 of **Underworld and Wilderness Adventures** reads as follows:

> "The basic system is that from CHAINMAIL, with one figure representing one man or creature. Melee can be conducted...by the CHAINMAIL system, with scores equalling (sic) a drive back or a kill equal only to a hit."

This seems simple enough, but there are problems.

Problem 1: What constitutes a "Man"? This is unclear by the rules on their face.

Problem 2: Which system is meant to be used? The 20:1 combat system, the Man to Man system, or the Fantasy Supplement system?

The answer to Problem 2 is tied up in Problem 1.

What constitutes a "Man" is clarified in CHAINMAIL, though somewhat obscurely—it is not obvious. On the Fantasy Reference Table (page 43 in the 3rd edition), the asterisked footnote defining what a "Hero" is clarifies that a "Man" is equivalent to "Either Heavy Foot, Armored Foot, Light Horse, etc., depending on arms and situations..."

Okay, so "depending on arms and situations" now becomes the crux of the problem, though one easily resolved, as DM fiat is common, accepted, and expected in the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. The trick is dividing up armor and arms into the categories we looked at above.

Troop Types Defined: CHAINMAIL gives us some guidelines as to what constitutes the various troop types, on page 14:

> Light Foot: Missile troops, Swiss/Landsknechte*, Peasants, Crews
> Heavy Foot: Normons, Saxons, Turks, Vikings, Men-at-Arms
> Armored Foot: Dismounted Knights, Sergeants, Italian City Levies and Condottiere
>
> Light Horse: Magyars, Mongols, Saracens, Spanish, Turks, Hobilars
> Medium Horse: Mongols, Norman Knights, Esquires, Saracens, Spanish Turks, Turcopoles
> Heavy Horse: Knights, Reiter, Gendarmes

Let us return to our 8 AC ratings. At the two farthest ends of the spectrum--no armor and plate + shield--we clearly have Light Foot and Armored Foot.

Using CHAINMAIL's Troop classifications and examining the typical types of armor and training for the troop types given, we can divide this way:

Light Foot: AC 9-8 (No Armor or Shield only—we can also assume padded armor falls into this category, having an AC of 8)

Heavy Foot: AC 7-4 (Leather through Chain & Shield—padded armor and shield would have AC 7)

Armored Foot: AC 3-2 (Plate and Plate & Shield)

OR, if the DM wants shields to make a difference, this way:

Light Foot: AC 9-7 (No Armor through Leather or Padded & Shield)

Heavy Foot: AC 6-5 (Leather & Shield and Chain)

Armored Foot: AC 3-2 (Chain & Shield through Plate & Shield)

Notes: Padded armor is not listed in Men & Magic, but there is some historical precedent for wrapping oneself in heavy layers of cloth as a form of makeshift armor. Also, if the DM wishes to take it to one final step, Plate and Shield could subtract one from the opponent's dice for defense; there is precedent for that sort of thing in CHAINMAIL, though an opponent should never have fewer than 1 die. But we will leave that as an "optional rule" for now.

Let us further state that, looking at the Man-to-Man Table (p. 41), weapons with a class of 1 reduce the rank of the wearer by 1, to a minimum of Light foot, for purposes of attacking. Thus, a character with CHAINMAIL, but wielding only two hand axes, still defends as Heavy Foot, but attacks as Light Foot. Similarly, a character clad in only leather armor but wielding a heavy, 2-handed claymore in grand Braveheart style, might attack as heavy or even armored foot, while still defending as light. Hand Axes should be class 2 rather than 1; treat this as a suspected errata in the tables.

The above are general suggestions and guidelines from careful reading

and interpretation. Every DM will have to make their own call. After the DM rules on the issue, players should note their attack and defense classes on their character sheet.

Cavalry and Archers: The same breakdowns apply to Horse, though the differentiation between Light and Medium Horse also is dependent upon whether or not the horse is barded and the rider using a heavy weapon or mounted lance.

Archers, as in CHAINMAIL, always attack and defend in Melee as Light Foot.

Note: Optionally, if he drops the bow and draws a melee weapon, an archer can defend as better than Light Foot if wearing appropriate armor, though plate armor makes it impossible to fire anything besides a crossbow.

Likewise, at the DM's option, a crossbowman may opt to defend as Heavy or Armored Foot without drawing a melee weapon, but his crossbow may be destroyed, having been used to defend against attacks. Another few "optional" rules culled from interpretation and common sense.

COMBAT PROCEDURE

To adapt CHAINMAIL's Troop Type System to the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS single-figure scale, characters throw dice based upon their Troop Type (attacker rating) vs. a defender's Troop Type (defense rating) as shown on page 40 of CHAINMAIL. Always round dice up, so that all characters throw at least one die. Bonuses are pips added to or subtracted from the highest of all dice thrown, this extrapolated from the following passage on page 5 of **Monsters & Treasure**:

> "Attack/Defense capabilities versus normal men are simply a matter of allowing one roll as a man-type for every hit die, with any bonuses being given to only one of the attacks, i.e. a Troll would attack six times, once with a +3 added to the die roll. (Combat is detailed in Vol. III.)"

Penalties should likewise be subtracted from the highest die roll. When two listings exist (i.e. "3 Men or Hero -1), always use the more advantageous rating in normal combat.

Missile fire is always resolved first in this system. Consult the Missile Fire table on page 11, and throw a number of dice appropriate to the character's "Man" ratings in **Men and Magic**. The listed casualty numbers instead become the number of dice of damage dealt to the foe. Thus, a first level Fighting Man firing a bow at an unarmored foe rolls a die; on a result of 3-6 he deals a die of damage. The same

character at level 5 will always inflict at least 2 dice of damage to an unarmored opponent, but may inflict 3 dice if he gains a result of 3-6. This fact makes missile weapons quite deadly and attractive for use by player characters; the main difference between types of missile weapons is their range. For this reason, DMs may wish to opt for the Man to Man missile fire system (see p. 10), while maintaining the Troop Type system for melee.

Note: I am of the opinion that "Number Firing" on the "1/2 Armor or Shield" column should read 1 under 1-3 and 2 under 4-6 instead of being 2 and 2. Not having seen errata for CHAINMAIL, I cannot be 100% certain of this, but it seems to match the other progressions, and I suspect it is a typo on its face.

Thus, a first level Fighting Man fighting as Light Foot (Man +1), attacking an orc which defends as Heavy Foot, throws a single die and adds one to the total, even though the table lists Lt. vs. Hvy as "1 die per two men." As per the combat table, if he gets a result of 6, he scores a hit and deals 1d6 damage to his foe as in **Men and Magic**, page 19.

The same character at third level, attacking as "3 Men or Hero -1" would in this case throw two dice (remember, always round up), with no bonus to either, as this is more advantageous than the Hero -1 which would see two dice thrown, subtracting one from the highest. If one comes up 6, he deals 1 die of damage. If both come up 6, he deals 2 dice of damage.

However, when moving to the Fantasy Combat Table, which we shall examine later, the character would attack as a Hero, subtracting 1 from his 2d6 roll.

Final Breakdown: The basic process here is simple: determine troop types involved, consult the Combat Tables on page 40 of CHAINMAIL, roll an appropriate number of dice, and count "hits."

THE MAN TO MAN SYSTEM

For epic, heroic, one-on-one battles, use the Man to Man System. It is straightforward and easy, and completely ignores the "Heavy foot, light foot," etc. classifications, focusing only on the exact weapons and armor of the combatants. In this system, "Man" as defined on the Level Progression Charts in **Men and Magic**, simply refers to the number of attacks granted in a round. Thus, a third

level Fighting Man, a Swordsman, gains three attacks. Since a "Hero" is defined in CHAINMAIL as having "the fighting ability of four figures," (p. 30), we can count "Hero" as "4 Men."

Using the Man to Man system, any time the progression reads "x Men," that trumps a "Hero" or "Superhero" designation. Thus, "5 Men," or 5 attacks, trumps "Hero + 1," which would be four attacks adding +1 to one of the four.

However, if the progression does NOT list a "Men" designation, go with what is there. Thus, the seventh-level Champion, which does NOT read, "7 Men," must fight as a Superhero -1. Superheroes are, according to CHAINMAIL, "about twice as powerful" as Heroes (p. 30), which means that they grant eight attacks (in the case of a Champion, one of these suffers a -1 penalty).

Note: For ease of play, it is suggested any bonuses or penalties are applied to the last attack in the sequence. This keeps things fair and equal, and prevents combat min/maxing. Thus, the above-mentioned Champion would attack 7 times, the last attack suffering a -1 penalty, and the above-mentioned Hero+1 adding +1 to his last attack.

Like the Troop Type System, missile fire is resolved first. To resolve this, see the Individual Fires with Missiles Table (CHAINMAIL p. 41); target numbers for each AC at three range increments are listed. For game balance purposes, this is preferable to the Troop Type System, if slower when rolling multiple attacks, as it allows for even higher level characters (and missile-firing monsters) to miss.

Monsters such as Halflings, Sprites, Dwarves, Gnomes, Kobolds, Orcs, Goblins, Elves, Heroes, Super Heroes, Trolls, Ogres, and even Giants can be engaged, with the DM improvising arms and armor based on their "Men" rating. Of course, all of these figures should gain hit dice as Fighting Men equivalent to said rating. A Giant, for example, fights as 12 Men, and thus should have 12 Hit Dice (and by extension, 12 attacks)! Generally speaking, improvisation in this area is not necessary as the hit dice totals listed in **Monsters & Treasure** will suffice. Remember that each Hit Die a monster has grants one attack in Man to Man combat (**Monsters & Treasure**, p. 5, "Attack/Defense").

Certain monsters, those very powerful creatures with Supernatural bents such as Dragons, Elementals, Treants, Wraiths, Wights, Ghouls, etc., may not—at the DM's option—be engaged by characters of below Hero status, these young adventurers having no chance to damage such monsters. We will deal with such creatures when we get to the Fantasy Combat Table.

Final Breakdown: Note the weapons and armor of the combatants, calculate the number of attacks each has, and use the Man to Man system as written.

THE FANTASY SUPPLEMENT

The Fantasy Reference Table and the Fantasy Combat Table (CHAINMAIL, pp. 43-44) come into play only when fighting specific, high-fantasy creatures. As it stands, only those creatures listed upon the Fantasy Combat Table use this system, though the DM can add others from **Monsters & Treasure** if he feels the need and they seem equivalent to those already present.

No character with a rating below "Hero" can attempt combat on the Fantasy Table (though characters with "Hero -1" status can try, excepting creatures that require a Hero to roll 12 to hit, such as Dragons).

The Fantasy Combat Table uses a single (not multiple) roll of 2d6, with a target number gained by cross referencing the character with the defending creature.

To repeat: characters battling on the Fantasy Combat Table do NOT gain multiple attacks.

Note: This makes Fantasy Combat somewhat drawn out--DMs may wish to offset this by allowing multiple dice of damage equivalent to the character's rating, or half that to limit massive damage--i.e. a Hero will do 4d6 damage instead of just 1d6, or 2d6 damage if the DM opts for half rating (a Hero is worth 4 men).

Unless specified in the creature's description (a Hero must use a bow to attack a dragon, for example), ranged vs. melee attacks make no difference in the Fantasy Supplement combat rules.

Combat progresses in this manner until one side retreats, surrenders, or dies. In many ways, the Fantasy Combat Table is the simplest form of combat; it simply does not work for more "mundane" creatures, which use the Troop Type or Man to Man rules.

Final Breakdown: Simply cross-reference character type based on level (as listed in his Fighting Capability Chart, **Men & Magic** p. 17-18) with the creature type on the Fantasy Combat Table, then roll 2d6, attempting to equal or better the listed target number.

SAVING THROWS

Saving throws are important to Dungeons & Dragons, but become something of an anomaly if using the CHAINMAIL–based combat, as

they function with a d20 rather than d6's. It is possible, however, to divine a Saving Throw system based off of that suggested in CHAINMAIL, if one keeps a few basic assumptions in mind.

CHAINMAIL has Heroes and Super Heroes targeted by spells being saved on a roll of 9 and 6 or better, respectively. if Heroes are 4th level Fighting Men, and Super Heroes 8th, we can extrapolate a progression based upon these numbers.

The basic assumptions for this system:

1. The system replaces save categories with a single saving throw. Optional adjustments for categories extrapolated from OD&D will be examined later.

2. This is not likely to be a linear progression. This should not be a problem, because it is believable that the better someone gets at something, the fewer broad leaps forward they take, and the more improvement becomes smaller increments. One who is already an expert savant rarely makes the kind of great intuitive leaps of learning that a novice or even journeyman does. Skills and abilities generally hit a plateau somewhere.

3. This system makes it much harder to save at low levels than does the d20-based one in Men & Magic, but likely much easier at higher levels.

Saving Throws by level look as follows:

Level	Saved on:
1-3	11
4-6	9
7-9	6
10-12	5
13+	4

This table applies to Fighting Men only. As with OD&D, Magic-Users should progress in increments of 6, Clerics in increments of 5. Since Thieves don't have a default save progression and the idea that Thieves are lucky is appealing, they will save as Fighting Men, just for fun.

Fighting Men includes Paladins and Rangers as well as Thieves and Assassins.

Magic-Users includes Illusionists and Bards.

Clerics includes Monks and Druids.

Option: Save Categories

Men & Magic includes the ever popular categories of save: Death Ray/Poison, Wands, Petrification, Dragon Breath, Staves and Spells. Since the new chart has only one save, it's possible to simulate these categories with bonuses to the save. If we assume a base save of 16 (as this is the worst save on the level one charts in M&M), we can assign bonuses by class as follows:

CLASS	Death	Wands	Stone	Dragon Breath	Spell/staff
Fighting Man	+2	+1	+1	+0	+0
Cleric	+3	+2	+1	+0	+1
Magic-User	+1	+1	+2	+0	+2

This table is not an exact translation from M&M; that would be nearly impossible. Bonuses have instead been estimated based on the difference between the M&M save and 16, divided by 2 (since the range of possibilities is nearly half that of a d20). The author has gone with instinct when rounding off fractions up or down, and made one alteration, giving Magic Users a higher bonus against spells.

Using this system, a roll of 2 on 2d6 always fails a save, regardless of bonuses.

NOTES