

General guide:

- **Archers and Crossbowmen** are split into their own unit lines. Archers move and fire faster, do bonus damage to spearmen and ships, and their resource cost is weighed more towards wood. Crossbowmen do more damage, are more accurate, have a bonus against siege units, are trained faster and their cost is weighed more heavily towards gold. Archers also have 1 less range in Feudal Age to balance out their increased firepower.

- **Wild Horses, Wild Camels, Wild Bactrian Camels**, as well as **aggressive animals** like Wolves can now be hunted. Hunters also gain +1 attack, like in Age of Empires 1, and one can therefore take on a Wolf without Loom. This is in an effort to make nomadic civilizations less reliant on Farms to strengthen their identity, although every civ gets something out of it.

- Some units are more widespread like **Elephant Archers, Armored Elephants and Steppe Lancers**

- Projectiles fired by **Onagers, Bombard Cannons, Cannon Galleons and Trebuchets** have higher projectile speed. While this is mostly for the sake of realism (come on vanilla Cannon Galleons fire helium-filled balloons), it does have the side effect of making some units stronger, especially Onagers, which makes them a lot more viable against the AI's insane micro. That is why Crossbowmen needed to counter siege.

- **Some previously unique units have been given the Elephant Archer Treatment and are now common or regional units.** These units include Imperial Skirmishers, Camel Scouts, Imperial Camel Riders, Genitours, Plumed Archers, Slingers, Cataphracts, Boyars, Organ Guns, Throwing Axemen, War Wagons and Camel Archers. In the case of Boyars and Cataphracts, the replce units from the Knight line. Plumed Archers replace Composite and Elite Archers. Genitours replace Skirmishers.

The civilizations that used to have these as their unique units have been given new ones.

- **A redesign of water combat.** So, in vanilla, water combat is very obscure, as there's a lot of hidden bonus damage involved and you never know what's going to do what. So, I did the best I could to make it clearer, more honest, without altering the general balance of water too much. The main difference is that as a result ships are considerably stronger against everything on land, including Castles, so I buffed Heated Shot as well as make the Archer line affected by it.

- **Siege Towers** work differently. Instead of being used to unload units over walls, they are instead mobile towers that can be garrisoned with foot archers to fire more arrows. Like regular towers, they must be built directly on the battlefield by Villagers, and they do bonus damage against buildings and walls.

- Several bonuses that normally appear in Castle Age have been reworked to appear in Feudal Age, in an effort to make **Feudal combat more diverse and interesting.** Some civilizations even get Cavalry Archers in Feudal Age, although Feudal Cavalry Archers aren't an easy strategy to pull off, as they are considerably weaker before hitting Castle Age and get beaten by both Archers and Skirmishers.

- As this mod is being made, several **official balance changes** occur in the game. I have elected to ignore some of them, either because they don't fit with the changes that this mod already makes, or, mostly, because they actively work towards making civilizations more generic.

- Units using fire (including **Tarkans**) as well as **Hand Cannoneers** and **Conquistadors**

deal +4 damage to Elephants, for the sake of historical accuracy. By no means does this make elephant units underpowered, as they do receive a few buffs, mostly civilization-specific.

- **Camel Archers** have slightly reduced attack but have some minor bonus damage against cavalry, in addition to their bonus damage against mounted archers. **Elephant Archers** no longer take increased damage from anti-mounted archer bonus damage.

- **Eagle Scouts and Camel Scouts** also train faster in Feudal Age (40 seconds) in order to make them a viable rush option. In Castle Age, Eagle Scouts split into three unique unit depending on the civilization.

- **Slingers'** attack and range are no longer increased by the Blacksmith upgrades, but by the stone mining upgrades. And Chemistry.

- **Hand Cannoneers** no longer have bonus damage against infantry, and have instead increased attack and they ignore armor, with Condottieri ignoring this effect so as to remain a viable counter (thus also making them stronger against Leiciari and that's not my problem). Also, I'm including here for completeness' sake because it will only be relevant if you somehow happen to have HCs before researching Chemistry, but their base accuracy has been lowered quite a bit, until you research Chemistry which brings it back to its default level. This is to lay some groundwork for later.

- **Organ Guns** have 1 less attack but ignore armor. This is to give the player an incentive to make them over Hand Cannoneers in some situations, as the high upgrade cost in both time and resources can deter one from it. Hand Cannoneers remain the better choice against elephant units.

- **Heresy** has been reworked. So, I know getting your units converted isn't necessarily fun, but on the other hand, Monks are part of the tech tree, and one of their core functionalities is completely invalidated by a tech that over half the civilizations in this game have. Also I needed one extra slot at the Monastery. So, I nerfed Faith, made it a cheaper tech and reduced its effectiveness, but that's because Heresy becomes the first level of conversion resistance, much like Fletching is only the first level of archer attack upgrades. Once both Heresy and Faith are researched, the conversion resistance bonus is stronger than what it is in the vanilla game when you research Faith. On the other hand, the old Heresy effect no longer is a thing in this mod, and yes, that is for the best. Naturally, the few civilizations that did not have access to Heresy in the vanilla game now do, but lack Faith instead. The only exception is Tatars, since they don't get either anyway. Also Atonement is researched in 30 seconds instead of 40.

- **Bonuses and unique technologies are activated in Full Tech Tree mode.** Not team bonuses though, except Condottieri. I wish to stress that this is not the purpose of the mod, I did not balance or design it with Full Tech Tree in mind, and therefore Full Tech Tree is sort of a broken mess, but by Cthulhu I swear that it is a fun broken mess. And if the first thing you're thinking about is Longbowmen with the range bonus and Thumb Ring, or Frank Paladins with 212 HP, rest assured that you have a lot of much more exciting and insane surprises coming for you should you decide to try it.

- New units, rejoice! I tried to keep a low count of entirely new common units as to not overwhelm players. These units include:

- **Crusader Knights:** An expensive cavalry unit trained at the Castle in Imperial Age, once your Castle Age unique tech has been researched. It has the HP of a Knight but 4 melee and pierce armor, and 18 attack. Accounting for resources, it generally performs similarly to a Paladin in most situations, but without the heavy resource investment required to upgrade it. It is also impossible to convert. Available to the English, the Franks, the Teutons, the Burgundians and the Sicilians.

- **Fire Lances:** An infantry unit that's very similar to the vanilla Urumi Swordsmen, in that it has a charged attack that deals extra damage in an area. However, where the vanilla Urumi Swordsman is an unstoppable monster, the Fire Lancer is cheaper and weaker. It however deals bonus damage to cavalry. The Fire Lancer gets the distinction of being the only melee unit having the gunpowder armor class, making it very easy to counter with Condottieri. Available to the Mongols and the Chinese.

- **Flamethrowers:** A siege unit that requires Chemistry. While short-ranged, it is quite proficient at destroying buildings, and deals bonus damage to infantry and elephants.

- **Obsidian Swordsmen:** American civilizations get some more emphasis on the theme of quantity over quality, to represent how they fought against small but technologically advanced Spanish expeditions. Obsidian Swordsmen are an American replacement for Long Swordsmen. They cannot be upgraded further, but come up with their own advantages, mostly civilization specific (I'll explain when I get to them). They are trained faster, move faster, gain +3 anti building damage in Imperial Age, and take less population space. Other than that, they have the stats of Long Swordsmen.

- **Slaver Cavalry:** A high-risk/high-reward unit that can be trained at the Town Center as soon as Feudal Age. It takes 25 seconds to train, just like a Villager, but costs 75 food and 50 gold. That might seem overpriced for a unit with such terrible combat stats, but its value comes from its ability to kidnap enemy villagers and bring them back to your Town Center, turning them into your own Villagers. They even retain the resources they were carrying! While not every civilization has access to it, it is not a crucial unit to have.

- **Dervishes:** Dervishes appear in the original Age of Kings design document and were supposed to be the Saracen unique unit, designed as mounted Berserks. Doing a bit of research, I found out that Dervishes are a religious concept. So we have a raiding cavalry unit that is trained at the Monastery. Dervishes have a resource cost comparable to Shrivamsha Riders, are affected by Bloodlines, Husbandry, Fervor and Sanctity and deal bonus damage to civilian buildings. They also happen to be quite good against archers. Available to the Saracens, Turks, Persians, Berbers and Tatars.

- **Elephant Cannoneers:** Similar to a Conquistador but on an elephant. It doesn't have as many HP as other elephant units, but makes up for it in sheer damage.

- **Canoes:** A small warship that costs no gold. When resources are taken into account, it's not that different from the galley line, though can be surprisingly good against large ships. It only costs 0.75 population space.

- **Siege Hulks:** Large warship. I originally designed them as a siege ship for civs without Cannon Galleons, and then we got Dromons and that depressed me, even if the Dromon itself is a great unit (that won't be the last time I get stepped on the toes like that). ANYWAY, Siege Hulks fire multiple bolts that each lower the armor of the target by 1, making them excellent at dealing with heavily armored ships. They aren't quite as effective against lighter ships like Canoes or the Galley line. They do resist some anti-ship bonus damage. Native American civilizations gain access to them, so that they gain at least an option for a siege ship, even though it's not going to be as useful for shore bombardment as Cannon Galleons or Dromons.

- **Springald Towers:** An alternate type of tower that fires Scorpion bolts, damaging units in a line in a similar way. Garrisoning archers inside Springald Towers will cause it to fire extra arrows instead of additional Scorpion bolts. The Springald Tower becomes available once you build a Siege Workshop, to the English, Franks, Burgundians, Teutons and Byzantines. It is affected by the Khmer team bonus and deals minor bonus damage to Rams and Elephants.

- **Lombard Cannons:** How do you turn this on again? Maybe something happens when you turn it off instead?

- **New techs:**

- **Hunting Dogs:** Returning right from the Forgotten, Hunting Dogs does exactly what it used to. For 40 food and 25 wood, it increases the work speed of Hunters and Fishermen by 25%,

and is researched at the Mill in Dark Age. The only civilization that doesn't have access to it is Mongols.

- **Revetments:** In Castle Age, for 200 wood at the University, you may upgrade your Palisade Walls to Fortified Palisade Walls. It should be noted that even as Cumans, they aren't as strong as Stone Walls, but this is definitely a worthy upgrade in some situations.

- **Trojan Tactics:** Still at the University in Castle Age, Trojan Tactics grants +50 HP and +5 garrison space to Transport Ships and Siege Towers. It also grants +2 garrison space to Rams.

- **Invasion:** At the Dock in Imperial Age, Invasion increases the movement speed of Transport Ships by 10%.

- **Block Printing:** I have renamed that technology to Afterlife (like in AoE1), but the effect is the same. The new technology called Block Printing reduces the training time of Monastery units by 30%.

- **Slavery!** ... Yeah okay it's not a good thing at all but it was all the rage back in the Middle Ages so I decided to include it. Basically you can buy Villagers at the Market for 90 gold. They're expensive but trained faster. It's not meant to be a replacement for booming, more for an emergency economy reinforcement if you need it.

- **Stone Mines** have 400 stone in them instead of 350.

- **Coinage** is free for every civ. Banking, however, is a Byzantine civ bonus. Guilds has been removed, but every civilization has a specific market exchange rate, ranging from 5% (Saracens, Portuguese) to 35% (Huns)

- **Watch Towers** must be upgraded from Outposts at the Blacksmith in Feudal Age for 150 food. You probably think it's a bad decision, and it is, but I needed to put that Springald Tower somewhere.

- Every civ is going to feel stronger than in vanilla, the idea being that **if everything is strong then it's balanced.**

- A small change in **terminology**. Units created faster, or buildings working faster, is now expressed in units created in less time. While the written numbers may seem like the bonus is weaker, they in fact express the same thing (for example, the Huns Stables working 20% faster are now said to be working in 16.7% less time, which is in fact the same bonus expressed in a different way). This is to avoid confusion, as a building working 50% faster can easily be misinterpreted as working in half the time, which is incorrect because math is just that weird.

- **Mangonels** and **Onagers** have their names swapped for historical accuracy. Technically traction trebuchets (Mangonels) have been invented before torsion trebuchets (Onagers) but Mangonels are a specific model of traction trebuchet that was invented after the Onager.

## CIVILIZATION SPECIFIC BREAKDOWNS:

### **Aztecs:**

Although the Aztecs retain their Infantry and Monk focus, the execution of said focuses happens quite differently. The theme of quantity over quality is present, as in all three Native American civs, but is less pronounced in the Aztecs. Their carry capacity bonus is increased from +3 to +4, which is still weaker than what it was in Conquerors, but will allow them to build up an economy more easily for a potential eagle rush.

Their creation speed bonus is now staggered over the ages. Where in vanilla their units are created 11% faster (or in 10% less time depending on how you count), here their units are created in 4% less time per age, resulting in a very slightly weaker bonus in Feudal Age, but that becomes stronger as soon as Castle Age, culminating in a 16% time reduction in Imperial Age. This might sound small but it is nearly as strong as having the English team bonus, the Goth team bonus and the Celt team bonus at the same time.

Gaining access to Plumed Archers and Slingers (the latter of which costing half the gold), as well as Imperial Skirmisher to combine nicely with Atlatl, their ranged options are considerably better. It might sound like their unique tech Garland Wars has been buffed, as it now gives +5 attack instead of +4, this is mostly to help with the Obsidian Swordsman's low attack, as the Eagle Knight's attack has been reduced by 1 to compensate, and Pikemen aren't going to do all that much more with +1 attack. These buff Obsidian Swordsmen are the Aztecs' main source of anti-building damage, as Aztecs, like the other American civilizations in this mod, lack good siege. Their third unique tech, Ichcahuipili, can be researched at the Blacksmith in Castle Age and increases the HP of infantry, cavalry and archers by 10%. Their Obsidian Swordsmen end up being comparable in strength to Champions (although with a bit more attack and a bit less HP), but without the considerable upgrade cost, taking up less population space, and created faster.

The Aztec Market is also quite strong, with a market exchange rate of 20%.

Full Tech Tree tip: The Monk HP bonus affects Dervishes. Or perhaps you'd like to see what happens when you give Garland Wars to Chakram Throwers.

### **Bengalis:**

The Bengali lose their +3 armor on Monks, but that's only because I intend to do something with that bonus in a later version of the mod (here's a clue: it has something to do with what this bonus used to be). It is, however, replaced with a much more needed early game economic boost. Hunting Dogs affect Bengali shepherds and foragers as well, although for half the effect. Still, that's a 12.5% boost to work speed once the technology is researched.

While the Bengali retain their mass elephant identity, their third unique tech, Khandayat, gives them a bit of defensive infantry flare, as it reduces the attack reload time of their Militia line by 33% as long as they're within 12 tiles of a friendly Farm, and is researched at the Mill. I promise there's a very good reason for that.

### **Berbers:**

While the main idea of the Berbers remain present, they do get a few tweaks that reinforce their cavalry and camel identity. Their discount at the Stable extends into the Feudal Age, starting at 10%, granting them a higher potential for a Scout rush or a Camel Scout rush. Their Villagers, which were recently nerfed for seemingly no reason at all, have been reversed to their former state of moving 10% faster from the beginning. I don't care that it makes them very strong on nomad maps or whatnot, several Berber subgroups are nomads anyway.

Something that a vanilla Berber connoisseur might notice is that they no longer have access to Genitours, the reason for that being that if there's any civilization that should *not* have Genitours, it's the Berbers. So, the Berber team bonus has been modified so that their camel units move 7% faster. Speaking of which, their new unique unit, since Camel Archers are regional, is the Tuareg, which is essentially a camel-riding version of the Light Cavalry line, having decent pierce armor and bonus damage against Monk, as well as, of course, against mounted units.

The third Berber unique technology is Trans-Saharan Control. It can be researched at the Market and allows them to build Stables in half the time and for half the resource cost, as well as granting +40 HP to Trade Carts (but not Trade Cogs) for the whole team.

It was unintentional but I suppose it keeps the Berbers' identity as a reliable team civilization.

### **Bohemians:**

The Bohemians very much retain their gunpowder identity. They also gain access to Heavy Crossbowmen for a non-gunpowder option.

Their third unique technology, Tarasnice, can be researched at the University in Imperial Age (only if Chemistry is researched) and increases the accuracy of their gunpowder units by 15%, as well as their projectile speed by 0.5 (like Arquebus).

### **Bulgars:**

I could have left the name Bulgarians, since it was the Bulgarian Empire, Bulgars is the name of the nomadic tribe that mingled with Slavs and founded the Bulgarian Empire. Speaking of nomadic tribe, and from the steppes at that, it's only natural that the Bulgars would have access to Steppe Lancers, which of course are affected by Stirrups. Notable, the Bulgarian army never really adopted crossbows, so, while in the vanilla game it means that they don't really use foot archers, here, they can use them all the way to Elite Archers, only missing the Crossbowman line.

While the Bulgars don't have access to Camels, they can still fight cavalry with cavalry thanks to their third unique technology, Arkani, which allows their light cavalry to deal +4 damage to other cavalry units, enabling Bulgar Hussars to beat even Paladins when equal resources are spent on both sides. It can be researched at the Blacksmith in Imperial Age.

### **Burgundians:**

The Burgundians retain the old value of their economic bonus of a 50% food discount. In fact, this benefits them even more in the mod thanks to the introduction of Hunting Dogs, which is of course affected.

Coustilliers are back to the charge attack they had on launch, minus the odd double damage to archers. They do gain a significant weakness to Cavalry Archers however, from which they take extra damage.

While the cost of Flemish Revolution takes the recent patch into account, their Flemish Militia are as strong and as expensive as they were on release.

Burgundians also gain access to Organ Guns, which also benefit from the gunpowder attack bonus. It could be argued that they gain a gunpowder identity, as their third unique technology, Breech Cannons, increases the attack of their gunpowder units against stone buildings by 10. It can be researched at the Siege Workshop once Chemistry is research.

### **Burmese:**

As a nod to the Burmese' reliance on European weaponry (Particularly Portuguese) towards the end of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the Burmese gain access to non-elite Organ Guns.

Combined with their sturdy Elephant Cannoneers, it provides them with some diverse gunpowder options, although their focus remains on elephants, infantry and monks.

Their unique unit, the Bloodsworn, is an Arambai in all but name, as arambai is actually the name of the weapon, and the Burmese Royal Guard would swear blood oaths. I did a bit of tinkering however, Arambais now get affected by the same upgrades as regular cavalry archers, but their base attack has been lowered by 3.

That's not to say that the Burmese don't get a new unique unit however, because they do. At the Monastery they have access to Elephant Missionaries, which are exactly what you think they are. This doesn't have much of a historical basis, I just really wanted to add that because it's really cool. Unlike Spanish Missionaries, Elephant Missionaries do cost more than regular Monks, but the added bulk more than makes up for it, and they become really hard counters to Knights and other high-value units.

Adding to the Burmese's already strong Halberdiers is their third unique technology, Ahmudan Regiments, which decreases the training time of trash units by 30%, adding a bit of rapid-response defensive potential.

### **Byzantines:**

Firstly, the fire spewed by Dromons and Mangonels is purely cosmetic. I know it's disappointing but come on it looks awesome. Their civilization bonuses remain largely the same, although you might notice that their tributes are free (like what the tech Banking does, except Banking isn't in the mod), making them quite strong for slinging.

Cataphracts, now being a common part of the tech tree, replace their Knight line. While other civilizations with Cataphracts have access to Bloodlines and Blast Furnace, Logistica helps Byzantine Cataphracts remain the best cavalry option to counter infantry units.

The new Byzantine unique unit is the Cheirosiphoneer, a foot unit armed with nothing less than a flamethrower! Yes, this is historically accurate. Cheirosiphoneers are quite strong against infantry and somewhat decent against cavalry, provided you have something in front, as they don't have a lot of HP. They also help clearing buildings, although should not be your first choice when assailing Castles, and definitely die to archers. They are affected by Greek Fire.

Byzantines also have access to the Springald Tower, which, like the Bombard Tower, gains extra blast radius from Greek Fire, making it an excellent option against large groups of units.

The third Byzantine unique tech is Polybolos, researched in Imperial Age at the Siege Workshop, which reduces the attack reload time of Scorpions and Springald Towers by 30%.

### **Celts:**

Much as they have been through the game's history, Celts remain largely unchanged. One thing you might notice is that they gain access to Bloodlines and lose access to Paladins, making their cavalry less expensive to make work, although it remains quite substandard.

An interesting change is that they gain access to Crossbowmen in Feudal Age rather than Castle Age, although they will take longer to train in Feudal Age, as they would otherwise be way too powerful. The Celts also gain access to the now regional Throwing Axemen at the Barracks, so they have some ranged options.

Their unique unit has been renamed to Kern, an Irish infantry unit, which is less anachronistic than the Woad Raider, but the unit is otherwise unchanged.

The Celts' third unique tech is Schiltron, which is available at the Barracks in Castle Age, in increases the melee armor of spear units by 3.

Full Tech Tree tip: Schiltron affects all spear infantry, not just the Spearman line.

### **Chinese:**

The Chinese have seen quite a few changes, vastly expanding their toolbox, especially in terms of ranged units. The only change to their civilization bonuses is that their technology discount extends into Dark Age.

Their Chu Ko Nu are now trained at the Archery Range, replacing the Crossbow line. The Chinese also gain access to Cataphracts. While Cataphracts are traditionally an anti infantry specialist, access to Bloodlines and Blast Furnace instead of Logistica makes them more like high HP generalists, though they remain quite strong against infantry. Another unit that used to be unique, but that the Chinese have now access to, is the War Wagon. Chinese War Wagons cannot be upgraded to Elite, but they are affected by Rocketry, making them slightly more glass cannon. They also gain access to Flamethrowers and Fire Lancers.

Their walls are made considerably weaker, as they lose access to Fortified Walls, and their unique technology, Great Wall, has been changed to reduce the cost of walls and gates by 70% instead of

increasing their HP. This technology however affects the entire team.

Their new unique unit trainable at the Castle is the Nest of Bees. The Nest of Bees does not have an elite upgrade and can only be built once Chemistry is researched. This gunpowder siege weapon fires an impressive volley of area-damaging rockets that is excellent at clearing masses of archers, especially as the battle scales up and you get more Nests of Bees.

Chinese walls have been reworked. They no longer get Fortified Walls, and their Great Wall unique tech now decreases the entire team's wall cost by 70%, and reduces the building time by 50%.

The third unique tech of the Chinese is Sulphuric Reaction, which is accessible at the University once Chemistry is researched, and increases the damage that Petards do to non-siege land military units by 60.

### **Cumans:**

There aren't many changes to the Cumans. Something perhaps noticeable is that being able to buy Villagers at the Market, combined with their second Town Center in Feudal Age, allows them to boom quite early, although they need to add gold to the equation in order to do so.

Their Kipchaks are now trained at the Archery Range instead of Cavalry Archers, and Cuman Mercenaries works differently. In a similar way to when it was originally introduced, the number of Mercenary Kipchaks is limited to ten per player, but, they can be replaced by new Kipchaks if killed, meaning that each player in the team can constantly have a group of ten free Kipchaks. Their third unique tech, Reserve Horses, can be researched at the Stable and allows their light cavalry and Kipchaks to regenerate 20 HP per minute.

### **Dravidians:**

So, I think that Urumi Swordsmen in the vanilla game are properly evil and should get arrested for breaching the Geneva Convention. Best I could do though was to change them. Instead of the charge mechanic, which goes to the Fire Lances in a much more balanced way, Urumi Swordsmen simply do 5 damage around them, like if they had Druzhina researched.

Other than that the Dravidians aren't changed all that much, their infantry is still very good, their cavalry still sucks, their archers are still very acceptable, and their siege is still discounted.

Their third unique technology, Bondikula, can be researched at the Siege Workshop once Chemistry is researched and allows their Hand Cannoneers to deal blast damage in a 0.5 tile radius. Hopefully this will make their strategies a bit more varied.

### **English:**

They may differ to the Britons in name, but the core components of the civilization are the same. The range bonus of the English has been reworked. Instead of gaining 1 range as soon as they hit Castle Age and Imperial Age, the range bonus applies once Fletching and Bracer (not Bodkin Arrow) are researched, giving them an edge in Feudal combat.

English Villagers, like in Age of Empires IV, defend themselves with bows, which can seem extremely powerful for Villager Rushes but it should be remembered that Loom grants +2 pierce armor to Villagers, so once Loom is researched for both players, any other villager will beat an English Villager in combat. These bows do instead come with the advantages of ranged units, making them better for focus firing and defending against infantry.

English Castles no longer train Longbowmen, instead Longbowmen are a direct upgrade to Archers (yes the AI can do it too).

The English also gain access to Organ Guns, although not the elite upgrade, and Crusader Knights, which, while substandard, can definitely help their Longbowmen to tank hits.

The third English unique tech is Privateers, which grants +6 attack against buildings to the Galley line.

## **Ethiopians:**

The Ethiopians underwent few changes themselves, but the general balance changes affected them greatly. Their faster-attacking archer bonus now applies to all foot archers, including Skirmishers and Crossbowmen. With the primary Archer line already attacking faster, and their access to Thumb Ring, Ethiopian Archers can become absolutely fearsome units in large numbers.

The Jubba tribe uses weapons very similar to Chakrams, even called Chakrani. The Jubba tribe has nothing to do with Ethiopia, but Chakram Throwers are way too cool not to use in every possible occasion, and Ethiopians are the closest civilization, geographically. So Ethiopians gain access to Chakram Throwers.

The third Ethiopian unique tech, Tankwa, increases the movement speed of both their Trade Cogs and Canoes by 10%, and allows their Canoes to deal +5 damage to Fishing Ships, making them ideal raiders on water maps.

## **Franks:**

The Franks have access to the same civ bonuses as usual, but the possible number of strategies they can perform is increased by their new unit choices. While they can absolutely go for Paladins in the exact same way as in the vanilla game, they gain a number of new ranged options. For one, Throwing Axemen are easier to mass, thanks to being trained at the Barracks.

They gain access to Crusader Knights, although they're not quite as strong as the fabled Frank Paladins, they require less investment and are still very strong.

The Franks also gain two new unique units, one of them being the Arbalester, a version of Crossbowmen that fires even slower but deals very heavy damage (up to 14 once all upgrades are researched). They are quite expensive, but their main advantage lies in the low numbers required to reach a critical mass that can one-shot heavy cavalry units.

The second new unique unit of the Franks is the Culverin, a type of cannon that requires Chemistry to be built and is more focused towards taking out units thanks to a higher projectile speed, especially siege. They are still decent against buildings, but the Franks still have access to Bombards Cannons that do that job better.

The Franks' third unique tech is Fustibale, which can be researched at the Archery Range in Imperial Age and grants Slingers an extra +8 attack to stone buildings, allowing them to easily handle towers, and even help out with Castles in sufficient numbers.

Full Tech Tree tip: Feudal Scout Rushes with 74-HP scouts are very strong, but the question is, would you end the game before you've had time to make those extra-chonky elephants?

## **Goths:**

Aaaaand I don't have much to say about the Goths. They remain stronger in the late game than in the early game, although they do have a few changes.

Firstly, their population space bonus occurs in Feudal Age, granting them an immediate +10 population space upon reaching it, and a buffer for them to rush.

The Goths also gain Cataphracts, which is a nice alternative to a fairly unremarkable Knight line.

The third Goth unique tech is Arianism, which can be researched at the Monastery and Castle Age to grant Monks +6 pierce armor.

## **Gurjaras:**

On release, the Gurjaras were such a hated civilization that they have been nerfed into irrelevance. Officially, because they were too strong, but most likely, because ranked players hate a civ that deviates from their beloved crossbow/knight meta.

This mod gives Gurjaras some of their tools back. Interestingly enough, now that Camel Scouts and

Chakram Throwers are art of the common tech tree, Shrivamsha Riders are the Gurjaras' only unique unit, which presented a perfect opportunity: make the Shrivamsha Riders as strong as they were on release, but put them at the Castle instead of the Stable, making them harder to access. So I did just that.

Their bonus damage increase, while not as strong as it was on release, has still been increased by 10 each age. Alas I could not figure out how to give them their old heritable bonus.

The Gurjaras' third unique technology is very strong, but requires some context. Charam Throwers, in this mod, are like they were on release. They had a higher attack, but their pass-through damage was halved, instead of being its full damage like it is today. They also did not have bonus damage against infantry. Tajani, researched at the Blacksmith in Imperial Ae for a fairly steep price, restores this full pass-through damage. Good thing the Gurjaras don't have access to Blast Furnace, or you'd finally have a good reason to hate them.

### **Hindustanis:**

I expected rebalancing these guys to be a nightmare, given that I know very little of the Mughal Empire, but a quick research made that pretty easy.

But firstly, it felt important to restore their old, more powerful villager discount.

Naturally, the Imperial Camel Rider can no longer be considered their unique unit as it is now part of the common tech tree, but Camel Riders are still an asset for the Hindustanis because of the attack speed bonus, which also affects their Camel Archers, but their lack of the Elite upgrade and Parthian Tactics doesn't make them an optimal choice in all ranged situations.

The Hindustanis are also granted access to Organ Guns (although not the Elite version), as Akbar, the third Mughal Emperor, had a Persian polymath develop an early version of a volley gun.

These Organ Guns are affected by the gunpowder armor bonus, as well as the third Hindustani unique tech, Bans, which grants each of their projectiles +4 damage against elephant units.

Admittedly, Bans are at the extremity of the Age of Empires 2 timeline, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but then, so do Conquistadors.

### **Huns:**

It's no secret that the Huns shouldn't have access to Paladins, historically speaking. That is why they get Steppe Lancers in this version. In fact, they can upgrade them to Elite Steppe Lancers without spending gold on the upgrade. They also gain access to Camel Riders (though not upgradable in Imperial Age)

Their Hunters do not require a drop site, too.

The Huns are also one of the few civilizations having access to Cavalry Archers in Feudal Age, where their discount even applies.

The Huns are the only civilization to lack access to Trebuchets. They instead relies on Onagers, which, through their third unique tech, Traction Trebuchet, which can be researched at the Siege Workshop once Siege Engineers is researched, grants Onagers +4 range, +60 damage against large buildings, and extra projectile speed. This might sound overpowered, but actually turned out to be pretty okay, giving their Onagers some Bombard Cannon properties. Remember that the names Onagers and Mangonels have been swapped.

On the negative side, the Huns lose access to Squires, as they were reported to spend so much time riding horses that they walked clumsily.

Overall the Huns are strengthened in their nomadic raider identity.

### **Incas:**

So, the way the Incas have been reworked with one of the recent patches, gaining their food discount and an extra +1 attack for Slingers with Andean Sling was absolutely not planned for.

Originally I had decided to make Andean Sling deal bonus damage to cavalry, as Spanish Conquistadors reported that Inca slings could “kill a horse”. I’ll keep that in mind for later. In the meantime, Incas have lost the Spearman line entirely, instead being able to train Kamayuks at the Barracks in Castle Age. They still have a second trash unit, however, in the form of their Swordsman line, whose gold cost has been replaced by wood. This will make the unit considerably easier to mass as the game progresses. Of course they’re not getting trash Champions, as their Swordsman line stops at the Obsidian Swordsman with different advantages. The Incas’ spin on the Plumed Scout is the Condor Warrior, which has familiar stats but moves 10% faster, a homage to the removed tech Couriers that was in the game before Andean Sling took its place.

To make up for their lack of good siege, the Incas’ already stronger Villagers are affected 66% more by Sappers.

The third Inca unique tech is Mit’a, which can only be researched in Imperial Age and if Obsidian Swordsman is researched, and allows you to train Kamayuks and Obsidian Swordsmen in pairs. The training takes a bit longer, but you will dramatically gain time if you’re training a large army, not to mention that it takes less room in the building’s queue. Unfortunately due to the way the game works, units trained in batches can’t make use of rally points, and that is not something that can be changed.

### **Japanese:**

While the Japanese remain identical in Dark and Feudal Age (aside of course for the general balance changes), it is in Castle Age that they diversify. They do gain access to generic but still viable War Wagons, including the elite upgrade, but also gain access to two additional unique units, all trained at the Castle.

Ninjas can be trained in Castle Age and can swap between a melee mode that deals extra damage to villagers, and a faster-moving ranged mode, firing multiple projectiles that deal extra damage to infantry.

The third Japanese unique tech, Shimabara Rebellion, can only be researched at the Castle once the Elite Samurai upgrade is researched, and turns all Elite Samurais present on the map into Ronins. Once researched, the Japanese may still choose to train either Elite Samurais or Ronins. Ronins are an infantry unit specialized in taking out large buildings. Their stats aren’t quite as high as Champions, making them worse in melee fights, although they do cost less gold.

### **Khmer:**

FOR THE RECORD I CAME UP WITH BALLISTICS SCORPIONS LONG BEFORE RETURN OF ROME HAPPENED SO I DON’T CARE, THOSE BELONG TO THE KHMER.

There, now that this is out of the way, let’s take a look at the Khmer’s other features.

They gain access to Elephant Archers, Elephant Cannoneers and Armored Elephants. The speed bonus also affects all elephant units, not just Battle Elephants. This is especially beneficial for Armored Elephants as it reduces one of their big weaknesses which is their low speed. In fact, another large weakness of Armored Elephants is helped, as they are affected by Tusk Swords. By no means does that make them good against melee units, but at least they can fight, and their extreme resistance to arrows make them able to fight archers to an extent.

The Khmer also have a 15% discount on slaves, which is quite powerful to boost their economy and make sure that they can get to Castle Age in time to start training those sweet elephants.

Their team bonus extends to all ballista units, including Springald Towers, with Ballista Elephants having 1 less range to make up for it.

They also gain access to a second unique unit, the Ox Wagon. The Ox Wagon is available at the Market in Feudal Age, and acts as a mobile drop-off point for miners and lumberjacks, for only 50 wood. A good use of that is to allow you to save some wood on Mills should you choose to head out

to hunt. However, even in the late game when you have more wood than you could possibly need, Ox Wagons still have a use, as the Khmer's third unique tech, Supply Wagons, which is available at the Market in Castle Age for 600 food, allows Ox Wagons to heal non-siege land military units around them in a 5-tile radius, further boosting the tankiness of your elephants.

### **Koreans:**

While the Chinese have arguably better War Wagons, the Koreans can undoubtedly tech into them more easily, thanks to the wood discount, as well as a handy 60% gold discount on their Siege Workshop technologies.

The wood discount was buffed in a recent official patch, but I elected to ignore that buff, as it would have made Korean archer rushes far too strong given that in this mod the Archer line has a resource cost much more inclined towards wood than gold.

The Koreans also gain access to Hwachas, their new Castle unique unit, which is a gunpowder siege weapon. On the surface it looks like it's comparable to Hwachas, but has little to do with it, being more mobile than other siege weapons and firing multiple arrows in a tight spread, excelling at taking out infantry, and, behind the safety of walls, wiping out even heavy cavalry. It's not quite as strong against archers given its low pierce armor and HP. It should be noted that while Hwachas are siege weapons, each of their arrows is affected by archer attack upgrades.

The third Korean unique unit is the returning Panokseon, which increases the movement speed of Turtle Ships.

### **Lithuanians:**

Fun fact, I never really liked the Lithuanians' gameplay because a simple focus on brute force heavy cavalry has been in the game since the very beginning with the Franks, and as much as I'd like to diversify them, their heavy cavalry focus will remain. However, their relic bonus now affects all cavalry units, allowing their Hussars to do +2 damage, which can be quite powerful for a unit whose low attack is one of its weaknesses.

Their third unique technology, Alkas, can be researched at the Monastery in Castle Age and allows their foot archers, including skirmishers, to deal +5 damage to religious units.

### **Lombards:**

The Lombards, known in vanilla as Italians, retain their themes of using and countering gunpowder. The discount they have on Dock and University techs applies to Revetments, Trojan Tactics and Invasion.

Italians have access to discounted Organ Guns, which, while they don't have the Elite upgrade, can still provide good value on the battlefield.

Their Condottieri are now available at the Market, as I felt it was more suitable for mercenaries than the Barracks, and can be strong in more situations due to the increased number of gunpowder units.

Due to the way Hand Cannoneers work in the mod, in order to remain a counter to them, Condottieri resist the affect that cause armor to be ignored, letting them be stronger against Leiciai as well. Speaking of the Lombard Market, it is one of their greatest assets, as, in addition to the Silk Road unique tech that helps in team games (the resource cost and research time of which I have decided to reduce slightly, and I made it affect the whole team), they also have a resource exchange rate of only 10%, which is very efficient.

Genoese Crossbowmen are trained at the Archery Range as a replacement for Crossbowmen, making their Castles less crucial.

However, these Castles can still provide a strong defense, with their third unique tech, Star Forts, which can be researched at the Castle in Imperial Age, allows them to take 60 less damage from cannon units (Bombard Cannons, Culverins, Cannon Galleons).

Full Tech Tree tip: The Lombards are the only civilization whose team bonus still works in Full Tech Tree mode.

### **Magyars:**

So, you mean to tell me that the Corvinian Army, one of the first armies in Europe to use gunpowder... doesn't get Hand Cannoneers? I'm sorry, but historical accuracy be historical accuracy and I need to change that. So, Magyars get Hand Cannoneers. And more than that, their unique technology, Corvinian Army, affects Hand Cannoneers as well as their Huszars (it doesn't turn them into trash units, it reduces their gold cost by 10).

Magyar Huszars gain 1 range similar to the Steppe Lancer, a historical nod to the incredibly long lance they would wield. To balance this advantage out their stats are slightly lowered, but nothing dramatic. Their biggest nerf is their training time, which is 3 seconds higher than Steppe Lancers which they replace.

To further enhance their strong Scout rush, Magyars also get the Hunting Dogs tech for free, as they did back when the tech was first introduced in the ancient times of a decade ago. Their bonus damage against wolves has been removed however, as this is utility they frankly don't need.

The third Magyar unique tech, Professional Soldiers, can be researched at the Barracks in Castle Age, once Supplies is researched, and remove the 45 food cost but increases the gold cost by 25, essentially being the opposite of the Malay's Forced Levy. It might seem strange to increase the gold cost of the unit, but the Magyars have an excellent trash option with their Magyar Huszars, and their Hand Cannoneers also have a reduced gold cost, so Champions would complement them nicely if you have a surplus of gold.

### **Malay:**

I really wanted to make a Starcraft reference by underlining the Karambit Warriors' similarity to Zerglings and give them a unique tech that would be similar to Metabolic Boost or Adrenal Glands, but I quickly figured that this would be a terrible idea.

The Malay have all aspects of their identities reinforced. Their water economy is improved, as, though their Fish Traps are no longer discounted, they provide infinite food like they used to.

Their infantry options are expanded with the addition of Chakram Throwers (although they don't have access to the elite upgrade), they gain access to Elephant Archers, which benefit from the large discount (again, not the elite upgrade, that would be quite overpowered), and their navy is made stronger by their third unique technology, Outriggers, which increases the HP of warships by 20 and the garrison capacity of their Transport Ships by 10. It can be researched at the Dock in Castle Age, although it's quite an expensive investment.

### **Malians:**

Despite lacking Bracer, Malians gain a few reasons to build Archery Ranges, in addition to their infantry focus, thanks to gaining access to Imperial Skirmishers, a new bonus that allows their Crossbowmen to move 10% faster and have +2 line of sight, and their third unique technology, Farbas, which lets their Barracks and Archery Ranges work in 20% less time. It's important to note that this bonus is applied multiplicatively with Conscription, which is a time reduction of 25%, and therefore, the total time reduction once both technologies are researched is of 40%, and not 45%. The extra pierce armor for Barracks units is also applied to Market units, so that Condottieri may benefit from it, but it also has the effect of making Malian Trade Carts harder to raid by ranged units.

Malians also gain a training time reduction for Slaves at the Market, a reference to the high number of slaves that Mansa Mussa owned. This, combined with their gold bonus, gives them the potential for a formidable economy in the mid game.

## **Mayans:**

The Mayans' core gameplay looks like it is the same, but they actually get some strong alterations. Firstly, it should be noted that with Plumed Archers being a regional upgrade to Archers, they're not nearly as strong as they are in the vanilla game. Their damage potential and movement speed are similar, but they don't have as much health.

I have done what I can to mitigate their farming inefficiency, but properly testing it would require precise measurement and I'd much rather spend time making cool stuff rather than bicker over this very minor detail that only ranked players care about.

The Mayan team bonus has been changed, now granting their Walls and Towers +10% HP.

Their Skirmishers and Slingers benefit from the foot archer discount.

The Mayans' new unique units are the Holcan, an anti-building infantry unit that can be trained at the Castle. Holcans deal high damage to buildings but also have a small anti cavalry bonus, making them quite viable against light cavalry, although heavy cavalry is probably not a fight they'd be looking for, as they have no base melee armor. They do make a good replacement for the Mayans' lackluster Obsidian Swordsmen.

The second Mayan unique unit is their own spin on the Plumed Scout, the Yucatec Scout. The Yucatec Scout does not have an elite upgrade, but his stats are higher than non elite Eagle Knights and Condor Warriors, and perhaps most importantly he does not have the Eagle Warrior armor class, thus taking no bonus damage from the Swordsman line. The El Dorado unique tech will grant him an extra 50 HP, taking him to 100.

The Mayans' third unique tech is Obsidian Arrows, which returns from the limbs to grant all Mayan foot archers +6 attack against walls.

## **Mongols:**

The nomadic Mongols gain some similarities to the Huns. Like the Huns, they cannot build Houses, although the bonus is handled differently. Their starting wood is cut by 50 instead of 100, but they do need to build extra Town Centers to increase their maximum population, as their Town Centers grant 75 population space. Their Town Centers can also be packed and unpacked to be relocated, which gives them access to a new kind of douche strategy, and I'm not ashamed of this in the slightest.

Mongols also gain access to Flamethrowers, Camel Archers (which benefit from the attack speed bonus), and Fire Lances, increasing their flexibility.

Their cavalry HP bonus has been swapped with the Cumans' faster movement speed for a bit of historical accuracy. This certainly balances out the impressive buffs they gain, as, lacking the last armor upgrade for both archers and cavalry, it prompts them to rely a lot more on speed, striking first and avoiding unfavorable fights.

The Mongols are the only civilization not to have access to Hunting Dogs, having their usual hunting bonus instead. They can train Cavalry Archers in Feudal Age, and those even benefit from the attack speed bonus. The way their Cavalry Archers are handled also changes. Mangudais now have an attack bonus against unique unit, while the anti siege bonus is passed on to their Cavalry Archers.

The Nomads unique tech increases the population space granted by Town Centers to 200, removing the need to build extra ones for population space unless playing with high population limit.

The third Mongol unique tech is Manchu Bow, which grants their Cavalry Archers (not Mangudais nor Camel Archers) +2 range, and a bit of an Age of Empires 1 vibe.

## **Persians:**

In a mod where many civilizations gain extra bonuses it can seem strange that the Persians still have only two of these. However, the Town Center work speed, which had deliberately been left as it

usually is in vanilla in Dark Age, now follows the pattern like in the other ages, and while 5% can seem insignificant, it does allow the Persians to gain a villager advantage after some time even before Feudal Age.

Persians also gain access to Cataphracts, Elephant Archers and Dervishes (admittedly not the best Dervishes), as well as a new unique unit in addition to the War Elephant, the Clibinarius, a heavy cavalry unit that specializes in taking out archers and, perhaps unusually, Archery Ranges, dealing bonus damage to them. This unit also attacks from a range of 0.33 tiles (0.5 for the Elite version). Gaining an anti-archer heavy cavalry unit means that their team bonus could be considered not that impactful, which is why it has been swapped for increased resistance to anti-cavalry bonus damage for the Knight line and its alternatives. This bonus works especially well against Camels. Fun fact, it was once considered as the Frank team bonus during one of the early builds of the game.

It should be noted that the Kamandaran tech affects the Archer line instead of the Crossbow line (Kamandaran is literally the Persian word for Archer), and that trash Composite Archers are very good even without Bracer, that Mahouts affects Elephant Archers, completely negating the idea that elephant units are slow, and that they regain access to the lost Boiling Oil tech, which lets their defensive buildings, including Town Centers, deal extra damage to Rams, which is very useful against the AI because we all know how much the AI loves sneaky Rams no I totally don't have PTSD I promise what are you talking about no I swear-

### **Poles:**

The Poles might be the least changed civilization in the mod. The main changes are simply to restore all of their bonuses as they were on release, instead of this watered down generic civilization that they currently are.

While they lose access to Crop Rotation, that's because it is replaced by their third unique technology, Ostsiedlung (did I write that correctly?), which doubles the Folwark's instant food yield, making their farms exhaust faster but on the other hand considerably increases their food gathering.

### **Portuguese:**

While Organ Guns are no longer a unit unique to the Portuguese, they do gain two additional unique units to compensate. Firstly, upon advancing to Castle Age, their Slaver Cavalry is automatically upgraded to Bandeirantes, which are more proficient in combat (although still less than ideal), but more importantly, gain increased resistance to anti-cavalry bonus damage, as well as a projectile-dodging ability similar to that of Shrivamsha Riders (although less powerful). This allows them to keep abducting enemy Villagers in the early Castle Age, while other civilizations' Slavers are less incentivised to be active by that time.

The third unique unit of the Portuguese is the Cannon Caravel, which can be built at the Dock once Chemistry is researched, and easily shreds less armored ships. It could be considered an Organ Gun on water.

Unlike other civilizations, the Portuguese don't need to research Chemistry before being able to build Organ Guns at the Siege Workshop. They still need that technology to upgrade them into Heavy Organ Guns, however.

The third Portuguese unique technology, Trunions, can be researched at the Siege Workshop in Imperial Age. It increases the movement speed of all land gunpowder siege units by 20% and decreases their build time by 20%. Despite being a gunpowder-related technology, it has been designed to be researched without Chemistry, so that both techs may be researched at the same time to speed up teching into gunpowder siege units (besides trunions are a mechanics breakthrough, not a chemistry one), although admittedly it is a lot of resources spent at the same time.

### **Romans:**

I SAID I CAME UP WITH BALLISTICS SCORP- ok we've been through this already.

So, Romans lose that, but they still have a Scorpion bonus, as they can build them, as well as Siege Workshops of course, in Feudal Age.

Their unique technology Ballista no longer reduces the Scorpions' attack reload time (though it still does for Galleys), but makes their Scorpions cost no gold.

Their third unique technology, Pilum, which can be researched at the Blacksmith in Imperial Age once Bodkin Arrow is researched, allows their Skirmishers to damage their targets' armor much like Obuchs.

FTT tip: So... if they had access to Bracer and Imperial Skirmishers...

### **Rus:**

I swear I didn't do it on purpose, but with good farmers, a Knight upgrade that comes earlier than expected, a cavalry unique unit and good hand cannons, the Rus kinda look like the Burgundians now.

So, these renamed Slavs get the Boyar upgrade in Castle Age as opposed to Imperial Age, and can research it in half the time, which allows them to perform quite a strong Knight rush provided they put the resources into it.

As part of the Rus tech tree are the Steppe Lancers, although not the Elite upgrade, and the Feudal Cavalry Archers. Given that the Rus economy encourages farming, making Cavalry Archers in Feudal Age isn't an optimal move, but it is an option.

The new unique unit of the Rus is the Cossack, a light cavalry unit with high pierce armor that costs a moderate amount of gold. While good against archers, it is against mounted archers, against which it deals bonus damage, that it shines.

The Rus also gain access to Hand Cannoneers, to whom their third unique tech, Streltsy, that can be researched at the Castle, grants +3 melee armor, making them an even better counter to infantry and even viable against heavy cavalry.

### **Saracens:**

For quite a while have the developers been trying to give Saracens a Monk identity, which is why Madrasah was a thing. But Madrasah sucked as a unique tech, so I made it a civ bonus instead. It only happens in Imperial Age, but it also affects Dervishes, which, coincidentally, are also affected by the HP bonus. Not Camelry though, the renamed Zealotry, since Camelry is obviously for Camels. However, it does make Saracen Dervishes quite a viable raiding unit, even able to replace light cavalry in trash wars to an extent.

The Saracens start with a Camel Scout, and being able to train Camel Scouts with extra HP gives them an edge against scout rushes and even helps a bit against archers. Their anti-building bonus for cavalry archers also returns from the forgotten lands (see what I did there?).

The third Saracen unique tech, Wet Hides, can be researched at the Dock and increases the melee and ship armor of Warships by 1, making them more resilient against Fire Ships.

### **Sicilians:**

The bonus damage resistance of the Sicilians, which was their civilization-defining bonus, has been nerfed twice into something that barely has an effect. This is unacceptable and needed to be reverted.

Other than that, Sicilians have access to Crusader Knights, which benefit from Hauberk, making them very dangerous given the combination of their very high armor and bonus damage resistance. Their third unique tech is the returning Scutage, except this time it doesn't cost gold, making it more interesting to research. For reminder, Scutage grants a 15-gold payment for each military unit

owned.

### **Spanish:**

With several bonuses that each quietly help the Spanish in the background, this civilization has a pretty smooth economy. To that we can add a very strong Market, with an exchange rate at 10%, and a reduced training time for Slaver Cavalry by 30%, allowing them to resume Villager production faster. The increased number of technologies in the mod also participates to their gold bonus.

They gain access to Organ Guns, which are helped by the attack reload time bonus, as well as Genitours (for historical reasons), replacing Skirmishers in Feudal Age, helping in early raiding. Their Missionaries remain the same, but their Conquistadors gain bonus damage against Elephant units, and are helped by the third Spanish unique tech, Hidalgos, which can be researched at the Castle in Imperial Age and reduce the bonus damage they take by 30%. 30% may not seem like much, given that Sicilian have a 50% bonus damage resistance for all their non siege land units, and for free, but the squishy Conquistadors take bonus damage from so many sources that Hidalgos is a most welcome extra layer of protection for them.

### **Tatars:**

Tatars gain access to Camel Archers, which synergizes considerably better with their civilization bonuses, as well as their unique technology Silk Armor.

Keshiks have been reworked into a Steppe Lancer replacement, gaining 1 range. Their gold generation has been reduced from 0.01 to 0.0035 (0.007 for Elite Keshiks) but works against buildings as well as units. Being built from Stables, their resource cost and training time has been aligned with Steppe Lancers.

Their third unique technology, Timurid Renaissance grants them a whole new booming potential, as it allows all of their civilian buildings (Mill, resource camps, Monastery, Town Center, University, Blacksmith), to work in 33% less time. Assuming this technology is researched as soon as they hit Castle Age, it would put villager production on halt for 50 seconds, or the time it takes to make two Villagers, but pays off after the ninth villager is built, where the Tatars would be one villager ahead of other civilizations (this is assuming that neither player builds additional Town Centers). Naturally, the more Town Centers the faster the payoff.

### **Teutons:**

Much like the English range bonus has been reworked, the Teuton armor bonus has been reworked in the exact same way. It also affects Teutonic Knights and Crusader Knights. Teutonic Knights have less armor to balance it out, but Crusader Knights become very well armored, making them more comparable to Boyars or Sicilian Cavaliers than Paladins. The Holy Roman Empire can be said to strike back, as the mythical Teuton Death Star is back from the long bygone era of Age of Kings, granting +5 range to Town Centers as a civ bonus.

The extra garrison space in Towers does affect Springald Towers, allowing them to fire extra arrows.

The third Teuton unique tech, Grose Bosche, can be researched at the Siege Workshop once Chemistry is acquired, and increases the HP and blast radius of Bombard Cannons by 50%. It is quite expensive, as one might expect, costing stone.

### **Turks:**

The Turks had several possible candidates that could benefit from their pierce armor bonus, those being Slaver Cavalry, Steppe Lancer, and Dervishes, all of them available to the Turks. I chose Slaver Cavalry, as Elite Steppe Lancers already got +1 pierce armor in a recent patch and Dervishes are already quite strong against archers. This makes Slaver Cavalry more usable in Feudal combat if necessary, although they are still not an ideal choice, but more importantly it allows them to better resist archers or towers that might be guarding enemy Villagers.

Janissaries have their role swapped with the vanilla Hand Cannoneers. In vanilla, Hand Cannoneers are anti infantry specialists, while Janissaries are more of a generalist unit with higher attack but no bonus damage. Since Rebalancement turns Hand Cannoneers into strong anti armor generalists, I decided to grant an anti-infantry bonus to Janissaries, since Turks don't get Slingers anyway. Janissaries still ignore armor, but they have lower attack than normal to compensate.

With Sipahi affecting Camel Archers, the Turks obtain a candidate for the strongest mounted archer in the game.

Arched Saddle, the third unique technology of the Turks, increases the melee armor of Steppe Lancers and Dervishes by 1, which makes Steppe Lancers able to beat heavy cavalry with equal resources, and can be researched at the Stable in Castle Age.

### **Vietnamese:**

In an earlier version of the mod, I had designed a unit called the Siege Skirmisher, that would be a second unique unit for the Vietnamese. There was no historical basis for that at all, I just thought it was too funny not to include. The Siege Skirmisher is no longer present, but the Vietnamese still et some changes. As much as it broke my heart to do so, I had to lower the attack of Rattan Archers so that they could fit as replacements to the Composite and Elite Archers without being completely overpowered.

Their HP bonus has been reworked, no longer affecting Hand Cannoneers, but instead all foot and mounted archers (remember, Hand Cannoneers are part of a different unit class).

They also gain a slightly stronger Dark Age due to their economic tech discount affecting Hunting Dogs.

But like other civilizations from Rise of the Rajas, the Vietnamese's potential with elephant units is where most changes are made, as Chatras affects every elephant unit, and they gain access to Elephant Archers and Elephant Cannoneers (the former being affected by the archer HP bonus).

The third unique tech of the Vietnamese grants them some more defensive potential on water maps, as it is a second level for Heated Shot that can be accessed in Imperial Age. Its effect is only 50% of Heated Shot, but the cumulative bonus damage against ships is quite impressive.

### **Vikings:**

Fun fact, the Vikings figured out a primitive version of steel by forging animal bones into their weapons. They thought that the spirit of the animals would strengthen the weapons, but the carbon contained in the bones made the weapons stronger. To reflect that, the Vikings can build a Blacksmith in Dark Age, and researched melee attack upgrades an age earlier.

They have a Slaver Cavalry as their starting scout, which is a complicated tradeoff. Scouting information is vital in Dark Age, but kidnapping your opponents' Villagers early can grant you a very strong economic advantage. So, you decide.

The Vikings' third unique tech, Faithless Looting, grants +4 attack vs. civilian buildings to their Militia line.