Fourth Edition

Locations: St. George's Cathedral



Written by MICHELE ARMELLINI **Edited by NIKOLA VRTIS Cartography by MICHELE ARMELLINI** Illustrated by MICHAEL HARMON and ERIC HOTZ

GURPS System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON **GURPS** Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor ■ JASON "PK" LEVINE Production Artist & Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS Art Direction ■ MONICA STEPHENS

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Reviewers: Roger Burton West, Douglas Cole, Peter V. Dell'Orto, Shawn Fisher, Dan Howard, Phil Masters, Kenneth Peters, Matt Riggsby, and Hans-Christian Vortisch

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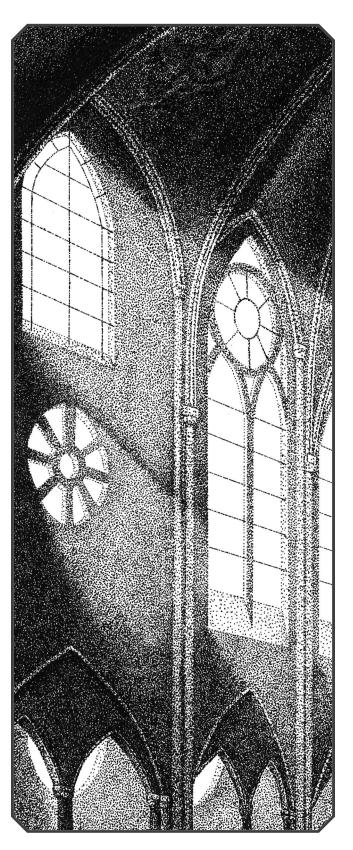
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An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

TEVE JACKSON GAN



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Human creation, powerful and fecund as the divine creation of which it seems to have stolen the double character – variety, eternity.

Victor Hugo,The Hunchbackof Notre Dame

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About GURPS

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, *Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

Introduction

A bishop's church. A prayer in stone. A forest of pillars, drawing your eyes and soul upward. Heaven, Hell, the Scriptures frozen into garishly painted statues. The tallest manmade thing ever seen. The pride of the city. A show of power. An extravagant project.

GURPS Locations: St. George's Cathedral describes a church that is all of that, and more, to a medieval society.

This supplement describes all parts of the building, its role in the city's life, sketches of the people commonly encountered there, and adventure ideas for various settings. The cathedral can be customized through the *Lenses* (see pp. 25-26), so that it can be used in a fantasy world, in a (somewhat cinematic) historical medieval campaign, or even in modern times.

This building never existed in reality, and some of the items and rooms are fictional. Most of it, however, is inspired by various parts of several historical cathedrals, as listed in the bibliography, and most of the details are factually accurate. No part of the description is mandatory; the GM can always leave something out, especially in a straight, realistic medieval campaign.

CAMPAIGN USES

St. George's Cathedral fits in with most historical campaigns and fantasy settings, especially *GURPS Banestorm*. In Ytarria, it would be suitable for any Megalan city smaller than the capital. It would be particularly interesting if it happens to be in

Ekhans (*GURPS Banestorm*, p. 97), considering the dragon threat there. Any of the northern provinces may be appropriate, given that dragons notoriously infest the Whitehood Mountains.

A Gothic cathedral may still be around for a modern campaign. Not only would it be priceless for its art and history, but it might also have had a congregation using it as their place of worship for the centuries, making it highly sanctified ground.

A bishop's church. A prayer in stone.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Armellini makes a living out of foreign languages, and he would be more comfortable with quill and parchment than with incense and thurible. He has visited more medieval cathedrals than his wife cares to recall. He has contributed regularly to *Pyramid* magazine and authored or co-authored several e23 products, including *GURPS WWII: Their Finest Hour, GURPS WWII: Doomed White Eagle*, and *GURPS WWII: Michael's Army*.

Glossary

aisle: A lower passageway to the sides of the nave.

ambo (plural **ambones**): A fixed lectern.

apse: The end part of a church, behind the main altar.

archdeacon: An ecclesiastic to whom the bishop delegates select duties.

ashlar: Accurately cut stone used for masonry.

aumbry: A recessed wall cabinet for sacred vessels.

bailiff: The representative of the king's authority; the sheriff.balustrade: A low partition, handrail, or parapet made by individual vertical shafts supporting a horizontal element.

canon: A priest who is member of the chapter.

capital: The top end of a column.

cathedra: The bishop's seat in his church, which is called a cathedral because of this.

chancel: The area containing the main altar and choir, set apart by an enclosure.

chapter: The body of priests attached to the cathedral.

choir: The area where the priests carry out the services.

clerestory: The part of the nave above the aisle roofs, with the largest windows.

confraternity: A laymen's association dedicated to a specific religious service.

deacon: A member of minor clerical orders.

dean: The head of the chapter.

flying buttress: A load-bearing partial arch built outside the wall it supports.

hagiography: A saint's biography, focusing on his miracles and teachings.

nave: The main, highest part of a church, between the

order: A specialized religious organization or a class of vows and, therefore, a degree of clerical investment.

ossuary: A room for the burial of bones.

parvis: The paved, open area in front of a church.

prebendary: A priest entitled to an income from specific assets (such as lands owned by the chapter).

relic: Bones or belongings of a saint, usually kept in a valuable container, the reliquery.

reredos: A decorated screen behind an altar.

sexton: A layman carrying out menial work to maintain the church building; a sacristan.

thurible: A censer; a burner for incense.

tithe: A tenth of a person's income, given to support the church, the clergy, and their works.

transept: The transverse section of the church, crossing the main body of the building at right angles.

vault: A ceiling formed by an arched structure.

Close to every door are stone stoups (DR 24, HP 32), fixtures in the walls or floor containing holy water. In certain settings, this water is an actual weapon against evil beings; carrying it away might raise eyebrows. More prosaically, peo-

ple dip their fingers in before it making the sign of the cross. This would be a devilish device to use for spreading infectious agents.

Most people attend mass standing, although a long stone bench once lined each aisle wall. These have been reduced by the ongoing introduction of side altars. The elderly use the few remaining benches. People sitting elsewhere may bring something from home: folding chairs carried by a servant, a rug, or a bunch of straw (for pews, see *Today*, p. 26).

In the lower nave, the paving stones are laid out to form a labyrinth. People say that walking down its snaking paths to its center an inordinate number of times equates to a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Sinners sometimes traverse the route on their knees as penance. A devout old man, Alain, has practiced for so long that he can walk this path unerringly, with his eyes shut. They say that while he does that, he can be asked about God's will on a given subject, and he'll give the right answer. The canons have forbidden this practice, but it is just possible that this is a form of Meditation trance (see p. B207).

In the second bay is the baptismal font, resembling an oversized bathtub. It's set 3' into the floor, with a low stone curb.

THE CHANCEL, CHOIR, AND APSE

The part of the building beyond the transept is three steps higher. Not only is it over the crypt, it is also the most sacred part of the church. Somebody standing here will be visible even when the nave is crowded.

The chancel is set apart by a 3'-tall wooden balustrade. A priest must invite a layman if the latter wants to enter this area. The balustrade is made by individual shafts (each having DR 4, HP 23), so it's not a hiding place. However, two ambones are in its corners. These include a platform and a solid front (DR 3, HP 33); a standing reader's upper body can be seen, but a crouching man can hide here.

The choir area is where the priests carry out their long rites, sometime sitting in carved stalls (individual seats) placed on two long daises. Behind them, the choir enclosure is a solid 8'-tall wooden partition (DR 4, HP 38). The outer side is sculpted and painted with scenes from the life of Christ, because that area, accessible to laymen, is used for processions. Another lectern is in the choir area, for the choir director; although cumbersome (65 lbs., DR 3, HP 32), it can be moved.

The high altar is at the end of the choir area. An impressive reredos, 10' tall (DR 5, HP 40), tops it. The sides are thick with gilded statues: a crucifixion group in the center, St. George killing the dragon on the right, St. Guy in prayer on the left.

Breaking and Entering

When the church is closed (see *A Time for Prayer*, p. 24), all the gates are bolted from inside, thus requiring brute force to get past them (see below). Grates and windowpanes protect the small crypt windows, which open at ground level. All the windowpanes are elaborate stained glass. They can be disassembled by prying open the lead cames that keep the glass pieces together, but it's tiresome, delicate work.

For adventurers disdaining subtler means, the architectural elements themselves can be breached. In the table below, "wall" refers to the *ground-level* part of it; higher parts are thinner. Some elements are thicker than strictly needed; the master builders wanted to play it safe. The main external walls (the aisle sides) feature a sandwich design – two ashlar walls filled with concrete. This makes it easier to carve out recesses, and to add a modern heating system (see *Today*, p. 26).

Item	Description	DR	HP
Crypt gate and grates	Iron	12	23
Internal doors	Wood	2	29
Internal walls	1' stone	156	94
Main external walls	4' stone and concrete	624	149
Main gates	Iron-bound wood	30	50
Pillars	6' stone	936	171
Roof	1/8" lead	4	34
Roof beams	6" wood	6	26
Vaults	8" stone	104	86
Vestry door	Iron-bound wood	15	40
Tower walls	8' stone	1,248	188
Windowpanes	Glass and lead	1	5

The HP figure is for a 10-square-foot section. All stone and wood DR values should be treated as ablative or semi-ablative against most attacks; see p. B559 for more details. This doesn't apply to the iron gates and to the roof's lead.

The building's overall HT is 13. However, its HT is 11 for the south tower, and 10 for the damaged north one. If the intention is not to enter the cathedral but rather to raze it down with a massive attack not targeting any particular area of it, the average DR is 624 and HP is 7,790.

The final alternative to get in is by climbing. Decorative motifs help, so Climbing rolls are at -2 (instead of -3). The lowest windowsills are five yards above the ground. The façade balcony is 18 yards high. The first clerestory window on the north side has lost its stained glass in the spire's collapse. Reaching it requires climbing the aisle's wall (some 17 yards), then up the aisle's roof (+3 to Climbing rolls). The windowsill is a few feet above the gallery's arches, with no glass to smash through.

For more about unauthorized access, see *GURPS Low-Tech* (pp. 122 and 126).

Locks

The vestry has the only outer door with a lock (-2 to Lockpicking); both the dean and the sexton have a key. Other doors have standard locks that are generally easy to pick, giving +4 to Lockpicking; exceptions are mentioned in the descriptions of various parts of the building.

Luc is turning 13. He knows he's going to lose his heavenly voice, the music, and the gifts. Becoming a priest would be his next best option, but he'll need a sponsor.

RENIER SACRESTE

Renier's father was the first sexton of St. George's, and their family name refers to their occupation. Renier followed his father's footsteps. He knows the building like the back of his hand, including the secret chamber. Little happens here that he's not aware of. He's a strong, pragmatic man who loves the cathedral in a no-nonsense way – mending the roof comes before posh celebrations.

As the sacristan, he defers to the priests but without being servile. He knows most churchgoers. He's on good terms with the bishop's guards, and he calls upon them when smelling serious trouble. However, he deals on his own with drunkards and rowdy youngsters. He carries his heavy keys on an iron ring.

JEHANNE

Jehanne is an old, pious widow who seems never to miss a service and prays frequently at other times. She's nearly a fixture of the Virgin's Chapel, and when she kneels there in her black clothing, her presence can easily be missed. She insists on confessing every day; her main fault is being a gossipy busybody.

GAUTIER THE STONE CARVER

It breaks Gautier's heart to see the cathedral in disrepair. Yet, the dean hasn't hired other workers aside from him and his apprentice, who carry out minor repairs. Gautier has been working here for years, but now he's mostly concerned with preventing further damage in the tower, although he's aware he's no master builder. He's typically found in the tower area.

A coarse, broad-shouldered commoner, Gautier believes that if Aloysius were to run things, he'd manage to raise the money that the building's repairs need. He always carries a mallet and chisel, though he's no fighter.

HERVÉ THE BISHOP'S GUARDSMAN

Hervé Guiclan is the leader of the detail of the cathedral. He's not above exacting "fines," especially from hawkers, harlots, and foreigners stumbling into his turf, but he's softer than he sounds. He has not fought in years, and he's quick to identify men he doesn't want to argue with. Hervé is in love with Perrette Benison (below), who has rebuffed him.

Hervé takes orders from the archdeacon, not the dean, and the guardsmen step in the church only rarely. They lazily stroll around the building or the parvis. He and his subordinates normally carry batons and knives. When expecting a riot, they don padded gambesons made of cloth armor and switch to shortswords.

Everybody Goes to Church

In the Middle Ages, not going to mass brings about a bad Reputation, and eventually the attention of the Church, unless the person is wealthy enough to have a private family chapel. Therefore, the cathedral is where recluses can be met, and sheltered damsels can be eyed (though approaching them is another story; they'll be accompanied by relatives, or a chaperon and a maid). Most of the strangers and visiting dignitaries who happen to be in town will go to mass here. The cathedral and the parvis are good places to address hard-to-reach personalities, too; a nobleman would look bad if he ignored a plea from a woman kneeling in front of him.

People who shouldn't be seen together can exchange a few words when meeting at the cathedral gates. Those who would be at each other's throat anywhere else may choose the cathedral as neutral ground, where violence is off limits (or should be; the ruthless have the advantage of surprise). Tokens or messages can be left in prearranged "dead drop" locations within this large building.

While most of the city guilds meet in their halls, a tavern, or the city hall, some of them gather in St. George's cathedral. They make donations and take care of their patron saint's altar. For instance, the masons meet near St. Stephen's Altar (p. 10).

PERRETTE BENISON

This young, stout vendor manages her ailing father's stall, which specializes in snack food. Notwithstanding her age and sex, thanks to her wit and will, she's the leader of the few peddlers authorized to keep their stalls on the parvis. She drives hard bargains with the dean, but she gets along well with Father Julien. She's willing to sell information or assist with meetings for a fee, if it doesn't harm her source of income: the cathedral.

Monsignor Giovanni Dandolo, the Archdeacon

A plump, clever Venetian schemer, the bishop's right-hand man resents not having actual jurisdiction in the cathedral (see *The Power Brokers*, pp. 6-7). He mainly comes to the cathedral in order to represent the bishop during important celebrations. When he needs to discuss with the dean one of the controversies arising because of the byzantine administrative arrangement of the diocese, he annoys Father Thibault by summoning him to the bishop's palace.

Dandolo does not seem to have weaknesses – at least, not now. But who knows if there aren't skeletons in some long-forgotten closet, back in Venice?

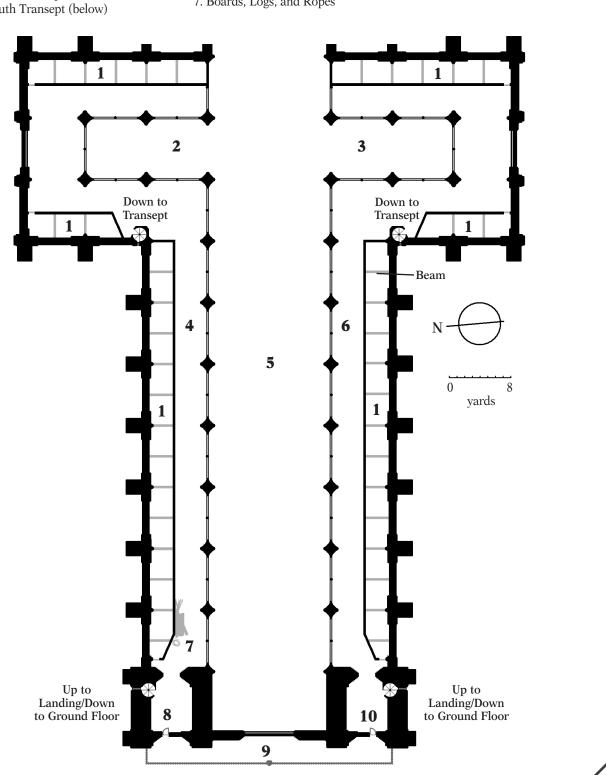
GODEFROY, VISCOUNT DE SAINT-JULES

The most powerful of this region's noblemen, the viscount is famously pig-headed. He readily takes offense at the subtlest slight by upstart commoners. He lives in a countryside manor complete with a chapel, but he also owns a townhouse not far from the cathedral. When he's in the city, he makes a point of visiting the Nobles' Chapel to verify that the nobility's privileges are not challenged. A man of action, he doesn't think much of priests and religion, unless they serve to support the established order.

MAP OF THE GALLERY, THE FAÇADE BALCONY, AND THE GARRETS

Key

- 1. Garret
- 2. North Transept (below)
- 3. South Transept (below)
- 4. North Gallery
- 5. Nave (below)
- 6. South Gallery
- 7. Boards, Logs, and Ropes
- 8. North Tower
- 9. Balcony
- 10. South Tower



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