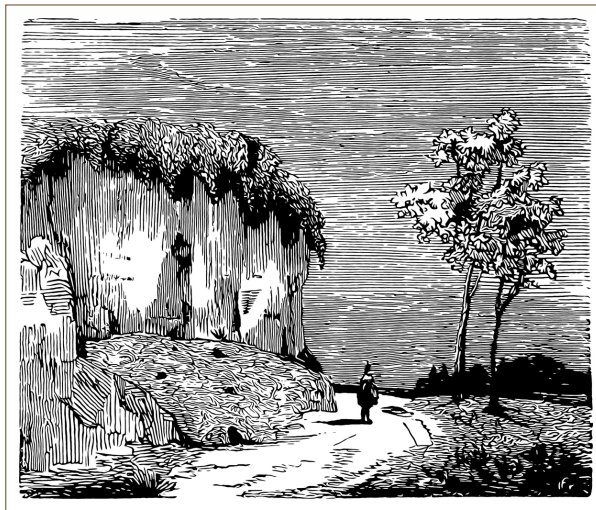


WIZARDS & LIZARDS

THE STRONGHOLD

A WIZARDS & LIZARDS SUPPLEMENT



B E T A

Version 0.10 · not yet playtested

Jon Mayo. PUBLIC DOMAIN (CC0-1.0)

CONTENTS

1. The company and the shared purse	2
2. Claiming a base	3
3. Facilities	3
What facilities grant	3
Building and upgrading	4
4. Upkeep, the press-your-luck lever	4
5. The garrison and defense	5
6. Raids	5
Threat vs defense	5
Are the heroes going to defend the walls?	6
7. Founding a city (the endgame)	6

Out past the last safe wall, a company that wants to stay needs a place of its own: a claimed watchtower, a cleared ruin, a palisade around a frontier well. A **stronghold** is that place, the West Marches **hub** the party pushes out from and falls back to, and over a campaign it **grows**, funded by the spoils the heroes drag home. This supplement is the rules for holding one, building it up, paying for it, and keeping it from being burned down behind your back.

It is an **optional campaign layer**, and it **sits on the downtime rules** (supplements/20-downtime.md): the stronghold runs on the same **fortnight**, the same **coin / materials / time** economy, and the same **project clocks**. Read those first. It adds **no new dice**: every roll here is the familiar 3d6 on the standard ladder, and every table is ordinary d6.

The guiding rule, before any number: **a stronghold buys access, options, and convenience, never raw power**. It opens new places to adventure, more gear to buy, custom work, and the facilities a hero needs to train, but it does **not** hand out combat bonuses to characters. The one defensive rating it tracks (the garrison) governs only the base's own safety, not anyone's attack or defense in a fight. Hold that line when you invent facilities of your own.

THE COMPANY AND THE SHARED PURSE

A stronghold belongs to the **company**, not to one character, and in West Marches play the company is larger than any single party: the roster rotates, a different group delves each session, but they all share **one base**. That sharing runs through a **shared purse** and a vote.

- **The tithe is the baseline.** A cut of every haul, **one share, a tenth (v0)**, goes into the stronghold's **Treasury** before the rest is split among the delvers. Any party that uses the base feeds it this; any party may draw on what it has built. The tithe keeps the lights on, it does not build a great hall.
- **Voting shares is the growth dial.** A company that means to *build* votes in **more shares**, each another **tenth** of the haul on top of the tithe, the same fixed-increment step the rest of the game uses. A company racing to raise its hold might vote **three or four shares** in all (a third to a half of every haul); one content with what it has votes none and pockets the rest. The base grows about as fast as the company is willing to feed it. (*v0: a building company runs at ~3–4 shares total. The tithe alone, one share, barely sustains a watch-post, it will not raise facilities; this is deliberate.*)

- **The vote, also, is how the Treasury is spent.** The company decides together what to build next, what to repair, whether to pay for more swords on the wall. A base is a thing many hands raise.
- **It persists.** The base, its Treasury, and its state carry across sessions and parties (track them on the base sheet / party ledger). This is how separate groups meet and matter to each other: through the hold they share.

The Treasury tracks: **Coin** (the shared bank), **Materials** (loads and rare components won on expeditions, the gate on the best building and crafting; see Downtime, *Materials, the haul* for how they are awarded, carried, and spent), **Obligations** (debts, tribute owed, promises), and **Property** (the facilities themselves).

CLAIMING A BASE

A company claims a stronghold by taking and holding a site on the frontier (a ruin, a tower, a spring, a crossing), or by being granted one. A **starting holding** is modest: a defensible shell, **one or two Tier I facilities, no garrison**, and an empty Treasury. From there it grows.

Track a base on its sheet: **Name · Type · Location · Tier · Facilities** (and each one's state) · **Garrison · Treasury · Staff & Allies · Region danger · Notes.** (Region danger is the GM's rating of how deadly the surrounding marches are; it drives raids, below.)

FACILITIES

Facilities are what a stronghold is. Each one grants access or an option, costs **coin + materials + a build project** to raise, and charges **upkeep** every fortnight. They come in tiers (I modest, II major, III grand), and a facility can be upgraded a tier to do more.

Tier	Build clock	Coin (v0)	Materials	Upkeep / fortnight (v0)
I modest	4 segments	~100	none	~2
II major	6 segments	~400	a few loads	~6
III grand	8 segments	~1200	a rare component (+ loads)	~15

(All numbers are v0 dials, set against the campaign's treasure flow: a standard delve nets roughly a Tier I's coin, a Dire foe several. Tune freely.)

WHAT FACILITIES GRANT

Grouped by the kind of advantage, never by power:

Facility	Grants (access / option / convenience)
Storehouse / vault	a safe stash; protects Treasury and stored gear from theft
Bunkhouse / hall	a safe full rest on the frontier; room for staff and guests
Quartermaster	faster downtime: an extra downtime action's worth of routine work per fortnight

Facility	Grants (access / option / convenience)
Market / trade post	buy more of the common gear list reliably; higher tier = more of the list
Smithy / workshop / alchemist	enables crafting and commissions; lowers a craft project a tier (cheaper, faster)
Stables / kennels	overland reach: faster, farther expeditions by land
Shipyard / docks	sea reach: expeditions to coasts and islands a foot party can't reach
Warded waystation / portal	makes returning to a known site less risky (skip or soften the journey)
Library	a mage may research spells here (the spell-research project)
Training yard	fighters and paladins may train advances here
Temple complex	clerics and paladins may train advances here; tends curses and disease
Guild safe-house	a rogue's place to train, fence, and buy information
Cloister / training hall	a monk's place to train advances
Walls / towers	raises the base's defense against raids (a static bonus)
Barracks	raises the garrison cap (how many swords you may keep)

The advancement-enabler facilities (library, yard, temple, safehouse, cloister) are the frontier answer to the cities: in an established city-state, training is easy and these are for hire (see Downtime, *Train*); out here, you build the place or you go without. They make every archetype want to invest, and give a mixed roster a reason to build broadly.

BUILDING AND UPGRADING

Raising or upgrading a facility is a **downtime project** (Downtime, *project clocks*). Pay the coin and any materials up front, then fill the build clock with downtime actions, the party's own and, crucially, **hired labor and staff**, who work the clock so the heroes can adventure. The same crit-pays-a-boon, Masterstroke-fills-two ladder applies. When the clock fills, the facility opens.

A Tier III facility is gated on a rare component. You cannot so much as begin the build until its **keyed prize** is in the Treasury, a single, named thing won out in the world, not bought: a titan-bronze keystone for the great hall, a relic of the patron power for the temple complex, a leviathan's spine for the shipworks. The GM names the component when the facility is proposed, and naming it is the next adventure: the grandest works always send the company back into the deep to fetch the one thing that makes them possible. (Loads and coin you can grind; the component you must go and take.)

UPKEEP, THE PRESS-YOUR-LUCK LEVER

Every fortnight, the base pays its **upkeep**: the sum of every facility's cost plus the **garrison's wages and provisions**. Pay it from the Treasury.

- If the Treasury **can't cover** upkeep, things fray: facilities go **dormant** (no benefit until paid up), staff drift away, and Obligations mount.
- **The garrison is the heavy cost.** Feeding and housing a real fighting force is expensive, so it **competes for the same coin** as the next library or shipyard. That is the whole tension: run light on defense and pour coin into growth (and eat the raids), or pay the soldiers and grow slower but safe.

THE GARRISON AND DEFENSE

The garrison is **insurance**, and it works exactly like armor does in a fight: it **soaks** the raids. A stronghold's **defense** is its **garrison level plus its walls**, and that one number is what matters.

Garrison	What it is	Upkeep / fortnight (v0)
0	no standing force	none
1	a watch	~3
2	a company	~8
3	a host (needs Barracks)	~18

Walls / towers are built facilities that **add to defense** (Walls +1, upgrade to add Towers +1), a one-time cost rather than a wage. **Defense = garrison + walls**. A small holding might lean on walls; a real frontier hold needs both.

RAIDS

The frontier pushes back, and out here it pushes **every fortnight**. There is no “does a raid happen” roll: something always tests the wall. What decides the cost is simple and **known to the players up front**, your **defense against the region's threat**.

THREAT VS DEFENSE

Every region has a **threat level** (its danger): how hard the marches lean on a hold there.

Threat	The region
1	a settled march, near the cities
2	wild frontier
3–4	a dangerous borderland
5	deep wilds, a haunted or contested march

Each fortnight, compare the region's **threat** to your **defense** (garrison + walls). The **shortfall** is all you need:

Shortfall (threat – defense)	What the raid costs
0 or less (defense meets the threat)	Secure. The garrison turns it away. Little to nothing.
1	A raid bites. Lose 2d6 × 5 coin from the Treasury.
2	A serious raid. Lose 3d6 × 10 coin and a facility is damaged (repair it).

Shortfall (threat – defense)	What the raid costs
3+	Overrun. Lose $3d6 \times 20$ coin and a facility is wrecked (rebuild it); if you cannot pay, the hold may fall.

A **vault** (storehouse) **halves** the coin stolen. So the rule the players carry in their heads is: **keep your defense at or above the region’s threat and you are insured; the match is the cap on your losses. Fall short and the gap hurts, worse the wider it is.** A garrison that matches the threat is rarely worth skipping in a borderland, and rarely worth paying for in a settled march. That is the whole press-your-luck decision, and it is different in every region.

(Optional, a surge: now and then a warband masses. The GM may raise the threat by 1 for a single fortnight, so even a matched garrison sees the occasional harder raid. Keeps “insured” meaning typically little to nothing, not always nothing. Long neglect, leaving the hold unminded for many fortnights, likewise raises the effective threat.)**

ARE THE HEROES GOING TO DEFEND THE WALLS?

Whenever a shortfall would cost you (a raid that bites or worse), the players choose their session:

- **Take the attrition.** Go do the adventure you came for; apply the loss above while the heroes are away. Simple, and the garrison has already capped it.
- **Defend the walls.** Make the session a **set-piece battle** for the hold, just the core skirmish, no new rules. Build the attackers from the core **Build a Foe** table (GM screen) at a tier set by the threat (and the shortfall); the heroes stand in for the missing swords. Give it an **objective** (hold the gate N rounds, protect a facility or NPC, drive off the captain). **Win** and the loss is averted, and you may take spoils (the raiders’ goods, a captive, a lead on who sent them); **lose** and you take it at the next worse step.

Defending is the gamble with agency: a strong party turns a raid it could not afford into a payday, but a loss at the wall costs more than quietly taking the hit would have.

FOUNDING A CITY (THE ENDGAME)

The grandest thing a company can build is not a bigger fort but a **new city**. When a holding has grown to its height (a true town, top-tier facilities, a real garrison) and the company secures a **patron power** for it, the stronghold can become a **new safe haven on the map**, a city-state of its own, and a new frontier opens beyond it.

In Theogonia that patron power is a **living god**: a multi-session quest to awaken, bind, or draw a deity into a new temple, mortals echoing how the living gods cast down the titans and raised their own cities. In another setting it is whatever makes a place safe and lasting. Either way, treat founding as a **grand project**, an outsized clock filled over many fortnights and marked by story beats (lay the foundation, raise the temple, draw the god, draw the settlers, repel the challenge that always comes), not a purchase.

Founding a city is **campaign-scale** advancement. Characters still cap at level 5; it is the *company* and the *map* that grow. This is the setting-neutral frame. The **full ritual** for Theogonia, the five phases, the three rites (Awaken, Bind, Draw), the god’s price, and the challenge that comes, is the campaign book’s capstone chapter (theogonia/setting/09-founding-a-city.md).

A NOTE FOR AUTHORS

When you add facilities, keep the rule: **access, options, convenience, never raw power**. A facility may open a new route, a new market, a new project, or a place to train, but it must not raise a character's attack, defense, HP, or damage. The garrison defends only the base (it soaks raids); it never touches a character's numbers. Custom gear stays inside the existing stat bands (Downtime, *craft and commission*). Hold that line and a stronghold stays a place of choices, not a power treadmill.

Beta: not yet playtested. This is a working draft (version 0.7). Its numbers and procedures are reasoned and simulation-checked, but unproven at the table, so expect them to change between versions. Play it, push on it, and report what breaks.