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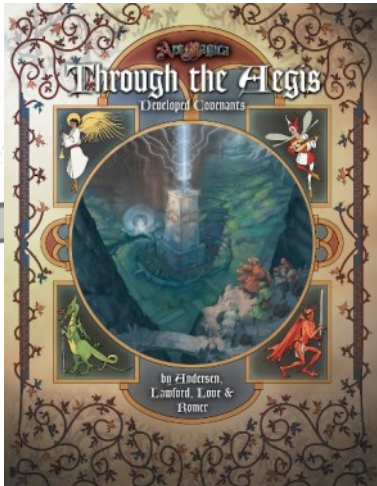
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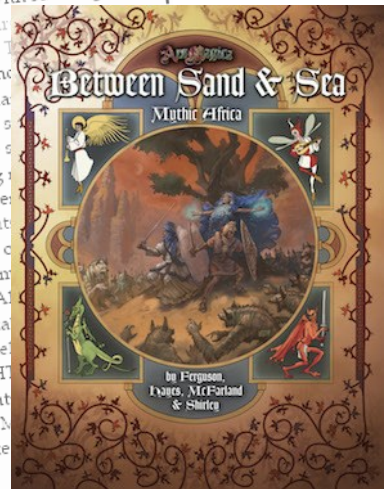
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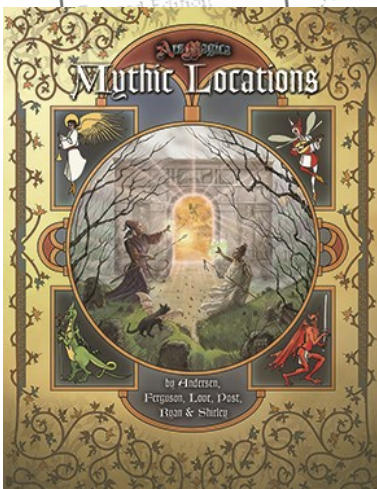
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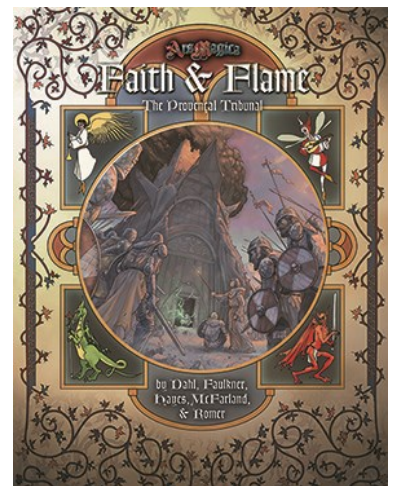
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It's taken a while, but once again, thanks to everyone who made this issue possible and also to our fantastic subscribers for being so patient. Special mentions to Matt Ryan and Timothy Ferguson for all their help.

UNDER THE ROSE

The request for material supporting ages and settings other than the default 1220 Mythic Europe is something that regularly appears in the **Ars Magica** fan community.

It is a testament to the breadth and depth to which Mythic Europe has been covered across five editions of the game that we are all intimately familiar with the setting. While that familiarity engenders confidence it can sometimes mean that one saga may feel very similar to the next; character names, the covenants, the rulers of the local towns all change, but the society remains the same and, crucially, the Order of Hermes stays much the same.

Of course, we now have the marvelous *Between Sand and Sea* and a whole book covering Egypt and beyond still to come. Those certainly expand the scope of the game further than has been done to date.

And the Tribunal books have gone to great lengths to differentiate different regions of Mythic Europe. Each provides a different play style, such that a saga set in Hibernia is now a very different thing to a saga set in Transylvania. But the thirteenth century remains a constant so despite these Tribunal differences and despite the greater medieval world now being supported by the line, there is still a desire to see something that steps away from 1220.

So with this issue, **Sub Rosa** gives itself over to different times and places. We are immensely grateful to a host of contributors this issue for giving us their view of Mythic Europe across the ages, allowing us to span the period from about 550AD through to 1470AD and beyond.

Tobias Wheeler has built a dark-age vision of magic out of the familiar Hermetic mechanics for his Britannia-based saga starting in the year 550AD, long before the founding of the Order of Hermes.

Berengar Drexel is playing double duty in this issue as he takes us to the year 865 in a campaign where your young magi form the future of the Order, and he also forms part of the team that moves us forward to 1050. That team also includes Shane Appel and Timothy Ferguson. The material covering 1050 also includes two scenarios, which provides a great opportunity to pick up and play in the Order's history as a change to your usual saga.

Mark Shirley takes things into the future, as far as the regular start date is concerned, by taking us to the years following the Great Mortality. We find an Order transformed and more integrated with the world than perhaps it had ever been before. New breakthroughs open to the Order are counterbalanced by new threats from unexpected sources.

That's the end of our notional time traveling proper, but Bob Karcher, well-known on the Gen-

Convention circuit, talks to us about running **Ars Magica** at conventions and he's not talking about any old **Ars Magica**. He tells us of his side-steps into running the game set firstly in 17th Century Paris followed by 18th Century New York.

But if the exploration of other times and places is not your cup of tea, we have even more content for you. If you want a dark swamp with a malicious faerie queen, we have just the thing, courtesy of Pelle Kofod. And if you're looking for mystical, magical weapons, then look no further than Vincent Garcia-Gomez' article.

Mark Baker brings a close to his trilogy of articles as we explore another Bonisagus lineage, complete with more cursed, unstable, and dangerous magi than you might have suspected House Bonisagus could contain.

Finally, events take a darker turn in the Journal of Vulcanis Argens as the troubled Verditius sells his soul to the devil.

This issue has been an age in development. That's partly down to the depth of the work done by the contributors, partly down to the sheer size of this issue, and partly down to ever-greater demands on the time available to the editorial team. The final result, though, we hope you'll agree, is a great resource for those looking to stretch the boundaries of our great game.

FROM THE LINE EDITOR

By DAVID CHART

Ars Magica is set in a world that looks very much like medieval Europe (and now, with the release of *Between Sand and Sea*, North Africa as well). One defining feature of that world was the dominance of the Abrahamic religions, particularly Christianity and Islam, and that means that we must portray those religions in the game. Obviously, the religions portrayed in the game are not the historical religions, because they exist in an entirely fictional world, much less the contemporary religions, which are significantly different from how they were in historical 1220. Nevertheless, people, understandably, see the religions in the game as reflections of the religions in real life. As the dreadful events at Charlie Hebdo showed, there are people who are willing to kill over the way they perceive their religion as being portrayed.

Fortunately, no-one has been killed over the portrayal of religion in **Ars Magica**. I have been accused of being an anti-Catholic bigot, but that is as far as it has gone. Nevertheless, it is something we have to think about carefully, and our approach to this issue has evolved over time. In early editions, the Divine aura was really for Christian churches, and we had to think about how to handle Judaism and Islam. We chose to bring them under the mantle of the Divine, even though there was probably no-one in historical Europe who thought that all three religions were valid approaches to the same truth. It was, we thought, the best way to be

respectful, and we attempt to combine it with the most accurate research we can manage.

Even this approach presents difficult issues. The immediate issue that prompted someone to call me an anti-Catholic bigot was my presentation of an aspect of theology, which, I was told, was obviously from a Protestant polemicist. In fact, it was taken directly from St Thomas Aquinas. The historical beliefs of these three religions do not always sit well with their contemporary adherents, and so we try to avoid putting too much emphasis on those aspects. Even so, Mythic Europe is supposed to be "Europe as medieval people believed it to be, plus the Order of Hermes", so we have to make judgement calls. When is it best to maintain historicism, and when is it best to jettison accuracy to avoid giving offence? The blood libel, the claim that the Jews used the blood of Christian children in their rituals, is not true in Mythic Europe despite being widely believed in historical Europe. That, however, is an easy case, and even the Abrahamic religions present us with tough decisions.

The position of pagan religions is even more difficult. There are two reasons why there is no **Ars Magica** supplement for Mythic India. One is that India is just too big. The other is that we would have to address the position of Hinduism. Hinduism is a living religion, but it does not fit into the metaphysics of the game. Making it Divine changes the nature of the Divine, but making it Faerie is an explicit declaration that, in the game, European beliefs have priority over

Indian ones. Here, we simply decided not write about India, or sub-Saharan Africa. Individual gaming groups can make their own decisions.

This leaves the problem of the pagan religions of Europe. Historically, they did not exist in 1220, outside a small area near the Baltic, but the names of the deities were still part of the culture, and are something that people would expect to see in the setting. In 1220, people believed that the deities were either long-dead human beings, demons, or pure fiction. The game could take that approach, but it makes interaction with pagan deities difficult; it is impossible to play out versions of the myths. The same is true if the pagan deities are Divine, because the divine is defined as transcendent. Thus, we made them Magic or Faerie, like most player characters. This preserves the view that medieval people took of their world without erasing pagan deities or making them irredeemably evil.

In the end, **Ars Magica** is a game, and all the religions in it are fictional. We are trying to create a game that reflects a particular artistic vision, while avoiding giving unnecessary offence. When we fail, we can do nothing but try harder.

BRITANNIA, 550AD

The Western Roman Empire is gone. In its place, migrant hordes now rule – the Franks in Gaul, the Visigoths in Spain, the Vandals in Carthage, and the Ostrogoths battle invading Eastern Romans in Italy. In Britannia, at the northwestern fringe of the former Roman Empire, Saxons, Angles and Jutes have been settling in for over a century. First as foederati hired to protect the Roman diocese there from invading Picts, Scots and other Saxons, and subsequently as permanent inhabitants who were intent on wresting land from the natives. These natives, mostly Romanized Celts abandoned by the Empire, adhere strongly to both Roman ways and to ancient tribal

loyalties, and present a disunited front to the invaders. But occasionally, they rally to the standard of a single leader, a High King, and halt or even reverse the loss of their homelands. In this setting of continuous strife, flux, and change, magi find countless opportunities to use their Gift to impact their surroundings and the unfolding of history. Whether they use it for the greater good, to free a slave or save a kingdom – for their own benefit, to secure a resource or rise to power – or solely for the purpose of destruction, it is their choice. There is no Hermetic Code, no Oath, and no Order to constrain their actions. Only their conscience or those who are more powerful can influence them. However,

By **TOBIAS WHEELER**

along with this freedom, magi are faced with grave threats. In addition to the upheaval of mundane society, the barbarian invasions bring formerly separate groups of Gifted into contact. With no Parma Magica to smooth interactions, conflict is the likeliest outcome, forcing both invaders and invaded alike to strive for their lives and to fight for their futures. This contribution to **Sub Rosa** will provide the background and setting material on which to base a saga that is set in Britannia, that focuses on magi of either



or both the Briton and Anglo-Saxon cultures, and that begins in 550 AD.

MAGICAL SOCIETY IN BRITANNIA

As the Romans expanded their empire, they reformed the civilizations they encountered by installing Roman political, economic, and military elements in place of those of the natives. They built roads, aqueducts, amphitheaters, baths, villas, cities and fortifications – iconic features of the Roman way of life. Despite these reforms, one class of the conquered people resolutely refused to be tamed: the Gifted, who used their powers to lash back against their would-be governors. In response, the Romans applied a more brutal policy to foreign magical traditions: backed by Roman legions, the Mercurians and other Roman cultists hunted them down. In Gaul and Britain, this policy resulted in the extirpation of the druids and their religious sites, notably the Isle of Mon in 60 AD.

As a result of this universal persecution, the population of Gifted in Europe fell drastically. Those who could flee made their way to the periphery of the Empire, where they were out of the reach of the Romans. Of those who escaped, many went north and west. They found scant welcome in the new lands they entered, for these lands were already populated by those with the Gift. After an initial period of struggle, the distribution of Gifted beyond the borders of the Empire equilibrated, with each individual or related group inhabiting comfortably-sized territories. Isolation from one another suited the Gifted well, for they preferred little or no interaction with fellow practitioners of the Magical Arts.

Each new generation disrupted this distribution, causing slight shifts in the borders between territories. But overall,

the disruptions were typically brief and inconsequential. The Romans easily repulsed the occasional foray onto their soil, and the Limes of the Empire held firm. In their fragmented, secluded little regions, the non-Roman Gifted lived in relative peace for over 300 years, tending to their own matters of import and interest while ignoring all else.

And then the barbarian invasions began, the Roman Empire crumbled, and the equilibrium of magical society shattered. With the weakening of the Empire in the late 4th and early 5th centuries AD, the diocese of Britannia was ultimately left to its own defenses. The last Roman legions withdrew from the island in 407 AD, and Emperor Honorius formally abandoned the Britons in 410 AD when he refused their request for aid against Pictish, Scottish and Saxon raiding.

As the mundane protectors of the Empire withdrew, so too did the magical; the remaining Gifted Romans retreated to the lands closer to Rome, to assist in their protection. With no professional defenders in place, the probing raids into Britannia became increasingly effective and audacious. The formerly displaced Gifted were free to reassert themselves in their ancestral lands, and they attempted to do so. New groups of Gifted also sprouted among the Britons, in the absence of the stunting Roman influence. With Saxon, Angle, and Jute incursions, Germanic Gifted set foot on Briton soil. Britannia now housed a dangerous concoction of magic wielders.

In 550 AD, the consequences of this mixture of magic are apparent. After a century of strife, Britannia is about to be split in two, from north to south. The Germanic invaders control the eastern portion, having displaced, enslaved or killed its former inhabitants. In the west, the Britons still hold on to their lands, though that hold becomes ever weaker, for they not only struggle against the invaders and raiders, but also amongst themselves. As the eastern lands were taken, the surviving Briton Gifted fled westward, and thus the

concentration of magi in the remaining Briton lands increased. Although the defenses are stronger as a result, detrimental infighting is also more common. The same holds true for the invaders; as more ships arrive from the Germanic homelands, their numbers swell, but so too does internal conflict. These conflicts are particularly devastating to the young magi who have recently stepped out from under the aegis of their masters. For them, it is a time of extreme peril. With no Hermetic Oath or Code to protect them, they are endangered by the whims of more powerful magi, as well as by the packs of mundane glory-seekers around them. On their own, they must carve out a future for themselves from a cold and hostile environment. But, if they are lucky, they may find themselves in one of two situations in which they can count on the help of others.

PACTS BETWEEN GIFTED

When several isolated magi share circumstances that are sufficiently cataclysmic, they are sometimes driven to band together and institute a pact, despite the adverse effects of the Gift. Such pacts do not often persevere, but when they do, they lead to greater success in defense and invasion. And they help keep young magi alive. There is precedence in the history of magical society for formation of such pacts: clusters of Germanic, Gallic, and Briton Gifted did so in the face of Roman persecution. These pacts could not ultimately stem the Roman tide, but failure in the past does not necessarily guarantee failure in the future. Latin-speaking magi, including Romano-Britons, call such a pact a *Pactum Inter Pares*; Anglo-Saxon magi call it a *Cwid-rádan Betweenan Dreás* (*Pactum* and *Cwid-rádan*, respectively, for short). At the core of these pacts are agreements between the magi on a set of common goals or on a period of servitude under a lord. The participants draft a document that includes a list of their goals or duties, and most importantly, a list of what actions constitute a breach

of the agreements and what punishments are commensurate with such breaches.

Given the right circumstances and the right personality traits among the magi, a pact can be used as a crutch to overcome the mistrust and paranoia that are a consequence of the Gift. Examples of the right circumstances include:

- A shared story flaw: Vow (e.g., to protect a particular object or person), Enemies (like a powerful magus and his apprentice(s)), Oath of Fealty (all to the same lord)
- Shared dire events (e.g., an invading army approaches)
- Oversight of a higher authority (e.g., an impartial magical being of great power, the Church, a charismatic and powerful chieftain)
- A shared prohibition geas with, for example, the condition “Never break the Pactum” (see *The Contested Isle*, page 118)

Once such circumstances are gone, however, a pact can easily unravel. Then they typically devolve into a dysfunctional arrangement that ends with only one survivor. The particularly paranoid may resort to magic for enforcing a pact. Of most use are spells with the durations Bargain or Until (pact is broken) (see **ArM5**, page 92), for those who are trained in Faerie Magic. A Watching Ward with either of these durations could be cast over a Perdo Corpus or Perdo Mentem spell that is then released when the pact is broken. Other useful spells include Intellego Mentem spells to determine when pact members lie to one another, or even, perhaps, when they think thoughts that are detrimental or hostile toward one another. Intellego Vim spells can also be used to determine when pact members cast spells at one another, for without such spells, it is impossible to know if one has been affected by a non-obvious spell. These

Intellego spells are usually cast as Rituals that are renewed yearly, along with the terms of the pact. By implementing such magics, the magi sacrifice a great degree of their free will when it comes to their relationships with and actions toward one another. This kind of sacrifice does not sit well with most magi, of course, but sometimes such sacrifices are necessary.

GIFTED FAMILIES

A second situation in which young magi band together is based exclusively on the luck of being born into a Gifted family. Extended families with many Gifted members arise when the Gift is passed on to multiple descendants of a maga or magus, for several generations. Gifted relatives afford protection and sources of magical knowledge. But blood isn't always thick enough to withstand the Gift, and sometimes Gifted relatives become one's worst enemies.

On the Romano-Briton side, a famous and powerful Familia or Teulu (TAY-lee) are the descendants of Coel Hen, a Gifted aristocrat who rose to power in northern Britannia after the Romans left. He assumed the military title of Dux Britanniarum and rulership of the lands that stretched from the Humber and Mersey up to Hadrian's Wall. Through coincidence and a few strategic marriages, the number of Gifted in the family grew with each successive generation. So too, did the extent of fragmentation of the kingdom, for the descendants of Coel followed the Celtic custom of distributing a father's lands between his progeny. By the mid 500's the Coels ruled over 11 separate kingdoms, seven of which comprised the original kingdom of Coel Hen. They acquired the other four at the expense of their fellow Britons. Despite the fragmentation of and infighting in the north, the last eastern kingdoms of the Britons to fall to the Anglo-Saxons were those ruled by the Coels. The effectiveness of their resistance is largely attributed to the

number and the strength of the Gifted in the Coel Familia.

An equally powerful dynasty on the Anglo-Saxon side are the descendants of Hengist and Horsa. These two brothers were Angles who led Jute and Frisian mercenary bands that the Briton High King Vortigern hired for the defense of Britannia, in the mid 400's. After successfully driving off the Pictish and Irish invaders, they revolted against their employers. Horsa was killed in the first battle against the Britons, but his brother prevailed. After two more victories, the last of which occurred in 465 AD, the kingdom of Ceint was firmly in Hengist's hand. He then ruled jointly with his son, Oisc, after whom the first dynasty of Anglo-Saxon Ceintish kings is named (the Oiscingas). Both Hengist and Horsa had the Gift, and again through fortune, so did many of their descendants. Unlike the Coels, however, the integrity of the land was maintained under a single ruler, who parceled out small regions to his relatives to do with as they pleased. In return, the Gifted of this Cynnred (KIN-red) were expected to rally to their king in times of need.

APPRENTICESHIP

Young Gifted nobles who are part of a Familia, Teulu or Cynnred have a definite advantage over Gifted children who are not. Not only are noble Gifted children treasured because of their blood (and thus less likely to be killed at a young age by a mob because of their ill-favored manner), they also have ready access to Gifted teachers within their family. The knowledge and secrets that their predecessors accumulated over lifetimes of study are passed on to them throughout their childhood. This training nurtures the development of their magical powers and preserves knowledge that is otherwise often lost.

Outside noble families, the preservation of magical knowledge is the primary motivation for all magi to subject themselves to the fosterage of creepy children. The relationship

between master and apprentice is rarely a comfortable, warm one. While apprentices in 1220 AD seldom have the misfortune of being trapped in an apprenticeship of servitude to a hostile master, such situations are far more common in 550 AD. In the best case, by the end of an apprenticeship, both parties have had sufficient time to become acclimatized to one another, though this depends also on their personalities. Regardless, the end of an apprenticeship is not always decided by a harmless test, like the Gauntlet. In some cases, both master and apprentice become disgusted with one another and go separate ways. After such antagonistic separations, the apprentice does not often survive for long. In other cases, the apprenticeship does not end until the student overcomes his teacher. Such apprenticeships usually last much longer than 15 years. In the

case when the master has their pupil's interests at heart, the apprenticeship is over when the master deems that the pupil is ready to leave the nest. Young magi then face a difficult choice: stay with one's master for the sake of protection but at the cost of one's freedom, or strike out on one's own but potentially at the cost of one's life.

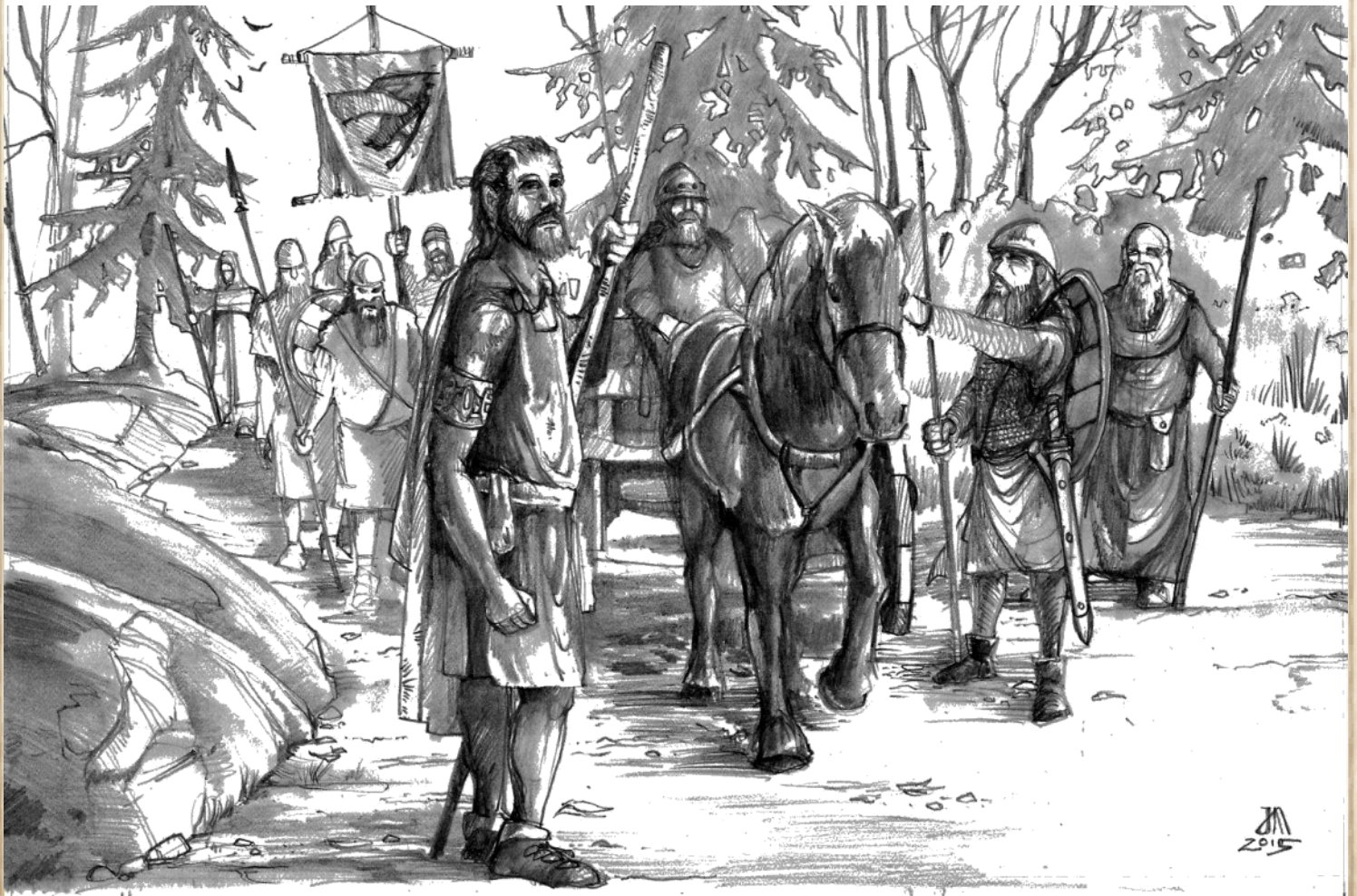
PROTO-COVENANTS

The setting in which a group of magi live is up to the troupe. Anglo-Saxon magi may choose to inhabit an abandoned Romano-Briton city, for example, which their mundane counterparts typically avoid and in which great wealth and resources might be found. Romano-Briton magi may choose to return to an ancestral hill fort that was forcibly decommissioned by the Romans, which provides better protection against current threats and a

potential link to powerful magic of the past.

The living arrangements for the magi of a Pactum/Cwid-rádan or of a Familia/Teulu/Cynnred mimic the Covenant of 1220 AD. For the former, magi often pledge to pool their individual resources for the benefit of all, and to live in the same structure or town. For the latter, magi typically inhabit the administrative center of the lands that their Familia rules. Each Gifted character has a chamber that is large enough to accommodate living space and a laboratory.

Living arrangements can be designed by using the Build Point allocation schemes and the Boons and Hooks of the core rules, with two changes. Firstly, no Build Points may be spent on books. Books are not yet widespread (see the section [The Dark Ages of Magic](#) below), and should be treated as



extraordinarily rare treasures that can be obtained only through stories. Secondly, the vis sources of 550 AD are significantly more productive than those of 1220 AD – the maximum rate of generation should be increased to 20 pawns per year. The cost of this resource remains the same (5 Build Points per pawn per year).

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MAGI AND MUNDANES

The Code of Hermes imposes a strong limit on the extent to which magi are allowed interact with mundanes. The Founders put this limit in place for various reasons, chief among them being the desire to avoid involvement in mundane conflicts and politics. In 550 AD, no such limit exists and magi often enter these conflicts and exert their influence over politics. The Gifted frequently use their powers to take and maintain positions of rulership, or sell their powers to the aristocracy and to military leaders. With no Hermetic Oath or Code, they are free to set up puppet kings, start wars with the Fae, make deals with demons, and do anything that it takes to stay alive. The repercussions of these actions are up to the storyguide and the troupe, of course, but do not automatically include a Wizard's March, or a lesser, Tribunal-imposed punishment, as they would in 1220 AD.

Magi regularly and overtly practice their Arts among and on the mundane people around them, as they have been doing for millennia. As a result, mundanes are more likely to associate the unpleasant demeanor that the Gift imbues with the ability to use magic. They are therefore more likely to treat magi with an awe- and fear-inspired respect, instead of with the suspicion and hostility that magi in 1220 are accustomed to. In addition, a cultural aspect of both Anglo-Saxon and Romano-Briton civilizations can lead to greater tolerance for the

EXAMPLE GOALS FOR A PACTUM OR CWID-RÆDAN

PROTECTING THE LAND

Raiders sweep across your region of Britannia, forcing you to band together with your Gifted neighbors to defend your lands and lives, despite your mutual revulsion.

ADVENTURE AND PILLAGE

You and several other Gifted are recruited by an Anglo-Saxon warband as magical mercenaries. You'll see much war and encounter many hardships. But strong bonds are forged in these conditions. Are these bonds strong

“Otherworldliness” of magi – they are both heroic societies. Such societies celebrate legendary deeds, victory over ones enemies, honorable lives, and violent deaths. The actions one takes weigh heavily in how one is judged, and the Reputation one wins can outweigh one's repulsive demeanor. Mechanically, the Reputation of a maga is added to rolls for social interactions, thereby lessening the effect of the Gift, provided that the Reputation is a positive one, such as “Healer of boils” or “Slayer of bog monsters”. If a magus has a negative Reputation, such as “Roaster of children” or “Stealer of swine”, then it is instead subtracted from rolls related to social interaction. If there are multiple positive or negative Reputations that could apply, then use only the Reputation with the highest magnitude. If there are both positive and negative Reputations that could apply, then subtract the negative Reputation with the highest magnitude from the positive Reputation with the highest magnitude.

enough to eventually overcome the effects of the Gift?

FINDING NEW LANDS TO RULE

Your lands were just overrun, displacing you and your Gifted neighbors westward. What will you do now? Staying together may be your only hope for survival.

A GRAB FOR A KINGDOM

Alone, you are isolated and at risk in your attempt at power. But a group of Gifted, aligned to the same goal, just may be able to exploit the chaos to take over a kingdom.

THE DARK AGES OF MAGIC

The magic of 550 AD lacks two distinguishing features of Hermetic Magic, for they haven't yet been invented: the magical shields that magi of 1220 AD rely on so heavily (the Parma Magica and the Aegis of the Hearth), and a unified theory of magic that applies to all of the Arts. Before Bonisagus developed the Parma Magica, magi had to rely solely on their form resistances and on their ability to fast cast defensive spells to protect them from hostile supernatural powers and magic. See *ArM5*, page 83 and 85-86 and *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 10 for applicable rules.

Before Notatus's innovation of the Aegis of the Hearth, magi could only erect circle wards to defend their buildings of residence. These wards, Rego spells cast with Target: Ring and Duration: Circle (see the Rego (Form) spell guidelines in *ArM5* for examples), can be effective, but they lack the versatility of the Aegis of the Hearth since each ward can only protect against one particular threat.

And before Bonisagus devised his Magic Theory, the Magical Arts were fragmented. This fragmentation is a direct result of the Gift itself: because of its social effects, magi lead largely solitary lives, isolated from one another. Always suspicious of others, magi tend to veil their magical prowess and guard their secrets closely. This reticence limits the spread of magical knowledge severely, and renders the insights that could lead to a unified Magic Theory impossible to make, unless one has the genius of Bonisagus. At best, the magical knowhow that magi spend their lives developing is passed on to a handful of apprentices. At worst, these secrets follow magi into Final Twilight, for the magi of this period seldom reduce their learnings and inventions to writing. Most magi, and particularly those who learned their Arts among the magical traditions of Germania and Britannia, were trained to rely exclusively on memory for storing this information.

LEARNING THE ARTS

There are a very few magi, however, who have begun to generate magical texts, including Summae, Tractatus and Lab Texts. Most of these pioneers of the magical literature are affiliated somehow with one of the monasteries that have begun to populate Europe, and make use of their scriptoria and writing materials. Because of this affiliation, the texts are written in Latin, and this precedent will ultimately see to it that Latin becomes the language used by the Order of Hermes. At this early stage, magical texts are extremely rare – most magi will see only one or two of such texts throughout their lives, if they are fortunate. Thus, the primary modes of learning the Arts are through one-on-one teaching and through the study of vis. Arts are learned in the native tongue of the teacher, or of the student if they are self-taught; the table below gives the names of the Magical Arts in both the Latin and Brythonic (for which modern Welsh is used, since so little of the Brythonic language has been preserved)

TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN ART

Latin	Anglo-Saxon	Brythonic (Welsh)
Creo	Āscieppe (ah-SHYEP-eh)	Creaf (CREH-ahv)
Intellego	Sēo (SAY-aw)	Amgyffredaf (ahm-guf-REH-dahv)
Muto	Forscieppe (fawr-SHYEP-eh)	Newydiaf (neh-OOID-yahv)
Perdo	Forspilde (fawr-SPIHLD-eh)	Dyleaf (duh-LEH-av)
Rego	Āstyre (ah-STÛR-eh)	Kymhellwsaf (kuhm-heh-HLOO-sahv)
Animal	Deór (DEH-ohr)	Anifail (ah-nih-VAH-yil)
Aquam	Wæter (WAH-ter)	Duvyr (DIH-vuhr)
Auram	Lyft (LIFT)	Gwynt (GOOINT)
Corpus	Bodig (BOH-dig)	Corff (KORFF)
Herbam	Plante (PLAHN-teh)	Blanhigion (blahn-HIG-yon)
Ignem	Fyr (FÛR)	Tan (TAHN)
Imaginem	Andgeit (AHND-yight)	Delw (DEL-oo)
Mentem	Ferhð (FERDTH)	Deualledd (Dew-AH-hleth)
Terram	Eorð (EYORDTH)	Dacaren (Day-AH-ren)
Vim	Cræft (CRAHFT)	Grym (GRUHM)

spoken by Romano-Briton magi, and in the Old English spoken by Anglo-Saxon magi.

Before the breakthroughs of Bonisagus, Forms and Techniques were not parts of a unified set of Arts, each of which could be practiced by an apprentice once their Gift was opened, and each of which could be studied and explained according to a single Magic Theory. In place of such a theory, each Form has its own particular Lore that magi must learn in order to invent new spells, enchant items, and perform any other magical activities that ordinarily fall under the purview of the Hermetic ability Magic Theory. For example, inventing a new CrIg, InIg, MuIg, PeIg, or ReIg spell requires a score in Ignem Lore. Furthermore, without a Magic Theory that links together all the Arts, the rituals used for opening the Gift are considerably less effective: only a single Art is acquired through an opening ritual. Additional Arts can be learned subsequently and require additional opening rituals, but as a maga's power in her known Arts grows, it becomes increasingly difficult for her to do so. For this purpose, new Arts are treated equivalently to new Supernatural Abilities, and for their magi to gain

them, players should follow the rules for gaining Supernatural Abilities (**ArM5**, page 166). Note, however, that the Arts are not in fact general Supernatural Abilities that any character type can acquire – they are restricted to characters with the free Magical Virtue, The Gift. In order to open their Gift to a new Art, magi must first find another Gifted individual who knows the Art, and who can be convinced to share their knowledge and perform an opening ritual for the Art. When a new Art is gained, the character receives a score of 0 in that Art, and, if the Art is a Form, they also gain the respective (Form) Lore ability with a score of 0. By age 25, most magi have learned the five Techniques and one to three Forms. Rarely do they learn more than one or two more, for finding a willing teacher is near impossible, and they must focus on becoming powerful in the Arts they do know, to stay alive, which makes it much more difficult to open their Gift to new Arts.

NEW ARCANE ABILITY (FORM) LORE

Each Form has its own Lore. This Lore includes knowledge of how the Form can be manipulated using the five Techniques, as well as all creatures, places, and traditions of the Magic Realm

NEW RULES FOR CHARACTER GENERATION

The following options may be used to create Gifted characters, depending on the preferences of the troupe. Both options retain the Technique + Form structure for the magical abilities of magi, to allow the familiar spell guidelines of the **ArM5** core rulebook to be used for designing magical effects. If so desired, troupes may keep this terminology for simplicity and familiarity, as the author does here, or they may alter it (to Method and Medium, for example), to help achieve a further conceptual distinction between the magic of 550 AD and that of 1220 AD. The aim with the following options is to emphasize the magnitude of Bonisagus's breakthroughs without sacrificing most of the well-designed rules and entertaining aspects of Hermetic Magic laid out in the core rulebook, like designing new spells with the guidelines. Thus, magical effects are constructed according to the standard guidelines and there are no suggested changes to the types of spells one can cast, nor to their ranges, targets or durations.

OPTION 1: SIMILAR IN POWER TO HEDGE WIZARDS

In 550 AD, most magi have knowledge of only a few Forms. However, the ways in which they are able to magically manipulate the Forms they do know are the same as those of

associated with the Form. (Form) Lore may be used in place of Magic Lore when appropriate. (Form) Lore is also always used in place of Magic Theory to generate Lab Totals and to perform any other activities that would ordinarily involve Magic Theory. Example specializations: a particular Technique, a single manifestation of the Form (e.g., stone for Terram, or lightning for Auram).

magi in 1220 AD, meaning that most magi of 550 AD have knowledge of all five Techniques. Each Technique is a Minor Arcane Virtue and each Form is a Major Arcane Virtue. Taking these virtues grants the character a score of 0 in the respective Technique or Form, and if it is a Form, a score of 0 in the respective (Form) Lore ability.

Forms and Techniques advance normally, using the Advancement Table for Arts on page 31 of the core rulebook.

By age 25, magi have acquired at most a total of 6 Arts (any combination of Techniques and Forms is possible, though most magi are specialized in one or two Forms and multiple Techniques). Additional Techniques and Forms can be gained through play, as if they were Supernatural Abilities (i.e., following the rules on page 166 of **ArM5**).

As a consequence of the undeveloped understanding of the Arts in 550 AD, casting spells is more mentally and physically arduous. The severity of the required exertion increases with the level of the effect, but also diminishes as the caster's ability in the Arts grows.

Mechanically, this handicap is represented by an adjustment to the rules regarding the expenditure of Fatigue Levels when casting spells.

For Formulaic spells, unless the casting total exceeds the spell level by at least two magnitudes, the caster must spend a Fatigue Level to cast the spell

successfully. For example, to cast a level 4 spell without spending Fatigue, the casting total must be equal to or greater than 10, and to cast a level 30 spell without spending Fatigue, the casting total must be equal to or greater than 40.

For Ritual spells, add one Fatigue Level to each number of the Fatigue Levels Lost column of the Ritual Magic table on page 81 of **ArM5**, and if the Casting Total – Spell Level is -16 or more, the caster takes a heavy wound.

For Spontaneous spells, a maga may still choose to exert herself when casting and divide her Casting Score + a Stress Die by two. Doing so, however, results in the loss of two Fatigue Levels. To cast a non-fatiguing Spontaneous spell, the maga divides her Casting Score by 10 instead of by five.

OPTION 2: SIMILAR IN POWER TO MAGI OF 1220 AD

For those troupes that would like the power of their magi to be closer to that of magi in 1220 AD, this option relaxes the constraints of Option 1 on the number of Arts that magi can use and on the difficulty of casting spells.

The Techniques are all included with the free Magical Virtue, The Gift, and each Form is only a Minor Supernatural Virtue. Taking these virtues grants the character a score of 0 in the Form and a score of 0 in the respective (Form) Lore ability.

Forms and Techniques advance normally, using the Advancement Table for Arts on page 31 of the core rulebook.

Furthermore, there is no adjustment to the rules for Fatigue Level loss from spell casting, explained on page 81 of the core rulebook.

For access to all of the Arts, or to better reflect the mythological dimensions that many of the key personalities of the Migration Period possessed, characters may take 20

**NEW GENERAL VIRTUE:
MEMBER OF A SYMPATHETIC
FAMILIA / TEULU / CYNRED**

You are a son or daughter of Gifted parents and a descendent of a magical lineage. Throughout childhood and adolescence, you were trained in the Magical Arts by one or several family members. Your relationship with your family is a positive one, and you can count on them for support in times of need. They will also count on your support.

NEW STORY FLAW: MEMBER OF AN INIMICAL FAMILIA / TEULU / CYNRED

You are a son or daughter of Gifted parents and a descendent of a magical lineage. While your family may have grudgingly imparted their magical knowledge to you, they are uncaring or unsupportive of your existence, and work to hinder you in whatever way they can.

points of Virtues that are balanced by the standard 10 points of flaws.

MEMBERS OF MAGICAL FAMILIES

For characters who belong to a Familia, Teulu or Cynnred, their background should be counted among their Flaws, depending on the nature of their relatives. A positive, supportive family can prove a boon to one's character, both in their magical training and through assistance in-saga, at the cost of reciprocated favors in the future, and thus should be counted as a Minor Story Flaw. A negative, hindering family can prove the opposite, and thus should be counted as a Major Story Flaw. If all magi in the troupe are members of the same family, then the relationship is no longer considered a Story Flaw, for the family will be involved in stories by default.



CANON VIRTUES, FLAWS, AND ABILITIES

In addition to the above options, troupes should follow the below list of recommended changes to the standard rules for the creation of magi (ArM5, page 28-33):

- Hermetic Virtues and Flaws are referred to as Magical Virtues and Flaws and characters must have The Gift to take them.
- The Virtue Hermetic Maga/Magus becomes simply Maga/Magus.
- There are no Artes Liberales or Latin requirements during apprenticeship.
- The following Arcane Abilities are not allowed: Code of Hermes, Parma Magica, Magic Theory.

- Unimaginative Lerner becomes a Major Magical Flaw, because of the increased reliance on studying from vis for advancement in the Arts.
- Incompatible Arts may only apply to Arts that the character learns during apprenticeship, and becomes a Major Magical Flaw.
- The following Virtues and Flaws are incompatible with this setting, and should not be used unless amended as indicated:
 - Weak Scholar
 - Covenant Upbringing
 - Book Learner
 - Deficient Form
 - Hedge Wizard
 - Limited Magic Resistance
 - Redcap

- Magister in Artibus
- Hermetic Prestige (could be changed to Prestige Among Magi, and becomes a Major Virtue because of the effect of Reputations on social interactions)
- Knight (may change title to 550 AD equivalent, such as Retainer for Romano-Briton characters or Gesith for Anglo-Saxon characters)
- Before the existence of Houses Verditiis, Merinita, Bjornaer, and Criamon, the mysteries that the magi of these Houses practice had not yet been developed or assembled into a single body of knowledge. However, it is not inconceivable that the individual abilities and powers that constitute the mysteries were known to various magical traditions of the 500's. At the troupe's discretion, Hermetic Virtues associated with the Mystery Houses may be taken at character generation. Diedne Magic may also be used, and renamed to something appropriate like Strong Spontaneous Magic.

THE GLASTENNING TEULU: EXAMPLE COVENANT AND CHARACTER

The members of the Glastenning Teulu are descendants of Dogfael, the eighth son of the legendary Gododdin warlord Cunedda, who brought his family and warriors to northern Wales in the late 300's and rid the region of Irish raiders. Kings of Gwynedd and eventually Wales would later claim this great leader as an ancestor. The descendants of Dogfael originally ruled Dogfeilion, a subkingdom in the north of Powys. But in the early 500's, during the reign of Dogfael's grandson Glas, they moved south to the area near modern-day Glastonbury in the hopes

of escaping the oppressive dominion of their numerous, more-powerful relatives. While officially still rulers of a subkingdom, now within the large kingdom of Dumnonia, they were given free rein to rule their new lands as they pleased in exchange for their military support. This arrangement suited them.

For their new home, which they dubbed *Caer Glas*, they built an enclosure on a large, ancient hill fort, installing wooden ramparts behind a stone wall and restoring the earthen ramparts in front of the wall. They positioned watchtowers at strategic points (see [the nearby map](#)), and also built a wooden gatehouse at the southwestern corner. Inside the enclosure, there is ample space not only for the large Glastenning family, but also for their band of warriors and for the metalworkers, the jewelers, the herders, and the livestock that followed them south. Those who enter through the gatehouse immediately notice the imposing timber Great Hall that houses the family. Beyond the hall, to the east, sits a bevy of thatched huts and minor buildings that house the craftsmen, their families, and their workshops. To the north is an animal pen into which the herders drive sheep, pigs and cattle when raiders threaten the area. In the eastern portion of the enclosure, and closest to the gatehouse, live the warriors and their families.

The Glastenning Teulu consists of King Glas, his wife Medwyl, their sons Elud (aged 20), Morfael (18), Elfan (12), Gwion (11), and Cynwraidd (10), and their daughters Gwladus (25), Ceinfryd (21) and Gwenddwyn (7). Glas's father Elnaw, the former king of Dogfeilion, also came south with the family. He is now 100 years old, and has spent the last few decades pursuing the mastery of his hereditary Form of Aquam, having abdicated his power to his son. He passes on his knowledge of the magical arts to his grandchildren, between bouts of Twilight.

The children's mother comes from a Gifted family that specializes in Mentem. With their grandfather and

mother as teachers, the children are trained in both Forms. Various distant relatives have also sent their children to train under these tutors.

The guest Sanctum is currently occupied by a nephew of Glas, Tudwal. The Glas warband is sizeable, numbering in the hundreds. The family relies on goods created by the multiple skilled metalcrafters in their employ, and on the animal herds to support these warriors.

HOOKS AND BOONS

Beholden (-1): The Glastenning Teulu must come to the aid of Dumnonia if called by its ruler.

Regio (-1): There is an entrance to a Magical regio at the northeastern point of the hill fort. The magi currently don't know of its existence, much less what lies within.

Rival (-3): A strong warband of Saxons, led by several Gifted, is intent on sacking *Caer Glas*.

Aura (+1) x2: The top of the hill has a Magical aura of +5.

Fortification (+1): The stone wall and earthen ramparts are sufficient to withstand a mundane assault.

Building (+1): The covenant has a strong gate house controlling the single entrance to the walled enclosure.

Wealth (+1): Metal goods are highly sought in the region, and can be traded for just about anything the magi and covenfolk want.

VIS SOURCES

The vis sources to which the family has access at *Caer Glastenning* include the following:

20 Pawns/Year of Intellego Vis:

This source is located a half-day's walk from *Caer Glas*, atop *Ynys Witrin*. Visual species from the surrounding landscape as far as 20 miles away reach the summit of the tor and are condensed there into Intellego vis in the form of perfectly transparent, curved

crystals that magnify (or shrink) the images observed through them. A Divine aura at the top of the tor, established by the holy thorn tree that sprouted from the walking staff of Joseph or Arimathaea, is slowly growing and displacing the Magical aura in which the Intellego vis collects. It is unknown how long the Magical aura will last, or

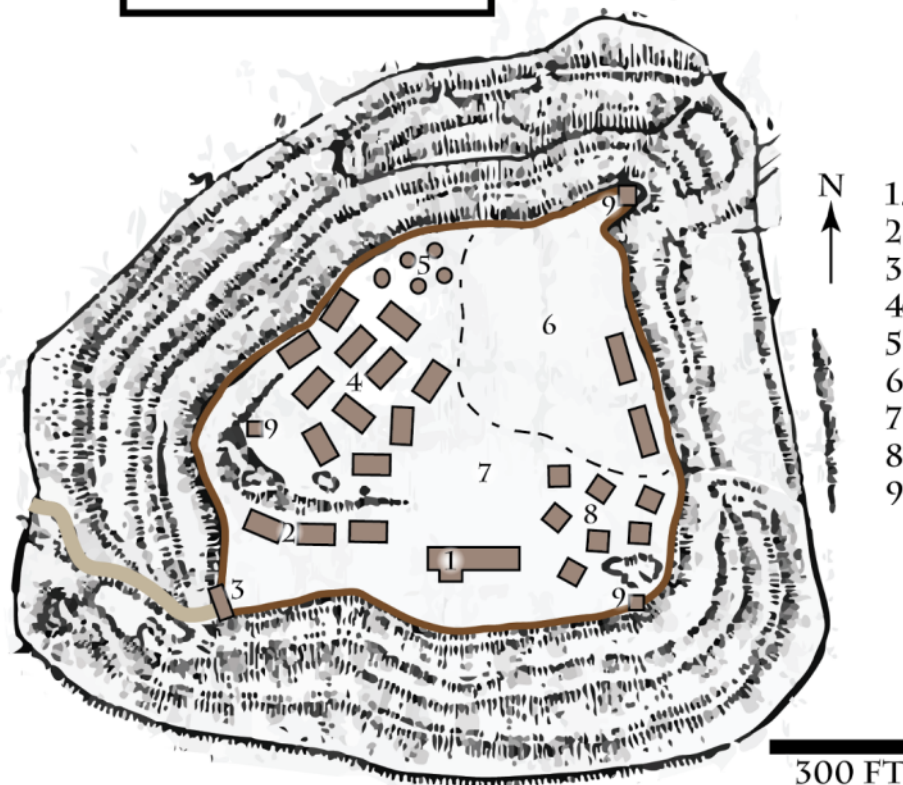
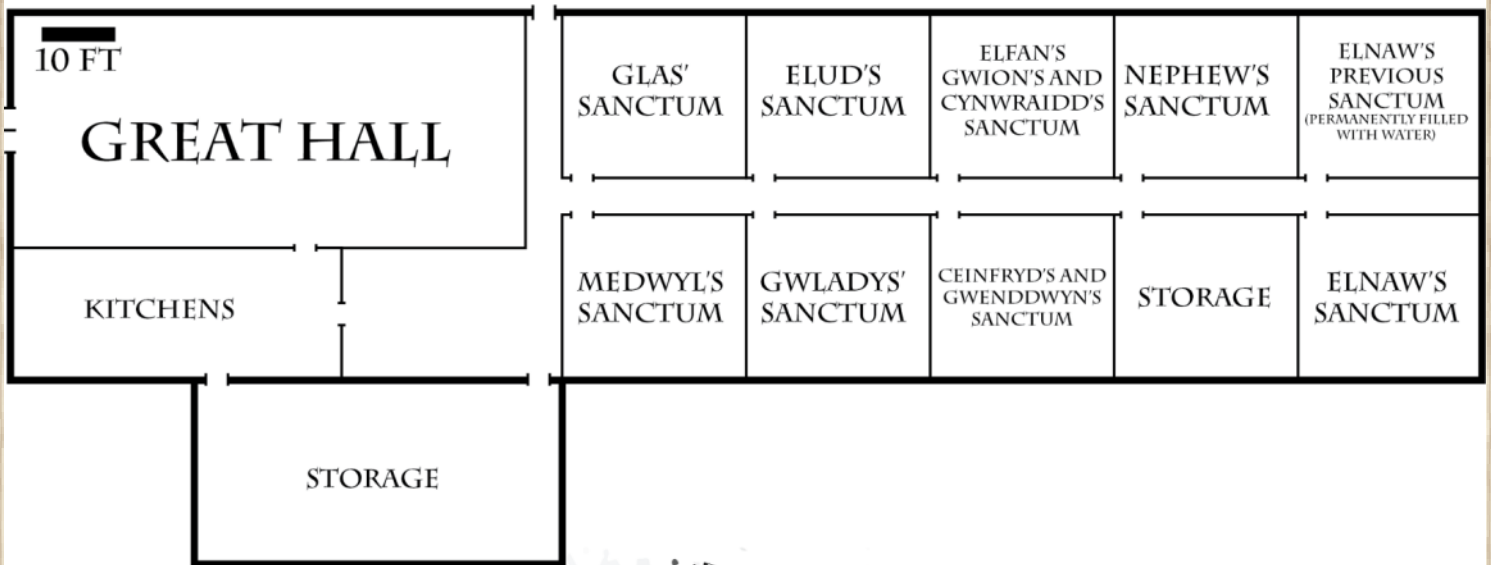
whether the vis will become Divine over time. At the foot of the tor, a maze of wooden platforms provides a track for traversing the deep marshes and pools that encircle it.

20 Pawns/Year of Aquam Vis:

This supply is located at the source of the River Cam, to the northwest of Caer Glas. Celtic tribes formerly used

this site as a sacred place for religious ceremonies. Hundreds of years ago, the tribespeople created a stone statue to represent the deity associated with the river. Now, all that remains is the head, which sits submerged under the water flowing from the source. The head sheds small flecks of stone that look like fish scales and that can be collected

CAER GLAS



1. GREAT HALL
2. STABLES
3. GATE HOUSE
4. WARRIORS' QUARTERS
5. HERDSMEN'S HUTS
6. ANIMAL PEN WITH BARNES
7. TRAINING YARD
8. CRAFTSMEN'S HOUSES
9. WATCHTOWER

ELNAW AP DOGFAEL AP CUNEDDA

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0 (-1), Str +1, Sta 0, Com 0, Pre 0 (-1), Dex 0, Qik +4

Size: 0

Age: 100 (72)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 7(15)

Confidence Score: 1(3)

Virtues and Flaws: Puissant Rego (free Virtue), Study Requirement, Compassionate (minor), Humble (major), Weird Magic, Offensive to Animals, Missing Eye, Cautious Sorcerer, Puissant Aquam, Affinity with Aquam, Fast Caster, Puissant Single Weapon, Harnessed Magic, Great Quickness, Warrior, Good Teacher, Improved Characteristics

Personality Traits: Humble +3, Caring +1, Reclusive +3

Reputations: Crazy Hermit 3 (Caer Glas), Loving Grandfather 5 (grandchildren)

Combat:

Fist: Init +4, Atk +2, Def +6, Dam +1

Kick: Init +3, Atk +1, Def +4, Dam +4

Longsword: Init +6, Atk +13, Def +14, Dam +7

Soak: 0

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

Abilities: Brythonic 5 (describing water), Dogfeilion Lore 2 (bodies of water), Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 3 (other people), Survival 5 (freezing weather), Swim 3 (lakes), Latin 3 (insults), Ride 1 (meek palfreys), Brawl 1 (fisticuffs), Charm 1 (children), Etiquette 1 (nobility), Folk Ken (nobility), Bargain 2 (food), Carouse 2 (dice), Concentration 5 (Rego), Guile 1 (excuses), Hunt 2 (fish), Artes Liberales 3 (geometry), Philosophiae 3 (natural philosophy), Dominion Lore 4 (angels), Faerie Lore 4 (water fae), Finesse 5 (Aquam), Penetration 5 (Creo), Aquam Lore 7 (inventing spells), Single Weapon 8 (long sword), Teaching 5 (Aquam)

Arts: Cr 18, In 19, Mu 13, Pe 11, Re 12+3, Aq 30+3

Twilight Scars: Eyes continuously weep tears of blue liquid, skin has become translucent so that the blood flowing within him is readily visible.

Encumbrance: 0

Spells:

Creeping Oil (CrAq 15/+51)

Mighty Torrent of Water (CrAq 20/+51)

Deluge of Rushing and Dashing (CrAq 40/+51)

Clear Sight of the Naiad (InAq 5/+52)

Subtle Taste of Poison and Purity (InAq 5/+52)

Call of the Rushing Waters (InAq 15/+52)

Voice of the Lake (InAq 25/+52)

Comfort the Drenched Traveler (PeAq 5/+44)

Closing the Earth's Gate (PeAq 25/+44)

Calling the Odious Drought (PeAq 50/+44)

Ward Against Faeries of the Waters (ReAq 25/+48)

Cloak of Duck's Feathers (ReAq 5/+48)

Break the Oncoming Wave (ReAq 10/+48)

Breath of Winter (ReAq 15/+48)

Push of the Gentle Wave (ReAq 15/+48)

Chaos of the Angry Waves (ReAq 30/+48)

Parting the Waves (ReAq 30/+48)

Waves of Drowning and Smashing (ReAq 30/+48)

Pull of the Watery Grave (ReAq 35/+48)

Tower of the Whirling Water (ReAq 35/+48)

Upwelling of Sulis (CrAq 20/+51)

Causes a geyser to erupt under a target, launching the target 30 feet into the air if the spell penetrates magic resistance. The target takes +15 falling damage (which can't be soaked, since the target is already wet).

(Base 10, +2 Voice)

Borvo's belch (CrAq 20/+51)

Creates a cloud of scalding steam around the target that does +20 damage.

(Base 10, +2 Voice)

Stream of Neighbor's Anger (MuAq 10/+46)

This spell changes the water flowing in a stream into urine, and is best cast upstream from the holdings of the intended target and downstream from one's own.

(Base 2, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 size)

Background:

Elnaw, son of Dogfael, great-grandson of Cunedda, grew up under two overbearing influences of self-effacing humility: his pious mother and his over-looked father. Being the eighth and second-to-last son of Cunedda, Dogfael was accustomed to getting the short, and pointy end of most sticks at the expense of his older brothers. Finding little else to be proud of in his own character, he taught Elnaw to be equally forbearing and modest. As a result, Elnaw had no will to improve his own standing within the growing family of Cunedda's descendents, neither through statesmanship nor through acquiring personal might.

He left the management of his diminutive holdings to subordinates, instead spending his time training with weapons, experimenting in the lab or in the wilderness, and devising new, subtle ways to manipulate water with his inherited Magical Arts. Elnaw's arranged, loveless marriage produced a wild-tempered first son, Glas, two other sons who both died young, and several daughters.

When Glas was old enough, Elnaw trained him as an apprentice, but then left him to other tutors for the rest of his development. Again he retreated into the wilds to study his Arts, practically a hermit, until Glas began having children. One of them in particular drew his attention: an un-Gifted girl named Ceinfryd, who kept interrupting her tall, lanky, one-eyed and off-putting grandsire at his studies. Watching her grow up, Elnaw developed a deep affection for his bravest of grand-daughters, and that affection drew him forth from his isolation, and drew him south with the rest of the family when they moved to Dumnonia. He now splits his time between studying his Arts and teaching his Arts to his immediate and extended family members.

downstream. Each fleck is a pawn of Aquam vis.

15 Pawns/Year of Rego Vis:

To the west of Caer Glas is a small farmstead that, unbeknownst to the farmer who runs it, is adjacent to a patch of magical dirt. Through accident, the farmer tilled this dirt one year in a particularly orderly manner, which is now repeated each year at the instruction of King Glas. The crops that grow from this orderly planting are similarly orderly – all grow to the same height, have the same number of leaves, etc. Some plants bear a same-sized, spherical red seed, each of which is a pawn of Rego vis.

10 Pawns/Year of Mentem Vis:

The site at which this vis is collected is just a mile south of Caer Glas. A forlorn and scraggly willow sits near a small wooden bridge that crosses a nearly-stagnant stream. Beyond the stream is a grove of drab and disheveled trees. Somehow, the sky looks greyer in this area, even on radiantly sunny days. This depressing scene causes those who walk over the bridge to think of loved ones they've lost, or of the failures and regrets of their life. These sad thoughts collect over time and precipitate in the form of misshapen lead beads that plop from beneath the bridge into the stream. Each bead is a pawn of Mentem vis.

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Over the years, the Glastenning Teulu have enchanted many items that were created by their metalsmiths and jewelers. These items range from swords and armor, to farm tools, to brooches, torcs and rings. All enchantments are based on Aquam, except a few Mentem-related effects that were recently created by Medwyl or her children.



MAGICAL TRADITIONS IN 550AD

Both Romano-Briton and Anglo-Saxon societies have a rich and varied history of magic users and magical traditions that established themselves over hundreds of years. What follows are but a few examples. Players are encouraged to devise their own traditions.

Characters who belong to a magic tradition are granted a free Minor Virtue that is characteristic of the tradition; suggestions are provided for each of the traditions described below.

ROMANO-BRITON TRADITIONS

DERWYDDON

The Derwyddon (Dair-OOIDTH-on), or Druids, were once ubiquitous in western Europe. Members of this tradition were often Gifted, though there were also non-Gifted members who had supernatural abilities and yet others who were so knowledgeable about the world that they seemed to have such abilities to mundanes. The Derwyddon enjoyed a revered status in Celtic society – they could go where they pleased, regardless of tribal affiliations; they were often consulted for political and judicial decisions; and to kill a Derwydd (DAIR-ooidth) was forbidden. In exchange for this social status, the tradition carried with it a duty: to acquire great knowledge and to use it for the benefit of society. Exactly

what would benefit society was up to the individual to decide, and was often heavily debated among Derwyddon.

There were numerous sub-traditions among the Derwyddon, each with its own specialization. This specialization was related to the type of knowledge that the sub-tradition sought, and could be either magical or mundane in nature, or both. For example, some Derwyddon were keen observers of natural phenomena, and sought to understand the fundamental principles behind them; others focused on knowledge they could glean from humankind, which ranged from medicine, to the way the mind works, to the theory of rulership and politics; others still pursued knowledge related to the Magic Realm, not just the ways of the Magical Arts, but also the ways of magical animals, of regios, and of the gods. This diversity meant that, among the Gifted members, all Forms are counted as favored, and any related free Minor Virtue is appropriate.

With the attempted extirpation of the Derwyddon by the Romans, and with the growing influence of Christianity, the role that the Derwyddon played in mundane society receded. In response to this withdrawal, the activities of Derwyddon traditions turned more to the acquisition of knowledge in their chosen area, allowing Gifted members to focus on their study and practice of magic. However, other knowledge is still highly treasured, and so apprentices must go through a rigorous scholastic training, in addition to their magical one.

Educated is thus also a common free Minor Virtue of this tradition. In 550 AD, there are still many Derwyddon traditions throughout Britannia, though their influence is not nearly as strong as it once was.

CROMLECH TYFWYR

Majestic and enduring, standing stone structures of various scales and arrangements are scattered across the landscape of Britannia. They radiate

mysterious power, but what is their purpose? And who built them? The answers to these questions have been lost, for the monuments predate even the migrations of the Celts to the island that occurred over a millennia ago. One present-day magic tradition of Britannia, however, is closely linked with the ancient stones – the Cromlech Tyfwyr (TUH-voocer), or Tomb Growers.

These magi are members of a single extended Teulu that has existed for eight or nine generations. Though they were originally from Britannia, many of the early generations spent their lives further north, studying the stones of Caledonia despite the resulting conflict with the territorial Gruagachan. Later generations moved back south of Hadrian's Wall for uncertain reasons; perhaps it was because of the Gruagachan, or maybe they found something they shouldn't have and fled from the repercussions. Regardless, the study of the stones and their surroundings continued in the south, as the Cromlech Tyfwyr attempted to uncover and harness their presumed hidden powers. Through this study, the Cromlech Tyfwyr developed an expertise in the Forms of Terram and Vim, the latter of which was learned through uncovering the regio portal aspects of many stone configurations. These portals brought them in contact with many denizens of both the Magical and Faerie Realms. Magi of this tradition often have magical foci associated with the earth and the underground, including materials (e.g., earth, stone, metals, gems), construction (e.g., stone structures, tunnels), phobias (e.g., darkness, claustrophobia, inhumation, fear of underground dwellers), and concealment.

BRYDYDDION

The Brydyddion (Bruh-DUHDTH-yon), or Bardic tradition is just as ancient as the Druidic tradition, and just as with the Druids there are both Gifted and unGifted Bards. Regardless of their nature, there is no sense of comradery between members of this tradition.

Instead, they compete flagrantly and deviously with each other for fame, wealth and glory. Those who are unGifted rely on natural talent or supernatural abilities to sway others with words and music. Those who are Gifted augment their talent with magical effects, incorporating subtle spells into their poetry and songs that typically target the audience or the caster. Many have a Necessary Condition that is linked to their chosen medium of performance.

It is also not uncommon for Gifted Brydyddion to be Deft in their two favored Forms, Imaginem and Mentem. As such, they are adept at the covert manipulation of others.

Additional Virtues common to the tradition include those associated with artistic creativity, such as Free Expression.

UnGifted Bards often have supernatural performance virtues, like Enchanting Music or Enchanting Storytelling.

An important role of the Brydydd (BRUH-duhdth) in Romano-Briton society is that of a proto-historian, a collector of stories and lore, which they put to memory and tell to others. To gather these linguistic treasures, they interact heavily with mundanes, either as itinerant poet-musicians or as more permanent members of a lord's court. In these contexts, Brydyddion attempt to place themselves at the heart of momentous events, to directly experience them and thereby better record them with their art. A famous example of such an attempt occurred in 597 AD, when a Brydydd named Aneirin embedded himself with a force of Romano-Briton warriors who rode to take back Catraeth from the Angles. The warriors were killed to a man, but Aneirin survived to extoll the fallen heroes in the elegy Y Gododdin.

Brydyddion also seek out beings of the Faerie, Magical and Divine Realms, depending on their topics of interest. Faeries are an interesting puzzle. Some Brydyddion believe that it is possible to

reconstruct lost legends by observing the Fae, provided that the observation is not a disturbance that alters the stories as the Faeries enact them.

Others don't waste their time peeping on Faeries, claiming that the Fae are an unreliable source since they always know when they are observed and that they then alter their portrayal of stories to extract the most vitality from their audience. Instead, they seek out Magical beings, such as members of the old Celtic pantheon, or Divine beings, such as angels and living Saints, who have knowledge of forgotten and new lore. Brydyddion must take care not to misplace their trust in those from whom they learn, however, for their source may be a demon who wishes to spread its infernal plots by using the Brydydd as a mouthpiece.

ANGLO-SAXON TRADITIONS

DEÓR DREÁS

This tradition is deeply ingrained in the psyche of Germanic society, and while in decline for centuries, it is still a strong one. Its members are the magical descendants of a caste that was formed back in times when humankind had not yet mastered the manipulation of metal. This caste led their fellow tribespeople in the worship of animals and their spirits, entreating to them in times of need and employing them in times of war. The lore of such rites, as well as the means of magically summoning, controlling, and becoming animals, was passed on and improved upon over many generations, as the Deór Dreás (Animal Magi) developed and refined their magical expertise.

In apprenticeship, each member of this tradition chooses a favored animal. This animal can either be mundane or of the Magic Realm. A particularly ambitious apprentice will often choose a legendary animal, such as a griffon, wyvern or a chimera. But typically, more commonly-found animals are chosen, such as wolves, bears, ravens, boars and deer. The apprentice must then study

this animal in the wild, and eventually catch and tame one. Throughout this process, they gain insight into the ways and nature of the animal, and as they grow in their abilities, they learn how to change their shape to match that of the animal and how to summon and control it. Thus, Deór Dreás primarily practice the Forms of Animal and Corpus. Appropriate free virtues are those that are related to either of these Forms, such as Inoffensive to Animals, and Deft Animal/Corpus.

After apprenticeship, Deór Dreás continue to pursue both the magical and mundane lore of animals, and to capture and tame them. A small subset of this tradition, the Draca Dreás are held in particularly high esteem. These are magi who have mastered the ability to change into dragons. An even smaller number are said to have developed an advanced understanding of the formation of bonds between humans and animals and are supposedly able to have multiple Familiars simultaneously.

SCINTHIOFAS

The Scinthiof (SHIN-theeoff), or Skin Thief tradition was begun on Briton soil in the early 300s, by an Angle maga named Nothgyth. She had only good intentions when she did what she did, but those intentions would give birth to a sinister practice.

Nothgyth and her adolescent, Gifted daughter Beorngyth lived with a band of Angle mercenaries in Deira. This warband was hired by the Romans to fight against Saxons who raided the eastern coast of Britannia. Nothgyth's role was to provide medical support for the warriors, using her facility with Corpus magic to help heal wounds and mend breaks.

Through her Gift, she won much respect from the Angles with whom she lived. But the Romans barely tolerated her and her daughter. A newly-arrived tribune took an active dislike to her and would go out of his way to threaten her and attempt to drive her from the community.

The mercenaries tried to intervene, but to no effect. One evening, Nothgyth's daughter came home to find the tribune striking her mother. She killed him with a spell, silently, so the tribune's guardsmen outside would not notice. Thoroughly shaken, and initially at a loss for what to do, Nothgyth came to the realization that the tribune, a key official of the legion garrisoned nearby, would be missed and that questions would be asked. The legionaries outside would also need an explanation. She didn't want to kill them too. But she didn't want the tribune's murder to lead to the execution of her daughter or of herself. And so she formulated a plan.

First, she examined the body and studied its features carefully. With her Corpus magic, she changed her own shape to match that of the tribune. Then she attempted the facial features, which were more difficult. After some practice, she matched them too. The final element was to mimic the tribune's voice, which she accomplished by changing her vocal cords until her voice sounded passably similar to the deceased's. Lucky for her, she spoke some Latin. Nothgyth completed her disguise by donning the tribune's clothing. Then she stepped forth from her house and led the legionaries back to their fort.

Nothgyth and her daughter held up this charade for many years. They learned the ways of the Roman military, and her daughter became a master at changing her shape to match those of others.

It was Beorngyth who embraced the ability to mimic the shape of others fully, and to take on the roles in society of others for her own benefit. She devised a means of supplementing her ability to copy facial features, a particularly difficult aspect of assuming the shape of someone else, by using the flayed face of the target as a magical focus.

Mechanically, this technique adds 6 to the Perception + Finesse roll that is

required to determine the accuracy of the reproduced features.

This roll is compared to an ease factor that depends on the familiarity of those who interact with the maga and see her disguise:

- +15 for a close relative or friend
- +12 for extended family or a friend
- +9 for a frequent acquaintance
- +6 for an occasional acquaintance
- +3 for a rare acquaintance

In addition to this skill, Scinnthiofas often have the free virtues of Puissant Corpus, Puissant Finesse, or Affinity with either.

Subsequent members of the Scinnthiof tradition expanded its specializations, though these specializations still mostly involve the favored Form of Corpus. Some found ways to change their physical size by several orders, while others were able to change the substance of their bodies entirely (with elemental requisites).

Still others incorporated necromantic aspects into the tradition, building wights from the skin and bones of the dead. The construction of wights requires that the maga must first gather the required components: enough skin and bones (not necessarily from the same body) and a number of pawns of Corpus vis that equals the magnitude of the Rego Corpus ritual that both assembles the components into the shape of the wight and that allows the caster to control the wight (base 4, +1 touch, +X duration, +2 group, +1 Rego requisite).

STORC WICCE

An isolated hut sits, surrounded by dark looming trees. The door opens and a woman exits, carrying a basket with her. She shuts the door and walks the short distance to the mist-shrouded shores of a lake. There, she takes up a slim, three-pronged wooden spear that was leaning against a tree, and wades several steps out into the shallow water. Her movements barely make a ripple or

a sound. She pauses, leaning forward, with spear at the ready and her attention entirely on the water before her. Suddenly, the spear flashes down and impales a fish, which she neatly releases from the spear tip and flips into her basket. At least that is what normal sight shows. To those with Second Sight or who are under the effects of a magical equivalent, however, the scene unfolds somewhat differently. Instead of the spear impaling a fish, they see her lips elongate rapidly into a pointed beak. Her head then jerks downward at the end of a long, elegantly stretching neck. The prey is not in fact a fish, but a water spirit that she deftly spears with her pointed lips, tosses up, and gulps down her throat. The spirit falls into a bulging sack at the base of her neck. The sack twitches violently several times, and finally stills.

Storc Wicce (Stork Witches) are common to the homelands of the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. Many have left these lands, and followed the strong sense of direction and nose for the wind that they share with their avian namesakes, to Britannia. Chieftains often sought out a Stork Witch to guide their ships safely across the North Sea. There are non-Gifted Stork Witches, who have similar powers to the Folk Witches described in *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, such as divining, herbalism, cursing, etc. There are also Gifted Stork Witches, who use their Magical Arts to achieve similar effects. What sets all Stork Witches apart from other witches, however, is their ability to render vis from the airy spirits that they catch and consume. This ability is the free minor virtue associated with the Stork Witch magical tradition.



The airy sprits can be of any type, though the vis that is generated is linked to the Form associated with the spirit. Thus a Stork Witch will prefer to consume spirits of the particular Form (s) that they favor, which are typically Animal, Auram, Aquam, Herbam, and Corpus.

Once consumed, the spirits generate an amount of vis that is equivalent to the amount granted by the Minor Hermetic Virtue, Personal Vis Source (ArM5, page 47).

Legends tell of certain “flocks” of Stork Witches who have specialized their ability to consume spirits that are aligned with the Faerie realm or even the Infernal realm.

MERLIN: ARCHITECT OF A LEGEND

The most recognizable names of post-Roman Britannia are Arthur and Merlin, or Myrddin. For the former, most historians agree that if Arthur or an Arthur-like figure ever truly existed, it was likely during the Anglo-Saxon invasions. For a significant period of time – almost a century – the Saxon advances in the south and west of Britannia were halted and perhaps reversed by a unified Romano-Briton resistance.

Myths attribute the leadership of this resistance to Arthur, a military commander and effective user of cavalry. The culminating victory in his fight against the Saxons was the Battle of Mount Badon (perhaps near or at Caer Baddan), c. 516 AD. After Arthur's death however, the unity imposed by his great leadership fell apart. The Anglo-Saxon invasion then resumed and consumed all of the lands that had been won back, and more. Early and High Medieval writers spun the Arthurian myths of previous generations into the stories we are familiar with today. But there are no contemporary writings that definitively prove his existence. Nor are there any

that prove the existence of a wizard named Merlin.

That said, Arthur and Merlin existed in Mythic Europe as surely as did dragons, and faeries, although his origins are unknown.

Most believe he came from somewhere west of Britannia – Ireland or the Isle of Mann. These beliefs, however, are merely conjecture based on his close association with druidic traditions and the persistence of those traditions in those regions. His age is also unknown, for he used his Magical Arts to keep his appearance consistent over the course of time. The final unknown, and the greatest mystery about his life, is whether he is in fact dead in 550 AD. Some claim he must be, for the stories about him started over a hundred years ago. Others claim that his apprentice, with whom he was besotted, imprisoned him in a magical cell of stone after stealing all of his magical secrets.

What is known, on the other hand, (among magi at least) is that he was Gentle Gifted – an extremely rare Virtue in this period. More able to blend into and interact with mundane society, Merlin broke away from the isolated, clan-like arrangements of Gifted individuals typical of the times. He traveled extensively throughout Britannia, seeking out magical knowledge. Through his travels, he developed a strong sense of patriotism for his adopted (or original?) homeland of Britannia.

He also saw what good his Gift could bring to others, and began an altruistic campaign to ease the suffering he encountered. This campaign caused him to run afoul of members of the Church, who did not approve of the non-Divine source of Merlin's “miracles”. These members of the Church interfered with his campaign and coerced him to stop; Merlin would forever hold these actions against them. To continue his efforts, he was forced to learn how to enact his will from behind the scenes, as the non-Gentle

Gifted often do; this lesson would be invaluable in the future.

When the Anglo-Saxon invasions began, Merlin put his Gift to use in resisting them. It was difficult to do so, in general – the Romano-Britons only had non-professional soldiers to pit against the well-armed Anglo-Saxon warriors, and there was no collective sense of defensive duty. The typical reaction of the lords of the lands being invaded was to move behind walls and horde their troops to guard their wealth. The invaders overran them one by one.

A notable exception to this tendency, however, was the valiantly self-less assistance provided by a minor king of Cornubia: Uther, who brought his warbands to the defense of eastern and southern Britannia. After hearing of this man's efforts, Merlin sought him out, and through a few conversations found that they shared the same vision for their country. That vision was of a strong Britannia, united under a strong High King and that could force back the invaders: a return to Roman glory, but with Britons commanding and Britons fighting.

Unfortunately for them, and for Britannia, political and financial support was behind someone else at the time – the weak and flaccid High King Vortigern – and they could not turn their vision into reality. Again the Church stood in the way of Merlin's aims, spitefully using their influence with the Council of Britannia to block his attempts to put forth Uther as High King.

This Council was a misguided political entity that was composed of the prominent men of the southern Romano-Briton kingdoms and that, under High King Vortigern, was responsible for sparking the Anglo-Saxon invasions through the hiring of the rebellious Hengist and Horsa and their warbands. Ultimately, however, Merlin was able to outwit the Council and the Church, the Council was dissolved, Vortigern was deposed from the High Kingship, and Uther was

confirmed in his place. But then Uther died the very next winter, at the hand of an unknown assailant.

As Uther's life leaked out through his wounds, he made Merlin promise to serve his son, Medrawt, just as he had served the father. And so Merlin again began laying the groundwork for the elevation of a King of Cornubia to the High Kingship. Merlin tutored the young noble, and attempted to cultivate the skills and perceptiveness required of a great leader. But the young man lacked ability.

By happenstance, Merlin came across another potential figurehead, one who showed astounding promise both in the ways of war and battle, and in the ways of politics and rulership. His name was Arthur, and he was also a son of Uther, but an illegitimate one. Nonetheless, Merlin put his faith in the young man, and used his Arts to bring him to power and ultimately to the High Kingship.

Arthur was extraordinarily successful in uniting the south and west of Britannia (the east was in the process of being lost to the Anglo-Saxons and the north was under the control of the Coel Familia, who refused to recognize Arthur as High King). His military prowess turned back the Saxon tide for almost a generation.

Then cancerous forces within the unified body of his own people brought about his downfall. Irked at the triumphs of Merlin and his prodigy, members of the Church worked toward their undoing. They set up Medrawt as a puppet, claiming with some justification that he was the true heir to Uther's High Kingship. Arthur had demanded much sacrifice from the wealthy of Britannia, so enough minor kings and aristocrats backed Medrawt that he had a significant following. Two armies assembled, one commanded by each half-brother, and both consisting solely of Romano-Briton warriors. They clashed at the Battle of Camlann, c.537 AD. Medrawt was slain and Arthur sustained a fatal wound. And so, in the



end, only the Anglo-Saxons won. With Arthur's death, the unified front of the south and west of Britannia dissolved. Soon thereafter, Merlin was either imprisoned or killed by his apprentice, or he simply absconded. Within a generation of the death of Arthur and the disappearance of Merlin, the Saxon takeover of the south proceeded as if they had never been. But perhaps, if Merlin still lives, and if he can be found and released from his prison or induced to return, then maybe there is still a hope that the south of Britannia can withstand the invaders and take back Lloegy, the lost lands.

ROMANO-BRITON AND ANGLO-SAXON SOCIETIES

The following two sections provide background information for the two main societies in Britannia in 550 AD, including their historical origins and an overview of their structure and state. Because of a scarcity of contemporary sources, especially for the Romano-Britons, there are few descriptions on which to draw directly in forming a picture of what these societies were like. What follows are summaries of reconstructions of the two societies undertaken by two historians, Sir Charles Oman (Anglo-Saxons) and

Professor Christopher Snyder (Romano-Britons). The former relied exclusively on literary sources, while the latter used both literary and archaeological sources. See the Bibliography for the complete references to these works. Note that the views described below adhere more to the picture of ubiquitously violent invasion and conquest put forth by ancient writers such as Gildas and Bede and by historians of the 19th and 20th century, as opposed to the more modern and archaeologically-supported view of peaceful settlement and acculturation. The old views provide a more dramatic backdrop for sagas. Feel free to adjust the nature of your version of the Anglo-Saxon takeover as you wish.

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The people who braved the North Sea and won themselves land in Britannia were primarily of three Germanic tribes: the Saxons, who came from the area of modern-day Germany that is south of the Eider and north of the Elbe; the Angles, who came from the land north of the Eider, now known as Angeln; and the Jutes, who came from the northern regions of the Danish peninsula.

Before their first raids on Britannia, in the 200's AD, they had no previous interaction with the Roman Empire and thus knew nothing of either civilization or Christianity. Through their raids, they built a reputation for piracy and barbarism. To the exclusively Christian writers of the time (and to the Christian historians of subsequent ages who interpreted their writings, including Sir Charles Oman, whose views dominate the subsequent paragraphs), these reputations and the pagan religion of the Anglo-Saxons meant that the motives of the invaders were largely evil.

To them, the Anglo-Saxons existed in the darkest state of barbarity and heathendom, intent only on the destruction of Briton civilization and to replace it with a new society of their

own. It is true that the Anglo-Saxons were pagans who worshiped Woden, Thor, Balder, and other ancient gods of their German ancestors. But they were likely not especially religious, for they built few temples, had few priests, and their religion did not appear to influence their lives or their politics heavily. It is more likely that the motives of the invaders were more complex than those attributed to them by the aforementioned writers and that they were not necessarily evil. The archaeological record supports such possibilities, for the evidence unearthed to date suggests that, in most areas, the transfer to Anglo-Saxon overlordship happened peacefully.

The first Anglo-Saxons to begin settling Britannia were mercenaries led by two brothers, Hengist and Horsa. These two Angle chieftains brought their Jutish and Frisian warbands to Kent at the request of Vortigern, the High King of the southern Britons. He hired them to drive away the Picts and the Scots who raided Britannia, for the Britons could not see to their own defenses. But when it came time for the mercenaries to be paid and leave, they refused to depart, and instead took control over the Isle of Thanet (449 AD).

A long war followed, the first battle of which, at Aylesford, saw the death of Horsa. But Hengist persisted, and after additional battles, he won all the land between the forest of the Weald and the estuary of the Thames. His followers saluted him as king, and his descendants were monarchs of Kent for over two centuries, until the kingdom was conquered by Wessex.

The next warbands to land consisted purely of Saxons, and were led by a chieftain, or alderman, named Aella (477 AD). They arrived near the fortress of Anderida (Pevensey), one of the chain of protective enclosures under the oversight of the Comes Litoris Saxonici (see Romano-Briton section). Aella sacked this fortress, killing all that lived within, and went on to conquer the narrow strip of land between the sea

and the forest of the Weald, as far as Chichester and Selsea. Thus he founded the kingdom of the South Saxons (Sussex), and reigned as its king.

In 495 AD, another band of Saxons landed on Southampton Water, west of Aella's realm. The new arrivals were led by an alderman named Cerdic. After overcoming the Romano-Britons who lived in the valleys of the Itchen and the Test and in the Roman town of Caer Guinntguic, he too won himself a kingdom, which he called Wessex. Cerdic continued to expand his kingdom, until coming up against the Dumnonians and Cornubians, who checked the Saxon advances.

A third band of Saxons landed on the northern shore of the Thames, while Cerdic was expanding his territory. From there, they spread into the low-lying country between the old Roman towns of Camulodunum (Caer-Colun) and Londinium (Caer Lundein), from the Colne as far as the Stour. This kingdom took the name of Essex and was the last Saxon kingdom that would be established on Briton soil.

But to the north, in 520 AD, the Angles landed in force. Two warbands conquered Caer Went; one band called themselves the North Folk (Norfolk), and the other the South Folk (Suffolk). Together, they formed the kingdom known as East Anglia.

Still further north, Anglian warbands took the lands above the Humber, and so came to be known as Northumbrians. There, they established two kingdoms: Bernicia (formerly Bryneich), with its central stronghold at Din Guardi (which they called Bamburgh), and Deira, centered on the old Roman town of Eboracum (which they called Eofervic, or York). Both East Anglia and Northumbria were established between 547-550 AD – 100 years after the fall of Kent.

The last Anglo-Saxon realm, Mercia or the "March", would not form until 584 AD, when at least three Anglian warbands established this realm: the

(Continued on page 25)



(Continued from page 23)

Lindiswaras (at Caer-Lind-Colun), the Mid-Angles (at Caer-Lerion), and the Mercians (in parts of Pengwern and The Peak). The center of the kingdom was Tamworth (near Caer-Luit-Coyt), which was fortified by King Creoda. At the time of the founding of Mercia, the Romano-Britons still held Caer-Guricon and Caer-Legion and thus the Mercians were kept from reaching the Severn and thereby bisecting Romano-Briton territory.

In the early period of the Anglo-Saxon incursions, the invaders killed all Romano-Britons who lived in the lands that they came upon. With time, however, they saw the utility in enslaving them and forcing them to tend the land. The Anglo-Saxons called the Romano-Britons Welsh, or “foreigners”, as if these long-time inhabitants of Britannia were themselves the new arrivals.

As they settled Britannia, the Anglo-Saxons mostly lived in the open country, only entering the old Roman towns to plunder them for building materials. Thus the realms that they established were founded almost entirely on rural communities. Each of the Anglo-Saxon realms were structured similarly. The basis for their administration was the warband of individuals who were sworn to follow a military chief, or alderman.

Once a region was conquered, the alderman would distribute lands among his followers, reserving the greatest share for himself. Each of the sworn companions (gesiths) of the king became the ruler of a small community of dependents that included their children, servants and slaves. As new settlers from the Continent arrived, the influence and responsibilities of the initial conquerors grew. The new settlers did not share the same status as the gesiths, but formed new communities that fell under the rulership of the established leadership. Thus the small regions of the first settling expanded in area and in

population, and over time became military monarchies.

With this transition, the original alderman became king, and the gesiths became aldermen, who each administered one region of the kingdom on behalf of the king. These regions were then further divided into districts, with a “reve” responsible for its royal property and dues. Eventually, as the kingdoms grew even larger, they were cut up into shires, each with its own alderman and a shire-reve (sheriff), to whom all reves of the districts within the shire reported.

For important decisions, the king relied on advice from a set of councilors: the Witan (Wisemen). This council consisted of the realm’s aldermen and a number of greater gesiths who served the king directly. When the Witan convened and the great men of the realm discussed matters of significance, the common people were allowed to gather and shout their support or dissent. But the decisions were ultimately left to the rulings of the king and his advisors.

When a king ruled tyrannically, became incompetent, or died, the Witan chose a new king from among the members of the royal family. Succession of all positions of leadership was not yet hereditary, and was instead by election (although the Witan never went outside the royal house in their nominations for the kingship).

For less important decisions on local matters, all the freemen of a shire would meet at a monthly shire-moot. The alderman and reve presided at these meetings, and with the aid of the freemen, would settle disputes and lawsuits.

Each freeman had a vote, so the shire-moot was much more democratic than the Witan, where only great lords could speak and vote. Matters that were deemed too minor for the shire-moot were settled by villagers at tun-moots that were attended by every freeman of the village. Most of the disputes that arose within a village were about

communal land use; pasture, waste land, and forests around the village belonged to the community. Houses and yards belonged to the individual.

THE ROMANO-BRITONS

In the opening decade of the 5th century, Britannia was a diocese of the Roman Empire. As in the rest of the empire, society was based on urban centers in which a majority of the people lived and in which local economies were centralized. The chief civic magistrate of the diocese was the vicarius in Londinium (Caer Lundein), who reported to the praetorian prefect in Gaul. Under the vicarius, there were multiple financial officials and then the governors of the five provinces of the diocese: Britannia Prima (with its capital at Corinum Dobunnorum, which became Caer Ceri), Britannia Secunda (with its capital at Eburacum, or Caer Ebrauc), Flavia Caesariensis (with its capital at Lindum, which became Caer Lind-Colun), and Maxima Caesariensis (with its capital at Caer Lundein). Within each province, local government was administered through the main cities (civitates) of small territorial units that corresponded roughly to the original lands of the Celtic tribes that inhabited the island when the Romans first came (see the nearby map). Each of these civitates was governed by a council of representatives called the ordo or curia. Its members, the curiales or decuriones, were drafted from the local aristocracy (possessores). In addition to the civitates, a province also contained other urban settlements (municipii, vici, pagi) and military forts.

After the last regular Roman troops left with Constantine III in 407 AD, the Britons were forced to arm themselves in response to Saxon, Pict, and Scot raids. This arming was an illegal act under the laws of the Roman Empire, and required the overthrow of Roman authority. Magistrates at all levels were removed from their positions. Following this revolt, which was formally allowed to persist by Emperor Honorius in 410 AD, the Britons set up

a government of their own. The possessores, who had much to lose from barbarian attacks, were best positioned financially and politically to take up the roles of the magistrates and to fend for their cities and regions. There were no more imperial troops, and so the possessores put their own funds and the proceeds from what remained of the Roman tax system toward hiring mercenaries and toward maintaining their own soldiers and communities. This maintenance included the preservation of the remaining Roman features like aqueducts, amphitheaters, communal baths, roads, etc.

and banks, and watchtowers, to protect their people from the invaders.

The three head military commands instituted by the Romans during their rule survived the isolation of Britannia from the Empire: the Comes Britanniarum who defends the central, southern and western inland regions, the Comes Litoris Saxonici who defends the southern and eastern coasts, and the Dux Britanniarum who defends the northern regions and oversees Hadrian's Wall.

The soldiers who serve these commanders are locals and therefore have strong ties to the community where they serve. They rely on their

this trade continued into the period of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, but eventually ended. Exports include salt and both raw and worked tin; the importance of these industries grew substantially in the 400 and 500's, and their products traveled as far as Alexandria.

Within Britannia, there is a diversity of industrial activity that includes iron smelting, production of high-quality jewelry, bone pins, and combs, leather working, and wool spinning and weaving. As trade with the mainland dries up, the Britons have begun producing their own fine pottery though on a much smaller scale. Some fortifications, such as the Mote of Marc, are devoted to industrial activities, with craftsmen gathering under the protection of timber-and-stone walls. Other greatly-respected craftsmen (smiths and jewelers in particular) are itinerant, and travel the land in search of the most generous patron.

Despite the economic uncertainty caused by barbarian raids, there are still signs of great prosperity. Wealthy villas are common features of the rural landscape. Many have been abandoned for more defensible holdings as the invasions progressed, but some are still occupied and functioning. These country residences and estates are worked both by tenant farmers and by slaves, who together form the bottom of the social pyramid. Though not a slave society (i.e., characterized by large numbers of slaves working on great plantations and in mines), slavery was common in Britannia. Most slaves were prisoners of war or non-Britons captured in raids.

Some possessores amass their wealth through slavery and the slave trade. Villa owners generate theirs through the agricultural surplus or industrial goods generated by their slaves, which is now sold in scattered, small rural markets, instead of in the large fora of the nearest urban centers as they once were. For the purchase and sale of goods, there is now a mixture of currency use and barter. The last Roman coins to be

IN 550, THE ROMAN TYPE OF CITY -BASED ECONOMY IS NO LONGER PRESENT IN BRITANNIA. MOST PEOPLE HAVE MOVED OUT FROM THE MAJOR URBAN CENTERS, INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE

The offices and titles of the possessores are hereditary, as they had been under the Empire. However, the authority of the possessores is not sanctioned by Rome, with Britannia no longer being part of the Empire, and those on the continent viewed these upstarts as illegitimate, petty tyrants. Over time, however, these tyrants would become kings. The lands they rule mirror the territories of the pre-Roman Celtic tribes. Some kings have kept their residences in large urban centers and have tried to retain as much of the Roman way of life as possible. Others, in response to the Anglo-Saxon raiding, have moved their residences to Roman forts, and others still to the ancient hillforts that the Romans had forced the Celtic tribes to abandon. They re-fortified these hillforts, restoring or adding such features as dressed stone walls with timber fighting platforms, timber gate towers, ditches

commanders for their livelihood and their equipment, which typically consists of swords, spears, shields, and helmets. Few are as heavily armed as Roman legionaries. The aristocracy ride horses to war, while some of the tyrant kings have taken up the ancient Celtic tradition of riding chariots. Forts along Hadrian's Wall continue to be occupied by military forces, as are a number of fortifications on the eastern coast.

In 550, the Roman type of city-based economy is no longer present in Britannia. Most people have moved out from the major urban centers, into the countryside. Thus there are no large populations from which to levy taxes. Instead, a major, though still dwindling, source of tax-based wealth for the possessores are tariffs placed on trade.

In Roman times, Britannia traded heavily with Gaul, importing wine, olive oil, and fine table wares and pottery;

minted in Britannia were struck in the 480s. By 550, many are still in circulation, though clipping and counterfeiting are common. As a result of these activities, Roman money has lost much of its meaning, and is instead melted down to make pendants, jewelry, and other objects of value to a heroic society. Jewelry items worn by the wealthy include artistic, enameled brooches (annular and penannular), gold and silver finger rings, metal belt buckles, and silver amulets.

Additional indicators of prosperity are the extensive construction projects undertaken throughout the 5th and 6th centuries, both military and civic. The military projects have already been described above. The civic projects relied exclusively on timber for larger structures, and wattle-and-daub and turf for modest structures, because of a scarcity of stone and/or skilled masons. Civic buildings range from small barns to multi-storied mansions and are found both in urban and in rural settings. The most characteristic structure of the time is the aisled hall built from timber. These buildings are impressive in size and have internal divisions for private apartments that are situated around a central hall. These halls are used for feasting, on occasions such as when a landlord shares his prosperity with his tenants and when a king rewards his warband or hosts another king. The feasts are often timed to coincide with a religious holiday or a military victory, and consist of foods like pig's, cow's, sheep's and goat's meat, honey, bread, wine, butter, garden vegetables, eggs, cheese, milk, mead, Celtic beer (cervisa), limpets, and oysters. Interspersed with these periods of feasting, however, are periods of famine and plague that cause severe declines in population.

By the early 400's, pagan religions played no significant role in Romano-Briton culture. The vast majority were Christian and had been for several decades. For example, St. Patrick's family had been Christian for three generations before him. In addition, there is no archaeological or literary

evidence that Christians persecuted pagans in Britannia, or that there was even any tension between the two groups. The more likely scenario is that worship at pagan temples simply died out slowly during the 4th century, and these structures then deteriorated. Christians recognized the sanctity of many of these sites and established churches and cemeteries on them. These churches were modest buildings. In contrast, the possessores often built relatively lavish private chapels in their villas, decorated with wall paintings and mosaics. These chapels indicate that many of the land-owning elite had converted to Christianity.

In Britannia, the Church itself has no formal hierarchy, but there are *betters* (*meliores*) or *elders* (*seniores*), and then those beneath them. There are pastors, whose duties include administering baptism and confession, serving the Eucharist, confirming oaths, giving alms, performing sacrifices, serving secular rulers, and sometimes pronouncing excommunication. Clerical interactions include the holding of councils, performing consecrations and ordinations, administering penance, and traveling overseas for church appointments. Celibacy is not a requirement, and women play an active role in the church. Education is an important element of church training; it follows the classical curriculum of grammar, rhetoric, and law, and is founded strongly on the Bible and the writings of the Church fathers.

As early as the mid-4th century, monastic communities began to be established, including one at Candida Casa on Solway Firth. The monastic movement in the 500s AD is still fledgling, but is gaining momentum and enthusiastic supporters. There are abbots, monks, and nuns who follow *regulae* in which they fast, hold vigil, sing psalms and work in fields, but they aren't wholly removed from their surroundings and the worldly temptations to be found there.

In the 400's, the Pelagian heresy was a strong influence that drew the clergy

in Britannia away from the path set by Rome. This heresy taught that human nature is not linked with original sin and that mortal will is capable of choosing good over evil without Divine aid. In response, Rome sent the missions of Germanus to Britannia in 429 AD and Palladius to Ireland in 431 AD. In 550 AD, there are perhaps still a few adherents to this heresy, but not enough to influence the Church in Britannia as strongly as before. A resurgence of this heresy might make for an interesting story arc. How would magi react to the Church taking extreme actions against their subjects who hold these benign beliefs? Or are these beliefs in fact not benign – is there a more sinister agent or motive behind them?

As a result of spending time in a unified state under Roman rule, Britons regard themselves as *Britanni*, or as citizens of the country or land called Britannia. Ancient tribal affiliations remained and rose to the surface with the fragmentation of the Roman dioceses into smaller kingdoms. But despite this political division, the common language and common religion shared by the Romano-Britons allow them to see themselves as *cymbrogi* (*compatriots*). And for this reason they believe themselves superior to the pagan Anglo-Saxons.

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HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF BRITANNIA

This timeline focuses primarily on events that occurred in Britannia, though it does include some key historical events that occurred in the rest of Europe. It also includes events associated with the fledgling Order of Hermes, for troupes with an eye to the future.

200-400: Britannia is continuously harassed by Picts, Saxons and Irish Scots. Their attacks include a massive raid in 367, dubbed “The Barbarian Conspiracy”, a planned and unified assault, in which northern and western Britannia is overrun, the Comes Litoris Saxonici is killed, and the Dux Britanniarum is captured. In response to this raid and others, several successive Caesars bring legions to the island to drive the barbarians back, beyond Hadrian’s Wall. The imperial presence is also occasionally required to put down rebellions among the Britons, and for rebuilding defenses afterward. When such tasks are done, they leave. Despite the barbarian incursions and the rebellious conflicts, Britannia prospers. However, its military forces are gradually weakened by usurpers such as Magnus Maximus (the Maccsen Wledig of Welsh legend), who lead armies away to the continent in their bids for the Empire.

407: The last regular Roman troops are withdrawn from Britain by Constantine III to fight in his rebellion on the continent.

408: Britain is devastated by Saxon raids.

409: A coalition of Vandals, Suevi and Alans crosses into Spain. The Britons revolt from the empire and set up independent rule. The Empire can no longer hold on to Britannia.

410: Rome officially abandons Britannia. Emperor Honorius refuses to send the aid requested by the Britons, for defense against Pict, Scot and Saxon raiders. Rome is sacked by Visigoths, under Alaric. Franks, Burgundians and Alemanni follow Vandals into Gaul.

418: Visigoths are settled as foederati by Romans in Aquitaine, after attacking Suevi, Alans and Vandals in Spain.

429: Britons, under St. Germanus of Auxerre, defeat Anglo-Saxon and Pictish pagan raiders at “Alleluia” battle. St Germanus begins his fight against the Pelagian heresy. Vandals cross from Spain into North Africa.

430s: Huns are used by Rome to impose foederati status on Burgundians and other barbarians in Gaul.

432: St. Patrick’s mission to Ireland.

439: Vandals capture Carthage, establish a kingdom.

441: Huns under Attila rebel, defeat the Romans at Naissus. Witnesses in Gaul observe that some portion of Britannia has fallen into the hands of the Saxons.

443-50: Plague infects Britannia and much of Europe.

445: St. Germanus makes a second visit to Britannia.

446: The Britons again appeal for aid, sending “The Groans of the Britons” to General Aetius in Gaul. “The barbarians drive us into the sea, the sea drives us back on to the barbarians. Our only choice is whether we shall die by the sword or drown: for we have none to save us.” Beset by Huns, Aetius cannot help.

449: Vortigern, High King of the southern Britons, hires Jutish/Angle mercenaries led by brothers Hengist and Horsa to stop Pictish raiding. These mercenaries attack Orkney and campaign “as far as the borders of the Picts”. Hengist and Horsa then rebel and begin their conquest of Ceint.

450: St. Ninian begins the conversion of the Southern Picts.

451: Aetius defeats Attila at the Catalaunian Plain, as Huns invade Gaul.

453: Constantinople wins ecclesiastical supremacy over Alexandria at the Council of Chalcedon; Attila dies.

454 : Germanic subjects of the Huns rebel, breaking Hunnic power at battle of Nedao.

455: Picts attack Britannia in support of the Anglo-Saxon rebellion. Rome sacked by Vandals; Aetius assassinated.

456: Anglo-Saxons and Jutes of Ceint defeat Britons at the Battle of Crecanford, Britons retreat to Caer Lundein.

457: Ceint lost to Jutes, led by Hengist and Oisc.

462-78: Visigoths expand into Gaul and Spain.

464: Saxon king Adovacrius rules near Loire estuary in Gaul.

470: Caer Lind-Colun (or Linnuis) lost to Angles, becomes Lindisware. Caer Lerion falls shortly thereafter.

476: Deposition of last Western Roman Emperor. Italy comes under the rule of Odoacer, a barbarian general, who deposed the “last” western emperor: the puppet usurper Romulus Augustulus, who was still a boy; Odoacer recognizes suzerainty of eastern emperor Zeno.

477: Aelle and his Saxon warbands arrive in Sussex.

480 : Death of Julius Nepos, the last legitimate western emperor. Dalmatia becomes part of Odoacer’s kingdom.

495: Cerdic and his Saxon warbands arrive in Wessex. Caer Went lost to Angles.

500: Aelle of Sussex recognized as Bretwalda. Fresh migration of Scots from Northern Ireland to Dal Riada.

c.500: The Battle of Mount Badon and slaughter of the Saxons. The birth of Gildas.

508-14: The Picts are expelled from the Lowlands.

520: Foundation of a monastery at Clonard in Ireland.

521: The birth of St. Columba.

537: Battle of Camlann and the death of Arthur. King of Scots, Comgall mac Fergus, is killed by Picts.

542-49: Bubonic plague devastates Constantinople, eventually reaching Britannia and Ireland.

545: Caer Colun lost to Saxons, becomes Essex.

547: Bryneich lost to Angles, will soon become Bernicia.

550: Angles occupy Bamburgh, formal creation of the kingdom of Bernicia.

552: Rhegin lost to Saxons, becomes Sussex. Caer Gwintguic lost to Saxons, becomes Wessex.

558: King of Scots, Gabran mac Fergus, is killed by Picts.

559: Deywr lost to Anglian mercenaries, who originally settled in this region c.420, becomes Deira.

563-65: St. Columba establishes a monastery at Iona, begins his mission among the Picts and visits the northern Pictish King Bridei in Inverness.

570-80: Ebrauc lost to Deirans.

571: Caer Lundein lost to Essex. Ceawlin, King of Wessex defeats Romano-Britons at Bedford.

577: Ceawlin, King of Wessex, defeats the kings of Caer Gloui (King Cynfael), Caer Ceri, and Caer Baddan at the battle of Dyrham, resulting in the loss of respective kingdoms, and cutting off the Romano-Britons of Dumnonia and Cornubia from those of South Wales.

580: Aeden MacGabraín of Dal Riada campaigns against the Picts of Orkney.

590: The Peak lost to Angles.

595: Dunoting lost to Bernicians.

596-97: Foundation of the Benedictine monastery of Canterbury and start of St Augustine's mission to Kent. Death of St. Columba at Iona.

597: Gododdin lost to the Angles, led by Oswald of Bernicia. Battle of Catraeth in which an outnumbered Briton force from Din Eidyn are killed almost to a man by Angles. Aneirin the Bard escapes and composes Y Gododdin.

605: Caer Celemion lost to Wessex, led by Ceawlin.

613: South Rheged lost to Angles. Aethelfrith, King of Bernicia and Deira, defeats the princes of Cumbria and North Wales at the Battle of Deva (Caer Legion). Host of Briton monks massacred; quoth Aethelfrith, "If they do not fight against us with their arms, they do so with their prayers." This victory cut off Cumbria from North Wales.

616: North Rheged lost to Angles, led by Edwin of Deira. Galwyddel is now under Bernician influence, while Caer Guendoleu is absorbed by Alt Clut.

620: Cynwidion falls to Mercia.

627-34: Bernicians and Deirans converted to Christianity.

628: Anglo-Saxon Hwicce (formerly Caer Gloui) annexed by Mercia.

630: Domnall Brecc of the Dal Riadans leads an army against

the Irish High King, but is defeated at the battle of Moira. Last dynastic link between the Dal Riadan Scots and Ireland is severed.

634: Bernicians and Deirans defeats Gwynedd at Hexham.

635: Bernicia and Deira formally united as the kingdom of Northumbria.

652-58: Glastenning lost to Wessex.

653: Essex converted to Christianity.

655: Elmet lost to Northumbria and Mercia. Pagan Mercia defeated by Northumbria and converted to Christianity.

656: Pengwern lost to Mercia, led by Oswiu.

660: Oswiu of Northumbria claims overlordship of Picts.

664: Synod of Whitby. Roman church takes precedence over Celtic church.

670: Oswiu dies.

672: Ecgfrith, son of Oswiu, attacks and destroys a Pictish army at the battle of Carron.

674: Ecgfrith withdraws from Alba to fight the Mercians.

679: Northumbria defeated by Mercia at Trent.

681: Picts take Dunnottar back from the Northumbrians.

681-86: Sussex converted to Christianity.

682: Picts retake Orkney from the Scots.

683: Picts lay waste to Scottish capital at Dunnadd.

685: Northern Picts destroy Northumbrian army at the Battle of Dunnichen.

686: Isle of Wight annexed by Wessex, conversion of this last pagan Anglo-Saxon realm to Christianity.

690-720: Dumnonia absorbed by Wessex.

690: Birth of Bonisagus.

698: A Northumbrian army invades the lands of the Picts and is destroyed. Adomnan of Iona makes the "law of the innocents" excluding women from military service.

700-10: Lindisware (formerly Linnuis) absorbed by Mercia.

705: Birth of Trianoma.

711: The Northumbrians rout the Pictish army on the Plain of Manaw, between the rivers Avon and Carron.

713: Picts and Northumbrians make peace.

714: Birth of Guernicus.

715: Approximate year of Flambeau's birth.

717: Nechtan, King of Picts, brings the Pictish church into line with Rome and expels Columban monks "across the spine of Britain."

720: Bonisagus invents Parma Magica.

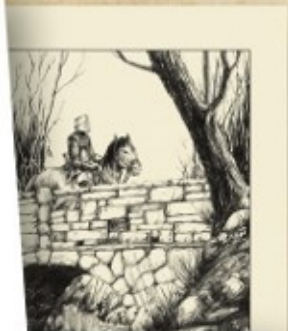
724-29: Southern Pictish civil war over the crown. Oengus emerges victorious.

- 729:** Birth of Jerbiton.
- 730:** Chiltern-Saeten (Chiltern Hills) annexed by Mercia. Oengus captures and drowns the “King of Atholl”, gaining overlordship of both the Northern and Southern Picts and Scots.
- 731:** Trianoma is apprenticed to Bonisagus, and learns the Parma Magica.
- 736:** King Oengus of the Picts invades Dal Riada, beheads the Scottish king, and proclaims himself the first King of Picts and Scots.
- 737-67:** Trianoma travels throughout Europe, sending some of the magi she meets, including several of the future Founders, back to Bonisagus.
- 738:** A war fleet of 150 Pictish ships is wrecked by storm near Ross.
- 741:** King Oengus of the Picts defeats Scots of Dal Riada.
- 744:** Oengus attacks and defeats the Britons of Strathclyde (formerly Alt Clut).
- 750:** Oengus’ brother, Talorcan, is defeated by the Britons of Strathclyde at the Battle of Mocetwawc.
- 753:** Valnastium established, future Domus Magna of House Jerbiton.
- 754-57:** Bonisagus sets up the first covenant, at Durenmar.
- 756:** Oengus makes an alliance with Eadbeorht of Northumbria and attacks Strathclyde. The Britons break the siege and seize Eadbeorht’s northern lands.
- 761:** Oengus dies, and the Scots break free from Pictish rule.
- 767:** Founding of the Order of Hermes. First meeting of the Grand Tribunal.
- 767-773:** Flambeau founds Val Negra.
- 770:** Harco founded, Domus Magna of House Mercere.
- 771:** Bjornaer begins tradition of holding a council on the island of Ruegen.
- 773:** Second meeting of the Grand Tribunal. Crintera founded, Domus Magna of House Bjornaer. Fenistal founded, Domus Magna of House Merinita.
- 768:** King of Scots, Aed Finn, invades Alba and fights the Pictish king Cinioid in Fortriu (Fortrenn).
- 782:** Causantin Mac Fergus of Dal Riada kills Dubhtollarg, king of the Southern Picts.
- 789:** Causantin Mac Fergus defeats Northern Picts and becomes the first Scottish king of both Scots and Picts.
- 780-90:** Norwegian settlers arrive in Orkney and overwhelm the local Picts. Orkney becomes the staging point for Viking raids.
- 791:** Branugurix founded, Domus Magna of House Diedne.
- 792:** Merinita disappears into the wilderness. Fenistal descends into Winter. New Primus, Quendalon, founds Irencillia.
- 793:** Lindisfarne monastery raided; first dated Norse attack.
- 798:** Fudarus founded, Domus Magna of House Tytalus.
- 799:** Third meeting of the Grand Tribunal. Quendalon disappears into the wilderness. Myanar takes up leadership of House Merinita.
- c.800:** Damhan Allaidh attacks the Order.
- 800:** Ergyng lost to Mercia. Northumbria loses Dumfries to Strathclyde.
- 801-02:** Quendalon reappears. Myanar does not accept him to be who he states, and conflict ensues. Fenistal is lost. Irencillia is now Domus Magna of House Merinita.
- 807:** Tytalus disappears into the Maddenhoffen Woods, to challenge the Queen of Faerie.
- 814:** South Welsh Dumnonia (Cornwall) conquered by Wessex.
- 816:** Welsh kingdom of Rhufuniog conquered by Mercia.
- 817:** Fourth meeting of the Grand Tribunal. Certamen accepted as decisive. Red Caps instituted. House Ex Miscellanea joins the Order.
- 818:** Death of Mercere.
- 820:** Causantin Mac Fergus dies, and Picts re-establish their dynasty over the Scots.
- 831:** Birna (Bjornaer) disappears into the wilderness, in bear form.
- 832:** Fifth meeting of the Grand Tribunal. Trianoma dies.
- 834:** Scottish leader Alpin rebels during a Viking raid, defeats one Pictish army, but is killed by a second.
- 836:** Ynys Manaw invaded by Norse. Bonisagus is last seen alive.
- 839:** Pictish King and “numberless others” are killed in battle with the Vikings. Alpin’s son Kenneth makes a claim for the throne, but is passed over in favour of Drust IX.
- 841:** Norse found city of Dublin. Kenneth MacAlpine becomes Rex Pictorum.
- 843:** “Treachery of Scone”, Southern Pict leaders murdered by Scots of Dal Riada. Picts put under Scottish king, formation of united kingdom of Alban.
- 848:** Sundering of House Tremere.
- 858:** Domnall I unites Picts and Scots under a Scottish ruling dynasty.
- 862:** The last remaining Founder of the Order, Tremere, dies.
- 865:** Fourth meeting of the Grand Tribunal.
- 865-67:** Norse “Great Army” raids across England, captures York.

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THE GLAMOROUS SWAMP

BY PELLE KOFOD

This comes to you, gentle reader, from a collection of notes found in the ruins of the fallen covenant of Speculum Petrosa. Once a mighty covenant, it is said their arrogance caused them to fall. Now all that is left is ruins - let the wise learn from this example and take heed.

A powerful faerie makes its home is a swamp near human habitation.

It has a strong water aspect and tries to lure people to their death - or better yet into its service.

The glamorous swamp is (obviously) not known by this name to the mundanes who live near it.

Feel free to invent the local name for the swamp at your own pleasure (a couple of examples could be "The Dark

Copse" or "that darn piece of swamp as we can't get drained")

The glamorous swamp lies near a road. Not a main road but one traveled often enough.

There is probably also a small river or several streams connecting with the swamp.

Travelers on the road tend to ignore the glamorous swamp and certainly avoid it.



SUB ROSA

Most are prepared to go to some length to avoid making camp near the glamorous swamp.

Yet often enough strangers or young people end up approaching, for firewood, the possibility of catching a meal – or for whatever purposes suit young people.

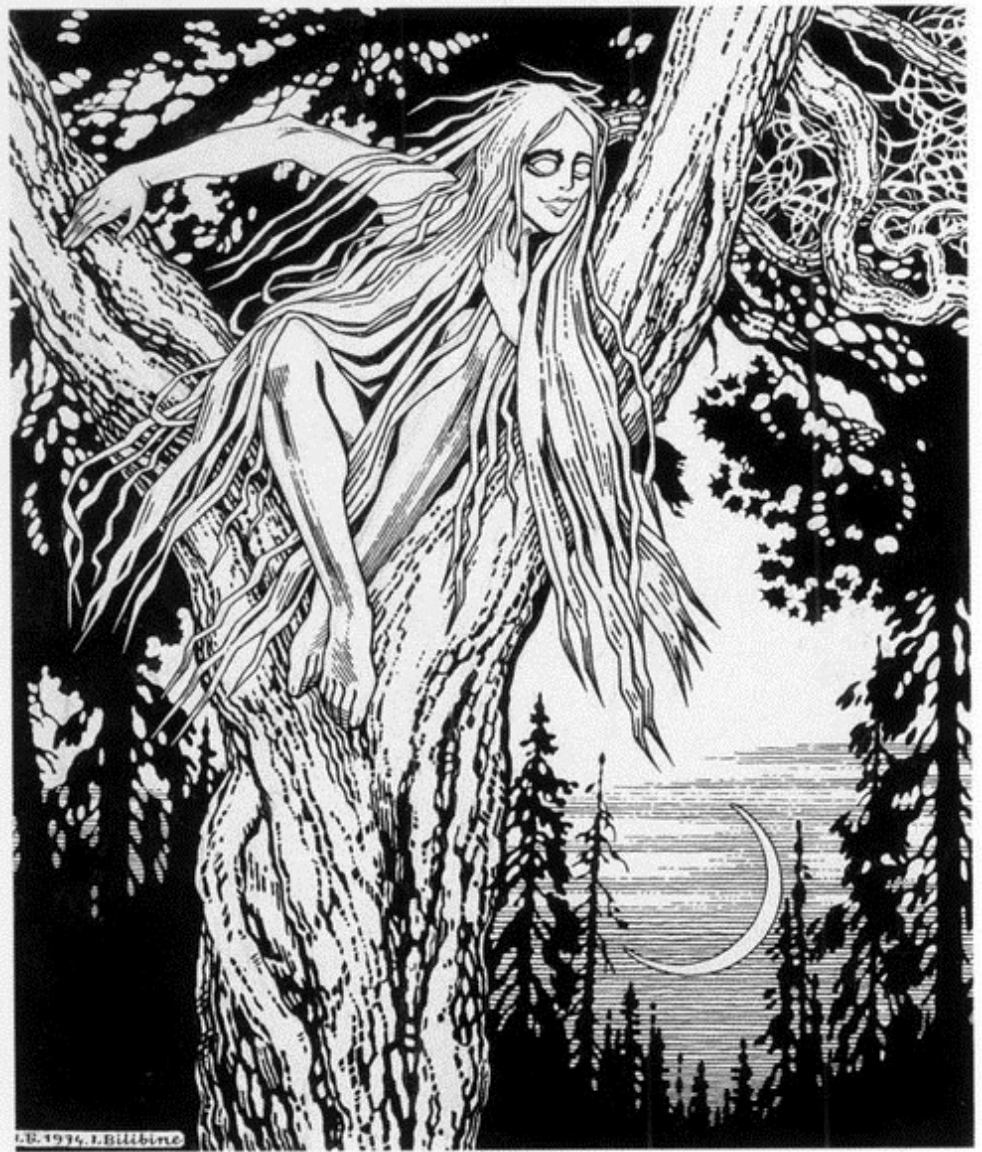
The border of the swamp area is not so bad – not even particularly swampy, so much as a bit of woodland with perhaps unusually soft ground.

The faerie of the swamp likes to present a pleasing front in order to lure travelers into its grip. This area has a faint (level 1) faerie aura.

This does not last long. Soon visitors are moved into the regio itself, though this is only visible to the very sharp-eyed or those with supernatural senses. This is a faerie regio of 3.

To notice this crossing requires a Perception roll of 12+. Should Perception + Second Sight be used instead, the difficulty is the standard 9+.

Once mortals enter the regio, things take on a darker feel. All paths seem to lead deeper into the regio and seem to change or close behind travelers. Any attempts to leave incur a penalty of 3 (strength of the regio-level) to any involved rolls. 3 extra botch dice are added as well, though botches are rarely harmful so much as leading deeper into the swamp. Soon intruders will find themselves wading through water up to just below the knee, walking on a soft and giving slippery mess of mud and dead leaves. All animals seem to have vanished except those the player characters may have brought with them. Good perception + awareness rolls might well locate human bones in the mud beneath the opaque waters. A mist will rise and cover everything. Thin enough at first it will quickly grow too



think to see through for more than a few yards.

Magi using spells to sense Vis at ranges Smell or Hearing are likely to catch tantalizing scents/sounds of Vis ahead, near the Heart of the Swamp.

The Heart of the Glamorous Swamp is a smallish open lake. Dead trees and branches break the surface here and there, as do a patch of bulrushes near one shore. As intruders arrive it will be covered in a thick mist. Here the regio intensifies to level 5 (faerie).

Again it is easy enough to enter – leaving might well be more of a challenge though.

As intruders enter the inner level of the regio, the mists will appear to lift, exposing the lake to viewers. But more importantly it will expose the Queen.

The Queen (find a name appropriate to your location, try to avoid obvious saints' names) manifests as a mostly human, mostly female shape that never breaks contact with the water.

(Continued on page 35)

FAERIE QUEEN

OF THE

GLAMOROUS

SWAMP

Faerie Might: 35+10

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +2, Pre +3, Com +1, Str -3, Sta +1, Dex, Qui +1

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Feast of the Dead, Place of Power (The Glamorous Swamp), Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Immune to Cold, Intangible Flesh, Negative Reaction (Obvious Faerie), Narrowly Cognizant*, Traditional Ward (Rest of the world – cannot leave it's Swamp), Aloof

Personality Traits: +1 Proud, +2 Demanding, Manipulative +2, Brave (Physical) -3

Combat: (Doesn't engage in physical combat)

Dodge: Init +1, Atk n/a, Def +1, Dam n/a

Soak: +1

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Pretenses: Awareness 3, Charm 5, Concentration 5, Etiquette 2, Folk Ken 2, Guile 5, Intrigue 7, Leadership 3, Local

Language 6, Faerie Lore 5, course they don't know that...
Magic Lore 4, Second Sight 7

Powers: Allure, Guide, Loosely Material, Extended Glamour (Whole Swamp), Sight Beyond Sight. In case it need said: The Queen is not balanced for use as a player character.

Focus Power x2: Any Aquam effect, up to level 45, but rephrased to be "swamp-themed".

Focus Power: Any Rego Herbam effect up to level 25.

Lesser Power: Fog (Can cause a fog to cover any part of her swamp – or all of it. This can be a thin mist or a dense pea soup or anything in between. Cost 0. CrAu, level special due to flexibility.)

Greater Power: To Wake the Dead. (Can Animate the bones of those who have entered her swamp and died. Base 10, Touch, Concentration, "Structure+1" (Entire Swamp, works across Regio levels) ReCo 40, Init -3, 2 Points, Intricacy spent to reduce cost). She prefers to use this power only to scare "guests" – if they actually put up a defense, use the stats for Skeletal Revenant, *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 99

Please note that the faerie does not have the Binding Oath power – the characters can promise her anything they like, and once they have left the swamp, the faerie has no way of enforcing these promises. Of

(Continued from page 33)

If all of her guests are mundanes, things are easy. If they cannot protect themselves from her powers and cannot persuade her of their usefulness, she will simply imprison them within the region, leaving them to starve thus letting her slowly harvest their vitality. Boring.

So the trick is to convince the queen that you are more useful alive than dying.

Fortunately, this is not too hard.

The queen straddles the lines between narrow and full cognizance. It understands that it is playing a role, that it can become more powerful and that its role can change. However, it lacks understanding of how.

Clearly if the swamp can be expanded, the faerie will possess a larger domain. If the swamp could be expanded to include some inhabited area, even more humans would fall under the sway of the faerie and again it is clear how its powers will expand.

This could be done e.g. by blocking a river or other stream of water, flooding the nearby area – or so the faerie is convinced.

If any of the intruders are Gifted, the game changes a bit, for the faerie recognizes the Gift.

This faerie cannot leave its lands. It cannot simply expand without aid. And none of its powers will reach beyond the edge of the soft ground and wooded patch surrounding the swamp.

This is because it was bound here long ago by a Gifted magician. The faerie recognizes the Gift, but while it hates being bound like this, it also recognizes that those who have the Gift have enormous potential to change the world around them. If a Gifted person is among the intruders, the faerie will

always talk. But it will not demand land, it will demand people.

One conceit the faerie has learned from a previous encounter, is to claim that she used to be a goddess among men, “back when this land was covered with Ice” (or water, if you’re playing south of the alps). If the faerie is invoking this story, it will try to get the characters to promise to convert worshippers to the service of the queen.

While the faerie would prefer to be rid of the bindings, it cannot speak of this (as part of the binding) and so cannot explain what it truly wants. Not directly anyway. Perhaps with time, it can manipulate Gifted magi into releasing it. This is its ultimate goal.

Should the characters simply refuse to bargain with her, she will harry them with the bones of the dead and the branches of the plants of the swamp, but will generally avoid direct confrontation and certainly direct attacks. She can take vitality from fear – and even the relief of those who escape her, though the taste does not become her – but dead give her nothing but more bones.

She will try to pressure the characters into a dark bargain, but for those who understand regions, it is possible to leave against her will.

865AD: VOVENTES CENTENNALES: RESEARCHERS, EXPLORERS, PIONEERS

BY BERENGAR DREXEL

About a hundred years ago the twelve Founders of the Order of Hermes composed the Oath of Hermes, and took it for the first time here. Now it is your turn to step into the forest glade, called the Fane of the Founders ever since, before the assembled Primi of the Houses.

You have been chosen among many apprentices groomed for this occasion, for the prestige of your parentes and the trust in you that they expressed. This

will be the last time that a Grand Tribunal will swear in a group of apprentices: tomorrow, it will confirm eight regional Tribunals, and afterwards concentrate on resolving inter-Tribunal disputes and issues affecting the whole Order.

The last century saw the Order of Hermes grow. A new House was admitted, and with a subtle strike a takeover attempt by its youngest Founder, Tremere, was foiled. Now all

the Founders are gone, as is Pralix, founder of the young House Ex Miscellanea.

Today, on the spring equinox 865 AD and 1004 AA, the magi of the Order of Hermes wish for a bright future built upon solid foundations: and you, who have been chosen to embody it, for the first time after nearly a century will take your Oath of Hermes



SUB ROSA

at the Fane again, and thereby become the Voventes Centennales.

SCOPE

This article describes a campaign setting for a group of magi just out of apprenticeship, based on the **ArM5** Order of Hermes at 865.

While describing Mythic Europe, the Order of Hermes, its magic and its rivals, it adheres as closely as possible to both history and published **ArM5** material, so that it can be used as material about the history of the Order for the canonical setting at 1220 as well.

Neither the mundane history described, nor that of the Order, can be complete by any standard: choices have been made in favor of material that – as the author believes – might motivate troupes and storyguides to delve deeper and thereby define their own campaign.

MUNDANE HISTORY

The Frankish Empire, as consolidated by Charlemagne, since 855 is split into five separate kingdoms, ruled by his far less talented and energetic grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Currently the king of Lotharingia and the king of Italy divvy up between themselves their deceased brother's kingdom of Provence. And everybody expects a further redistribution in just a few years.

Byzantium has just come out of the iconoclastic crisis, when Emperors imposed onto the reluctant Greeks – often by immediately executed decree – a strict, intellectual theology inspired by the Eastern part of their Empire. But during the reconciliation of Emperor, Greek population and Church, two eminent churchmen contend each other the office of Patriarch of Constantinople, and draw the Pope – as the largely undisputed leader of Christendom – into their conflict.

NEW VIRTUE: VOVENS CENTENNALIS

(Minor Hermetic Virtue)

The magus took his Hermetic Oath 865 at the Fane during the Grand Tribunal (see *Guardians of the Forests*, pages 61 and 62) and has the Hermetic Prestige for it. This links him to the destiny of the Order through the Fane: he gets a bonus

This Pope has recently been besieged in Rome by the king of Italy and Roman Emperor, in vain trying to force him to annul the contract of an infertile marriage about to extinguish one Carolingian bloodline.

The Abbasid Caliphate – recognized, but not necessarily obeyed, in parts of Persia, in Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt and some of the Maghreb – goes through a period of violent anarchy, with four Caliphs in a row within ten years deposed and killed by their Turkic military ‘advisors’.

The Scandinavian people – the Vikings – start their settlements and conquests in Britain, Neustria, Iceland and the Rus', which in the next decades will transform these countries forever.

While the Saxons and Frisians in the Frankish Empire have been fully integrated and Christianized, most Slavs, Balts and Scandinavians stick to their old religions and deities.

TECHNOLOGY

The only plough in use is the ard, which makes bad use of good soil, as it doesn't invert it. The only crop rotation scheme is two-field, where land lies fallow for a year or more after having been planted. And there is not yet any large-scale transhumance. Altogether, this makes cultivated land and pastures support few people per square mile. And this causes the need for small,

of +3 to Personality rolls, which involve securing a future for the Order.

The sodales expect him to advance it where the Founders and Pralix left off. The magus knows of the existence and location of the Fane of the Founders, thereby holds a position of trust, and likely will at some time be asked to perform the ancient rite at the Fane for his House.

For PC magi in the 865 campaign this is a free Virtue. In this campaign Guernicus PCs get Puissant Art: Terram as their free House Virtue, since their specific Hermetic Prestige is overridden.

scattered settlements, mostly connected by unmaintained paths. Means of transport on these are pack animals, and two-wheeled carts drawn by oxen. There are no wheelbarrows yet.

Water mills and norias are found all over Muslim and Christian countries. Mosaics, frescoes, small bronze casts and glass can be made around larger towns – or where holdouts of classical technologies still exist. Nobody makes precision instruments any more. Luxury fabrics come from the East, mostly from Byzantium. Generally there are no church bells or belfries, but hand bells can be cast.

Crossbows are nowhere in military use, though known since antiquity. As for armor, the Carolingian byrnie is best treated in **ArM5** as ‘Metal Reinforced Leather’ or ‘Metal Scale’, but Byzantine soldiers may have mail armor instead.

Nailed iron or bronze horseshoes are very unusual, and there are no farriers. Stirrups, introduced by the Eastern horse people (Magyars, Avars, Turkic), are already widely used in Byzantium, the Carolingian kingdoms and the Muslim countries. In Britain and Scandinavia they are still a novelty, and most uncommon among Slavs and Balts. To get the Attack and Defense bonuses of **ArM5**, page 174 Mounted Combat derived from one's Ride score, one needs to use stirrups.



CAROLINGIAN SOCIETY

The Carolingian kingdoms are not yet built on fief and vassalage, but on a simple administration centered on the traveling court of the king with its dignitaries and judges, the resident counts and bishops with their local courts, and the assemblies of the free men. To integrate existing strong local authorities, or establish them where needed, margraves and dukes are appointed.

Charlemagne unified currencies on the base of the pound of silver (*librum*, l.) split into 240 pennies (*denarii*, d.). This single metal standard with a single type of coin is very successful all over middle and Western Europe. Even the Pope uses it now. This is also the system *Covenants* (page 56) uses.

The early Carolingian court has generated an elaborate style of figurative arts and architecture, embracing the functional needs of a new society while

emulating forms of late antiquity with new expressivity in architecture, frescoes, book illumination, carved ivory, bronzes and jewelry. At the same time the first ‘neume’ notations for music appear.

Carolingian minuscules constitute a widely followed calligraphic standard for Latin texts. Other standards for Latin characters remaining with some following are the Cassinese (also Beneventana) used in Southern Italy, and the Visigothic script in Iberia.

Medieval Latin adapts to Germanic- and Latin-based vernacular sensibilities, often following their word ordering, grammar and construction of clauses, and starting to differentiate “u” and “v”. Sticking to classical grammar instead is a sign of distinction few can follow or even appreciate: so its champions often exaggerate it.

BYZANTINE SOCIETY

Having seen the Western Empire decline into barbarism, the people of the Byzantine Empire see themselves as the last heirs to Rome. They certainly still keep many of its customs alive.

The hippodrome in front of the Imperial palace is the gathering place of the people of Constantinople. Their political parties (*Demes*) and militia are organized as supporters of several racing teams.

The large column on the Forum of Constantine, carrying his statue holding an orb, is supposed to hide in its base and the orb the relics he brought when founding the city: among them the Palladium of Troy and a part of the true cross. And they inherited the strict, late Roman law and tax systems, rigidly applied to both country and city people.

Many places around the Mediterranean still are pro forma under Byzantine administration: there local office holders (like *hypatoi*) with growing independence often turn into local nobility.

Court life – with its eunuchs, its many honorary and functional ranks – ideally is supposed to demonstrate harmony and order, so that the Empire proper can “reflect the motion of the Universe as it was made by the Creator”. Currently it is a hotbed of ambition and strife, where regent and Emperor, their favorites and assassins, wives and paramours ruthlessly struggle for power – and still that court pacifies and consolidates the Empire. In 860 the Rus’ attack Constantinople by surprise with some 200 ships, plunder the suburbs and are repulsed only at the return of the Emperor, but in 863 his troops under Petronas decisively defeat an army of the Caliph in the battle of Porson in Asia Minor.

Greek is the only language for administration and government of the Byzantine Empire, and the language of the Church there as well. The currently written Greek is not really different from that of the New Testament and

Plutarch – so it is recommended to just treat it as Classical Greek (Attic) in **ArM5**. The language spoken by the inhabitants of the Empire, however, has developed into a vernacular of its own: the Romaic Greek from *The Sundered Eagle*, page 41, with the -2 Penalty to mutual understanding with Classical Greek from page 42. So the average man of Constantinople wouldn't understand official Imperial documents read to him any better than the average man of Rome documents of the Pope.

The Imperial, the Patriarchal and the several private libraries of Constantinople after the loss of the library of Alexandria constitute by far the largest repository of the knowledge of antiquity. In 855 the Caesar Bardas instituted a high school under Leon the Mathematician, also a renowned poet and polymath, in the Magnaura palace near the Hagia Sophia.

MUSLIM SOCIETY

Islam is very explicit as to how its believers shall behave. Still, organizing an Islamic society required transfer of authority to legal scholars and judges (ulema) and to religious and political leaders.

An Islamic philosophy of law and legal practice is being created since about 800.

At that time the Caliphate of Baghdad in fact has already been transferred twice to new dynasties, and the principle by which to determine a Caliph – consent of most Muslims (the Sunnite claim) or Divine Appointment from the right bloodline (the Shi'ite claim) – is hotly contested and has split Islam forever.

Before 865, the Shi'a is in minority everywhere, with the exception of Morocco ruled by the Idrisids. The Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad struggled for a century, but now their huge domain is crumbling: Iberia never was under Abbasid rule, Africa and Egypt already have politically independent rulers, Persia is about to break away.

And the Byzantine military advances in Anatolia.

Earlier Abbasid Caliphs like Harun al-Rashid or al-Ma'mun were eminent patrons of arts and sciences: the former founded the Bayt al-Hikma (house of wisdom) in Baghdad, and the latter requested and received from Byzantium important Greek books for translation. Both thus laid some ground for the work of famous scientists, e. g. the mathematicians:

- al-Khwārizmī, who taught at the Bayt al-Hikma, but whose work is rather based on Hindu sources than Greek ones
- Thābit ibn Qurra al-Harrānī, with Pythagorean leanings, who 865 is in his late 30s, and whose time in Baghdad is yet to come after the current anarchy. (See *Thabit ibn Qurra as Sabi' al Harrani* below.)

Arabic, the language of the Quran, holds together the Muslim world. Many educated Muslims from cultures with other languages (like the Persians al-Khwārizmī and Omar Khayyām) use Arabic for their literary, scholarly and scientific works – just like ninth century Irishmen or Franks use Latin.

PERSONALITIES IN CONTEXT

The current Roman Emperor is the Carolingian king of Italy, Louis II, groomed for both functions since his youth. After in vain switching alliances within the family to enlarge his inheritance, he now champions the family interests in Italy. His brother, king Lothair II of Lotharingia, will die without a legal heir, unless the Pope confirms a Frankish synod that voided his marriage with an infertile woman and allowed him to legalize his children from a second wife. The Emperor took up his cause in exchange for some shift of common borders, and after inheriting also their brother Charles' kingdom of Provence laid siege to Rome until an unfortunate fever caused him to withdraw. He is more efficient when

fighting Langobard dukes and Saracens in Italy.

The uncles of these three brothers, king Louis “the German” and king Charles II “the Bald”, were allies victorious in battle in the internal war after their father's death, and in the Treaty of Verdun secured Western and Eastern Francia as their kingdoms. Louis the German early quelled the last uprisings with some pagan background, and is currently fighting off not only Viking raids, but also the first Magyar incursion into his kingdom. In 858, however, he nearly succeeded in ousting his brother with the help of disgruntled nobles. Charles the Bald had lost two battles against the Bretons and in 851 recognized their factual independence. In 858, after 15 years of reign, he was too unpopular to even raise an army. He fled, but was sheltered by his mother's family and upheld by the bishops of his kingdom. Recently he has – after decades of Viking raids – released an edict reorganizing his kingdom's defenses, ordering bridges to be fortified against their longships and a large body of cavalry formed to engage and repel them. The head of Charles' Palatine Academy is Johannes Scotus Eriugena, an early translator of Greek texts (obtained from Byzantium) and neo-platonist defender of the concept of free will and the fundamental unity of philosophy and religion.

Sub-king Charles “the Child” of Aquitaine, second son of Charles the Bald, is a young rascal at the head of a rebellious province. Married against his father's will, he captured his rival for the Aquitainians' favor and had him disappear. Recently he took a grievous wound in the head in mock-combat with a hunting companion.

Pope Nicolaus I, born in Rome and a close collaborator of three other Popes before being elected himself, is an energetic, unrelenting defender of Papal prerogatives with respect to churchmen, nobles and kings. He does not tolerate concessions beyond the law by church officials, even by his own envoys.

When archbishop John VII of Ravenna exercised the authority of a Byzantine exarch in and around his archdiocese and repeatedly refused Papal summons, the Pope himself went to Ravenna to investigate, and maintained John's excommunication against the Emperor and Charles the Bald.

Even the assertive, generally successful politician and partisan Archbishop Hincmar of Reims, protector of the Eriugena, has to back down before Papal authority: in particular in the matter of the annulment of the marriage of Lothair II.

Nicolaus' intransigence led to a serious rift between the Eastern and Western Churches, when 863 he had a synod in Rome reject the decision of one in Constantinople, that with the consent of Papal envoys instated Photios as Patriarch.

After his death in 867 he is followed by the aged Pope Adrian II, who will continue his politics, but with less energy. Adrian also has to handle the excommunication of the Pope for heresy by a Council in Constantinople, organized by Photios.

Since it repelled a Carolingian siege in 810, Venice is de facto an independent city state with close cultural ties to Byzantium and widespread trade connections. In 828 two Venetian merchants stole the relics of St. Marc from Alexandria, who thus became the patron saint of Venice.

Under the long reign of its doge Pietro Tradonico - who followed a Partecipazio doge ambushed, tonsured and enclosed in a monastery - Venice fought Slavic and Saracen pirates, and its independence was formally recognized by both Franks and Byzantine. When Tradonico was assassinated in 864, Venice managed to quickly apprehend and judge his murderers and elect a new Doge, Orso I, a Partecipazio again.

Two further maritime states with fleets and trade interests in the

Mediterranean currently exist in Italy: the republic of Amalfi and Gaeta under the hypatos Docibilis, founder of a local dynasty.

After over a century of iconoclast Emperors, Theodora, widow of the Emperor Theophilos and regent for her infant son Michael III, and her brothers Bardas and Petronas 843 gave up on the subjugation of the Church under the Emperor, made peace with the Greek population, and restored the veneration of icons.

Restoring a fragile inner peace allowed the court of Theodora to come to terms with the Abbasids and get free hand against their protégés, the Paulicians (see *The Sundered Eagle*, page 142 for the **ArM5** perspective) on the Empire's Eastern border, killing them by the thousands.

When reorganizing the Church, initially great care was taken to retrieve iconoclast followers: but that enraged the zealot monks. So a eunuch, monk and son of an Emperor, Ignatios, became Patriarch to mediate.

In 856 Michael III had a favorite of his mother killed and himself declared reigning Emperor, sending Theodora and her daughters into monasteries, appointing her brother Bardas Caesar, and finally forcing Ignatios to abdicate.

Bardas had him replaced with Photios: then a layman, a gifted politician and diplomat, owner of an excellent library, author of the *Myriobiblos*, a famous collection of 279 book extracts and reviews, and of works on difficult and controversial theological issues. The questionable legitimacy of this replacement created two parties - Photians and Ignatians - in the Eastern Church, and drew the Pope into the conflict.

Bardas is murdered in 865 by a new favorite of Michael III, the devious Basileios "the Macedonian", who is made Caesar in 866 and in 867 will have Michael III murdered as well, to become himself Emperor and founder

of a dynasty. (See also *Eudokia Ingerina* below.)

In 862 prince Rastislav of Greater Moravia sent an embassy to Constantinople, requesting help in organizing the Church in his countries: this was a move to limit the influence of Louis the German, who had helped him reach his position, and whose missionaries were in Moravia already.

The Emperor's court consented, and decided to entrust this mission to two brothers from Thessalonike, learned churchmen who had already absolved a mission to Byzantium's Khazar allies, failing to keep them from adopting Judaism: they are best known by their monastic names Cyril and Methodius.

Before going to Moravia, they had already translated the psalms and parts of the New Testament into a Slavic language that became Old Church Slavonic (in **ArM5**: South Slavonic (Church Slavonic)), written with newly invented Glagolitic letters adapted to Slavic phonetics. Arrived there, they hold the services in their Slavic language. German bishops object, and 867 the Pope will call the brothers to Rome.

Knyaz Boris I of Bulgaria has to maneuver his large realm between Byzantium and Eastern Francia, threatening, promising, compromising, suffering an invasion by Louis the German and losing territory to the Byzantines. He was negotiating with both Louis and Michael III, when a Byzantine threat during a famine in Bulgaria made him come to terms with Michael III: he was baptized with his family and some high nobility by an embassy of Byzantine clergy in 864. In this way, he also improves his standing among European royalty, makes them powerful allies in interior conflicts, and on the long run might Christianize and thereby unify his mixed people.

Scandinavian colonists and merchants moved into the Rus' already in the 700s, and might have taken part in the raid on Constantinople 860. But the Varangian chieftain Rurik is a near-

legendary figure. He might in 862 or 864 have become lord of the place called Holmgard, and later Novgorod,

contested between Byzantine and Saracen forces. In many years of siege warfare, the latter took Palermo in 831,

is of course the occasion for heroic covenants, shrugging off accusations of “meddling with mundanes” while defending their covenfolk and vis sources, to pick protégés and enemies.)

IN 865

A LARGE, COORDINATED VIKING ARMY, REPUTEDLY LED BY THE SONS OF RAGNAR LODBROK, THE BERSERKER

IVAR “THE BONELESS” AND HALFDAN, LANDS IN EAST ANGLIA, QUICKLY SUBDUING THE KINGDOMS AROUND BY SHOW OF NUMBERS OR FORCE.

already settled with Finno-Ugric or Slavic people, but his name is preserved as the ancestor of a dynasty. (Yes, this allows storyguides to script a fantasy Viking career of eagle-eyed leader for Rurik: first inspiring the raid, then plundering Constantinople, finally returning with his faithful crews to found Holmgard and raise little Rurikids.)

Until lately, the strong man in the Abbasid Caliphate was Bugha al-Sharabi, a Turkic military leader, who in 861 led the rebellion of Turkic troops that killed Caliph al-Mutawakkil. The next Caliphs were little more than figure-heads of the Turkic military, who suffered decisive military defeats in 863 and thereafter had to quell uprisings in Baghdad and Kufa. In 865 there are two Caliphs: each representing a faction of the military, with one besieging the other in Baghdad.

At the same time, the solidly established Umayyad Emir Muhammad I of Córdoba successfully fights native rebellions and Christian kings. (A classical, gritty **ArM5** campaign full of small scale politics, wars and the exploration of local supernatural sites can be started by establishing the first Hermetic covenant in hold-out Christian Asturias – around Oviedo and León – among Visigothic nobles and Iberian natives.)

Forty years ago Sicily and Crete have been invaded by Saracens based on the African coast, and since then are

and the central Sicilian fortress Enna in 859. Currently Khafaja ibn Sufyan, Sahib of Sicily on behalf of the Aghlabids, consolidates his hold onto the center and the South of the island, and plans to oust the Byzantines from Syracuse and Catania as well. Crete in the meantime has become a Saracen corsair base, currently staging attacks against undefended coasts of Greece. Sardinia suffers as well from the Saracen raids, which caused its inhabitants to give up some places at the coast and withdraw to an impoverished life in the interior, turning their Byzantine administration into one by local families, while retaining its basic structure.

The current ruler of most of Wales is Rhodri ap Merfyn, also Rhodri Mawr “the Great”. Ascended by subtle pressure and creative use of the Celtic laws of inheritance, he owes his nickname to the vigorous, successful defense of his lands against Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons of Mercia and Wessex alike.

In 865 a large, coordinated Viking army, reputedly led by the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok, the berserker Ivar “the Boneless” and Halfdan, lands in East Anglia, quickly subduing the kingdoms around by show of numbers or force.

So in the way of the invasion soon stand only Mercia, and Wessex with young Æthelred just crowned king, and his still younger brother Alfred as ‘secundarius’ – lieutenant and heir. (This

Currently Vikings have discovered Iceland, and the Swede Garðar Svavarsson is starting to explore it. (This is the occasion for a campaign which sends magi alongside the Vikings to explore unknown lands – maybe inspired by texts of Irish monks, or just by a fierce desire of independence from old Mythic Europe.)

BRIEF OUTLOOK

Unless a troupe will significantly modify history during their campaign, the following will happen in the future – and should be kept in mind for campaign planning.

The subsequent deaths of Lothar II (869), Louis II (875), Louis the German (876) and Charles the Bald (877) lead to internal wars and two more treaties, that partition and further weaken the Carolingian heritage. In 884 Charles III “the Fat” once more holds the Imperial and all the Carolingian crowns together: for three short years.

Then their reign declines. The Western Carolingians remain pro forma still kings for a century, with the actual power in the hands of the lords of large territories in a beginning feudal system. The Eastern Carolingians retain the Imperial crown, but, under increasing pressure from Vikings and Magyars, lose most power to the dukes of the major German tribes. In any case nobles (and some magi) profit by establishing allods.

The popes following Nicolaus I cannot resolve the rift he caused with the Eastern Church, even after the death of Ignatius in 877. In the meantime, the “filioque”-controversy about the proper meaning and wording of the creed – basically caused by different connotations of ‘origin’ (Latin: processio, Greek: ἀρχή) in the languages of the two Churches – tears

them further apart and leads to mutual excommunications.

With the power of the Roman Emperors also the position of the popes deteriorates, which makes them depend on local potentates and involves them in squalid intrigues.

Even after his brother's death in Rome and his imprisonment in Bavaria until 873, Methodius is upheld by Pope John VIII in the jurisdiction over Moravia, Serbia and the Avar March. Svatopluk I "the Great", successor of Rastislav, defeats an East Frank army in 871 and establishes the independence of Greater Moravia – relying for recognition of his status on the Pope. So the Slavic liturgy is celebrated in these countries, until in 885 Pope Stephen VI finds himself allied to an East Frank king and requests Svatopluk to turn to the Latin liturgy. Priests refusing to comply have to flee, and some are received by Boris I of Bulgaria, who had managed to get some autonomy for the Bulgarian Church from the Patriarch of Constantinople in 870.

Basileios I "the Macedonian" is the founder of the Macedonian dynasty of 13 Emperors and 3 Empresses, which rebuilds Byzantine administration and power, retakes Anatolia, Crete and even parts of Southern Italy, and defeats many external enemies. Sicily, however, is conquered by the Saracens: its last major fortress, Taormina, falls 902.

Otherwise the Saracens lose all their footholds in Italy. When a Turkic leader in 870 wins the power struggle in Baghdad, he finds a close associate in al-Muwaffaq, vizier and brother of the Caliph. In close cooperation with the Turkic military, al-Muwaffaq consolidates the Caliphate, accepting the Tulunids in Egypt. His son in 892 becomes Caliph with the name al-Mu'tadid, and continues his policy. Later the Caliphs become mere figure-heads again, and the Caliphate disintegrates finally into separate realms.

The Scandinavians colonize the islands around Scotland, many coastal

spots of Ireland, Pomerania and along the Baltic. They trade from the Baltic Sea through the Rus' to the Black Sea and Constantinople, and on the Volga route to the Caspian Sea and as far as Baghdad. They found Reykjavik in 870, establish the Danelaw in a treaty with Alfred of Wessex in 886, and finally one of theirs, Rollo, in 911 becomes Duke of Normandy, as a vassal to the king of the West Franks. There were Danish kings during all the ninth century, but in its last third, according to the Heimskringla, Harald Fairhair rules as first king of Norway.

THE ORDER OF HERMES

Twenty years ago most magi expected the Order to fall under the power of its last surviving Founder, Tremere. His House, by mastery of certamen and by fear-mongering, had enmeshed many sodales into a web of obligations and alliances. He prepared to formally take power in a special Grand Tribunal, when in 848 his web's vulnerability was revealed and exploited by still unknown magi, who sundered its strands by breaking the minds of his closest lieutenants at Dorostolon – leaving Tremere open to the retribution of those he had believed to control.

As purposeful as they had struck, the unknown magi then negotiated the resolution of the real problem, while staying within the constraints of the Code of Hermes:

- Tremere promised to give up his attempts to dominate the Order.
- Fenicil, the Primus of Guernicus, received access to Tremere's mind, erasing from it the identities of his vanquishers, and monitoring it for the rest of the Founder's life.
- And in exchange the minds of Tremere's lieutenants were restored.

Now also Tremere is dead, and Pralix is gone. All the Founders are honored. And their legacy, the Order of Hermes, is passed on quite unblemished to their descendants.

THE HOUSES

The main sources on the history of the Houses in the ninth century are the Houses of Hermes books. The following shall not replace them, but only stress, interpret and expand certain facts – especially those relevant to design magus player characters and campaigns for 865.

In 865 there should be altogether around 400 magi in the Order (see Mark Shirley's article on Demography of the Order of Hermes in **Sub Rosa** issue 14).

BONISAGUS

Primus: Notatus since 836

Most Bonisagi treasure Magic Theory now as the legacy of their Founder, to be fully understood first, and only then extended or modified. This was quite different, when Bonisagus himself created this Magic Theory with the help of the other Founders in the first place - enabled by his knack for cooperation. Some younger Bonisagi still have a similar House benefit.

Notatus, however, is a shining champion of the superiority of Hermetic magic, was never seen cooperating with non-Hermetics, and achieved his famous Major Breakthrough, the Aegis of the Hearth, by rigid Original Research in the 820s (building on Mercurian rituals he already knew and never talks about). Magi of his lineage all get Puissant Magic Theory as House benefit already.

Many magi in the House, that rather look for ancient secrets to integrate, currently follow Lucian, the founder of the Seekers. While Irmele heads a lineage of wandering Trianoma politicians out to stabilize the Rhine Tribunal.

NEW VIRTUE: COOPERATIVE HERMETIC INTEGRATION

(Minor Hermetic Virtue)

The magus has a special talent for Hermetic Integration (as described in *Ancient Magic*, pages 7 to 9 and *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 14 to 16)

while working with a teacher, who knows the magic to be integrated.

If such a teacher spends a full season to answer questions and help the magus, in that season the magus gets a +4 bonus to rolls to gain Insights related to the teacher's magic, or a +6 bonus to lab totals when creating the effect allowed by such an Insight. Both bonuses are cumulative with eventual bonuses from the Inventive Genius Virtue.

This Virtue is available only to newly created Bonisagus researchers, and then replaces their Puissant Magic Theory Virtue as House benefit.

GUERNICUS

Primus: Fenicil since 832

As his favorite pupil, only Fenicil knows the last musings of skeptical Guernicus about the Order's chances for continued existence. When he took over as Primus while Tremere was about to be declared overlord of the Order, Fenicil showed a grasp of the responsibilities of the Quaesitores, but little talent for assuming them. He backed preparations for the assassination of Tremere by Guernicus magi, allied with the Diedne leaders for the conflict to come afterwards – and was certainly relieved when all this was not called for, and the preparations could be kept a close secret.

Since then, Fenicil tries to create a sense of unity, stability and common tradition within the Order, expecting it to catch on and thus become reality. Hence he holds Quaesitores to strict observance of the Code and respect for the privacy of a magus.

Following personal interests and studies from before his appointment to Primus, he sponsors secret research by a group of Guernicus magi into ancient rituals and the history of magic – in particular of Hermes Trismegistus and Mercurians. Being a part of that select group is a Mentor: Fenicil Minor Story

Flaw for Guernicus magus characters. Fenicil reserves for himself the decision, which results of that group to reveal to the Order and how to do so.

MERCERE

Primus: Priamitus since the late 820s

House Mercere is led by the two sons of Mercere, Priamitus and Mutans, both self-taught after some initial apprenticeship with their father. As most Redcaps organize themselves around a Mercer house in the region they work in, the two have some time on their hands to pursue their own long-term projects.

Priamitus sees himself as the heir to the priests of the Roman Cult of Mercury, obliged to venerate the ancient divinities of natural powers and civic concepts by customary sacrifices, ceremonies and festivals, and to lead it into the Order of Hermes. In this, he allies with Apromor, Primus of Flambeau.

Priamitus is also a teacher of Mercurian Magic (**ArM5**, page 46, *Faith & Flame*, pages 26 to 28) and the Spell Mastery Abilities associated with it (*Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 96). Mutans is the current specialist in the Order of Muto Vim magic, a field still

largely undefined (see [Recent Discoveries](#) below).

Mercere's last apprentice, resourceful and duteous Belin, is the role model of Redcaps and mother of a large lineage, all having the Legacy Minor Heroic Story Flaw (*Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 109), and possibly further Heroic Virtues and Flaws.

TREMERE

Primus: Albanus since 863

For most Tremere, the death of their defeated Founder three years ago was a relief, finally opening up new alleys for their and their House's development. The House had until then retreated to its Domus Magna Coeris, its lands, and some all-Tremere covenants like Blackthorn – wondering whether there was a further strike to come.

Some Tremere think, that the current Primus, Albanus, was in league with the magi who sundered Tremere's web – and many don't mind if he were. Indeed, Tremere magi have already been quietly working for over a decade to overcome distrust inside and outside their House, and rebuild social and political positions lost in the Sundering.

BJORNAER

Primus: Wilkis since 831

When Birna the Founder finally became a Great Beast, she left her House organized into clans led by her six pupils, who now form the Bjornaer Council: Midusulf and Mahrus (bear and stallion, remnant Gothic), Ilfetu (swan, Frisian), Wilkis and Arelie (wolf and eagle, Prussian), Sirnas (stag, Baltic). She already had appointed Midusulf as the leader of the House and the Council, and Wilkis as its spokesperson to the Order and hence Primus.

The Bjornaer know these mysteries already, and how to initiate them:

- The Outer Mystery Heartbeast,
- The Ritual of the Twelve Years,
- Mystery of the Epitome.

The clans are currently organizing, each finding its own structure, purpose and initiations – while other Bjornaer look for inspirations from nature and Great Beasts for further feats to improve their heartbeats and their links to them.

Half a century ago, House Bjornaer offered membership to the followers of Myanar from House Merinita and initiated them to their Outer Mystery. These and their apprentices each associate with a clan only loosely and still initiate nature magic, namely Nature Lore, Awakening and Wilding (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 102 to 105), but have lost Merinita's knack with familiars.

CRIAMON

Prima: Juliasta since the 780s

Wandering Juliasta nowadays is a familiar topic everywhere in the Order, and even the apprentices are told and tell stories about her many adventures on the road and in foreign covenants. Ostentatiously sacrificing her own spiritual development to integrate her parents' work with the Order, never expressing judgement, always listening and curious, she was usually accompanied by her latest wide-eyed and charming apprentice.

Even after returning to the Cave of Twisting Shadows she managed to stay one step ahead of an Order, that well could have overwhelmed and scattered the community of individualists in her charge. Not only did her apprentices soak up the methodology of Magic Theory and make it their own – but due to her canny evasions (and, some say, the counsel of her close friend Irmele, third filia of Trianoma), Criamon was the House least affected by Tremere's machinations. Her apprentices often develop a keen sense for the condition and intentions of magi they encounter, resulting in Virtues like Puissant Folk Ken and Affinity with Folk Ken.

The early followers that Criamon assembled in the Axis Magica never espoused Hermetic magic or learned



Magic Theory, and many never even think of leaving that regio if not for the Hypostasis. So much research to create the Criamon paths and their Scripts has to be done by younger magi – even player characters. This is quite independent of input from other Mystery Cults or books from the outside world, but also not as voluntaristic as *The Mysteries Revised Edition* (pages 18 to 19) makes it (see [House Mysteries](#) below).

To further serve her House as a ghost, Juliasta will soon submit to her killer in the Cave of Twisting Shadows, and has recently identified the person likely to succeed her as a Primus. It is Verderis, whose popularity in the Order at large is already eclipsing her own: an epic poet and author of the *Travels of Fedoso*, the book by which nearly every apprentice learns his first Latin, and gets

his first idea of what it means to be a magus.

MERINITA

Primus: Quendalon since 792

After founding Irencilia in 792, defeating Myanar in battle soon after and taking over House Merinita in the early 800s, Quendalon turned it to the faerie ways he had acquired as a child, and during his two year stay in a Bohemian faerie forest. His vigor in this did not diminish over seven decades, so House Merinita, even its Mysteries, is now mostly his personal creation and that of those he handpicked to help.

This does channel the development of younger Merinitae, and also fuels suspicion and enmity in the rest of the Order, particularly with Houses Bjornaer, Diedne and Tytalus.

Quendalon encourages followers to entrust Gifted children at a very young age to faeries, still voluntarily acts as Mystagogue for the Arcadian Mysteries (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 92 to 96), and after initiating the Becoming Mystery helps the initiates with the transformation rituals to become faeries.

Ambrosius of Merinita, brought into the House by Quendalon, now teaches apprentices whom he later initiates to the faerie Folk Mysteries from his British homeland (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 96 to 100).

Otherwise, and outside of Quendalon's direct grasp, magi still temporarily bind Faerie Familiars and initiate Binding the Gift (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 91 to 92) – while the Leaden, Iron and Tin cords are not yet invented.

And finally Pendule, trickster extraordinaire outside of the Order, before his death in 854 has taught two Merinitae Spell Timing and Glamour (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 101 to 102), to which these now initiate their followers.

VERDITIUS

Primus: Turnis since about 835

After Gelon sacrificed himself to quell the vendetta incurred by his parens Verditius, and thus secured the future of the House, his filius Turnis has followed him as the second Primus. He concentrates upon the House, reorganized the 838 Contest in a region near Verdi, looked to the unification and sharing of Verditius Cult Lore, and finally developed the initiation and ritual Embrace of Boëthius (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 119) to teach magi from other Houses Verditius magic. He encourages the founding and development of confraternities and the use of Script components common within the House (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 117) in their initiations into Verditius Inner Mysteries.

Verditius magi are encouraged to look for practices and examples of mage-smiths and makers of magical items, and bring them to Verdi for inspection and analysis in the lab. Some of these, like Roland's sword Durendal, then even became the focus of a confraternity.

A small campaign can be built around young magi searching for the legacy of Heron of Alexandria. One can use *Ancient Magic*, pages 75 to 88, mostly as written there: only replacing Michael's Tabula (page 87) by the proud and secretive League of Iconophiles, and de Pepoli (page 82) by Photios proper, who in 867 is deposed and locked with his library into a monastery, but has many friends among the clergy and the scholars of Constantinople. From 875 to 878 he will be the teacher of the sons of Basileios I.

Most Verditius Inner Mysteries from *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults* are already available in 865: the exception is Bind Curse.

FLAMBEAU

Primus: Apromor since 820

Apromor, first filius of Flambeau, is a self-taught diplomat, strategist, and the founder of the first school of magical combat diverging from that of Flambeau himself. He strengthens his own House within the Order by vigorous recruiting, opening the Order also for pagan wizards. Finding among these recruits descendents of priests of the Cult of Mercury, he encourages them to join forces with Priamitus, Primus of Mercere, to reconstruct this cult and propagate Mercurian Magic.

Another recruit of Apromor, Kaeso, brought a tradition back into the House that – in the person of Laberius, carer and teacher of Flambeau – stood at its very origin: that of the Cult of Mithras. Inducing three more wizards with that background to join, he founded a society – the Mithraians – built on Roman ideals of harmony, justice and duty. It is in many respects a forerunner of the later Flambeau Milites, and the

Legion of Mithras (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 118 to 122). Kaeso is considered the first Hoplite, and died in a battle with Viking raiders in the early 850s.

A Flambeau close to the Founder's late ideals is his second filia Elaine: Archmaga, Mithraian, a widely read author and teacher of magic and philosophy. Both Ramius – a Tremere changing House after 848 – and Vilano are currently creating their own schools of combat, concentrating, respectively, on direct non-magical attacks and on indirect spells bypassing Magic Resistance.

Currently Flambeau based on Castra Solis covenant, with the Mithraians in the front lines, fight an ongoing war against Viking invaders and vitkir in Gascony (see *Faith & Flame*, page 67). This is a good location for a campaign, where brave Mithraian Hoplites and their allies repel the raids not only of Vikings, but also of Trollsyrir and Muspelli (see Scandinavia below).

JERBITON

Prima: Putina since late 830s

Putina (diminutive feminine form of Latin putus = pure, clean), filia of Jerbiton, is a Rhaetian, a resolute Mentem specialist and a polyglot expert in agency warfare (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 140 to 144).

Jerbiton sent her 815 to Constantinople to restructure the League of Iconophiles, staggering under pressure of the reorganized iconoclasts. Five years later their head, Emperor Leon V, was assassinated at the altar of the Hagia Sophia during Christmas service – which brought the Amorian dynasty to power and stopped further persecution of the iconodules for over 15 years. When a year later the multi-ethnic army of Thomas the Slav, supported by the Caliph and already controlling many districts and the Byzantine fleet, besieged Constantinople for over a year, Putina

(Continued on page 48)

THE TRIBUNALS

The table nearby contains the list of all covenants existing in 865, by Tribunals as created at the Grand Tribunal (and as described through successive editions of **Ars Magica**).

Tribunal	Covenants	Number
Rhine	Durenmar (Domus Magna Bonisagus) Crintera (Domus Magna Bjornaer) Irencilia (Domus Magna Merinita) Arae Flaviae Rethra, Sirmium Schwarzburg	7
West Franks including Gascony and Pyrenées	Val Negra (Domus Magna Flambeau) Baiocassium (Vassal of Branugurix) Bibracte (Vassal of Fudarus) Confluensis, Pagus (Vassal of Confluensis) Sinapis Castra Solis Tolosa Paratge	11
Lotharingian	Foedus Avenniense (and Arelat Jerbitons) Campus Elysii Portus Cottiae Yf	6
Britannian including Brittany	Fudarus (Domus Magna Tytalus) Branugurix (Domus Magna Diedne) Cad Gadu (Domus Magna Ex Miscellanea) Ynys Môn (ArM4) Blackthorn (ArM4) Rosalba (ArM4) Castrum Antiquum (ArM4) Praesis Lámbaird Circulus Ruber Qui Sonant Pro Quietio, Vigil Praeses Septentrionalis (ArM4)	16
Roman	Harco (Domus Magna Mercere) Verdi (Domus Magna Verditius) Magvillus (Domus Magna Guernicus) Auctus (ArM3) Rellantali (ArM3) Calabria (ArM3)	6
Theban	Coeris (Domus Magna Tremere) Epidauros Erebos Hedyosmos Ingasia League of Iconophiles in Constantinople	6
Eastern	Urbs Rubra (ArM4) Urania (ArM4)	4
Greater Alps	Cave of Twisting Shadows (Domus Magna Criamon) Valnastium (Domus Magna Jerbiton) Icy North (ArM4) Where Journeys End (ArM4) Sinews of Knowledge (ArM4)	8
Total		64

Tribunals in 865 A.D.



SUB ROSA

KEY

- DOMUS MAGNA
- COVENANT

(Continued from page 45)

remained with ostentation in the capital until a relief attack by Omurtag, the Great Khan of Bulgaria, saved it.

Already appointed Prima, her last – more peaceful – success in Constantinople was the final dismantling of iconoclasm under Theodora, the widow of violently iconoclast Emperor Theophilos and regent for his infant son. Afterwards, Putina's circle could concentrate on other issues. Very few know what she did during the sundering of Tremere's web, and those stay silent.

House Jerbiton under Putina focuses on secret politics both among the mundanes and in the Order – working closely with their families and mundane contacts. They tread a fine line between efficient plotting and their sodales' fear of its sheer potential, and hide their part in the Sundering. Many do this by affecting an overly cultured and erudite attitude, which due to their Byzantine ties is quite credible.

The Greek Jerbitons use the Imperial, Patriarchal and private libraries of Constantinople, that have no peers in Mythic Europe any more. They research Aristotelian and Platonic Magic Theory (see *Art & Academe*, page 11) for Hermetic magic and Magic Theory in Greek (see *The Sundered Eagle*, page 29), and magi able to follow Platon or Aristotle.

The Greater Alps Jerbitons – speaking Latin, not Greek – start to look westward to Dauphiné, Arelat, Occitania and Aquitaine. Life and culture there is appealing to them, because the towns are still very much Roman (with Roman/Visigothic law) and not inhabited by Franks.

The Arelat in particular already houses many Jerbitons, who – under pressure by Saracen raiders – begin to emulate the efficient organization and practice of the League of Iconophiles.

Flavia filia of Jerbiton, after an unexplained absence in the 810s, left a life serving the House in Rome and

Constantinople for a place in Northern Britain. There she founded her covenant Rosalba, to pen down the results of her magical-philosophical research into the nature of Hermetic magic and the magus.

TYTALUS

Prima: Hariste since 807

Pralix had planned to make enchantingly beautiful Hariste her apprentice, but Tytalus became besotted with her, snatched her from Pralix, and despite his obsessive care she got infected with his leprosy – becoming a Leper Maga. When Tytalus left for Maddenhofen forest, never to be seen again, Hariste quickly moved to Fudarus, requested to see every follower of Tytalus in private to convey the Founder's last instructions, and thereby took over the House – catching Pralix

flat-footed. Later she fortified her position by gathering his words into a book, the *Analects of Tytalus*, and assuring its wide distribution: implicitly making him the hero and herself his voice. Thereby she caused an irresolvable rivalry with Pralix, glorified after Pralix' disappearance as that of the first pair of “beloved rivals”.

Following ideas from the *Analects*, Hariste installed the eristic moots as the adequate public meetings for every business of the House: formal disputes, even magic competitions that are most unlikely to ever definitely resolve something of importance – so political issues in need of resolution are decided in cabal intrigues by the insiders before, and then presented in a mock contest at a moot.

Both the Mystery Cult of the Titanoi, without the stigma from after



DEALING WITH THE DIEDNE

Sub Rosa Issue 13 contains many different approaches to House Diedne and its magi. Particularly playable in the 865 campaign outlined here is the proposal of Erik Dahl, Diedne the

Theurge – if you drop the idea of Notatus being a Diedne apprentice snatched up by Bonisagus.

To be self-contained, however, this article will use House Diedne's reclusiveness in the 850s to present it as a shadowy power in the background of the campaign, and not allow for Diedne player characters. For this it contains the paragraphs marked †.

the “Betrayal”, and the tradition of Leper Magi exist 865 in the House (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 94 to 96).

DIEDNE

Primus: Obregon latest since 851

Diedne magi all live in single House covenants, away from their sodales of other Houses. Once Diedne had joined the Order, she tried to recruit the Irish druid magic users – and destroy who would not join. In 810 Ulster-born Quendalon returned home with his followers, to save the hedge wizard / druids left from the pogroms of Diedne. Her followers never recognized the Treaty of Cnoc Maol Réidh, continuing their forays into Connacht and their persecution of the Coill Trí (*The Contested Isle: The Hibernian Tribunal*, pages 11 and 12).

At the Britannian Tribunal in 851 Obregon, Primus of Diedne, declared that the magi of his House would no longer protect their sodales from the Vikings and their rune wizards, shutting down nearly all interaction between Diedne covenants and the others in that region (see *Ancient Magic*, page 135). This affected also the Diedne in other regions harassed by Vikings and their wizards, like Gascony, Neustria and Northern Germany.

† The relations with their sodales became strained – and in 858 Obregon announced to sever all ties but the most official with the rest of the Order: messages from Redcaps are only received by the Diedne covenant leaders, and only these attend Tribunals

– wielding the voting sigils of the other Diedne.

† Since then, House Diedne and its covenants have become inscrutable for magi from other Houses. And Fenicil is glad to not have joined his fate with theirs.

EX MISCELLANEA

Managed by the Council of Four since 863

Pralix, prospective pupil/victim of Guorna, filia of Tytalus and Bonisagus, Founder of Ex Miscellanea, went missing in 863 when returning to her Domus Magna Cad Gadu from a visit to Fudarus. For lack of any more information, suspicions run wild.

The Council of Four, instituted by Pralix for the day-to-day operation of the House and consisting of veteran magi from the hunt for Damhan-Allaidh, manages Ex Miscellanea since then. Which causes the sense of unity Pralix instilled to slowly fade away.

But for the Donatores Requietis Aeternae (pages 115 to 120), all the Ex Miscellanea traditions from *Houses of Hermes: Societates* do exist already – though it will take centuries still to bring some of them into the Order.

DIVISIONS IN THE ORDER

- Some Houses and traditions are isolated and distrusted
- So few magi outside of Diedne, Tremere and Merinita understand the purposes of these Houses,

and what currently goes on within them.

- Ex Miscellanea and House Tytalus have no efficient political structures, so they have trouble to make lasting decisions or control their members.
- The Jerbitons know to be feared for their contacts and political potential, and work hard to dispel distrust among their sodales, both by careful dissimulation and by the occasional helping hand.
- It is the Tremere who take their example most to heart, starting to learn from it for the control of their unchallenged domain around Coeris and their own interaction with sodales.
- The traditional rivalry between Flambeau and Tytalus exists – but is currently more like a sporting competition.
- Members of Bjornaer and Criamon are seen as mostly harmless oddballs.

HERMETIC MAGIC

The basic structures of Hermetic magic, as well as most of the spells from ArM5, are already available in 865. In the following we treat the exceptions: that part of Hermetic magic that in 865 has only recently been invented – or not yet at all.

RECENT DISCOVERIES

Light in 865 is already covered by Ignem, through Elaine's discovery and its publication in the Liber de Lumine (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 9).

As other practical inventions and theories, Hermetic magic at first had a problem with reflexivity. The question was: When applying magic to magic, what exactly was the target, and what did a Technique really do to it? The first

VIM AND REALM LORES IN 865AD

If a magus from 865 uses the Form Vim to affect realms other than Magic, that Form is limited to his appropriate Realm Lore. This limit applies to spells at casting time, and to effects in enchanted items at time of instilling.

THE LIMIT OF VIM

Removing this limit to Vim is a Minor Breakthrough that can significantly benefit the Order.

Insights for it, of four breakthrough points each, can be found in Notatus' *Mastery Tractatus Research Notes on Aegis of the Hearth* and his own lab text of ReVi 20 *Aegis of the Hearth* (see *The Lion and the Lily*, page 23 right box).

relevant effect of Bonisagus' magic directly affecting magic was not a spell or item: while every apprentice can explain, how the Parma Magica is the historical cornerstone of the Order, it is quite debatable whether it is Hermetic at all.

The first Hermetic spells targeting magic likely used the Technique Intellego, and did not change its target in any way. Creo Vim effects do never create something articulate: their result is either raw undefined power, or strengthening existing magic. Perdo Vim in a similar fashion does not reduce or destroy specific properties of magic, but an effect in general, its duration or traces, and the Might or casting capabilities of beings. All these effects are long understood in 865.

Finer manipulation of magic by magic, however, in 865 is still an area of

Both Insights require experimenting with an Aegis – so the resulting spells are likely useless.

Another Insight into it can be had from the tome of correspondences of the unappreciated Bonisagus researcher Binro (*Legends of Hermes*, page 27).

Experimentally recreating the ReHe(Vi) 30 Ward Against Woodland Spirits within it, that defends against denizens of all realms, brings nine breakthrough points.

THE FORMS OF VIM

Whether and how the Forms of Divinum, Inferum, Idolum, or Arcadicum work is left to the troupe. A simple ruling is, to apply them to their respective realm at full strength, but to make all magic with these Forms stressful: so spells with them always require stress rolls, and lab activities involving them always use the rules for Arcane Experiments from **ArM5**, pages 107 to 109.

research Bonisagi have analyzed spellcasting and vis handling processes sufficiently to recently publish the Rego Vim spells for spell control and vis concentration on **ArM5**, page 162.

And Ex Miscellanea warders and conjurers like Columbae (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 110 to 115) and Elementalists (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 17 to 32) begin to guide approachable Bonisagi designing Hermetic Rego Vim spells to ward and summon magical beings. But the fine-grained manipulation of spells proper is so far only pursued by a single, eccentric Hermetic magus: Mutans of Mercere, who likes to call himself Hermes Triceres and recently has sent lab texts of his Muto Vim Wizard's Reach (Corpus) spell to the research community – with little resonance. (This means, that a storyguide should just

drop all Muto Vim guidelines from his 865 campaign, together with their errata. Wizard's Communion, as inherited by the Mercurians, does however already exist.)

FORMS FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

Another important research topic for Hermetic magi is the scope of Vim. Independently of the realm they are aligned with, the Parma Magica defends against all supernatural attacks, and the highly polished solitaire that is The Aegis of the Hearth hinders all supernatural effects and beings not allowed in.

But the other Vim effects, as understood by magi in 865, are made to affect the Magic realm only, not the Divine, Infernal or Faerie (see *Legends of Hermes*, pages 12 and 13). Indeed, Intellego Vim magic cannot yet distinguish auras by realms.

Most Hermetic magi in 865 try to use other specialized, experimental Forms to affect other realms, though:

- Divinum for the Divine,
- Inferum for the Infernal,
- Idolum for Faerie, unless they follow Quendalon, who teaches the use of Arcadicum for Faerie instead, making their Faerie spells incompatible.

HOUSE MYSTERIES

The four Hermetic Houses built around Mystery Cults, Bjornaer, Criamon, Merinita and Verditius, have not yet reached the full scope of the Mysteries described in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*. Indeed, player characters can lend a hand there, contemplating, meditating, questing and/or researching for new Initiation Scripts, becoming part of the growth of their House. Since the storyguide typically has an idea of the outcome of such activity – e. g. from the book above – he should be able to guide it before dice rolling starts,

instead of only adjudicating results in the end (as proposed in *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 18 and 19). For this the two rules additions nearby are suggested.

BUDDING MYSTERY CULTS

None of the established cults described in *The Mysteries Revised Edition* fits well into the ninth century. But founding a Mystery Cult on one's own is a topic for an 865 campaign. If a later cult described there is desired as an example after which to model your own, the following might serve best:

- Magoi of the Star (pages 54 to 56),
- Neo-Mercurians (pages 114 to 117, but see also *Faith & Flame*, page 28),
- Legion of Mithras (pages 118 to 122, and also *Faith & Flame*, pages 27 and 28),
- The Huntress of the Wood (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 33 to 35).

Just starting with *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, pages 18 to 19, and designing a cult from scratch requires a strong grasp of its theme and background first.

There are still many more magical, uncorrupted nature spirits than in 1220. Some of these might become the source of a Mystery Cult by providing paths of power (see *Guardians of the Forests*, pages 35 to 40) which magi may walk first – before they study pagan legends and rituals, communicate with further spirits, and join forces with other students of nature to expand the Nature Lore they have thus acquired into a full-blown, teachable Mystery Cult Lore.

Such a cult might guard a specific place, have strong pagan feelings and tie-ins, adopt early Merinita nature magic (see *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 102 to 106), or attempt to dilute its origins in a more abstract, scholarly approach.

Ancient Magic can be used quite creatively, and is not only a good source

NEW VIRTUE: CREATIVE MYSTAGOGUE

(Minor Hermetic Virtue)

The character must be from a House that is a Mystery Cult and has a signature ability: Heartbeast, Enigmatic Wisdom or Faerie Magic. After each adventure in

which the character took part, the player rolls a stress roll for that signature ability + Intelligence against an Ease Factor of 18. At a success, the storyguide should come up with a specific, not yet found Initiation Script, fitting for the character, the adventure and the House, and give the character a bonus of at least the roll – 15 for its validity check according to *The Mysteries: Revised Edition*, page 18, if she experiments to discover it.

INITIATION SCRIPTS

A Script to initiate a new Verditius Inner Mystery is typically the result of a standard investigation of a significant enchanted item (**ArM5** page 100): a successful Int + Verditius Cult Lore stress roll versus 18 provides an Insight score appropriate to the item

investigated, plus a sketch for a Script, using mostly the typical Verditius Script components and Ordeals.

That Script can be discovered by experimentation according to *The Mysteries: Revised Edition*, page 18, and with the Insight score as a bonus for the validity check.

Creating a working Script is worth 3 experience points to Hubris.

for 865 Seeker adventures. The fertility magic from pages 54 to 64 could e. g. also become the base of a homegrown Mystery Cult around fertility fetishes in painted caves.

RIVALS AND HEDGE TRADITIONS

Especially in areas not yet Christianized or Islamized, traditions of magic may be constitutive for mundane societies. There Seekers and other adventuresome magi may find many instances challenging their opinions on the position of Gifted people.

Elementalist and Folk Witch traditions (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 17 to 53) exist about everywhere in and around Mythic Europe.

THE SUBHAR SULAYMAN

In 805 the Sahirs (see *The Cradle and the Crescent*) living at the court of Harun-al-Rashid in Baghdad formed the Subhar Sulayman, divorced from magical service to the Caliph. It is easy to join, but tighter organized than the Order, collecting taxes and protecting the jinn from abuse. In the following decades it prospered and spread, but still remains centered at the eminent library and academy of the Caliphate Bayt al-Hikma (see *Muslim Society* above).

Large Sahir communities exist in Damascus, Gundeshapur, Cairo and Cordoba. Every summer the Sahir from these and many other places hold the Majlis al-Sulayman during the great fair in Baghdad (see *The Cradle and the Crescent*, page 28) – though 865 the siege of Baghdad interferes.



Flexible magi fluent in Arabic may find themselves received well by the Subhar Sulayman. If they master Classical Greek, too, they could even find employment as translators in the Bayt al-Hikma – rubbing shoulders with al-Kindi, al-Khwārizmī, the Banū Mūsā brothers and Johannitius. An entire political **ArM5** campaign can be built around polyglot Seekers who start out 865 to look for the remains of the language of Adam or the witch of Endor in Palestine and Syria, get attracted by the Subhar Sulayman, work at the Bayt al-Hikma, found a covenant in the area and become middlemen between Subhar and Order.

SCANDINAVIA

In 865, Scandinavian society consists mostly of scattered settlements, ruled by local lords with wealth and family ties. These lords organize the Viking raids, and are also coordinating the current Viking conquests and settlements.

Ansgar, archbishop of Hamburg, for some forty years has now been in charge of proselytizing Scandinavia - with very little to show beyond some tolerance for Christian religion and small congregations in a few trading places like Birka.

Instead, the Scandinavians stick to their pagan priests and sacrifices (see Pagans below), and to their rune-magic casters, the Vitkir (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 120 to 140, and *Ancient Magic*, pages 133 to 141).

These Vitkir are in general esteemed community members, so their Social Status Virtue Vitki (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 122) should be Minor, not Free in 865. They accompany their kinsmen to Neustria, Ireland and Iceland, into England, and into the Rus'. And at the Grand Tribunal in 832 the Order of Hermes, feeling threatened but otherwise in utter ignorance, found the catch-word "Order of Odin" for them.

Building an 865 campaign around magi who join Viking settlers, traders or seamen might appeal to a troupe interested less in Order politics than in overcoming natural and supernatural challenges to build a covenant in a new world.

If an important character has strong blood ties and some personal understanding with an enterprising Scandinavian lord (like Guðmundr 'Moðirsson' Hrafnsson from Birka below), she might bring her friends to join the lord's people on their expedition – alongside or instead of a Vitki. In that case, the "Order of Odin"-trope can even be helpful to prevent nosy sodales from following and complaining about "court wizards".

The Muspelli and Trollsyrir, servants of the jotun giants, live among the Scandinavians, too (see *Rival Magic*, pages 75 to 109 and *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 76 to 77). As occasional raiders and even pirates they might compete with adventuresome magi. But as they violently oppose the Norse gods, they are socially incompatible with Scandinavian society and its achievements.

BRITAIN

The grugachan in the Britannian Tribunal (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*,

page 55 to 78, see in particular page 72) are the heirs of the Pictish culture, religion and language. They allied with Damhan-Allaidh against Pralix, to defeat those druids Diedne had recruited in Britain for the Order of Hermes.

They accuse the Order, and specifically House Diedne, to have erased their tradition's cultural memory and language in the decisive battle Pralix won March 21st of 815, and since then have been recovering in the most isolated areas of Scotland, where they tried to fit in with the clans.

Most magi from 865 have never heard of gruagachan, their past and their enmities – so when they find a gruagach collective (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 74) they will not understand their prejudiced, defensive and most likely aggressive stance.

Seekers overcoming it would still need hard work to understand the potential of Hermetic Integration of gruagach magic (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 78).

THE EAST

The werewolf families from which Birna descended are still living among the Slavic and Viking inhabitants of Pomerania (see *Guardians of the Forests*, page 99 box).

PAGANS

In 865 the vast majority of the Scandinavian, Slavic and Baltic people in Mythic Europe are pagans – that is, they venerate deities tied to their land, families and direct experiences.

These deities are immanent to the world of the worshippers. Their veneration is motivated by their influence on the world, conveyed by oral tradition and by practice, and does not put stress on a beyond and the life needed to attain it.

Hence Paganism in **ArM5** is not associated with the Divine, but with

PAGAN DEITIES AND THEIR AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Culture	Deity	Area of control – favored activities - Vow – Virtue/Flaw for 2 nd initiation
Baltic	Laima	Luck, destiny – healing, charming, insight –Vow: never attempt to hinder Laima's prophecies - Luck / Ability Block: Martial
	Māra	Earth, fertility – trading, crafts, agriculture – Vow: never harm domestic animals – Animal Ken / Anchored to the Baltic
	Perkons	Lightning, rain – fighting, athletics, perception – Vow: never show fear – Tough / Reckless
	Potrimpos	Spring, fertility - healing, charming, trading – Vow: protect springs – Inspirational / Weakness: easy partners
Germanic	Odin	Runes, death – knowledge, trading, perception – Vow: always keep your word – Second Sight / Missing Eye or Offensive to Animals
	Thor	Thunder, storm – fighting, athletics – Vow: never show fear – Tough or Berserk / Reckless
	Freyja	Sorcery, fertility – charming, healing, agriculture – Vow: protect wives – Magic Sensitivity / Offensive to Divine Beings
Slavic	Svarog	Fire, smiths – crafts, trading – Vow: always be faithful to your wife – Puissant Craft Ability / Offensive to Faeries
	Svantevit	War, fertility – fighting, healing, insight - Vow: never attempt to hinder Svantevit's prophecies - Second Sight / Offensive to Divine Beings
	Perun	Lightning, war - fighting, athletics, animals – Vow: never show fear – Tough / Reckless
	Živa	Life, fertility – charming, agriculture – Vow: never harm women – Wilderness Sense / Ability Block: Martial

Magic. Demons and faeries might mimic pagan deities just like they imitate Hermetic spells, and they may thus fool magus and worshipper alike – but they are the substitutes, not the real thing (compare *Guardians of the Forests*, pages 30 and 31).

The pagan traditions establish relationships between worshippers and deities through sacrifices, and mirror the idealized relationship between a chieftain or lord and his charges. The pagan priest is first and foremost the courtier, able to properly perform a

sacrifice that pleases the deity and induces it to favor the worshipper.

PAGAN PRIEST

We hence model the career of a Pagan Priest as an unGifted **ArM5** character after walking the path outlined by a forest spirit (*Guardians of the Forests*, pages 35 to 38). A pagan priest can be Wealthy or Poor, starts with a Social Status Virtue customary in his community, must usually work for a living, and only a few – those associated

to popular sites of worship – can later do so by performing sacrifices.

A priest-to-be needs to learn the appropriate Sacred Lore of his culture (Baltic Sacred Lore, Slavic Sacred Lore, Germanic Sacred Lore, etc.), each specialized on the deity he is going to serve in particular. This is done first through practice with immediate feedback by a priest (Source Quality 5), then by Exposure when helping her, and finally by Exposure or Adventure experience when acting as priest oneself. Growing scores in Sacred Lore lead to growing intimacy with and comprehension of the traditions of his culture, and a specific connection to his deity.

The priest-to-be thus also learns how to enter deep communion with the deities of his culture, which he needs to become priest, and for every initiation:

Intelligence + Sacred Lore stress roll against Ease Factor 9 for the deity he serves, and 12 for the other deities of his culture.

Each attempt uses up an otherwise free season, providing Exposure experience in the culture's Sacred Lore.

With the **first initiation** he takes a Vow Minor Personality Flaw specific to his deity (see table on page 53), and receives an additional Minor Social Status Virtue Pagan Priest of his culture and deity: so it could read Baltic Pagan Priest (Potrimpos) with Baltic Sacred Lore (Potrimpos) on the character sheet.

Besides the improved social status in his community, the Pagan Priest can latest now learn Arcane Lore and perform sacrifices pleasing to the deities of his culture at appropriate sacred sites.

He can ask them for a sign:

Presence + Sacred Lore + Magic Aura + stress roll

Ease Factor 9 – or more for more difficult requests

Or to bestow a favor on a worshipper:

LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING GRANTED BY SACRED LORE

Score (deity served)	Score (other deity)	Understanding
0	3	Can determine within a few hours, whether a site is favored by the deity.
1	4	Can try to enter deep communion with the deity, and to make appropriate sacrifices.
2	5	Is aware of the deity's manifestations, and can by careful observation detect the favors and curses it has bestowed.
3	6	Is easily aware of all the workings of a deity in a favored site.
4	7	The deity occasionally contacts the character directly.
5	8	Can in favored places easily communicate directly with the deity.
6	9	Can ask each week one favor from the deity, even without sacrifice.

Presence + Sacred Lore + Magic Aura + worshipper's Pious Trait + stress roll

Ease Factor 12

Reading the signs they deign to give in response:

Perception + Sacred Lore stress roll

Ease Factor 6

The fitting value of a sacrifice is determined by the status of the worshipper, or the scope of a sign.

What favors they are asked for and can do depends on the specific deities (see the nearby tables).

They can bestow on a worshipper a +6 bonus to a single roll within the next month for activities they favor (picked after rolling dice by the worshipper's player – if there is one), or a similar malus to a single opponent's roll within that time.

Or they can provide a worshipper with a Virtue for a single event (like a

fight, battle, meeting, celebration, childbirth, sickness or stretch of travel), both specified when asking for the favor.

One person can only ever hold one favor. She has to use and cherish it, before she can obtain another. While it operates, a favor can be detected with Magic Sensitivity and analyzed with appropriate InVi magic. Its Penetration, and level equivalent for dispelling, is 50 at the very least.

How to communicate the results after the sacrifice is left to the social abilities of the Pagan Priest.

The **second initiation** is specific to the Pagan Priest's culture and deity, and bestows a Virtue in exchange for a Flaw (see the nearby table).

The **last initiation** is the reward for many years of service of the Pagan Priest.

He vows to never leave a specific sacred site of his deity for the next 6 years, tend it and defend it from all

TYPICAL VIRTUES GRANTED BY PAGAN DEITIES TO THEIR FOLLOWERS

Culture	Deity	Virtues Typically Bestowed as Favors Upon Worshippers
Baltic	Laima	Inspirational, Intuition, Luck, Rapid Convalescence
	Māra	Animal Ken (score 3), Enduring Constitution, Puissant Craft Ability
	Perkons	Berserk, Keen Vision, Tough
	Potrimpos	Inspirational, Rapid Convalescence, Venus' Blessing
Germanic	Odin	Clear Thinker, Piercing Gaze, Premonitions (score 3), Second Sight (score 3)
	Thor	Berserk, Reserves of Strength, Tough
	Freyja	Inspirational, Magic Sensitivity (score 3), Rapid Convalescence
Slavic	Svarog	Clear Thinker, Puissant Craft Ability, Strong-Willed
	Svantevit	Intuition, Rapid Convalescence, Second Sight (score 3), Tough
	Perun	Animal Ken (score 3), Berserk, Tough
	Živa	Animal Ken (score 3), Inspirational, Wilderness Sense (score 3)

harm, requesting to be made the guardian spirit for this site afterwards. This makes the site after 6 years an extension of his being, his locus like in Guardian of Nature (from *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 105 to 106), and ties him forever into it.

An example Pagan Priest is found below, under Radomer of Rügen, Priest of Svantevit.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

Typically missions to autonomous pagan countries are decided and assigned by Christian Emperors and kings, or the Pope.

The priest in charge of such a mission will, if successful, become leader of a new archdiocese located in this country. Even before, he has the free Commanding Aura Virtue granted by the Church hierarchy, or the Divine directly, of an Archbishop or Legatus (see *The Church*, page 26). While a relic would further boost his Magic Resistance, typically a head of a mission

will not carry one, not to lose it among the infidels.

Legendary missionaries like St. Corbinian often make creative use of their Aura of Rightful Authority, commanding wild animals, faeries and even devils to aid them. So many have obviously some penetration for it, which makes their Virtue:

Aura of Rightful Authority Range: Voice, no cost, penetration: +10 to +20

Magic Resistance 10 to 20, Soak Bonus +2 to +4.

Successful missionaries – besides being educated Senior Clergy (see *The Church*, page 25) - typically have some of the Virtues Linguist (see *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 25), Inspirational, Good Teacher, Sense Holiness and Unholiness and the Flaw Higher Purpose.

Two vastly different example missionaries are found below, under Gorazd from Nitra and Formosus, Bishop of Portus.

ADVANCING THE ORDER

Those claiming to keep the magi of the Order on the straight and narrow path of nice sodales – Quaesitores and Tremere indeed – did not look very competent lately. In 865, the most recent events universally acclaimed to have significantly advanced the Order are the joining of the magi Ex Miscellanea in 817, and sundering the web of Tremere in 848. None of these were the work of magi asking their Tribunals or the Quaesitores for permission before they acted: Pralix indeed never rejoined the Order of Hermes after founding the Ordo Miscellanea, and the magi defeating Tremere remain unknown to most.

So also the Voventes Centennales, sworn in to present the Order with a perspective for the future, are not supposed to be the model pupils and goody-goodies of the Order's second century.

In 865 there is a competition of accepted methods to advance the Order:

- 1) Bonisagi refining Magic Theory as is, focusing on technical extension
- 2) independent researchers filling in the holes overlooked by the Bonisagi
- 3) Greek Jerbitons clarifying Magic Theory in the light of the classics
- 4) Seekers looking for ancient and exotic magic to integrate
- 5) Many others creating House Mysteries
- 6) Some reviving older Cults (Mercurian, Mithraian, ...)
- 7) A few outright founding new ones
- 8) And many more just founding and securing new covenants.

But some enterprising Hermetic magi travel with the Vikings, in spite of

the Order's hostility towards an "Order of Odin".

Some Seekers in the Muslim countries – Iberia, Africa and the Middle East - encounter not only the Subhar Sulayman, but also Arab scholars.

And some Voventes found covenants outside of the current domain of the Order: in Scotland, the Rus', Iberia, Africa, the Middle East and even Iceland.

STARTING THE CAMPAIGN: THE SIXTH GRAND TRIBUNAL AT 865

The main player characters will be sworn in at the end of the Sixth Grand Tribunal, as its last agenda item, and become Voventes Centennales. The day after Fenicil, the presiding Quaesitor, will call for the general vote to validate the Tribunal, at which they may participate.

Before this, they can watch the Order debating and deciding, try to talk to important magi about issues they care for, find out who might help or hinder them and their plans in the future, make a few useful contacts, and decide about their plans if they have not done so already. But it can endanger a campaign, to make characters in its very first session publicly vote on tricky issues at the Grand Tribunal.

Descriptions of Tribunal procedures are in **ArM5**, page 14, *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, pages 64 to 66, and in *Guardians of the Forests*, pages 24 to 27 – but not all of these need to be applied one-to-one to a Grand Tribunal, when there are no regular regional Tribunals established. Depending on the needs of your campaign, you can hence with some preparation adapt them to make the Tribunal memorable.

The storyguide should use the following issues to give the players some bearings about the state of the Order and the interests at work first, before coming to those topics affecting their future, where they and their parentes might become more active.

This is helped by Notatus, the Tribunal's Praeco qua Primus of House Bonisagus, who puts the least controversial issues first onto the agenda. Thereby he early on builds enough consensus, to make it impossible for those magi later losing at the more controversial issues to find enough votes to invalidate the entire Tribunal.

So the overall sequence of topics and voting is the following:

(1) Preventing misuse of certamen: Certamen cannot be used to defy a Tribunal judgement, make a magus break the Code of Hermes or ignore a Code violation. This is presented by Fenicil and motivated by Tremere's take-over attempt. It is sure to be accepted by nearly all magi, but for eventually the isolated Tremere.

(2) Treaty of Cnoc Maol Réidh (*The Contested Isle: The Hibernian Tribunal*, page 12): a treaty among equals between the Order and Irish hedge magicians outside of it is most unlikely to pass. Ambrosius is chosen to defend it, but as Obregon objects clearly, a majority sees, how the issue is already contested among Britannian magi, and votes the treaty down to uphold the Order's superiority.

(3) Institution of the regional Tribunals: This is the first big topic, carefully vetted and prepared by the Primi beforehand (see *The Tribunals* above). The issues discussed on the Tribunal are nevertheless still manifold:

(3.1) Most Britannian magi are unhappy for being thrown together into one regional Tribunal. But – having shown at the topic above already, how they are unable to agree – they are not taken overly seriously on large scale organizational issues.

Obregon proposes to assign to the Britannian Tribunal all the lands with Celtic traditions – also Brittany. This further divides the Britannian magi and thereby makes their votes irrelevant – while the West Franks magi are content to let Branugurix and Fudarus go.

(3.2) There are concerns about the borders between Rhine, West Franks and Lotharingian Tribunals and their alignment with those between the Carolingian kingdoms. These concerns are accepted. But Notatus can show, lists in hand, that in the north there are no covenants affected by the likely border shifts between the kingdoms. While in the south the Emperor's kingdom of Provence looks stable enough. The Jerbitons agree, stressing how the Grand Tribunal can still change boundaries later, if necessary – with an unspoken ulterior motive: if the kingdom of Provence should fail, the Tribunal with its delightful cities might be joined to Greater Alps, where most of the remaining land of the Emperor is anyway.

(3.3) The Tremere – goaded subtly by Putina – finally show their fury, that Coeris is put into the Theban Tribunal. But this is an excellent argument for most others to do exactly that – even overlooking minor quibbles. And the Thebans expect to control Coeris better within their Tribunal than as an opponent outside.

Finally, a very solid majority should approve the institution of the regional Tribunals as proposed, and thereby also the split of tasks between them and the Grand Tribunal.

(4) Grand Tribunals to meet every 33 years at Durenmar: This is an uncontested issue that follows of the previous one, and is passed quickly and with great majority.

(5) Status of the Dead Magi in the Rhine: Discussion of (*Guardians of the Forests*, page 17) three Rhine Tribunal magi supposed to be in Final Twilight before their spirits appeared 857 at Tribunal, demanding and receiving the

right to vote. This should be ratified. Notatus here tries to ride a wave of consent and goodwill from the previous two votes, and to legalize the recent Rhine practice of voting with the sigils of Hermetic ancestors most probably in final Twilight. He might have been overconfident about this, though – and perhaps escape with no decision by the Tribunal at all.

(6) Conquests of territory by the Order of Odin, endangering covenants: The Order of Odin has betrayed and killed negotiators of the Order of Hermes in Ireland, entrapped and killed Hoplites of the Order in Gascony, and is now sending a great heathen army into England to subdue it. An urgent response of the Order is requested by the English covenants, in particular Blackthorn. Notatus asks for the opinions of the covenants concerned by this. And Flavia of Jerbiton, representing her covenant Rosalba near York, explicitly requests to be left alone in handling the Vikings. When it then turns out that Blackthorn is an all-Tremere covenant at the border to Wales, nearly two-hundred miles away from the army's landing site, the motion is sure to be defeated. (This can be used to set up a campaign around a covenant in Wessex or Mercia, motivating the player characters to organize their own defense and ally with Æthelred and Alfred. Blackthorn cannot hinder them any more after this. It will also interest characters intent on joining Viking expeditions.)

(7) Pagans, Muslims and the Order: Hariste moves, that, since the heathens now already threaten the new Britannian, West Franks, Rhine, Roman, Theban and Eastern Tribunals, only Christians be henceforth allowed into the Order. She also moves that every apprentice, before taking the Oath, shall from now on recite the Nicene creed. Here Notatus – seeing Blackthorn's shameful defeat and guessing that it will have consequences – has sent in the clowns. Hariste's motion alludes to the Flambeaus' recruiting practices and tries to bait them, but Apromor isn't hooked.

Others – in particular from Ex Miscellanea – are, and the debate gets heated nevertheless. At the end Apromor calls to vote down the proposal, and so it happens – to the glee of the Tytali. (This allows player characters to understand the feelings in the Order about religion, and how to address contacts with pagans or Muslims.)

Finally a few complicated matters of the Code involving individual magi are debated and voted. Some of these the storyguide can pick to inform the players of Code issues important for his campaign: covenant self defense vs. meddling with mundanes, magically creating wealth, weight of an accusation needed to suggest endorsing the defendant's testimony by a Quaesitor, cooperation with other organizations of wizards, and such.

And then the Voventes Centennales solemnly take the Oath of Hermes at the Fane of the Founders.

APPENDIX:

TIMELINE 860 - 890

The following timeline is meant to support planning of a campaign starting in 865.

860: Rus' attack Constantinople and raid its suburbs.

861: Synod in Constantinople accepts deposition of Ignatios and appointment of Photios as Patriarch of Constantinople. Caliph al-Mutawakkil killed by Turkic troops of the Caliphate.

862: First Magyar incursion into East Francia. Moravian Embassy to Constantinople asks for help to organize Slavic Church. Death of Tremere.

Around this time: Rurik Lord of Holmgard (the future Novgorod).

863: Lateran synod in Rome rejects appointment of Photios as Patriarch of Constantinople. Cyril and Methodius proselytize in Moravia. Byzantine troops under Petronas defeat a Caliphate army in the battle of Porson. Vikings loot the ancient graves in the Boyne valley. Pralix disappears on a voyage from Fudarus to Cad Gadu.

864: Assassination of the Doge Pietro Tradonico. Orso Partecipazio I elected doge. Boris I of Bulgaria baptized by ambassadors of Byzantine Church. Uprisings in Kufa and Baghdad.

865 Sixth Grand Tribunal in Durenmar (see Starting the Campaign): Caesar Bardas murdered by Basileios "the Macedonian", with the consent of Emperor Michael III. Siege of Baghdad in internal war. The 'Great Heathen Army' lands in East Anglia.

866: Death of Charles "the Child". Louis "the Stammerer" succeeds his brother as subking of Aquitaine. Basileios "the Macedonian" appointed Caesar. The Danes take York.

867: Death of Pope Nicolaus I. Pope Adrian II elected. He calls Cyril and Methodius to Rome. Patriarch Photios has a synod in Constantinople excommunicate the Pope and declare the "filioque" in the Latin creed heretic. Emperor Michael III assassinated on behalf of Basileios "the Macedonian", who becomes Emperor. Photios

deposed, enclosed in a monastery and replaced by Ignatios as Patriarch.

868: A Saracen fleet laid siege to Dubrovnik for 15 months, but then is chased away by a strong Byzantine squadron.

869: Death of King Lothair II. Death of Cyril in Rome. 8th ecumenical council of Constantinople opened, to deliberate on Photios' deposition and the organization of the Eastern Church. East-Anglia conquered by the Danes.

870: Treaty of Meerssen distributes Lotharingia between Louis "the German" and Charles "the Bald". Methodius imprisoned by Bavarian bishops. Svatopluk dethrones his uncle Rastislav, who soon dies. Bulgarian Church integrated with the Byzantine by the council of Constantinople before it closes. Vizier al-Muwaffaq, cooperating with Turkic military, ends the "anarchy of Samarra". Saracens occupy Malta. Vikings found Reykjavik.

871 Tribunal Year: Emperor Louis II takes Bari from the Saracens, but afterwards is for a month imprisoned by Adelchis, duke of Benevent. Svatopluk I defeats an East Frank army, establishing the independence of Greater Moravia. Death of king Æthelred of Wessex. Alfred "the Great" king of Wessex, under attack by the Danes. Basra taken by Zanj-rebels, looted and burned.

872: Louis II crowned again as Emperor in Rome. Death of Pope Adrian II. John VIII elected Pope. A Byzantine army scatters the Paulician troops, takes and destroys their capital Tephrike.

873: Methodius, freed from prison, resumes his mission in Greater Moravia. A Byzantine army fights south of the Taurus, taking Samosata and Zapetra. The Danes conquer Mercia.

874: Ahmad ibn Ṭūlūn declares independence of Egypt from the Caliphate.

Roughly around this time: Methodius baptizes Bořivoj I, prince of Bohemia.

875: Death of Emperor Louis II. Charles "the Bald" becomes king of Italy and is crowned Emperor in Rome. Grado sacked by Saracens.

876: Death of King Louis "the German". His sons Karlmann, Louis III "the Younger" and Charles III "the Fat" divvy up his kingdom. Louis "the Younger" defeats Charles "the Bald" in the battle of Andernach, foiling his attempts at conquests

around the Rhine. Bari opens its gates to the Saracens. Byzantine.

877: Pope John VIII tries in vain to assemble an alliance against the Saracens in Italy, then flees to France. Capitular of Querzy: Charles “the Bald” recognizes fiefs as hereditary. King Charles II “the Bald” dies while fleeing from Italy. Louis “the Stammerer” succeeds his father as king of the West Franks. Death of Rhodri Mawr. Death of Patriarch Ignatios. Photios reinstated as Patriarch of Constantinople. He develops a political philosophy to introduce newly assembled and reedited Roman laws. Troops of Ibn Ṭūlūn route an army of the Caliphate in Egypt.

878 Tribunal Year: The Saracens take Syracuse. The Danes attack Wessex by surprise, but are defeated at the battle of Edington and forced to withdraw. Their king Guthrum the Elder is baptized. King Alfred starts to consolidate the defense of Wessex.

879: Death of king Louis “the Stammerer”. The kingdom of the West Franks is divided between his sons Louis III “the French” and Carloman II. Neustria overrun and plundered by a ‘great host’ of Vikings from England, who afterwards remain in the country.

880: Death of king Karlmann. Treaty of Ribemont gives the Western half of Lotharingia to Louis III “the Younger”. Boso of Vienne elected king of Provence. In Rome, Methodius successfully defends his mission in Moravia. Saracen strongholds at the mouth of the Garigliano and at Agropoli established, to become bases for raids by land and by sea.

881: Charles “the Fat” crowned Emperor in Rome. Pope John VIII excommunicates Photios over the “filioque”. Death of doge Orso Partecipazio I. Giovanni Partecipazio II elected doge. The Zanj-rebellion in Southern Iraq is put down by Caliphate troops.

882: Death of king Louis III “the French”. Death of Archbishop Hincmar of Reims. Death of king Louis III “the Younger”. Death of Pope John VIII, reputedly assassinated by his relatives. Charles “the Fat” the only king of the East Franks. Vienne taken from Boso, making his claims irrelevant for the time being. Marinus I elected Pope.

883: The abbey of Montecassino looted by

Saracens.

884: Death of king Carloman II. Charles “the Fat” also king of West Franks. Death of Pope Marinus I. Adrian III elected Pope. Death of Ahmad ibn Ṭūlūn.

885 Tribunal Year: Death of Pope Adrian III. Death of Methodius in Moravia. Stephen VI elected Pope. Svatopluk I has Greater Moravia return to Latin liturgy. Duke Guido of Spoleto decisively defeats the Saracens in the battle at the Garigliano.

886: Siege of Paris by Danish Vikings, repelled by count Odo of Paris and the inhabitants. Death of Emperor Basileios I. Emperor Leon VI “the Wise” crowned. Photios is deposed and banished to Armenia. Stephanos – a brother of Leon VI – appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. The clarification and reediting of the Roman laws is continued. Byzantine general Nikephoros Phokas the Elder starts to re-conquer southern Italy. Danelaw recognized by treaty between Alfred of Wessex and Guthrum the Elder. Al-Muwaffaq recognizes the Tulunids in Egypt and Syria.

887: Death of Boso of Vienne. The Diet of Tribur deposes Charles “the Fat” as king of the East Franks, replacing him with Karlmann’s son Arnulf of Carinthia. Giovanni Partecipazio II abdicates. Pietro Candiano is then elected doge, but dies the same year in battle with the Neretva pirates on the Dalmatian coast. He is succeeded by Pietro Tribuno, who strives for an agreement with the Carolingians in Italy about trade and the interests of Venice on the Terraferma. Al-Muwaffaq campaigns in Persia, to keep it from breaking away from the Caliphate.

888: Death of Charles III “the Fat”. Berengar of Friaul king of Italy (soon as vassal of Arnulf, but contested by duke Guido of Spoleto). Odo of Paris king of the West Franks (confirmed by Arnulf). Rudolph I – a Burgundian Welf – king of Burgundy.

889: Boris I of Bulgaria abdicates in favor of his eldest son Vladimir. Fraxinetum founded near Saint-Tropez as a Saracen fortification (near a rogue covenant set up by two Tytali - see *Faith & Flame*, pages 10 and 114).

890: Death of Guthrum the Elder. Louis “the Blind” of Vienne king of Provence (under Arnulf).

RADOMER OF RÜGEN, PRIEST OF SVANTEVIT

A third son of an esteemed branch of the Rani's princely family on Rügen, Radomer grew up near the central sanctuary of Svantevit on the Cape Arkona (see *Guardians of the Forests*, pages 91 and 92). As a child, one spring he ran astray among the sacred white horses of Svantevit on their pasture. But the god, refraining to kill him for this, marked him instead for his horses' service for every spring to come, and gifted him with speech they and all other beings of Rügen could understand. So his family decided that he would become a priest of Svantevit, and Radomer was content with it. But when first reading the signs of Svantevit from the ways his sacred horses pranced and ran, he found, that his speaking to them allowed him not only to read subtle meanings, but also to obscure or enhance certain signs meant for the other priests.

Mindful of the Vow he took when becoming a priest, he uses this to make sure that Svantevit's prophecies are not hindered by others, and their gist becomes clear to the other priests. So far Svantevit was content with Radomer's service, and made him prosper both as a priest and a nobleman. He is well married, and will succeed the current high priest soon: over ten years before that was expected.

Radomer is both a politically minded subtle manipulator, and a loyal servant of his family and his god: he sees no contradiction in that. The politics among the Rani, the spirits and Faeries of Rügen, the Bjornaer of Crintera, the raiders, traders and envoys of other people keep him occupied. It is up to the Storyguide to make him trip over one plot too fine and too many, if this helps with a story on Rügen.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 35 (35)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 2 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: Inspirational, Self-Confident, Privileged Upbringing, Social Contacts (Sorbs), Gentleman, Slavic Pagan Priest (Svantevit), Voice of the Island Rügen, Second Sight, Pious, Servant of the Island Rügen, Offensive to Divine Beings, Vow (never attempt to hinder Svantevit's prophecies)

Personality Traits: Confident +2, Leader +2, Manipulative +2, Pious +3, Political +2

Reputations: Dedicated (Slavic Pagans) 2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Atk n/a, Def +0, Dam n/a

Fist: Init -1, Atk +1, Def +0, Dam +1

Kick: Init -2, Atk +1, Def -1, Dam +4

Cloak: Init -1, Atk +1, Def +1, Dam +0

Dagger: Init -1, Atk +4, Def +1, Dam +4

Mace & Round Shield: Init -1, Atk +7, Def +5, Dam +9

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Latin 2 (Guesswork), Artes Liberales 1 (Alphabets), Faerie Lore 1 (Regios), Magic Lore 3 (Regios), Chirurgy 3 (Bind Wounds), Slavic Sacred Lore 5 (Svantevit), Awareness 1 (Alertness), Athletics 1 (Grace), Brawl 1 (Dagger), Swim 1 (Sea), Animal Handling 3 (Horses), Low German 1 (Saxon), Norse 1 (Eastern), West Slavonic 5 (Sorbian), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (Bjornaer), Ride

3 (Travel), Carouse 1 (Staying Sober), Etiquette 3 (Nobles), Intrigue 3 (Nobles), Leadership 5 (Worshippers), Charm 3 (Nobles), Folk Ken 3 (Worshippers), Guile 1 (Worshippers), Area Lore: Rügen 3 (People), Single Weapon 3 (Mace), Second Sight 3 (Regios)

Equipment: Shield, Round (Init: 0; Atk: 0; Dfn: +2; Str: -1; Cost: Inexpensive)

Encumbrance: 1 (2)

GORAZD FROM NITRA, FOLLOWER OF CYRIL AND METHODIUS

Somewhat after 830, the first church on Slavic territory was consecrated by bishop Adalram of Salzburg in Nitra, likely for the use of the local prince's Bavarian wife. Young Gorazd was among the pupils of the East Frank tutors there, and his noble family decided – likely considering his gifts and dedication – a church career for him. So Gorazd was already a young man in minor orders, when – perhaps at the court of Rastislav – he met Cyril and Methodius. They soon adopted the rare, eager Moravian clerk into their entourage, and will take him to Rome in 867.

There he will be ordained in 868 by bishop Formosus, then papal legate to Bulgaria, and become an important aide of Methodius.

Voventes Centennales can make the acquaintance of Gorazd in Rome, Bavaria and Moravia. They might be impressed by his serious, practical, conciliatory and diplomatic approach to the Carolingian, Papal and Byzantine interests involving the Church among the Slavs. And perhaps they hence learn to trust him in matters of magi and the Church in the Slavic territories as well.

Returned from Rome, from 873 on Gorazd will again assist Methodius in Greater Moravia. Before his death in 885, Methodius will appoint him his successor to the archbishopric. When Methodius' followers are accused of heresy, it will fall to him to take care of them. The first biography of Methodius passed down to us is supposed to be written by him. And the Bulgarian Church considers him one of its seven founder saints.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +1, Per -1, Pre +3, Com +3, Str -1, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik -1

Size: 0

Age: 24 (24)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Faith Points: 1

Virtues and Flaws: True Faith × 1, Improved Characteristics, Linguist, Privileged Upbringing, Clerk, Pious, Ability Block (Martial), Offensive to Demons, Higher Purpose (Fruitful Church among Slavs), Mentor (Cyril and Methodius of Thessaloniki)

Personality Traits: Committed to an Ideal +3, Conciliatory +2, Loyal (Cyril and Methodius) +3, Pious +3

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Atk n/a, Def -1, Dam n/a

Fist: Init -1, Atk -1, Def -1, Damage -1

Kick: Init -2, Atk -1, Def -2, Dam +2

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Theology 2 (Bible), Classical Greek 4 (Attic), Latin 4 (Ecclesiastical), Artes Liberales 2 (Rhetoric), Concentration 3 (Prayer), Music 2 (Singing), Athletics 1 (Hike), Swim 1, Animal Handling 0 (1), South Slavonic 4 (Church Slavonic), High German 3 (Bavarian), West Slavonic 5 (Moravian), Etiquette 3 (Ecclesiastical), Leadership 3 (Ecclesiastical), Charm 3 (Inspiring Trust), Folk Ken 3 (Slavs), Church Lore 3 (Organization)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

GUÐMUNDR 'MODIRSSON' HRAFNSSON FROM BIRKA

Guðmundr is the second son of the renowned leader Hrafn of Birka and his worldly wise, foreign wife. Trained from birth as a sea and river trader, he has always shown a knack with people, and in particular with women. His elder brother devised his nickname 'Modirsson' (son of his mother), when young Guðmundr caught the motherly attention of all the neighbors' and clients' wives, and his own mother had to compete.

While learning his trade, he traveled between Birka and Ladoga. Practicing the strange language of the natives around lake Nevo, he encountered his True Love Fenna, married her on the spot and brought her home to Birka.

In 861 he equipped a longship for the voyage to Constantinople, loading it with valuable furs. These turned out to be in high demand by the Byzantine ladies around Eudokia Ingerina (see below), and Guðmundr – not sparing any effort on his business – made a very handsome profit, which he invested in Byzantine luxury fabrics to bring back. In Birka the counsel of his Byzantine friends proved true: so for some time to come his wares, and Fenna wearing them, defined fashion among the Svear lords.

But it also caused a growing jealousy and enmity between his elder brother's wife and Fenna, which leaves Guðmundr little choice but to employ his riches to find a new place for his wife and his followers to colonize: the Rus? or Iceland? So he asks his mother to aid him with her connections abroad, and she just knows of a few scholars among her relatives, who also look for a new place to settle.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +1 (Shrewd), Per 0, Pre +2 (Handsome), Com +1 (Clear), Str +2 (Hearty), Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik -1 (Slight Limp)

Size: 0

Age: 33 (33)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Linguist, Tough, Venus' Blessing, Warrior, Social Contacts (Traders), Well-Traveled, Noble Trader, Optimistic, True Love, Poor Student

Personality Traits: Brave +1, Conciliatory +1, Leader +2, Optimistic +3, Sympathetic +2

Reputations: Ladies' Man (Birka) 2, Shrewd (Svear Traders) 2

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Atk n/a, Def +1, Dam n/a

Fist: Init -1, Atk +2, Def +1, Dam +2

Kick: Init -2, Atk +2, Def +0, Dam +5

Cloak: Init -1, Atk +2, Def +2, Dam +1

Dagger: Init -1, Atk +5, Def +2, Dam +5

Axe & Round Shield: Init +0, Atk +9, Def +6, Dam +8

Soak: +7

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Awareness 2 (Alertness), Survival 2 (Sea shore), Athletics 2 (Running), Brawl 2 (Dagger), Swim 3 (Sea), Navigation 3 (Stars), Sailing 5 (Longship), Shipbuilding 3 (Repairs), Romaic Greek 3 (Trade), Finnish 3 (Trade), Low German 2 (Trade), Norse 5 (Eastern), Bargain 5 (Trade), Etiquette 2 (Trade), Leadership 5 (Inspirational), Charm 3 (Women), Folk Ken 3 (Traders), Area Lore: Birka 1 (People), Single Weapon 4 (Axe)

Equipment: Shield, Round (Init: 0; Atk: 0; Dfn: +2; Str: -1; Cost: Inexpensive); Partial Metal Reinforced Leather Armor (Soak: 7) (Soak: 7; Protection: 4; Quality Armor: +2)

Encumbrance: 0 (2)

THABIT IBN QURRA AS SABI' AL HARRANI

Unlike the neighbouring Edessa, during late antiquity Charrae (Arabic: Harrān) in Northern Mesopotamia remained a stronghold of the old religion, in particular worshipping the moon and the planetary gods. The itinerary of Christian pilgrim Aetheria from 385 still records a vast majority of pagans there.

The madrasa founded in Harran by the last Umayyad Caliph is considered the first university of the Muslim world, and might well have continued the tradition of a neo-platonist academy of the 500s. It is told that al-Ma'mun, when visiting Harran around 830, did order its inhabitants, on pain of death, to choose a book religion accepted by the Quran. After some consideration, the Harrani choose to be listed as Sabians – syncretists with the good fortune to have been mentioned there – and continued with their cult of the stars.

Thabit ibn Qurra is a 'Sabian' born around 826 in Harran, has studied intensely at the local academy there, and taken up money changing to earn a living. His scientific and philosophical interests led to quarrels with his 'Sabian' compatriots. First he revoked his opinions, but at a second conflict the highest priest of the community cast him out of the temple: so he has to leave Harran, while the Caliphate is dominated by Turkic military warring among each other, and suppressing uprisings in Baghdad and the countryside.

Voventes Centennales meeting Thabit ibn Qurra moving from place to place in search of patrons and employment as money changer, tutor, secretary and administrator might see more in him than just a scholar on hard luck: he is positively brilliant, and not only heir to the mathematics and astronomy of the ancients, but able to continue where

these left off. Will the Order of Hermes benefit from him?

If they do not pre-empt him, sometime between 870 and 873 Jafar Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn Shākir, the eldest of the famous Banū Mūsā brothers, will introduce Thabit to the Caliph and put him up in Baghdad, where he will soon become the rising star of the Bayt al Hikma, a sought-after translator from Classical Greek, and a prolific and creative author of scientific works in Syriac and Arabic.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +5, Per 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Str -2 (Puny), Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 40 (40)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Academy Student, Affinity with Artes Liberales, Linguist, Great Intelligence × 2, Book Learner, Good Teacher, Puissant Artes Liberales, Ambitious, Sabian, Ability Block (Martial), Clumsy, Excommunicated from Sabians, Higher Purpose (Revive Neo-Platonism)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +3, Independent +2, Intense +2, Scholarly +3, Widely-Read +3

Reputations: Excommunicated from Sabians (Harran) 4

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Atk n/a, Def +0, Dam n/a

Fist: Init +0, Atk -1, Def +0, Dam -2

Kick: Init -1, Atk -1, Def -1, Dam +1

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Art of Memory 1 (Lectures), Medicine 5 (Physician), Philosophiae 5

(Neo-Platonism), Arabic 6 (Scholarly), Classical Greek 6 (Attic), Artes Liberales 9+2 (Astronomy), Magic Lore 5 (Magical Traditions), Concentration 3 (Study), Awareness 1 (Search), Persian 2 (Scholarly) (11), Syriac 6 (Scholarly), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (Covenants), Money Changer 5 (Foreign Coins), Bargain 3 (Money Changing), Etiquette 3 (Scholars), Teaching 3 (Artes Liberales), Folk Ken 1 (Townfolk), Area Lore: Harran 3 (Sabian Religion), Area Lore: Baghdad 1 (Bayt al-Hikma), Area Lore: Athens 3 (Classical Philosophers)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

EUDOKIA INGERINA

While the famous Varangian Guard isn't yet established in 865, there are already individual Varangians among the guards of the Byzantine Emperor. Eudokia Ingerina is the daughter of one of these, Ingr, who managed to marry Melixena Martinakia, of noble Byzantine family.

Eudokia's favorite uncle is Eutybios Martinakios, a jolly fellow who always had something wondrous for little Ingerina. But when the girl showed promise and there were discussions about introducing her at court with 14, uncle Eutybios visited more frequently: he is indeed a Jerbiton from the League of Iconophiles, had some use for a spunky girl at court, and had an easy time recruiting her as his agent by promising her that the stream of wondrous trinkets would continue.

Uncle Eutybios didn't know what he had bargained for, though. In Eudokia's first year at court, Emperor Michael III fell head over heels for the guardsman's daughter one year younger than him, and she has kept him as her lover ever since. Yes, Michael got married, became reigning Emperor soon, had advisors exchanged or assassinated, but stood by Eudokia Ingerina.

Uncle Eutybios isn't happy with her, though: far too important to be dropped as an agent, far too visible and exposed to ever contribute useful intelligence about political matters of interest for the League, fallen out with the remaining iconoclasts, and accustomed to a good supply of antidotes, healing potions and enhancements for Michael's sex life, Eudokia has become a serious liability for Eutybios' standing in the Order – while his sodales in the League leave him no way out.

On top of that, Eudokia will tell her uncle at the beginning of 866, that she might be pregnant. Latest then Eutybios will look for help among magi outside of

the League.

If player character magi are not too clumsy, Eudokia Ingerina will marry a new favorite of Michael III, Basileios "the Macedonian", in 866, and soon bear him (him?) two sons – later to become Emperor Leon VI and Patriarch Stephanos I.

Eudokia will then weather the assassination of her lover by her husband, and take other lovers. She will pick the wife for young Leon from the Martinakios family (a religious, patient and manageable one, on uncle Eutybios' advice), who later will donate (on uncle Eutybios' advice again) a church to Saint Anastasia, the Protector from Potions.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +3, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 2 (5)

Virtues and Flaws: Self-Confident, Improved Characteristics, Strong-Willed, Tough, Venus' Blessing, Privileged Upbringing, Social Contacts (Imperial Court), Gentlewoman, Ambitious, Carefree, Favors (Michael III), Apostate (former Iconoclast)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +3, Bond: Related by blood to principal +2, Charming +3, Cheerful +3, Daring +1, Political +1, Trusting -2

Reputations: Apostate (remaining Iconoclasts) 4, Favorite of Michael III (Constantinople) 3

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Atk n/a, Def +1, Dam n/a

Fist: Init +0, Atk +1, Def +1, Dam +1

Kick: Init -1, Atk +1, Def +0, Dam +4

Cloak: Init +0, Atk +1, Def +2, Dam +0

Dagger: Init +0, Atk +4, Def +2, Dam +4

Soak: +4

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Art of Memory 1 (Conversations), Civil and Canon Law 1 (Byzantine), Theology 1 (Iconoclasm), Classical Greek 3 (Attic), Artes Liberales 1 (Grammar), Chirurgy 1 (Bind Wounds), Music 1 (Singing), Stealth 1 (Indoors), Awareness 2 (Alertness), Athletics 1 (Grace), Brawl 1 (Dagger), Swim 1 (Rough Water), Norse 3 (Eastern), Romaic Greek 5 (Urban), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (Potions), Carouse 3 (with Lover), Etiquette 5 (Byzantine Court), Intrigue 2 (Plotting), Leadership 1 (Inspiration), Charm 5 (Mistress), Folk Ken 3 (Courtiers), Guile 3 (Fast Talk), Church Lore 1 (Church Organization)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

If using the Agency rules in *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, the following numbers describe Eudokia Ingerina as an agent.

Agent Resistance: 17

- **Social Virtue:** 1
- **High Ability:** 0
- **Useful Virtues:** 7
- **Underlings:** 0
- **Useful Flaws:** 0
- **Multiple Resources:** 9

Agency Points: 19

- **Agent Resistance:** 17
- **Bond Strength:** 2

FORMOSUS, BISHOP OF PORTUS

Formosus was born in Ostia around 816. He is well aware of the precarious situation of the papacy between the Carolingians occasionally coming down in force to Rome, the Langobard dukes of Spoleto as its most potent neighbors in the meantime, and the noble families in and around it. His reputation as an efficient church politician and his excellent network of contacts and clients among the papal curia allowed him to become bishop of the Roman harbor town of Portus in 864. He is currently considered an ascending star of curial diplomacy, and appointed legate to the court of Boris I in Bulgaria, who had submitted questions for papal decision.

Formosus sees no practical difference between ecclesiastical and worldly diplomacy, but for his own protection carefully maintains an aura of ceremony and religious authority, which seamlessly melds into the Aura of Rightful Authority his offices provide him. Italian magi that have to negotiate with him for papal favors or leniency will find him more artful and less rigid than Nicolaus I or his successor. Some might even have provided a longevity ritual for him to preserve a working relationship made to last, which explains the high age Formosus reaches without much apparent deterioration of his abilities.

In 866 Formosus will make such a huge impression in Bulgaria, that Boris I petitions both Nicolaus I and later Adrian II to make him the first archbishop there. Since the translation of a bishop to another office by rigid canon law requires good reasons, though, the many enviers Formosus' successes had already created can prevent this. Formosus, on return to his bishopric, forms a large, though volatile political faction in the curia. He will lead diplomatic missions to Lotharingia and

France, be excommunicated and banished by Langobard Pope John VIII, and restored by his successor. He will be instrumental in the election of Pope Stephen VI and become pope himself in 891.

But a year after his death in 896 he will be subject to the infamous cadaver synod: his corpse taken from the grave, put on display in papal paraphernalia, condemned, mutilated and thrown into the Tiber.

A storyguide a tad ghoulish might determine, that the longevity ritual could have left traces on the corpse, and build an adventure around hiding or removing these during the 'synodus horrenda'.

Saga: Voventes Centennales

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +3, Com +1, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Age: 49 (49)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Senior Clergy, Social Contacts (Roman Clergy), Priest, Ambitious, Ability Block (Martial), Vow (Chastity), Commanding Aura as *legatus missus* (*The Church*, page 26)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +3, Confident +2, Diplomatic +2, Guileful +2, Pious +1

Reputations: Dedicated (Christians) 1, Highly Talented (Community and Church) 4

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack n/a, Defense +0, Damage n/a

Fist: Init +0, Attack +0, Defense +0, Damage -2

Kick: Init -1, Attack +0, Defense -1, Damage +1

Soak: +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10),

-5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Art of Memory 3 (Conversations), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Papal), Philosophiae 1 (Moral Philosophy), Theology 3 (Church Organization), Latin 5 (Ecclesiastical), Artes Liberales 3 (Rhetoric), Concentration 1 (Reading), Italian 5 (Roman), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (Guernicus), Ride 1 (Travel), Bargain 3 (Favors), Etiquette 3 (Ecclesiastical), Intrigue 7 (Alliances), Leadership 3 (Intimidation), Charm 3 (Inspire Trust), Folk Ken 3 (Clergy), Guile 3 (Pretend Competence), Area Lore: Rome and Surroundings 3 (Nobility), Church Lore 7 (Church Organization)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

FROM THE JOURNAL OF VULCANIS ARGENS

Being the journal of Vulcanis Argens of House Verditius, discovered during the Vernal Inquisition after the fall of Donum Chanuti. Let its secrets inform the Order:

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

Tostig is dead. My parens' most loyal servant and then mine own, is no more. Though white-bearded, so strong and able of form was he that I did consider him able to outlive a covenant of magi four or five generations over. As an apprentice, I looked to Tostig when my

Aurifex had no time, and I warrant I learned as much about the Order and the covenant from him as ever I did from my parens. But now he is gone.

He never could abide a fool, whether that fool were magus or grog. I have felt his harsh rebuke often enough, even since my return to Donum Chanuti, but never in front of other magi or covenfolk. He spoke plainly, but never out of place. But I shall never hear that voice more.

He was the bravest of them all. And strong too. I once heard it said that he carried not one but two grogs to safety upon his back and still had sword arm

free with which to secure their retreat. That was so long ago now that there are no grogs living that remember it. And I have seen him thrash a faerie so soundly that the beast was so afraid to leave Tostig's side for fear of another beating that it followed him meekly for a month or more, calling him master and carrying out such service as it was able. But that arm is now cold and still.

It was neither demon, nor dragon, nor beast, no brigand that took dear loyal Tostig. It was simply age. Winter finally took hold and no magic that we could find could forestall the inevitable.



We buried him today and he took his armor and his axe with him. Donum Chanuti is a place where ghosts often walk. I would not have that for Tostig as he has earned his eternal rest. Bellatorius carried out my request and ensured that his spirit could not be summoned.

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

The events of the last days have seen the covenant thrown into new dangers, dangers of its own making and fed from within. These are dark waters we are entering, but I am convinced that I have the only light by which they can be navigated.

Octavia was found murdered. Her hands and her eyes were removed after death and she was buried in a shallow grave at the edge of the island woodlands. The discovery of the murder initiated a search for a demon at work in the covenant, set to drive a wedge between the two factions and bring about its downfall. But my sense was that we needed no demon to achieve that end. There are ideologies at odds and there are those practiced and willing enough to use them to further their own games. Surely tools for the Devil's work but dangerous enough on their own.

Those of the lower village blamed those of the upper village for the crime and those of the upper village considered murder to be the least of the sins committed by their counterparts. Neither of these could be proven true, not if we wanted the covenant to survive.

We took to Charonicus as he was patron of those from the lower village and had most contact with Octavia. She was known to attend him and was trusted with his personal possessions as much as it is wise to trust any servant. He was dismayed to hear of her death but was more intrigued by the manner in which her body was treated. He confessed that he was familiar with such

treatment and had actually done the same to Ned the Powysman, whose body we had left buried and unmolested. The knowledge of the simple folk protection was common enough, he assured us, but it was strange for it to be done to someone who none suspected of any infernal leanings.

When Valeria asked who else knew that Charonicus had uprooted Ned's corpse and so assaulted it, Charonicus told us plain; he had told nobody of his actions, but that did not mean that something might not have seen him about his work.

Something unseen, then? Charonicus agreed. But why? Perhaps because Olivia was his servant? Perhaps he was the indirect target for some perceived transgression? Again, Charonicus agreed.

While my fellow magi looked for the demonic, assumed some infernal revenge for the death of Ned the Powysman some years before, I had other suspicions. Knowing that there is one magus at Donum Chanuti who has experience of the spirits above all others, I sought a secret council with Legalitus. We have seen before how he calls spirits to him, learns from what they have seen, assigns them tasks in exchange for the prospect of freedom.

Legalitus seemed to have anticipated my unannounced call and even made no attempt to hide the presence of his invisible servants. I was given the impression that he and I were surrounded by them. It was tantamount to the confession I was looking for.

I challenged him over his invisible, intangible spies, accused him over the death of Octavia who again had been in his employ, of having instructed his spirits to carry out the deed, and of then attempting to have others blamed in his stead. He was rightly mocking in his denial. As much as it frustrates me still, I was not correct. Not entirely.

I was right that Octavia had been in thrall to Legalitus; he had promised to

use his magic to remove the warping affliction that she had in common to those of the lower village. He had held this promise over her for years. In return, she was to give him information on Charonicus and his daily activities; information that his spirits simply could not get for him. Octavia grew impatient though. The reason was love, of course. She was in love with a young man from the upper village and knew that he would not love her back all the while she bore the outward signs of warping. Foolish child.

Legalitus himself learned of her impatience, but by his own account did nothing. One of his spirits, however, loyal to a fault, looked to protect its master. Fearing that Octavia might reveal his master's spying upon Charonicus, the spirit lured Octavia away from the village and suffocated her. Once dead, the spirit did to her body what it had once seen Charonicus to an infernal witch; it removed her hands and eyes and then buried them separately to prevent her spirit from returning.

I demanded the spirit be brought to account and that the council would hear of Legalitus' continued spying in breach of trust and the Oath.

Then he made me an offer. He knew that I wanted the position my old parents held, that of covenant Princeps. He said that he would gift me that position in return for my silence.

I do not yet have the power to keep order the way I would wish but the election is looming and I must make my case in the most direct way I can. Valeria seeks to work through Bellatorius, but he is a man with no history or connection to Donum Chanuti. Despite his fluent words about strong leadership, he sees an opportunity for himself only and cannot sit as the balance between the extremes. I cannot allow that and I must do what I must to prevent it.

My own momentary silence betrayed my interest; there was never any prospect of my standing firm behind my

principles, not when such an offer had been made. The only question really was in the detail. I was, however, firm that the beast responsible for the killing must be brought to account; though the full story of her killing would be forever locked away in this journal, the covenant needed to have the killer caught.

Legalitus indicated a small wooden cage, suspended from his ceiling by a slender chain. It swayed and twisted slightly, throwing shadows from the firelight against the far wall. The cage, he claimed, contained the beast awaiting punishment. He offered me the chance to exact that punishment, in full view of the covenant, while at the same time clearing the way for my election as Princeps. He would give me his vote. All we needed to do was to remove one

other vote that might be swayed towards another side.

I left his chambers after a further hour, an hour in which a dread plan was hatched. It was overheard by I know not how many of his spirits. I fear I may achieve my aim of controlling the covenant, but that I shall then be controlled by Legalitus in turn.

While my colleagues researched the infernal late into the night I joined them in the library and ensured that they found an entry, as instructed by Legalitus, on vengeful infernal spirits, spirits that sought revenge upon those who murdered their mortal servants. The passage itself was speculative, but was sufficient to guide their thinking. I sat silent through the resulting discussion and then I retired to bed.

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

I watched as Benedic, Bellatorius, and Valeria all investigated the covenant, looking for signs of infernal anchors, charms or potions that might attract this invented vengeful spirit. Of course, they found none. All the while, I clutched in my hand a small figurine made from twisted corn stalks; the breaking of which would destroy the very spirit they were looking for. My task was to wait until nightfall.

As night fell, I invited Benedic to drink with me. One of the homes in the upper village had opened its doors for drinkers that night though they did not expect to see me. They were rightly deferential and made no complaint. I plied Benedic with as much drink as I could, while reserving my own judgment. As the call of ten o'clock



came from the guard on patrol, I knew that the time was close.

I suggested maybe that we had been wrong to seek out where the spirit might be hiding, but rather we should seek out where it might strike next. In Benedic's state, it was simple enough to persuade him that Bernard, our captain of the guard, holder of a vote at council, had been involved in running Ned the Powysman into the ground and had perhaps given his lack of magical protection he might make for a target.

Benedic took the bait. I already knew the sight that would greet us, so while Benedic made his drunken way to Bernard's home, I set out to fetch our colleagues.

Bernard was a brave and loyal captain, even to the last. To hear Benedic tell of it, the fight started just as Benedic himself arrived. He saw Bernard reeling from unseen blows yet still fighting back, lashing out with his sword against an enemy he could not affect. Benedic, in his drunken state, could not summon his magic as he would want until he managed to extend his Parma Magica around Bernard. Only then did the assault stop. I arrived with the others as the spirit fled, leaving prints in the soft ground where it ran away. We all gave chase, Valeria in her hawk form, casting spells against demons at it.

After several castings from the others, I slowed. Behind them, as they surrounded the spirit, I incinerated the straw figure and the spirit died.

As far as my colleagues were concerned, they had destroyed the beast that had murdered Octavia and mortally wounded our turb captain. As far as I am concerned, I have sold my soul.

From the Journal of Vulcanis Argens:

It is morning, but the day feels blacker than the night. I have protected Legalitus' secrets and colluded with him

to remove Bernard from the vote for the position of Princeps.

I know that he is using his support as leverage against the future state. He knows the depths to which I have gone and will use them against me I am sure. But even so, if Legalitus really is dangerous to himself, to us, and to Donum Chanuti, perhaps I can temper him.

But I risked Bernard's life. The life of a loyal servant. And so hard upon the

covenant losing Tostig, too. My only comfort in the matter is that I gave full consideration before doing so. I weighed his life against my own ambition and his life fell short. But if it was my ambition, then it is borne of concern and belief in Donum Chanuti. Does that absolve me? Can we forgive cruelty if the ends are noble? Or do those noble ends become tainted? Perhaps time will tell.



1050AD: THE ORDER SHAKEN

BY SHANE APPEL

The following articles offer two visions of how the exhausted Order sought the time to heal itself after the evisceration of the Corruption and Schism War.

First we see how the Order suspends its legal traditions to allow for faster reaction to crises. This vests authority to the player characters, who serve in the militia under the Antares, the Order's field marshal.

Next we have a scenario designed to allow these newly empowered magi to exercise their judgment and authority.

Finally, we have an exploration of the year 1050 through another scenario; *1050: Strange Alliances*, by Berengar Drexel. This sees the Order develop closer ties with the temporal

and spiritual authorities of Mythic Europe and the player characters are tasked with protecting the Papacy itself. The player characters are, in each scenario, drawn from the generation that was trained by the veterans of the Schism War.

The player characters represent an Order that has little material aid to offer them, and few superiors to provide counsel and they are young for the responsibilities with which they find themselves entrusted.

Demons, faeries and conniving mortals have become bold, as the Order's power has waned. Can the new generation bind the Order's wounds long enough for the scars to form?

THE SHADOW OF THE WAR

The Schism War ended 32 years ago but its echoes still linger. The wartime coalition of Tremere, Ex Miscellanea, Tylalus, Flambeau and Guernicus were weakened not only by numbers but also internal dynamics. The loss of the Ex Miscellanea's Primus Basilicus, the return of Guernicus to its moderate, pre-War position, and the conflict in the Normandy Tribunal between Tylalus and Flambeau signalled its end as an effective bloc.



SUB ROSA

The triumph of the militant houses passed quickly. Their decimated ranks faced the more numerous moderate houses: Guernicus, Bonisagus, Verditius, Mercere. The sceptical houses, Criamon, Merinita, Bjornaer and Jerbiton, added their numbers to the opposition. The militants made galling but necessary concessions in 1018. Militant fantasies of an Order-wide purge, single House Tribunals and the abolition of factions were quietly shelved.

By the 1040's the militant Houses began to test their returning strength. Political factions have arisen who are critical of the War, some actively seek succession. Calls have been made for the wartime machinery to be dusted off to deal with this dissent. The War required extraordinary measures; none more than the creation of a virtual dictator with absolute power – the Antares.

THE SINEWS OF WAR

The special Grand Tribunal of 1003 delegated its power to a war council. The inner council of House Guernicus fulfilled this role for a couple of years. The need to broaden the commitment of the order to the war resulted in the creation of the Caucus of the Primi in 1005. This group consisted of the Primus of each House. The Caucus quickly decided it must appoint a supreme war leader. The Caucus decided annually to renew the powers of the Antares until 1018. In 1050, the office continues in an unofficial passive role.

The Grand Tribunal of 1030 made some of the most significant decisions since the time of the Founders. It faced the reality that it was an unwieldy mechanism for decision-making during crisis. Three significant decisions relating to the structure of the Order during emergencies were made. These included retention of the Antares, retention of the Caucus, and the creation of special standing orders.

THERE IS ALWAYS AN ANTARES

The role of Antares is permanently occupied, and each holder is appointed for life by the Caucus via unanimous vote. The Antares is prohibited from attending any Tribunal meeting, or participating in the activities of their House. The Grand Tribunal was persuaded that secrecy and isolation of the office would enhance the security of the Order. The office retains the powers it held during the Schism War, but remains dormant unless activated by the caucus.

It is unclear if the Antares has authority to act outside the territory of the Order. This has never been clarified by Tribunal ruling, so successive Antares have interpreted their powers generously. The current Antares regularly issues mandatum to magi travelling to Scandinavia, North Africa and the Levant.

THE CAUCUS OF PRIMI

The Caucus of Primi is a body that appoints the Antares, can trigger certain emergency actions, described later. Its members are all Primi of the Order. As a body designed for emergency situations, it is more interested in action than in form. It remains quorate if a House lacks a Primus, or a Primus fails to attend.

SPECIAL STANDING ORDERS

The standing orders or loci are designed to allow the Order to mobilise effectively during crisis. Each is named for a Roman god. Locus Mercury is the peacetime setting. The Order has escalating from Locus Mercury on four occasions since 1030. The first was to a rumoured Diedne threat and the others were to two incidents in the Normandy Tribunal involving Houses Tyalus and Flambeau. The higher settings are:

- Apollo, for unspecified threats
- Juno, for a defined threat or problem

STORY SEED: THE INMACULATA

A new societas has been formed that is deeply critical of the war against the Diedne, authoritarianism within the order and its inhumanity. It is holding a meeting and there is a general invitation to all magi to attend. The player characters may wish to attend out of simple interest or are conferred mandatum to investigate this event further.

STORY SEED: THE NEW SUNDERING

The Societas Inmaculata has commissioned a new history of the war where it clearly places the blame for the war on House Tremere. It argues for a new sundering to put the house in its place. After all, no one ever asked it to be the Order's militia. It did that all by itself and then had the temerity to ask the order to bail it out a confrontation with a fellow house.

The Players Characters may be asked to ensure that the history is copied and distributed or tasked with its destruction.

TRANSFORMING MYTHIC EUROPE IN 1050

The *Transforming Mythic Europe* supplement has a number of uses in this era, the first being the unprecedented exposure of the order to mundane society because of the Schism War.

Having fought a highly visible war across Mythic Europe there is a possibility that the Fourth Estate saga could be used to kick-off your troupe's entry into 1050. The Societas Inmaculata would be a major advocate for such a change perceiving it as a way to humanize the Order of Hermes.

In contrast, an Island of the Magicians saga could represent efforts of secessionists to break from the Order.

- Luna, for when a response is needed
- Orcus when a broad political or military response is necessary
- Mars when wide mobilization for war is required

Certain eligible magi can initiate a locus. Each locus has a set duration. During this time each of the True Lineage Primi is tasked with a particular chore. The Primus communicates their views to the rest of the Primi (and Praecones in some cases) on the nature of the threat or problem during the period of the locus. If the time runs out and the Primus fails to report, there is an automatic escalation to the next level. The tasking Primus assumes responsibility for receiving all communication and dispersing it to the Order.

Once the communication is received the eligible magi may order a stand-down, escalate or maintain the current locus. The opportunity to do so may only be exercised at the expiry of the durations. The Antares can countermand any stand-down order and may effectively hold the Order at a particular locus indefinitely. Up until Locus Orcus, the process of communication is conducted by letter. It is not until the Caucus convenes that the Primi actually meet in person.

CELSUS EX VERDITIUS

There is no magus in the Order of Hermes with greater prestige than the revered Antares. Trusted by all, he is noted for his great height and dignified bearing. If not for the Schism War he would have become the Primus of House Verditius in his day. Instead he was invested with supreme power to save the order in its gravest hour.

The initial attraction of Celsus was his basic emotional stability, membership of a non-militant house and his apparent lack of ambition. He was perceived as a

In the lower loci of Juno and Apollo, a single eligible magus may escalate, maintain or stand down the Order. This is by simple request. It can be disallowed if more eligible magi object than favor the request. An eligible magus can cause the Order to skip various loci. All standing orders are suspended when the Grand Tribunal is in session. The nearby table summarises the respective loci:

HERMETIC COMMISSIONS

The early Order of Hermes had a steady need for ad hoc officials who

safe pair of hands or as a necessary compromise depending upon the opinion of who was expressing it at the time.

Celsus' appointment turned out to be a resounding success. In 1050, however, he is ancient and spends most of time in contemplation in an isolated tower, worried about the future direction of the Order. He is also concerned by how his successors will manage future challenges. A large part of his present attention is absorbed by rumours of Hermetic secessionists immigrating to Scandinavia, and allying with Diedne renegades and the Order of Odin.

could undertake various tasks at short notice. These special commissions were known as *mandatum*. Some of these commissions evolved into separate roles, like the Hoplites. As the Order became more stable the office of *Mandatus* fell into disuse as the Quaesitors and Hoplites became more numerous and the individual Tribunals established their own officials.

The War saw the re-emergence of the Mandati in a variety of roles. During the Schism War the Antares issued mandatum directly. The only Mandatus to hold a formal title was the chief

SUMMARY OF LOCI

Locus	Duration	Tasking Primus	Task	Special	Initiation	Stand-Down
Mercury	None	n/a	Peace	None	n/a	n/a
Apollo	2 Moons	Bonisagus	Investigation	None	Any Primi, Praeco	Any Primi, Praeco
Juno	1 Moon	Guernicus	Investigation	All Tribunal Quaesitors and Senior Redcaps must attend their Praeco's covenant immediately.	Any Primi, Praeco	Any Primi, Praeco
Luna	14 Days	Mercere	Communicatio n	None	Three Primi	Six Primi
Orcus	7 Days	Tremere	Mobilisation	Caucus must Convene	Six Primi	n/a
Mars	None	n/a	War	Antares in command	Eight Primi	Antares

lieutenant of the Antares the, Magister Armorum. The other leading Mandati who served the Antares directly as lieutenants, were referred to Praetors, though that title was never officially given.

EXAMPLE HERMETIC COMMISSIONS

Each commission is drawn up specifically when issued, and so their contents may vary, but over time patterns of responsibility and authority have emerged, so that most magi recognise the following terms.

Grandis Mandatum: This is issued by a Grand Tribunal and is usually grants a Quaesitor's powers to investigate an issue on the Tribunal's behalf. It became immensely more flexible during the Schism War. The scope of this mandatum could be very broad, as it effectively conferred the authority of the Grand Tribunal on the Mandatus. Controversially, the Grand Tribunal of 1030 allowed three of the Primi to issue a mandatum unilaterally, subject to the disallowance by three other Primi. In addition they could be issued by the Antares if their powers were active, or by the Caucus directly if it had convened.

Paulo Mandatum: This is issued by a Tribunal, or a Praeco granted the right to do so. It grants powers similar to a Quaesitor, to investigate a specific issue within the granting Tribunal.

Flebilis Mandatum: A derogatory reference that stuck, it had its origin in the tendency of Quaesitors to farm out more their minor work, particularly disputes over the estates of deceased magi. The Quaesitor only delegate part of their power in this type of mandatum, so it is more commonly encountered.

PRAETORIAN COVENANTS

Covenants with deceased magi, but with functioning household staff, were not rare during the War. The problem of what to do with these covenants

STORY SEED: ARMS AGAINST ODIN

The Player Characters have been conferred mandatum by the Antares to investigate and destroy a secessionist colony of hermetic magi in Scandinavia.

The information they receive is wrong and the inhabitants are loyal Bonisagi magi undertaking simple research.

THE PERDO WAR

The many of casualties of the Schism War gave rise to unsavory incidents and acrimony over the disposition of property, a period of strife called "The Perdo War" by some magi. The Grand Tribunal of 1030, in response, declared that property of a deceased magus must pass in accordance with a specified procedure. The selected procedure is complex, and favors espoused any physical children over apprentices and Housemates.

grew as the War continued. A solution was for the Antares to install a Mandatus as a governor, or "princeps". These became known as "Praetorian" covenants.

These covenants were an anomaly because their charters had lapsed, thus severing their membership of their Tribunals. Most have been resettled or abandoned. A few continue to function outside of the Tribunal's political structure, answerable to the Antares through his governors. This has become a sore point with some Tribunals.

The most famous Praetorian Covenant was located on the island of Comacina in Lake Como, northern Italy. The Order maintained this as its unofficial contact point with the mundane world during the War. In 1050, the covenant stands empty and silent except for the bustle of activity once a year in the spring. A mandatus arrives and takes up residence for a month to await any envoys from the church or secular states.

The inevitable disputes, accusations of negligence and theft of deceased property usually arose because multiple heirs or debtors protested the disposition and appealed to the Presiding Quaesitor. Quaesitors were happy to rid themselves of these distractions and used Mandati extensively to resolve the disputes. By 1050 some of this work stills remains. An ambitious magus with an eye to becoming a hoplite or a Quaesitor may use these assignments to impress potential benefactors.

The magus responsible for this new addition to the code, Appelius of Hannover is loathed by every covenant princeps and tribunal Quaesitor in Mythic Europe. The sheer volume of work, frustration and responsibility that this reform stimulated caused his reputation to plummet. At a subsequent Tribunal meeting he was so roundly abused that he has retired into exile.

REST ASSURED: AN ADVENTURE FOR MANDATI IN THE ORDER OF 1050 AD

BY SHANE APPEL

In 1006, Colman Ex Merinita did an unwise favor for an old friend by murdering his covenmate, Truttedia Ex Flambeau.

Once he concealed her body so his friend could assume her identity they both left the Hibernian Tribunal and joined a new covenant. This would have been fine if the new Truttedia had kept to the deal. She had agreed to move on, but she came to enjoy the covenant so much she stayed.

The years passed and the new Truttedia died. Colman, now the princeps of Nostram Impertimus was required to execute the rules of Hermetic inheritance. This was bad enough, but his "new" Truttedia used to be Eimile Ex Diedne. Eimile now haunts the covenant, and she has vowed to destroy all those who harmed her in her life, including Colman.

STORYGUIDE'S NOTES

Many of the NPCs in the scenario do not need pre-determined statistics but if they are needed the stats for the various magi in the core book for Bartell, Reinhard and Carry will suffice. Broc can be simulated by using the knight template in the Core rules but adding the Supernatural Virtue "See In Darkness" to his repertoire. Player Characters who act as mandati will need some experience in Code of Hermes. It would also help if they had a literate retainer to take the official record.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ADALBRECHT

Adalbrecht is a former apprentice of one of the covenant members (long deceased). He left the covenant when he was approximately 16 years old because he killed one of the covenant serving girls with whom he was infatuated. His activities since leaving the covenant are kept deliberately vague so the SG can develop these accordingly. His return at the present time is not connected with the present events and his motive is one of remorse for his actions. He harbours no ill-intent against anyone and has been hiding in the various empty rooms, roof and wall cavities of the covenant since he returned.

Adalbrecht has a very swarthy complexion, dark brown eyes and short, spiky black hair which looks a little

HERMETIC INHERITANCE

At the Grand Tribunal of 1030, it was declared that as matter of hermetic law, property of a deceased magus must pass as follows:

The executor is to draw forth all property and debts and divide the property into mundane and magical pools. All debts against the magus will be paid from the relevant pool. Next the executor is to list the members of a first class who will in order of priority be the magi's wife; the magi's natural or adopted children; the magi's former apprentices now magi. The executor is to use their best endeavors to contact all debtors and classes and inform them of the magus' death.

At the passage of a year and a day from the death of the magus, the executor shall give the remainder of both to members of the first class who present themselves at the gates of the executor's covenant. Each claimant takes as equally as practicable, with priority for unique items given as noted above. A mundane person is not eligible to take from the magical

pool. Should none of the first class present themselves, the executor is to draw a list of the members of a second class who will in order of priority be the magi's former master, the magi's covenant, and the magi's tribunal of residence.

At the passage of three years and a day from death, should no claimants from the first class present themselves at the gates of the executor's covenant the executor shall give the remainder of both pools in order of priority to members of the second class who present themselves at such place. If before three years and a day but after a year and a day of death any member of the first class present themselves at the gates of the covenant, that member shall take the entirety of the pools in order of arrival at the gates of the covenant.

The executor is always the princeps of the magi's covenant of membership. Should that princeps not be available the praeco of their tribunal and the primus of their house become the executors in that order. The executor is the final arbiter of all disputes regarding the property unless three heirs or debtors appeal the executor's orders to the Presiding Quaesitor.

unhealthy. He has an oval face and a pointed chin stands 5' 8" and is fat. His clothes are usually quite old and earth coloured.

BARTELL Ex TREMERE

Bartell represents Fengheld covenant. Fengheld alleges a vis debt owed by Truttedia. When Truttedia died, Colman recognised this debt but soon got into trouble. The redcaps noted that the signatures on the promissory notes did not match. Both Mercere and Fengheld alleged forgery.

He is a confident looking man with wide brown eyes that are like two acorns. He has thick, curly, medium-length hair the color of charcoal, and is worn in a weird style. He is short and has a graceful build. His skin is deeply-tanned. He has a small nose and a strong chin. His wardrobe is mystical and tight, with a completely green and yellow color scheme.

BROC

Broc is the natural son of Truttedia, born before her murder, and the offspring of a relationship with an Irish

nobleman. Broc was taken to be raised in the nobility soon after his birth and bases his claim to Truttedia's mundane property on his blood lineage to her. He also asserts that he has mystical powers. He claims this entitles him to both the mundane and magical property of his mother.

CARRY Ex MERINITA

She has the physical presence of a menacing tornado. With almond-shaped brown eyes she has luxurious, curly, charcoal-colored hair worn in a style that reminds you of a gush of water. She is short and has a wide-hipped build. Her skin is pale white. She has a domed forehead and a large mouth. She dresses plainly.

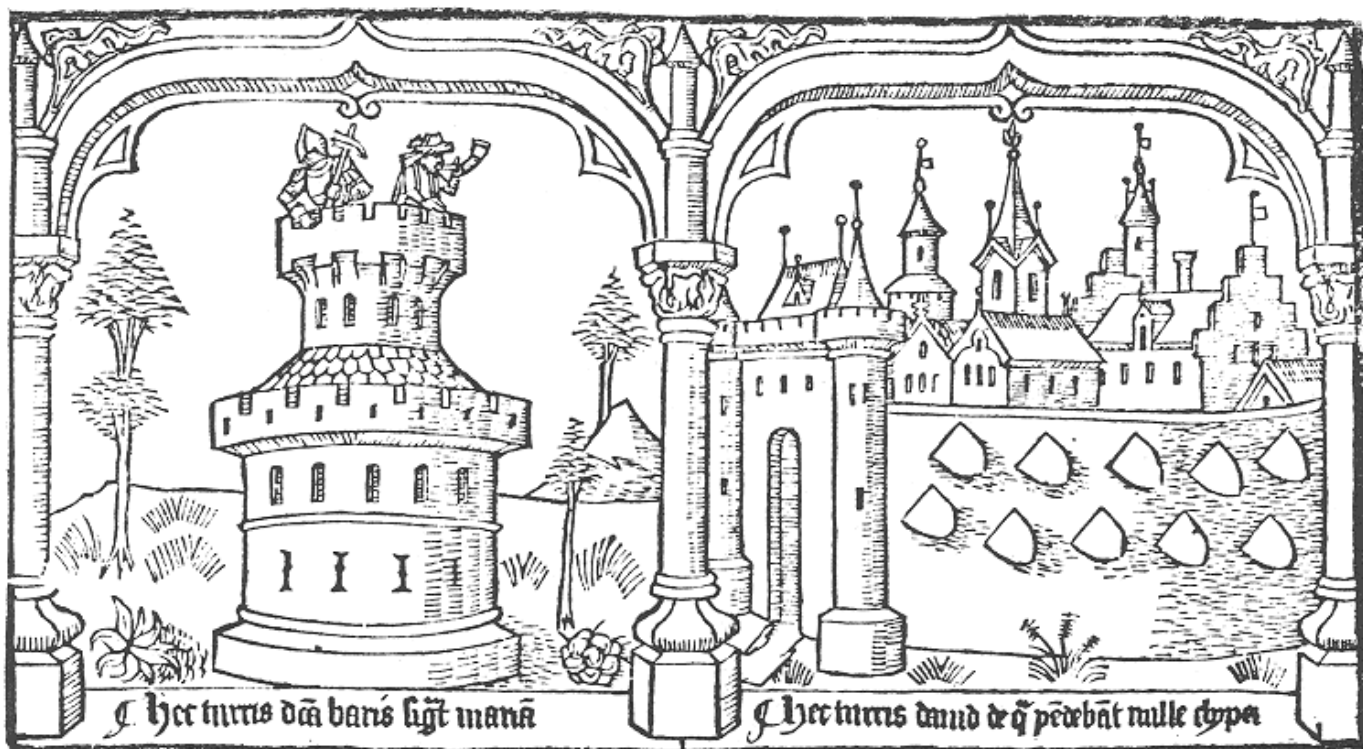
Carry has been appointed by the covenant of Circulus Ruber in the Hibernian Tribunal as its representative. Tradui (its princeps) knows that Truttedia possessed the Torc of Breanna, a powerful enchanted item before she died and is obsessed with its return. Tradui wants the Torc back, sp Crculus Ruber has intervened.

Tradui believes that Circulus Ruber also has a claim on Truttedia's property because she never quit its ranks. This is correct since Truttedia / Eimile never formally joined Nostram Impertimus and did not sever her membership of Circulus Ruber. Circulus Ruber also contests the debt alleged by Fengheld based on the dissimilarity of Truttedia's signature on the Circulus Ruber charter and the promissory note given to Fengheld.

COLMAN Ex MERINITA

He has always had trouble saying "no" to people which is one of the reasons he finds himself in his current predicament. He despises the position of princeps and fantasizes of the day that he can be rid of it. He knows that one day the stress will get too much and he will simply implode.

Colman has many secrets. The most valuable is knowledge of the Forest Lore (see *Guardians of the Forests*) which he aimed to extract from Truttedia and has spent his life discovering with the assistance of Eimile. As a young man he first touched upon this knowledge in



SUB ROSA

his native Ireland which led him to Germany.

Colman's more mundane secrets include his collusion with Eimile and the murder of Truttedia. He will do anything to avoid having the Mandatus use Intellego Mentem spells on him because of his secrets. Unfortunately for Circulus Ruber, the Torc of Breanna is not one of them. He genuinely has no idea what happened to the thing.

A Mandatus, like a Quaesitor, cannot compel the use of Intellego Mentem upon a magus. A refusal would look bad and Colman will argue strenuously against it, feign illness or procrastinate before giving his consent. Between giving his consent and submitting to the examination he commences countermeasures.

Colman is a physical coward so he employs measures that avoid any direct confrontation, even though he is probably more than a match for young magi. He is overconfident due to his death prophecy Virtue (which is deliberately kept unstated).

His countermeasures are as follows:

- **Legal Foundation:** Two events give Colman the opportunity to argue that the authority of the mandatus no longer exists. The first is when Broc is attacked and killed. The second is if Carry leaves the covenant. He puts his case to the Mandatus forcefully (but takes care not to offend) that because one or two of the disputants are no longer parties there is no legal basis for the mandatus having further involvement.
- **Bribery:** Colman indicates early to the Mandatus that he is willing to do anything to settle the dispute without further inquiries or hassle. Later on, and with nothing to lose, this may include outright bribery. A PC could do well out of this by demanding a very high price. Colman honours any bribe offered.

- **Misdirection:** If all else is failing, Colman's trusted Autocrat (if he is still alive) brings the PCs a message from the Presiding Quaesitor (appropriately sealed) that she is now in Cuxhaven and to resolve the dispute personally. The Mandatus and all the disputants are commanded to attend her. There is no Presiding Quaesitor in Cuxhaven. Colman has organised this deceit to get his potential enemies away from the covenant so he can escape.

- **Escape:** If the PCs do not take the bait than he slips off to his bolt hole and make his way to the Teutoberger Forest.

- **Scorching:** If the PCs take the bait and respond to the summons, when they return to Nostram Impertimus they discover it a smoking heap with no single grog or surviving magus in sight. Obviously this raises a number of questions. Did Colman, Adalbrecht or the ghost do it?

OSVALD

Osvald is the covenant's autocrat. He is Colman's creature in every possible way. He has deep-set brown eyes and thick, wavy, iron-gray hair that is medium-length and is worn in a dignified style. He is short and has an elegant build. His skin is tanned with hollow cheeks and robes that are completely blue.

REINHARD Ex MERCERE

Reinhard the redcap represents House Mercere in the matter of the succession. Mercere, like Fengheld is not an heir but a debtor. It claims an unpaid loan, taken by Truttedia in 990 when she was a member of Circulus Ruber. House Mercere disputes the vis debt to Fengheld based on the differing signatures (see Bartell's entry). It supports Circulus Ruber's claim.

TRUTTEDIA/EIMILE (GHOST)

She simply wants to kill and starts with the most vulnerable, killing one character per day. The Storyguide should structure these killings for dramatic effect, starting with the invalid magi and progressing to the others. She stops once she kills Colman. The ghost is not particularly interested in anyone else other than the magi of Nostram Impertimus.

WERTHER Ex MISCELLANEA

The former princeps of Nostram Impertimus, he still has his faculties about him though he is physically immobile. He cannot abide Colman. As a source of information he can relate the following:

- Truttedia and Colman came from Ireland in 1006. Colman in his view was a shirker and avoided serving because he sympathized with House Diedne.
- Colman was fully admitted to the covenant though Truttedia never was. Werther never liked Truttedia and liked Colman even less. Both were secretive. At the time they arrived, the covenant was fully engaged with the Schism War and its losses were grievous. Colman had no inclination to fight and it suited the covenant at the time to have someone able to look after things while the other Magi went to war.
- She lived as the companion of Colman though no one ever saw any evidence of an intimate relationship.
- Truttedia bought a child with her though it was never understood what her precise relationship with it was. She certainly did not treat the child like her own. Liesa disappeared when she was about 11 years old. Truttedia never had

COLMAN, FOLLOWER OF MERINITA

Characteristics: Int +3, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str -2, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +2

Size: 0

Age: 77 (49)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Hermetic Magus, Flexible Formulaic Magic, Herbalism, Immortality of the Forest, Faerie Magic, Minor Magical focus (Aging). Death Prophecy, Repellent, Curse (Slander), Difficult Longevity Ritual, Flashbacks, Incomprehensible, Lesser Malediction. Study Requirement,

Combat: Is unskilled in physical combat.

Dodge: Init +2, Atk n/a, Def +1, Dam n/a

Soak : +1

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, Unconscious

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore (Germany) 3, Area Lore (Munster) 2, Area Lore (Saxony) 2, Artes Liberales 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Bows 6, Charm 1, Code of Hermes 1, Concentration 1, Diedne Lore 3, Etiquette 1, Faerie Lore 1, Finesse 1, Folk Ken 2, Forest Lore 4, Gaelic 5, Guile 5, Herbalism 4, Intrigue 1, Latin 4, Low German 5, Magic Lore 3, Magic Theory 4, Merinita Lore 4, Order of Hermes Lore 1, Parma Magica 1, Penetration 1, Profession: Scribe 1, Stealth 2, Survival 5, Swim 1, Wilderness Sense 4.

Arts: Cr 8, In 5, Mu 10, Pe 5, Re 15, An 5, Aq 5, Au 6, Co 15, He 12, Ig 6, Im 5, Me 5, Te 5, Vi 5.

Spells Known:

Break the Oncoming Wave (ReAq 10)

Gift of the Bear's Fortitude (MuCo 25)

Prying Eyes (InIm 5)

Room of Stale Air (PeAu 15) Mastery 5 (Quiet, Still, Penetration, Fast, Magic Resistance)

Viper's Gaze (ReAn 15)

Voice of the Lake (InAq 25)

Well Without Light (PeIg 25)

Soothe the Ferocious Bear (ReAn 10) Mastery 2 (Quiet, Fast)

Phantasmal Fire (CrIm 20)

Whispering Winds (InAu 15)

Purification of the Festering Wounds (CrCo 20)

Ward Against Mundane Intrusions (ReIg 35)

Ward Against the Curious Scullion (ReCo 10)

Seven League Stride (ReCo 30)Mastery 1 (Fast)

Stance of the Patient Tree (MuCo 35)

Hunt for Wild Herb (InHe 5)

Probe Natures Hidden Lore (InHe 4)

Appearance: A man in his late forties with long red hair tainted with grey. His poorly-trimmed goatee compliments neither his face or his hair. He has a round cheerful face but his whole demeanor is simply repugnant. His remaining blue eye (he is missing one) darts all over, and then there is the frequent casual slip of his finger into a nostril and a laugh that sounds like geese honking.

any other children that he was aware of.

- Truttedia maintained a sanctum. Her permit to do so was controversial because she was not a full member of the covenant. Colman argued strongly in her favor for this boon.
- Truttedia never took an apprentice. Colman and Truttedia never attended any Tribunals.

PROLOGUE

A PC magus has been asked by their covenant princeps to accept the conferral of mandatum in a dispute over a deceased magus' property. The deceased is Truttedia Ex Flambeau of the covenant Nostram Impertimus. An appeal was lodged with the Presiding Quaesitor of the Rhine Tribunal from three aggrieved heirs. It is alleged the executor, the princeps of Nostram Impertimus covenant in northern Germany, has made disposition not in accordance with the Code of Hermes.

Once the magus agrees to serve they are handed four scrolls. The first is the conferral of mandatum, the second a letter to the Presiding Quaesitor of the Rhine Tribunal from the covenant Circulus Ruber making an appeal for intervention. The third is an account of the executor and Princeps of Nostram Impertimus, Colman Ex Merinita written to the Presiding Quaesitor declaring his dealings with the disputed property. The fourth are some notes by the Quaesitor.

Before the PC's leave they may make Order of Hermes Lore rolls informing them of aspects related to Nostram Impertimus:

- **Known by All:** It's a winter covenant located in the swamps of Northern Germany.
- **Widely Known:** It was founded in 890 AD by Ex Miscellanea magi. It was once prosperous but all of its younger members perished in the Schism War.
- **Uncommon Knowledge:** Its early founders had an interest in mystical beasts and the nearby lands were ridden by the things
- **Lost Secrets:** A number of the founders were craftsman of various sorts including Verditius magi interested in testing weapons on the local wildlife.

SCENE I

The Storyguide may wish to read the following description:

The journey to Nostram Impertimus is uneventful and your hopes of further adventure seem unrelieved by your first impressions of the covenant itself. Located between the fishing villages of Cuxhaven and Bremerhaven just off a rutted track in a large swamp, the terrain is uninspiring.

As you follow your directions you are led to an enormous hedge with stout wooden gates the height of three men which appears to mark the entrance to the covenant. Large rocks rest against the base of the gates to hold them in place. As you peer through the gates dominating the view is three main sets of structures.

To your right are three brick structures shaped like beehives. Straight ahead and running parallel with the western side of the hedge is a longhouse with a black wooden rooftop, built close to the ground on a low rock wall foundation. A porch runs around its perimeter. Slightly concealed by the longhouse and behind it is another long building that runs parallel with the hedge.

INFORMATION FROM COLMAN EX MERINITA

Colman is able to relate the following information about matters:

TRUTTEDIA

- She was approximately 79 years old at death. Cremated upon her instructions. Her death was sudden and unexpected.
- She joined the order in 995AD. Initially she belonged to the covenant Circulus Ruber and left the Hibernian Tribunal to travel with Colman in 1006.
- She did not maintain a lab and preferred to do her work from study.
- She had no family he was aware of until recently.
- Her master, Terious of Flambeau is long deceased. She trained no apprentices.

ESTATE

- Vis debt of 10 pawns of vim to Fengheld.
- Vis debt of 10 pawns of Herbam to House Mercere;
- 2 seasons service to Nostram Impertimus
- 10 pounds of cash, jewellery and other personal effects;
- 23 pawns of assorted vis;
- Three items of virtue;
- 2 Summa on Herbam.

A number of people seem to scuttle about on a variety of mundane chores. The ground around them is slick with muddy pools and deformed ground that has been squished with the feet of a thousand livestock and animals. Some rather nasty looking dogs prowl around the grounds sniffing and cocking their legs over posts and the scant plant life within the grounds.

Surrounding everything is the dense, drab colored hedge. The place has the feel of being a large camp...

Let the PC's take a break at this point to get their bearings and request help or ask other questions.

As you approach closer the kilns appear to have been converted to houses. One bears the mark of a magus' sanctum.

The concealed building looks dilapidated with another black wooden rooftop and courses of brick forming the groundwork. It is clearly older than the longhouse and it has been constructed with rough-hewn timbers, consisting of half-logs placed perpendicularly which support the roof. Wattle and daub have been used to infill the cracks. Small windows have been cut into the logs.

A number of newer, better looking outbuildings dot the enclosure. These appear to be mostly residences but the main attraction is clearly the smithy; compared to the other buildings it is a veritable palace. With its black wooden rooftops, faded buildings and scary animals, Nostram Impertimus has a revolting atmosphere and hardly the place of civilized living.

MEETING THE PRINCEPS

Once the PCs have confirmed where they are and what their business is they are escorted to the chambers of the Princeps. This is in the concealed building that the covenfolk call the monastery.

Colman is perhaps the most unimpressive magus you have ever met. You cannot believe that such a man would be trusted by his peers with such a responsibility. It is not his appearance (red long hair tainted with grey reveals a round cheerful face) that causes alarm but his whole demeanor which is simply repugnant. His hollow blue eye (he is missing one) darts all over your body the casual slip of his finger into a nostril and a laugh that sounds like geese honking unceasingly. The goatee does not compliment his eye or hair.

Colman seems genuinely aggrieved that the dispute could not be resolved. He states that you may have full use of the covenant's conference room for your deliberations and the adjoining antechamber for your accommodation. He hopes that a final settlement can be reached before hearings commence.

Colman states that Reinhard of Mercere is at the covenant now, with Circulus Ruber, Fengheld and Broc still to arrive. Colman invites you to tour the covenant the following day and to meet the covenant members once you have had the opportunity to settle in.

THE MAGI OF NOSTRAM IMPERTIMUS

This part of the scenario commences with Colman providing a tour of the covenant. Arrange for the PCs to meet all of the magi, except for Werther. Colman dislikes Werther and only arranges an introduction if directly asked. He avoids Werther not for any nefarious purpose but because he cannot stand the constant berating and belittling he receives from him.

The rumor that the covenant is in winter is confirmed when Colman

introduces you to its other members. Bosma Ex Verditius sits unmoving as a grog spoon pours porridge into his toothless mouth. He rests patiently in a pool of his own urine and faeces.

Otacia Ex Criamon looks about age 90. She is excitable and scampers naked around her chambers trying to catch falling feathers from a pillow that she occasionally throws in the air and calls "Schnucki". Her sagging skin and breasts gyrate as she attempts to catch the feathers.

Iustina Ex Mercere shakes uncontrollably in her chair and constantly curls the strands of her long, thin gray hair with her fingers. Some type whitish liquid, half dried stains her night cloak. Colman states, "As you can see my brothers and sisters have seen better days."

THE GROUNDS

Colman provides a short history of the site as you walk its grounds:

"The monastery was constructed by the monks who first inhabited the site. They were all killed by a Viking raid in the late 880s. The founder of Nostram Impertimus liberated the site from them in 890 from them. They built the kilns. One kiln serves as Amalya Ex Verditius' sanctum. Amalya is Bosma's former apprentice; he is travelling at the moment and unavailable. The other two were previously used as workshops but now just store the covenant's foodstuffs, spare laboratory equipment and its artillery from the Schism War."

"We added the longhouse later on but that was before my time. The Aura on the site is minor and centers on the old monastery building. What drew the magi was the local mystical wildlife that were reportedly numerous back in the day. There are still some horrors that lurk in the swamp though."

The Old Kilns are beehive-shaped structures made from a rock and mortar combination. Their interior has been blackened by use. The Longhouse is primarily used as the quarters of the

grog and contains the kitchens and other ancillary functions of the covenant. The monastery building contains the library and the sancta of the magi. The covenant's meeting room is located here along with the princeps' chambers, his lab (marked as sanctum), a cellar and dining hall.

Reinhard and Bartell are present and accommodated in some of the outbuildings. They appear quite disinterested in the whole proceedings and are eager to have matters resolve.

INVESTIGATIONS

The PCs may make their own explorations as they await the arrival of the other disputants. The Storyguide should pace this carefully because once the rest of the disputants arrive time the tempo of the scenario changes. If the covenfolk can be coaxed into talking their revelations are truly outrageous and wildly inaccurate. He is incredibly disliked by all.

The PCs notice the first oddity after one day. In their chambers small things are amiss. Food left behind is gone. Little objects are misplaced. This repeats as the days go by.

SCENE 2

Eimile begins her murders. She concentrates on the most vulnerable – the three elderly magi who cannot raise a Parma Magica are all suitable candidates. A single death is likely to be dismissed as unremarkable but once the casualties build the PCs undoubtedly become fixated on the problem. After the first death, Colman informs the PC's. He states that no one is surprised since the magus was old and decrepit.

As he speaks, Osvold interrupts the meeting, apologizes profusely and reports that a local peasant has attended the covenant and reported that a young female traveler is in distress on the road. She has apparently been ambushed by bandits. Colman looks unsurprised

simply commenting that, "It is a sign of the times".

Colman declines to send aid and dismisses Oswald. Oswald hesitates before taking his leave and says, "What if the woman is Carry of Circulus Ruber?" Colman pauses briefly retorts; "Well it is good thing she is a powerful magus! Now go Oswald!" He laughs, dismisses Oswald with a hand and resumes his conversation with the PCs.

If the Mandatus wishes to act, proceed with the Ambushed section, later. If pressed for aid, Colman states "I will send my most experienced grog." If the PC's have no interest in the matter proceed with Another Death.

AMBUSHED

As you arrive at the destination you can clearly hear the sounds of metal on metal. A faint mist has crept in and as you approach you glimpse carnage. A heavy-set man in a red cloak wields a large sword which he just now withdraws with bloodied blade from the shuddering body of a kneeling man. Not less than five paces away from him stands a woman in a defensive stance wielding a heavy quarterstaff. She is shrieking in terror. She spots you and screams, "Help! Kill him!" The red cloak has not noticed your approach and advances on the woman menacingly.

The man in the red cloak is Broc, one of the disputants on his way to the covenant. He was ambushed by a group of bandits of which the woman is one. The woman is determined to flee once an opportunity presents itself.

Broc has finished off most of them with the help of his wounded retainer, who now lies unconscious nearby. He only speaks Gaelic so he is unaware of the significance of the woman's cry for help. If the characters kill Broc, they find identifying documents on his body, indicating that he is indeed Broc, Truttedia's long lost son. Broc's retainer might support this evidence, but expires from his wounds without prompt aid.

If the PCs do not intervene in the ambush, Broc arrives later that day with his wounded retainer. He announces his presence through his retainer-interpreter and is presented to the Mandatus once he has cleaned up. He explains the ambush if asked. If Broc dies, Colman raises a legal objection to the proceedings.

ANOTHER DEATH

The following morning the next death is discovered. Colman appears uneasy about the matter when he announces it (Folk Ken Ease Factor 6) and promises the PCs that he will look into the matter further. If asked for specifics he states that he will inspect the Aegis of the covenant to see that is still intact, which it is. Colman does not object to the PC's investigating the deaths, but he does warn the PC's that unless there is a link between the deaths and the official authority of the mandatus the investigation is not official.

Later in the morning, Carry Ex Merinita arrives. She is surprised that a Mandatus has been appointed. She protests to the Mandatus and states that her covenant is insulted that the Quaesitors have not bothered to give their matter the attention it deserves. She announces that she is withdrawing from the proceedings to make a formal complaint to the Presiding Quaesitor of the Rhine. The Intrigue rules in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages* can be used to resolve this diversion.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRINCEPS

If Circulus Ruber withdraws. Colman soon learns of it. He makes a concerted attempt to persuade the Mandatus that there is no point in them continuing, as the legal basis for the hearing has collapsed. In the middle of the meeting, Oswald interrupts it to announce that Bartell of Fengheld, the last of the disputants, has arrived. Colman announces as special dinner

welcoming all to the covenant. At the dinner he asks for a final indulgence: that the heirs and debtors join together for one last attempt to resolve the dispute. Carry, if she is present, rejects this out of hand.

SCENE 3

After the previous day's distractions, the Mandatus can finally resolve the dispute. Code of Hermes knowledge informs the PC that these proceedings function similarly to a private hearing at tribunal. Each side outlines its case and the Mandatus hears sworn evidence from the disputants, then decides which facts are proven. The Mandatus has 30 days after concluding the hearing to declare a verdict. The Mandatus may take as long as required to complete the hearing. The Mandatus may also request that a magus submit to Intellego Mentem spells as part of the proceedings.

The disputants bring the following evidence:

- Circulus Ruber presents its charter, evidencing Truttedia's signature and membership of Circulus Ruber. It also presents a signed declaration of its princeps stating the loan of the Torc of Breanna.
- House Mercere and Fengheld bring their promissory notes. It is easily determined that the signature on Mercere's note matches the one from Circulus Ruber's charter. Fengheld's is completely different.
- Colman, if asked, states that he has never seen the Torc.
- Colman objects to the proceedings continuing on legal grounds.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

The PCs may have been noticing missing food and slight misplacement of objects. If they investigate the offending

party is Adalbrecht. He does not resist capture. He declares that he has been hiding out in the covenant for the past couple of weeks.

Adalbrecht explains to the PCs that he cannot stay any longer and he must trust them if he is to complete his task at the covenant. He reveals part of his background and his need to recover something from the cellar of the monastery, which is buried under the cobblestones. If the PCs help him he reveals what he knows about Colman and other secrets.

Back when he lived at the covenant he knew many secrets. Liesa was his main source because she shared confidences with Colman. Liesa was only young maybe 11 or 12 when she told him that Colman had a big argument with Trutedia over certain books that were to be kept exclusively in his laboratory.

Eventually they compromised and built a secret lab in the swamp. They worked together in this lab. Adalbrecht adds that the swamp around here is not safe. There are rumors that it contains hidden horrors. Adalbrecht warns the PCs to be wary of confronting Colman: an older, experienced magus should not be underestimated.

A FAVOR PERFORMED

Digging in the cellar under the cobblestones reveals the skeletal remains of a woman. The woman is of no importance to the story other than Adalbrecht's quest for redemption. If pressed for details he explains who she was and why her remains are there. He confesses an intention to give the remains a Christian burial.

SCENE 4

Colman's laboratory is located in the monastery and is marked as his sanctum. Its only security measure is the locked door at the entrance (Ease Factor 9 to unlock) which squeaks loudly when opened. No matter how



they end up in it, the PCs find no evidence within its walls. The lab looks slightly underused, much of the equipment is basic and Colman appears to be working on his longevity ritual at the moment. Colman opens up his sanctum to the Mandatus if asked. He keeps his controversial materials elsewhere.

THE SWAMP

The secret laboratory is exactly one league to the west of the covenant. It is located in a particularly dense area of the swamp and its main purpose is to house the secret texts that Colman and Trutedia/Eimile both used to further their studies of the Forest Lore. Colman has not been for some time due to the pressures of administration.

Finding the laboratory is challenging. It is within a round stone hut with a turf roof. The lab is warded by Ward Against Mundane Intrusions and Ward Against the Curious Scullion. A Boglin (see *Guardians of the Forests*) is located nearby. A PC has D10 rounds before the beast launches an attack upon any

person loitering nearby. If the storyguide does not have a copy of *Guardians of the Forests* they may substitute any other suitably feral beast. Awareness rolls (Ease Factor 9) indicate evidence of spoor. Players specifically asking for a Magic Lore roll (Ease Factor 15) can identify the spoor as that of a Boglin.

The lab is frugally made out with some chairs and benches. It appears to be laid out as two labs within the same building. It is the selection of books that is of most interest, containing a number of texts associated with House Diedne.

END GAME

Colman strenuously denies having anything to do with the secret facility. He invites any magus to lay a charge. At the same time he makes plans to use *Seven League Stride* to flee to one of the local ports then sail to Scandinavia. If cornered he fights, but always with an eye to making an escape.

IO50AD: STRANGE ALLIANCES

BY BERENGAR DREXEL

For thirty years, the Order has been at peace. It has recovered from the chaos of the Schism War, and restored the rule of the Code of Hermes. Had this peace graced the Holy Roman Empire instead, the chroniclers would have hailed it as a miracle, or a new era.

So in 1048 the Holy Roman Emperor, facing a threat which his privileges and armies cannot avert, turns to the Order of Hermes for help. Will magi, who still remember the consequences of corruption in the Order of Hermes, now succeed in protecting the Church from it?

SCOPE

Strange Alliances is a saga framework for experienced and confident magi, which uses the nadir reached by the papacy around 1050 to present an adventure involving religion, law and dreams. Its major events follow real history, and fit with canon history of the Order. It does not dwell on things that are routine for an experienced storyguide, or that need to be tailored to the player characters involved. Instead it details the historical and Mythic European backgrounds, timeframes, relationships and conflicts which define the saga and make it unique.

HISTORY

The decline of the Carolingian kingdoms left the papacy weakened and at the mercy of local nobility. It fell under the control of a vast and quarrelsome family – at different times named Teophilacti, Crescenzi and

Counts of Tusculum. They are closely related by marriage to the dukes of Spoleto, who have used the Papacy to fortify their hold on Rome for well over a century. This led to an erosion of papal legitimacy and authority (see also [Canon Law](#)).

During this time, society evolved and the clergy assumed new, more worldly, roles. Bishops had already been essential for the administration of the Carolingian kingdoms, but now monasteries provided life insurance, annuities, and places for retirement. Faithful people missed guidance on the role of the Church in the world. The first cathedral school professors started to engage in theological disputes resulting in charges of heresy. And supernatural forces pounced, eager to use all breaches in society: demons and faeries enjoyed a heyday.

In 1046 Henry III, son of Emperor Conrad II, travelled to Rome for his coronation, which required the Pope. At that time there were three claimants for the papacy: Sylvester III and Benedict IX, each supported by a rival faction of the urban nobles, and Gregory VI, who had bought the papacy two years before from Benedict IX. All three were summoned to a synod convened in Sutri, on Henry's way to Rome. On December 23rd. Gregory VI and Sylvester III were dismissed. The day after, Benedict IX was also removed. Henry's former confessor Suidger, who had accompanied him to Rome, was enthroned Pope Clement II on Christmas Day 1046, and immediately afterwards crowned Henry III Holy Roman Emperor.

After his coronation the Emperor conquered several castles of Roman

nobility in the Alban Hills, but then had to attend to other business. Clement II convened a general synod allowing priests ordained by a simonist to remain in office after 40 days of penance, and accompanied Henry III through Italy and back to Germany. Returning to Rome without the Imperial army in 1047, he died in Pesaro. Shortly afterwards, Benedict IX reoccupied the papal palaces on the Lateran Hill.

On Christmas 1047 Henry III sent Bishop Poppo of Brixen to Rome, with the army of the Margrave of Toscana. Poppo was enthroned Pope Damasus II on July 16th 1048. Soon after he withdrew to Palestrina and died after

THE PRAETORIAN COVENANT

Your magi have been asked, or convinced, by the Primi to join a unique covenant. The *Conventum Praetorianum* has been chartered according to the *Peripheral Code of the Roman Tribunal*, and is dedicated to protecting the pope. If you are designing new characters for this saga, discuss with your Troupe any Flaws that would make the character difficult to accommodate in this storyline. Your characters have a season to prepare for their task, and to write a detailed charter. An example for one is found in *Triamore: The Covenant of Lucien's Folly*, pages 34 and 35.

only 23 days in office. Both popes were reputedly killed by a professional poisoner in the service of Benedict IX. After Henry had restored peace everywhere in the vast Empire, excepting for the Netherlands, he now decided to change his strategy about the papacy.

In early September 1048, a large cavalcade of a type never before seen from the watchtower of Durenmar approached the covenant, displaying the signs of the Holy Roman Emperor. Its leader, Otto of Schweinfurt, the recently appointed Duke of Swabia, quickly obtained a most unusual face-to-face meeting with Crispa, Prima of House Bonisagus.

The Duke of Swabia asked the Order of Hermes for help in restoring the papacy. Henry wished to exert his right as the Patricius of the Romans, and from the Privilegium Othonis, to send another German churchman to Rome as a pope. This time not only his knights, but also the masters of the Order shall protect his candidate. Neither the knights nor the magi shall interfere with papal decisions and politics. Both Henry III and the Order will merely do their duty and protect Christendom from corruption.

Within 10 days the Emperor's proposal had been considered by all the Primi, and a common response prepared. No Primus did object, that protecting the Pope on polite request of the Emperor, while maintaining one's independence, was "interfering with the affairs of mundanes". And no Primus did consider exploiting the current weakness of the Church.

The Primi thanked the Emperor for having offered cooperation in an important, common cause. His request was granted under the condition, that the magi chosen by the Order of Hermes to protect the pope would act exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Order, and that any complaints leveled against them would be handled by the Order.

A NEW POPE

In December, the Emperor's choice for the Pope has fallen on Bruno of Egisheim-Dagsburg, (see Bruno of Egisheim-Dagsburg, Bishop of Toul, Pope Leo IX). Your first task is to escort him to Rome.

To Rome

Around Christmas Bruno sets out from Worms via Toul to Besançon. Here he is joined by Hugh of Cluny, who recommends to him a young monk named Hildebrand of Sovana (see Hildebrand of Sovana), whom Bruno assumes among his retinue. Bruno is also joined by the magi and a mundane escort: several knights and 200 mounted Swabian swordsmen, who generally fight on foot.

GREAT ST. BERNARD PASS

The first challenge on the journey is crossing the Great St. Bernard Pass in the fogs and snows of winter. They find the hospice there in ruins, as left by the Saracen raiders a century ago.

MILAN

When Bruno reaches bustling, rough Milan, he discovers a divided city. The minor nobles, strong of their fiefs' heritability assured by the Constitutio in Feudis of Conrad II, request the removal of the count-archbishop, Guido of Velate, on the grounds of simony and nicolaitism (see *Unlawful Practices*). He is a powerful nobleman, chosen as archbishop by Henry III in 1045.

Bruno favors the minor nobles' theological position, but depends on Henry III and is not yet enthroned as Pope, hence lacks the authority to intervene. So he privately meets with their candidates for the archbishopric.

SUTRI

One long day's ride from Rome, the small town Sutri lies on a steep hill

STORY SEED: ST. BERNARD BANDITRY

Bruno's cavalcade is watched for days by brigands, who gather accomplices from neighboring valleys for an assault on its money chest. Unless magi identify their observers in time and react, one evening the brigands trigger two rock avalanches to isolate the section of the caravan containing Bruno, his money and the magi. Then they rope down from a cliff, try to grab the chest, and disappear into a ravine where horses cannot follow. If there is confusion, Hildebrand saves Bruno by hiding him under a servant's cloak.

The Storyguide should use this encounter to help the characters form a group and define their relationship with Bruno's retinue.

STORY SEED FOR MILAN: RIOTS

Armed partisans of the minor nobility stand sentry over these talks. They are exhorted to be inconspicuous, but instead appear weak. The count-archbishop's men attack, and drive them back towards the meeting. If the player characters do not intervene, a knight attending the meeting incites them to resist. This gives the magi a second opportunity to act, either by confronting the attackers, or by whisking Bruno and his dialogue partners away.

If they unobtrusively save Bruno from an embarrassing discovery, the magi earn his trust. This makes their future tasks easier. They also develop contacts in Milan, among the candidates and lesser nobility. The knight they met is named Erlembald Cotta (see Erlembald Cotta).

BENEDICT THE CHRISTIAN

Introducing Benedict the Christian allows the storyguide to tie the ancient Jewish community of Rome into her saga.

Note that around 1050 Jews in Rome did not wear a yellow ring or live in a ghetto, and were not forced to attend Christian sermons.

Some Jews still have connections to Rhadanite traders plying the routes to the Middle and Far East.

along the Eastern side of the Via Cassia, with its cathedral at the highest point.

ARRIVAL IN ROME

Before entering Rome, Bruno and his clerical entourage don pilgrims' garb and begin to sing hymns. As they enter Rome, the magi, knights and swordsmen are highly alert. Their reception is, however, friendly: at the Porta Leonina the Roman people meet Bruno in processions, and acclaim him in St. Peter as the new Pope. In the general commotion, only watchful player characters spot the agents of the Teophilacti (see below), who for now also just watch.

Bruno and his retinue then proceed solemnly to the Lateran palace. After his reception, Bruno's election, according to canon law (see [Canon Law](#)) by the people and clergy of Rome, becomes a matter of course. On the 12th of February he takes possession of his see in St. John Lateran as Pope Leo IX.

SETTING UP IN ROME

Leo IX starts with little money or income. Benedict IX has taken most of it. If the player characters do not intervene, Hildebrand uses his connections in Rome to quickly organize some funds. He relies on the family of Benedict the Christian, a respected, converted, Roman Jew. It is

STORY SEED FOR SUTRI: THE GOLDEN AGE

An amphitheater stands on the side of the Cassia opposite Sutri. It is cut and built from the local tuff. Ancient tombs, cut into the rock, surround it. The locals warn travelers not to visit the site at night. Some of the knights in the escort, and perhaps the magi, see that as a challenge.

During the day, the amphitheater is an overgrown, lonely place without any aura. The cadaver of an old man is laid out among the bushes. He has no wounds. His equipment is Carolingian, but in excellent condition. His armor and sword have no sign of rust.

At night, the characters encounter a friendly, festive crowd wearing strange, well-kept clothes. The crowd speaks a local form of Latin (-1 for speakers of Hermetic or medieval Latin). One of the knights recognizes a brother-in-arms thought lost in a skirmish in 1046, with a new wife and child. The knight explains that tonight some guests face the challenge of King Saturnus. If the visitors succeed, they will join the golden age. Asking about the golden age, magi get glowing, detailed descriptions of a bucolic paradise without work, disease or natural disasters. A challenger must defeat a

gladiator in single combat to the death.

Each character makes a moral decision between duty and a pleasant life here. When trying to convince the knights to abandon the challenge, player characters may remind them of their duty. Player characters considering the challenge may have other traits to which their comrades and sodales may appeal. If they join the golden age, they are removed from play.

The player characters who opt to face the challenge are led into the arena, together with some of the knights from Bruno's retinue. Other characters are led to the crowded seats of the amphitheater, which now has a Faerie Aura of 3. In the place of honor, overlooking the arena, an old man appears. King Saturnus holds three ears of grain like a symbol of office. He introduces the challengers by name and calls forth his champions (use the stats from *Guardians of the Forests*, page 134, but with Faerie Might). If addressed politely now, he answers questions, so the magi should figure out the simple Faerie game played. The victors live out their lives in the bucolic Faerie domain of king Saturnus. Their happiness, and eventual deaths, nourish Saturnus' realm.

Bruno and his clerical retinue will be very clear in the morning: whoever joined the golden age, or died trying, committed a mortal sin. If they die without contrition and penance, they are bound for hell. The priests participate at a simple burial of the Carolingian warrior, though.

now headed by Benedict's son Leo, and Pope Gregory VI also belonged to it.

The magi have other problems, though. Protecting the pope now is far more complicated than escorting him on the road. His household is increasing and filling up with Romans. The buildings he dwells in are vast and ancient. The city itself is even more

mysterious. Servants, supplies, victuals and rooms need to be continuously, but secretly scanned. A guard detail for the pope must be set up, that protects him day and night from assassins, poison, witches, demons and faeries.

THE LATERAN PALACE

The Lateran Palace was built by Constantine the Great, whose monumental equestrian bronze statue still stands on the square in front of it. He donated the palace to Pope Sylvester I, and ever since it is the residence of the popes in Rome, who added to it over the centuries. It has a large banqueting hall, with mosaic portraits of Charlemagne and Pope Leo III from life. It holds the Sancta Sanctorum (the most holy collection of relics) including a large painting of Christ made by Saint Luke the Evangelist with the help of an angel. It also houses the papal library. In general, the palace has a Divine aura of 6, but it is hard to verify that aura in every nook and cranny.

LACUNAE AND THEIR INHABITANTS

If the magi hire savvy, but uncouth, local help to look for lacunae (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 57), they sooner or later find the Mithraea of Rome. Both heathen and Christian Romans built on top of older construction, incorporating rooms of pre-existing buildings as cellars and basements into new ones. The vaulted cult rooms of Mithras proved to be very resilient to that kind of reuse, and there are still about a dozen left in Rome. Some have preserved a weak Magic aura, among these:

- One directly underneath the Circus Maximus near the Palatine Hill



THE SEEDIER SIDE OF ROME

The Storyguide should employ befriended Monahellos to guide magi to the seedier Rome, its outspoken inhabitants, their sentiments and dreams.

The magi may witness one night a reenactment of the cadaver synod of 897 (see 865AD: *Voventes Centennales: Formosus, Bishop of Portus* on page 65 in 865AD) on the figure of a pope made of brooms, blankets and straw.

In a long speech padded with bad Latin, the local Cicero accuses it of having bought the papacy at a fair price; a knuckle of pork.

In this it aided and abetted its gluttonous predecessor instead of cheating it, and this makes it guilty of heresy. The people then mutilate its right broom-hand, and burn it at a stake made of wood waste.

Asking the Monahellos and Romans clever questions can reveal that this celebration is quite innocent: just a rowdy neighborhood ritual, not targeting any specific pope or shortcoming. And that very innocence should worry the magi most.

- One under the church of St. Clement between the Lateran and the Coliseum
- One under the church of St. Prisca among the gardens of the Aventine Hill

Securing inconspicuous access to them requires fitting in with the Romans, and perhaps bribery.

When investigating the Mithraea the magi meet their current inhabitants, the Monahellos. These roving prankster faeries pretend to be monks or clerics. (Use the Privy Counselor from *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 83 and 84, but replace:

- Oath of Fealty with Martial Block

THE PALATINE REGIO

The paths leading up the Palatine all pass through the crumbling substructures and cryptoporticus of the Imperial palaces which, at night, connect the Palatine regio to the mundane world.

Magi passing through for the first time hear somebody around the corner exhort in Latin to a group of legionaries to be brave. Once past the corner, they see the young speaker, who now addresses them directly:

“Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.”

He is among an entourage of older men, all wearing classical Roman armor. After that phrase, the old Praetorian officers exchange glances, draw daggers and – unless the magi are very fast – cut down the young orator.

Immediately thereafter, rough voices are heard from beyond yet another corner. The old officers hesitate, then bolt in the direction of the magi, trying to escape a troop of blond warriors in ancient Germanic dress. The new group have their swords drawn, and command

the magi to “stop these traitors” in ridiculously bad Latin. Unless the magi comply immediately or jump out of the way, the blond soldiers try to brush the magi aside with their fists and swords, as they follow the Praetorian assassins down the passage.

The remains of the young orator are left behind. He has a golden laurel wreath in his hair and many rings. One is a signet identifying him as “C. Caesar Augustus Germanicus”. Magi versed in Roman history will recognize him as Caligula. Stealing a few golden rings is now fine, and these will turn to dust in the morning. But trying to remove the golden wreath or signet ring enrages the powerful Faerie Monarch that is now Caligula: he then rises from the dead, rallies his court of Germanic and Praetorian guardsmen, and commands them to apprehend and punish the thieves.

If the magi, perhaps a little battered, push on, in the regio on top of the hill they find the Imperial palaces intact, but mostly empty. A richly garbed young man of about twenty years promenades among them, listening to the Latin of an eloquent scholar in his fifties. There appears to be great familiarity between

the two. The young man completely ignores the many little faeries crawling in the scholar’s robes, beard and hair, and flying over his head.

Magi who examine the scholar closely can see that he wears a pallium: so he should be a pope. If they listen to his lecture, they can determine that he is a Learned Magician (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 79 to 102). With proper etiquette – kissing the ring of the scholar first, then deeply bowing to the young man – they can introduce themselves to the faeries Pope Sylvester II and Emperor Otto III. Sylvester is a little pompous, but cognizant and always eager to hear of Rome and of magic. If properly addressed, he can become a prime source of information about the Palatine faeries for the magi. The player characters might even show him, how magi protecting the Pope are actually his legacy, add to his legend as the archetypal mage-pope, and are worthy of his help.

If the magi manage to become a little bit at home on the Palatine, they may find regio levels higher than the main one, and sometime get a glimpse of Ermelina visiting.

- Order of Hermes Lore with Church Lore
- Single Weapon with Music (Singing)
- The focus on magi with one on bigots
- The Sovereign Ward about the Aegis with one concerning True Relics
- the form of their External Vis with a cross on a neck-chain
- and the appearance and equipment

The Monahellos make the magi the butt of practical jokes a few times, but if these keep their composure, the Monahellos address them:

“We have been discussing among ourselves for some time, what might be behind the remarkable reduction of demons in Rome since Leo IX entered. My brother claims, that the demons departed, because the new pope leaves them nothing to do, and I rather think that they are afraid. What do you think?”

If the magi answer that without appearing bigots, the Monahellos reward them with a few secrets of Rome, hoping to gain strong and fun allies:

- Demons indeed appear to have been leaving Rome for the last decade
- The Palatine Hill has a strong Faerie aura at night, and is inhabited by mighty faeries

- If one says “ab cauti ad cautopatem” in a Roman Mithraeum, all the people within are moved into another one. By investigating a Mithraeum with Magic aura as a ReCo 50 magical item (**ArM5**, page 100), a magus may then learn how to choose which Mithraeum to arrive in

THE PALATINE FAERIES

Many of the thousands of tales of Rome are centered on the Palatine Hill. Romulus and Remus were raised there by the she-wolf. Augustus lived there, and the Roman Emperors after him built enormous palaces there, now deserted. During the daytime the place has no aura and is visited by the homeless, the desperate and a few



scavengers and scholars. At night it sports a Faerie regio and aura of up to 6.

The faerie court of the Palatine (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 82 to 86), having already acted out and exploited the stories of eighteen hundred years, is among the most powerful and canny of Mythic Europe. In particular it now has many Faerie Monarchs. If a new stirring legend involving a ruler appears in Rome, a Highly Cognizant faerie (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 9, 10, 52, 64) might grasp the occasion to become its Monarch. And the newest Monarch is Ermelina (see *Ermelina*).

ADVERSARIES

The obvious adversaries of the German pope are the Teophilacti, the Counts of Tusculum, who support

Benedict IX. Far less obvious are their resources and their exponents' intentions. Since the early 900s, this family, with its branches, has provided or controlled nearly 20 popes, and was often headed by dukes of Spoleto.

It has been a prime target for demonic machinations for all of that time. The most famous target was the daughter of the powerful and ill-reputed Theodora Senatrix: Marozia (ca. 890 – 937). She was married thrice, the reputed lover of a pope and mother of another. She controlled yet another three and is the ancestress of five more. After her son, who was the Pope, wedded her in the Castel Sant'Angelo to the King of Italy, another of her sons roused the Romans against her bridegroom. They chased him from Rome, and her son put Marozia in

prison, where she died after five years. Scholars of the Infernal suspected her of being a Demon Child (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 100), but her many children disprove that (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 99).

Her great-grandson was the recently deceased Alberic III, who with Ermelina sired:

- Gregory II, Count of Tusculum and the Lateran
- Peter, Duke of the Romans, 'de la columpna'
- Benedict IX

So the current leaders of the family have very strong Faerie Blood – and are

THE POPE'S SLAVES

The 1051 synod does not directly address the wives of clerics. It instead legislates about "women who prostituted themselves to clerics within the walls of Rome".

A few spirited, elder prostitutes may then apply at the Lateran for slavery. A good master like the pope will house, feed and clothe his slaves, or won't he? These 'slaves' are quite a handful for magi in charge of palace security.

PETER DAMIAN

Magi with piqued interest in Church reform find in Peter Damian an excellent dialogue partner. He is a practical reformer, starting with the things close at hand: his own monastery Fonte Avellana; concrete instances of corruption among the clergy; manifest abuses of power; the expectations and needs of the faithful.

governed by Ermelina, playing at being a new Marozia.

THE FAERIE COURT OF TUSCULUM

Tusculum in the Alban Hills – once location of famous classical villas – is the central base of power of the Counts of Tusculum. It is well fortified and garrisoned, and the home of Ermelina's faerie court with its Privy Counselors, Champions, Minor Knights (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 78) and subservient lesser faeries. It has weak Divine auras in the few chapels, and medium Faerie auras in the rooms that remain of the villas, where Ermelina and her court reside.

A mundane attack on Tusculum requires a siege and a large army equipped for it, hence is out of the question. Assaulting a noble stronghold with obvious magic would be “meddling”, hence forbidden to the magi. They might however decide to spy on it intensely. The faerie court will contest this with glee, reciprocate the favor, and then send assassins.

If the magi wish to remove the threat to Leo's life, they need to find out:

- That Ermelina is the force behind it
- That she is a faerie
- What game she is playing
- How to take her out of action (finding and destroying her, beating her at her Faerie game, or even making her win it and thus cease to be a problem)

BENEDICT IX

The former pope needs to stay far from any struggles, which suits his temperament (see [Benedict IX](#) below). Any attack by the magi upon him – even just a little bit of mind reading or control – is “meddling” and forbidden. He knows enough about the Order of Hermes to not give them any excuse. If Ermelina detects magi trying to affect

Benedict IX with magic, she will do her best to make a huge diplomatic incident from it. That would leave Leo IX with only the options to refuse their further services or to lose his authority. Benedict IX negotiates with Leo and the magi on behalf of his family, protected by Ermelina's faeries.

BRAZUTUS

Ermelina has a Privy Counselor (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 83 and 84) specializing in poisoning, and spreading fear of poisoning.

He has:

- An Oath of Fealty to her
- Additional Pretenses with good scores in Church Lore (clergy), Profession: Apothecary (poisons), and Mythic Herbalism (creating poisons) (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 125 and 126) associated with Faerie instead of Magic
- An assumed identity of Brazutus, Roman poisoner
- An illusionary home and wealth appropriate for this

OCCUPYING THE ROMAN GATES

Once the magi have settled into Rome, they must face the Pope's foes.

In early March 1049, Count Gregory II and Duke Peter decide to test the Pope's resolve. In the middle of the night, they lead their armymen against the militia holding the Porta Sancti Sebastiani and Porta Latina, and occupy these gates and the connecting Aurelian walls.

In the morning, the alarm is raised at the Lateran.

Hildebrand can explain to the player characters, that it now falls to Leo IX to rally the urban militias and loyal nobles and send them to retake the gates. The militias are to be led by Benedict the Christian's son, Leo. The magi and knights are asked to protect Leo IX,

which is difficult among the many armed Romans. If Ermelina sends an assassin against him, the magi might detect in a dramatic way the Pope's recently acquired Commanding Aura (see [Regaining Authority](#)), that will also inspire the Romans to quickly retake the control of their fortifications.

THE WORK OF THE REFORM

THE PAPAL COURT

Leo IX works to assemble a court of advisers, to determine papal politics long after his death. Among it are churchmen from his native Lorraine like Friedrich, brother of its rebellious duke, and Humbert, the abbot of Moyenmoutier, whom he makes his principal secretary in 1049, and Cardinal-Bishop of Silva Candida in 1051. Hildebrand becomes Cardinal-Subdeacon and papal administrator. Leo also gains the collaboration of the Camaldolese prior and reformer Peter Damian, an ardent accuser of all kinds of corruption within the Church.

THE EASTER SYNODS (1049, 1050, 1051)

Around each Easter, Leo convenes synods in the Lateran to promote the reforms he holds necessary to recover the authority of the Church. These reestablish the celibacy of the clergy, and disentangle Church offices from compromising worldly ties. Leo is, however, circumspect with regard to investitures with Church offices by laymen, a privilege Henry III strongly defends.

These synods also serve to show the support Leo has in the Church, so his allies – like Hugh of Cluny and Halynard of Lyon – will usually attend.

The synod of 1049 confirms that clergy of the rank of subdeacon or higher must remain celibate, and decides that clerical offices or decisions obtained for worldly goods are invalid.

“GREGORY VII

HAD FOR SOME TIME TAKEN COUNSEL WITH A MAN USED TO THE MOST HEINOUS CRIMES, A FRIEND OF BENEDICT IX NAMED GERHARD BRAZUTUS. THIS MAN IS TOLD TO HAVE WITHIN 13 YEARS POISONED BY SUBTERFUGE 6 POPES: CLEMENT II, DAMASUS II, LEO IX, VICTOR II, STEPHEN X AND BENEDICT X.”

BISHOP BENO II OF OSNABRÜCK (SEE *MONUMENTA GERMANIAE HISTORICA, LIBELLI DE LITE IMPERATORUM ET PONTIFICUM TOMUS II*, HANNOVER 1892, PAGE 379)

In late summer of 1052 a lengthy journey, with many stops and ceremonies, brings Leo to the Emperor and his army besieging Pressburg (today's Bratislava). There he tries in vain to negotiate with the Hungarian king, and prepares his own campaign against the Normans.

The storyguide can use these travels for adventures all over Mythic Europe. The magi make many contacts among clergy and intellectuals, and some may build a reputation as capable go-betweens.

This may lead into a Fourth Estate saga as described in *Transforming Mythic Europe*, pages 8 to 53.

At this time Leo rigorously denies the validity of sacraments by simoniacal clergy, but the synod does not follow him in this and three years later Peter Damian convinces Leo of their validity. A synod making the sacraments of simonists invalid would have terrible effects indeed: many confessions would be invalid, and many priests would have false ordinations.

The synod of 1050 condemns the teaching of Berengar of Tours about the transubstantiation.

The synod of 1051 again confirms the requirement of celibacy, and makes the remaining wives of Roman clergy slaves (Latin: *ancillae*) of the Lateran palace.

THE TRAVELING POPE

Leo IX and his court spend the remainder of the years 1049, 1050 and 1051 traveling throughout Europe, protected by the magi. This prevents him from being easily targeted by his Roman enemies, and allows him to propagate reform at local synods. His travel significantly increases papal authority, as he is present to enforce changes in local Church organization, like the deposition of unrepentant simoniacal bishops. The synod of Reims, for example, reconfirms the need of canonical election for all

Church offices, and emphasizes the primacy of the Pope.

THE NORMANS

The Normans first appear politically as a minor power, serving the Papal



interest and in 1050 receiving his blessing to rule portions of Southern Italy. After the leaders of the Normans change, and he finds himself unable to appoint bishops in their territories, Leo attempts to build a coalition against them. Unless the player characters go beyond their covenant's mandate and intervene, his attempt to weld together Byzantine, Imperial and local forces, under his command, has limited success. In 1052, Henry III transfers his authority over Southern Italy to Leo, but gives him no additional resources. So Leo enlists more Swabian soldiers and Italian levies.

The Quaesitores in nearby Magvillus quickly become aware of this emerging conflict, and remind the magi of Conventum Praetorianum to keep out of it. They request the magi to inform Leo IX, that they must not advise him in this war or interfere with his decisions or their consequences. The magi still protect his person, as the Pope, though.

THE BATTLE OF CIVITATE

After the Easter synod in 1053, where he excommunicates the Normans, Leo IX leaves Rome with his troops. On the march he falls ill, gaining Aging Points to bring his Decrepitude to 4.

Marching on nevertheless, he reaches the troops of the Italian lords, and then maneuvers to unite with a Byzantine army coming from Apulia. Instead, in mid-June they encounter the smaller Norman army at Civitate near Foggia. After fruitless negotiations a bloody battle is won decisively by the Normans. The Swabian swordsmen of the Pope make a last stand and die nearly to the last man. Leo considers them martyrs afterwards.

THE POPE CAPTIVE

Leo IX awaits the result of the battle in Civitate. Its inhabitants surrender him and his retinue to the Normans. After burying the dead, the Normans lead their prisoner to Benevent and hold him

there and in Melfi – generally respectfully – for nine months. Finally the pope recognizes the Norman houses Hauteville and Drengot Quarrel and ratifies their recent conquests. He even assumes Humphrey and the Guiscard Hauteville as vassals of the Church, to protect him against Germany and Byzantium.

The magi must alleviate his 'honorable prison' and growing illness, without threatening his captors or rescuing him. Perhaps the magi hide from the Normans for nine months, while still looking after and protecting the pope?

BYZANTIUM

In prison Leo writes a missive to Michael I Kerularios, the Patriarch of Constantinople, about growing disagreements between the Eastern and Western Churches. This letter is the first instance of a pope using the Donation of Constantine (see [Canon Law](#)) to prove his authority. He then sends Humbert of Moyenmoutier and Friedrich of Lorraine as legates to Constantinople. They deliver it and negotiate with the Patriarch. In real history, he is unwilling to accept the Roman position, and in July 1054 Humbert asserts the Great Schism of the Church by presenting a bull of Leo IX that excommunicates the Patriarch.

DEATH OF LEO IX

In March 1054 Leo is released from his prison. He arrives in Rome on April 3rd. In April 13th he is carried from the Lateran to St. Peter's and dies there on April 19th. Player characters may use magic to ease his passing, but the strain of the campaign and in prison have broken the Pope's health, and his time has come.

THE GREAT GAME OF BENEDICT IX

If Ermelina is still active, Benedict IX contacts the player characters after Leo IX's death. His messenger is a

faerie. He invites the magi to a meeting in a little church on the Via Appia, called St. Mary in Palmis and better known as 'Domine Quo Vadis?'. The magi are aware that they mustn't touch him.

If they meet, he requires proper ceremony as a bishop. If accorded it, he explains to the magi that he is enthroned Pope. His papacy was acknowledged by Emperor Conrad II, the father of Henry III. He deplors the destiny that Leo IX brought upon himself by abandoning the Church reform for a war, and then failing as a general.

He suggests that Leo had failings like every human, while Benedict's mother keeps every rule she imposes on herself. Perhaps it would be best if she were the one to make the rules. If his legitimacy is questioned, he considers this an issue to be resolved politically. And he offers to overcome any objection with money, privileges for the Order of Hermes, or offices in his court for the magi.

Magi who accept Benedict's offer need to be circumspect. The Emperor and the Roman Church hierarchy reject his claims to the papacy and consider him an enemy. By setting up Conventum Praetorianum, the Order follows them in this. So Tribunals may rule harshly against magi who aid him.

If the player characters refuse, and explain clearly the forces arrayed against Benedict, he is impressed and unsettled. They can make counter-proposals, in which he reins in his mother and retires to a monastery. Benedict might be induced to accept these, if they include safeguards for his family and compensation for the loss of his, admittedly tenuous, Papal throne.

EXTENDING THE EMPEROR'S REQUEST

If the magi successfully protect Leo IX, but do not remove the threat Ermelina poses, the Emperor requests their protection for the next German pope sent to Rome. In real history,

Henry dies in October 1056. His six-year-old son's regents do not have the influence with the Order of Hermes to extend the mission.

APPENDIX: NPCs

BRUNO OF EGISHEIM-DAGSBURG, BISHOP OF TOUL, POPE LEO IX

The intellectually gifted son of a count from Lorraine, young Bruno was appointed to a post in the chancellery of Conrad II, and then consecrated bishop of Toul at the age of 24. He is a man of discretion and duty, who has served the Salian kings all his life. With 46 called up by Henry III to follow Damasus II as the next pope, he sees not only the manifest danger, but the obligation. Well versed in both civil and canon law,

he accepts, but plans to be elected Pope canonically in Rome. His experience in the chancellery and as bishop has nurtured his conviction that a lasting institution must be built on laws. So his duty to the Church is to restore it to canon law (see Canon Law), and he will not shirk it.

HILDEBRAND OF SOVANA

Born in Tuscany around 1025 and well connected in Rome, the bright young monk Hildebrand has been a follower of Gregory VI, dismissed in Sutri. He accompanied him as capellanus and advisor to his confinement in Cologne, and tended him there until his death. He is inspired by the reform of Cluny under abbot Odilo, which stresses the freedom of the Church from secular power. Among the curia of Leo IX, Hildebrand is the indispensable adept for Rome, the papal rights and resources there, and its

nobility. After Leo's death Hildebrand will keep his curia together, and soon become its most influential member.

ERMELINA

As a Highly Cognizant Palatine Faerie, Ermelina noticed that Marozia of the Teophilacti stirred the dreams, hopes and fears of the Romans with the story of her rise, power, downfall and end. Most Romans feel that Marozia found the way to power for a crafty and courageous woman. Most Teophilacti see the short time that she controlled the city and its popes as a highlight of their family history. When starting to emulate Marozia, Ermelina happened upon one of the demons sent to corrupt her.

It took only a little help from that being for Ermelina to marry Alberic III, Count of Tusculum. From there, subtly presenting herself as a new Marozia



created enough emotion to feed Ermelina's way to Monarch among the Palatine faeries, and gain her a powerful retinue (see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 12 and 13). At the same time, the 'helpful' demon found that the marriage he sponsored helped corrupt Alberic III, the Teophilacti, and Rome in a way no sterile Demon Child could have. Many simpler demons were driven from Rome, to prevent them from interfering.

The arrival of the German popes put a new twist into Ermelina's Faerie game, turning her into a lioness fighting for her influence and her family. Ermelina expects to end her game imprisoned by one of her sons – preferably Benedict IX. For her “the journey is the reward”, provided it stirs up plenty of emotion.

BENEDICT IX

Teophilact III of the Teophilacti of Tusculum is the favorite son of a faerie queen, born and bred for her Faerie game – while his father educated him for a part in the dynastic games of Roman nobles. His Faerie Blood makes him look much younger than he is. He appeared to be twelve years old when enthroned Pope in 1032. He now appears to be in his early twenties.

Benedict IX affects a spoilt, blasé attitude. He is actually a sharp judge of character, ruthlessly exploits weaknesses, and defends his hard-won independence. He detests conventional morals and delights in showing their inadequacy. He leaves defeating the minions of the Emperor to Ermelina, but negotiates on behalf of his family. And he would sacrifice any of its individuals, even his mother, to defend the family or himself.

ERLEMBALD COTTA

Erlembald is a courageous young man with common sense. He acts on his convictions and is able to explain them in simple words. He comes from a family of small vassals of the archdiocese of Milan. He became a

military captain early in his life, and through his elder brother, Landulf, also an exponent of the Pataria: the movement which opposes bishop Guido of Velate and the high nobility of Milan.

APPENDIX: THE WESTERN CHURCH REFORMING

The following represents, in game, the Church during its crisis around 1050.

CANON LAW

For many hundred years the Church held synods and councils: assemblies of bishops convened to authoritatively decide on matters of faith, the practice of Christian religion and Church organization. In theory, the Church is governed by the canon law laid down in them. The authority of many of these synods was accepted only locally, so the canon law began to differ between Eastern and Western Church.

Also in 1050 it still is the law of the Church – though very few really know or understand it. Over the centuries forged documents have been added to it, like the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals or the Donation of Constantine. Often it has become overgrown by practices never sanctioned by a synod, but derived from social and political necessities and opportunities.

When even archbishops and popes are no longer chosen, invested and consecrated in ways conforming to canon law, they do not gain and cannot confer the Commanding Aura (see *The Church*, pages 25 and 26) or association with the divine (in the sense of *Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 38). Going down the chain, most priests ordained by unlawful bishops can no longer temper auras (see *The Church*, page 28 and

Realms of Power: The Divine, pages 38 to 41). The results of this are subtle, but if accumulated over time they can become devastating for the Church – especially if the sacraments administered by such priests become suspect.

UNLAWFUL PRACTICES

As widespread as the non-canonical practices and customs are, as unclear to 1050s clergy are the ways to leave them behind. Radical condemnation often appears to be impractical, while practical compromises can be accused as unlawful and heretic.

NICOLAITISM

Shortly after 300, the synod of Elvira in Spain required the celibacy of clergy from deacon upward. From that time it is canon law in the Western Church, but – especially in the countryside – was never enforced. As ubiquitous, striking violation of canon law, married priests are deplored by intellectual clerics as the heresy of nicolaitism.

SIMONY

In 451 the council of Chalcedon explicitly forbade to ordain priests for payment. This was considered an ideal, and extended over time to prohibit all payment to ascend to Church offices. Many of these offices include secular functions, and are sources of worldly power and income: so negotiating for them quickly can become unlawful. This is seen as the main obstacle to establish the rule of canon law in the Church, and accused as the heresy of simony. Intellectual clerics extend the definition of simony often, so that it includes receiving payment for any kind of Church function.

REGAINING AUTHORITY

Once Leo IX has become Pope according to canon law, he himself has a Commanding Aura again, as do those he invests with sufficient rank. In the synods he convenes this gives him power over simoniacal bishops, who

sometimes spontaneously confess and repent their sinful ascent to office.

Enforcing canon law in the Western Church all over Mythic Europe is an undertaking far too large for Leo IX, and all the popes still to come from his curia. There isn't even a method yet to weed out the forgeries in canon law. But synods passing new law will also allow the Church to adapt to the changing times without giving in to lawlessness. Thereby effective lawful succession in Church offices can be assured, leading to its stable state described in *The Church*.



MYTHIC WEAPONS

A frequent complaint in **Ars Magica** circles is how, due to the functioning of Magic Resistance in the game, any legendary weapon would be useless, being repelled by Parma Magica.

A related problem is that, as Wards against Mundane Weapons are rather easily possible, even an enchanted weapon that has enough Penetration to go through a magus Parma Magica may still be repelled by such a ward.

In this article, we'll thus explore how, in the context of the game, such Mythic Weapons might be created.

MYTHIC WEAPONS

In *Realms of Power: Magic*, we are presented with Awakened Items, which are, in essence, items with Magic Might and Powers. Despite their wonderful potential, these are given little treatment, and are easily overlooked by players and SG alike.

How can we use these to create fearsome artifacts?

First, as a magical thing, a sword may have magic Qualities and Powers, including a minor magical quality such as Improved Damage, which enhances its damage by +3 each time it is taken. As this is part of the sword's nature, just like a griffin's beak or a dragon's claws, this is *not* stopped by magical resistance, which allows the creation of terrifyingly destructive weapons that ignore Magical Resistance as if it wasn't here.

Going further, such a weapon might Grant Puissance to its wielder, or, alternatively, use its own scores,

augmented by suitable qualities, such as Improved Attack, Initiative or Defense.

Although this is House Rule territory, we can also conceivably allow these qualities to apply, not to the weapon, but to its wielder's scores when using it.

Likewise, it can have any appropriate power, from the ability to close its wielder's wounds (think Excalibur's scabbard) or to throw thunderbolts. A lance like Gaé Bolga could have a Touch range Perdo Corpus power similar to *Evisceration of a Thousand Knives*.

Of course, penetration becomes an issue, as it should be. If this is really a problem, as an optional rule, one can allow additional penetration to be built into the Power, on a one-by-one basis.

For example, the *Wound that Weeps* is a level 15 power that could be built into a Might 10 weapon, making it easily resistible by all but the most junior magi. But one could include 10 levels of additional, "built-in" penetration, creating this as a level 25 power,

All this is well and good, but a combat-ready magus will have defenses such as a Personal Ward against Steel. But here comes the icing on the cake: As these weapons have Magic Might, they also have magical resistance, so a ward that would repel a hermetic weapon will need to penetrate in order to protect against them. This also makes them harder to destroy through magic, as they can resist spells aimed at them.

BY VINCENT GARCIA-GOMEZ

OTHER REALMS AND ARTEFACTS

These rules can be expanded to include other realms. It is, of course, perfectly possible to build a faerie or demon that looks and acts like a sword, or a lance which is a relic (with associated powers), and I encourage you to try it. On the other hand, this gives a different feeling, and can be harder, whereas the Awakened Item rules are in my opinion very clear and perfect for this.

The Faerie Realm is especially susceptible to have scores of Mythic Weapons, but both the Divine and the Infernal can accommodate them, too. Using guidelines from various realms allow these to still have very different powers and feel, and you should, if possible, use these rather than hermetic ones.

An interesting bit is that, despite all their advantages, such weapons are, more or less, conscious, and characters in their own right. So in theory it is the weapon, not its wielder, that chooses when and how to use its powers.

This forces the character to follow his weapon's rules if he wants to benefit from its help. A magic hammer might require you to protect magical auras, a Faerie sword could send you on heroic quests, a Divine lance would ask you to seek out evil beasts and wrongdoers, whereas an infernal blade will probably require you to feed it with the blood of innocents (probably deserting you at the worst possible time, thus ensuring that your soul goes right to hell).

Any Cursed Weapon could have a ReTe teleport effect to ensure it comes back to its bearer, Mentem spells to compel her, or just Grant a Flaw.

In fact, Mythic Weapons have a great, and underestimated potential, to become an important ally of any character with the Magical Thing Companion, and can have entire stories build around them. For example, if you've read the Chronicles of Amber (and if you haven't, you should!), Frakir is one of Merlin's best trump cards, one which can be easily modeled using these rules.

Even magi can benefit from such an ally: An awakened staff could grant virtues, or use Vim magics to augment a sorcerer's power though powers akin to *Wizard's Reach* (ArM5, page 160), the *Patient Spell* (*Magi of Hermes*, page 113), or the *Gift of Vigor* (ArM5, page 134). As a very powerful house rule, it could also Grant Puissance in Magic Theory, or Finesse...

ADDING MYTHIC WEAPONS AND ARTIFACTS TO YOUR GAME

Any character which takes a Magical Thing Companion can begin play with such an artifact, which should have its own history, goals and personality.

A mystery cult could grant one to its adepts, either on its own, or along another virtue. As discussed before, this could be a significant boost on a magus's power, on par with a Familiar or Talisman. Of course, one might not like what one gets. Also, since benefiting from its powers often requires lowering one's Parma, a sufficiently powerful pairing could come to dominate its magus without him even realizing it.

A storyguide could easily inject a legendary weapon into his game, sending his players after Durandal or Merlin's staff. They also could face a crusader whose holy mace protects

from injury, or a cursed dagger that turn those who seize it into frenzied killers.

Another possibility is to go even beyond this, to add buildings and places to the list of mythical things, especially with Faeries: A Castle or a cursed marsh might be a single, giant magic thing, complete with its own might and powers. This would allow the creation of sentient, moving castles whose internal design changes as it wills.

One should probably take care, nonetheless, to keep these rare enough: If each grog comes equipped with a Bludgeon of Dragon-Slaying, they quickly lose their aura of power and mystery.

CONCLUSION

Here it is. I hope this'll be useful to you, and will give you a new appreciation of the wonderful work that was done with *Realms of Power: Magic*. Have fun!

Now for some sample weapons using some of the alternatives presented above as examples of what can be done.

INCIPIENS, FIRST RING OF VERDITIUS

The first ring forged by Verditius, Incipiens hasn't the power of his later brethren. Still, it may prove invaluable to almost any magus.

Magic Might: 10 (Vim)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +3

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing

Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power × 4, Ritual Power × 1, Minor Virtue (Arcane Lore), Improved Powers × 1, Limited Movement, Major Flaw (Mute), Major Flaw (No Hands), No Fatigue, Temporary Might

Personality Traits: Hubris +3, Vengeful +3, Crafty +2

Abilities: Tocsan 5 (Enchantments), Magic Theory 5, Concentration 5 (Spells), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (history), Verditius Cult Lore 2 (History)

Powers:

Wizard's Communion (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Vim, Range: Voice, +2, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Group, +2: A level 50 version of wizard's communion. This can be used in cooperation with a magus, to halve the level of any 5th magnitude spell he's casting.

Shroud Magic (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-4, Form: Vim, Range: Voice, +2, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Ind, +0: Affects any level 50 or lower spell

Grant Unaging (Ritual), Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-10, Form: Vim, Range:

Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +0, Target: Ind, +0.

The Patient Spell (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-4, Form: Vim, Range: Voice, +2, Duration: Conc, +1, Target: Ind, +0, 5 mastery points: As *Magi of Hermes*, page 113: Incipiens can hold and release a lvl 35 or lower spell.



THE LANCE OF OLYNDICUS

Olyndicus was a Celtiberian war chief who fought against the romans, using a silver lance sent to him by the gods. This Faerie artefact may, or not, be the actual lance.

It can enhance its wielder's scores for Sun Duration, at a cost of +3 per might point spend. Although powerful, due to the lance's Temporary Might, this is seldom used. It also acts as a teacher, advising his bearer to restore pagan worship, and retains a burning hatred of all things roman.

Faerie Might: 15 (Auram)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik +1

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing

Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Damage × 2, Improved Might × 5, Lesser Power × 3, Limited Movement, Major Flaw (No Hands), No Fatigue, Personal Power × 1, Ritual Power × 1, Temporary Might

Personality Traits: Angry +2, Devout +3, Honest +2

Abilities: Area Lore: Iberia 4 (history), Awareness 3, Celtiberian 5 (storytelling), Faerie Lore 5 (Celtic Gods), Folk Ken 2 (Warriors), Hunt 3(tracking), Magic Lore 2 (magical traditions), Organization Lore: Roman army 2 (personalities), Single Weapon 4 (Spear, Short), Teaching 1 (Thrown Weapon), Thrown Weapon 5 (Javelin)

Combat:

Short Spear/Javelin: Init: +2, Attack +7, Defense +6, Damage +11

Powers:

Eyes of the Bat (Lesser), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-7, Form: Auram, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Hearing, +3. As per the spell of the same name, this needs to be used each turn on the wielder, yet may save his life.

Grant Puissance in Single Weapon (Lesser),

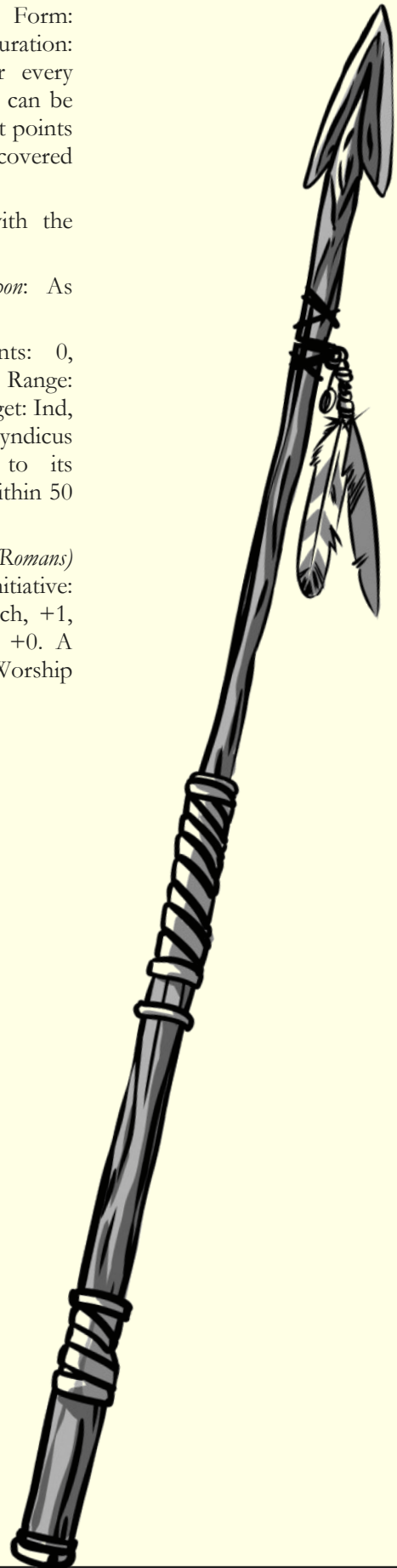
Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-2, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +2, Target: Ind, +0. For every Might point invested, the wielder can be given +3 to Single Weapon. Might points spent on this power are only recovered when its effects are withdrawn.

Grant Tough: As above, but with the Tough Virtue.

Grant Puissance in Thrown Weapon: As above, with Thrown Weapon.

Faithful Return (Personal), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-1, Form: Terram, Range: Per, +0, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Ind, +0. Once thrown, the lance of Olyndicus returns the following round to its wielder's hand, so long as he is within 50 paces.

Grant Minor Flaw: Hatred (Romans) (Ritual), Cost: 25, Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-10, Form: Vim, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +0, Target: Ind, +0. A higher purpose to restore Pagan Worship is a fine alternative.



SHIELD OF EVALACH

Given to the Saracen King Evalach by Josephus, son of Joseph of Arimathea, and later used by Galahad, this holy shield may increase its wearer's Defense score, and heal him of all wounds, should it so choose. However, those who even touch it without being pure of heart often find a quick demise.

Divine Might: 15 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre +1, Com 0, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing

Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power × 4, Improved Defense × 3, Lesser Power × 4, Limited Movement, Major Flaw (No Hands), Major Flaw (Pious), Minor Virtue (Arcane Lore), Minor Virtue (Educated), Minor Virtue (Premonitions), No Fatigue, Temporary Might

Personality Traits: Adventurous +2, Brave +3, Peaceful +1, Pious +6

Abilities: Awareness 6 (bodyguarding), Breton 5 (poetry), Church Lore 4 (History), Dominion Lore 4 (divine creatures), Faerie Lore 2 (Faerie Castles), Infernal Lore 2 (demons), Latin 4 (church ceremonies), Magic Lore 2 (creatures), Organization Lore: Arthurian 2, Penetration 5 (Curse of the Unworthy), Premonitions 5 (threats to the bearer)

Combat:

Heater Shield: Init: +0, Attack 0, Defense +9, Damage 0

Powers:

Curse of the Unworthy (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-7, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +2, Target: Ind +0, Sun, Penetration +25. Based on Invocation/Cursing base 35, this effect gives 5 additional botch dices on all Stress rolls. This is used on those who take, or attempt to take, the Shield without being pure of heart, as well as those who hide themselves from it thought Magic Resistance. Includes 25

levels of *built-in* penetration.

God is my Shield (Lesser), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-8, Form: Mentem, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +2, Target: Ind, +0. Based on Meditation/Blessing base 05, this increases the Wielder's Pious trait by 1, up to a maximum of +3.

Shield against Unholy Powers (Lesser), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-12, Form: Vim, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +2, Target: Ind, +0. Invocation/Blessing 15 : Grants Magic Resistance 15 to the Shield's Wielder.

No Evil Shall Fool the Light of Truth (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik+0, Form: Mentem, Range: Per, +0, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Touch, +1. Meditation/Intervention base 4: Due to the shield's peculiarity, this works at Touch range, and allows it to perceive evil in people.

The Blessing of the Holy Knight (Greater), Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Ind +0, Level:

CrCo50, Design: 50 levels, Base 45, +1 Touch, -5 Might cost: Based on Purity/Intervention 45, this heals a Heavy Wound or less per turn. This is a miraculous effect, requiring no vis, so I build it using the Greater Powers rule, not the Ritual ones.



HARBINGER OF SORROW

This black, demonic axe can replace its wielder's scores with its own, twisting in her hand to land better blows than she could, and can also heal her by draining over people's life, making her very hard to kill.

It has 2 basic schemes: Strengthening a wicked man's power, helping him spread misery and despair, or... helping defeat such people. Taking some would-be hero, helping him to kill evil wizards or rebel against a wicked lord. This ensures the victim's souls go to hell without repentance, as well as promotes murder, war and bloodshed. Indeed, it encourages violent solutions, reliance on strength rather than diplomacy, and likes to turn on its wielder once he's thoroughly corrupted, as quick to murder in rage than those he sought to defeat.

Infernal Might: 20 (Vim)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik +2

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Thing, Berserk, Overconfident, No Hands

Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Abilities \times 5, Improved Attack \times 3, Improved Damage \times 4, Improved Initiative \times 2, Lesser Power \times 8, Major Flaw (No Hands), Minor Virtue (Arcane Lore), No Fatigue, Temporary Might

Personality Traits: Angry +2, Vicious +2, Manipulative +1

Abilities: Awareness 4 (Preys), Church Lore 2 (history), Dominion Lore 3 (saints), Folk Ken 4 (Youths), Great Weapon 8 (Pole Axe), Guile 5 ("I don't stand a chance without this axe?"), Hunt 2 (tracking), Infernal Lore 5 (demons), Intrigue 3 (plotting), Leadership 4 (intimidation), Norman French 5, Order of Hermes Lore 2 (politics), Penetration 5 (Consumption)

Combat:

(Acts as a Pole Axe, with Damage +23)

Pole Axe: Init +9, Attack +22, Defense

+11, Damage +24

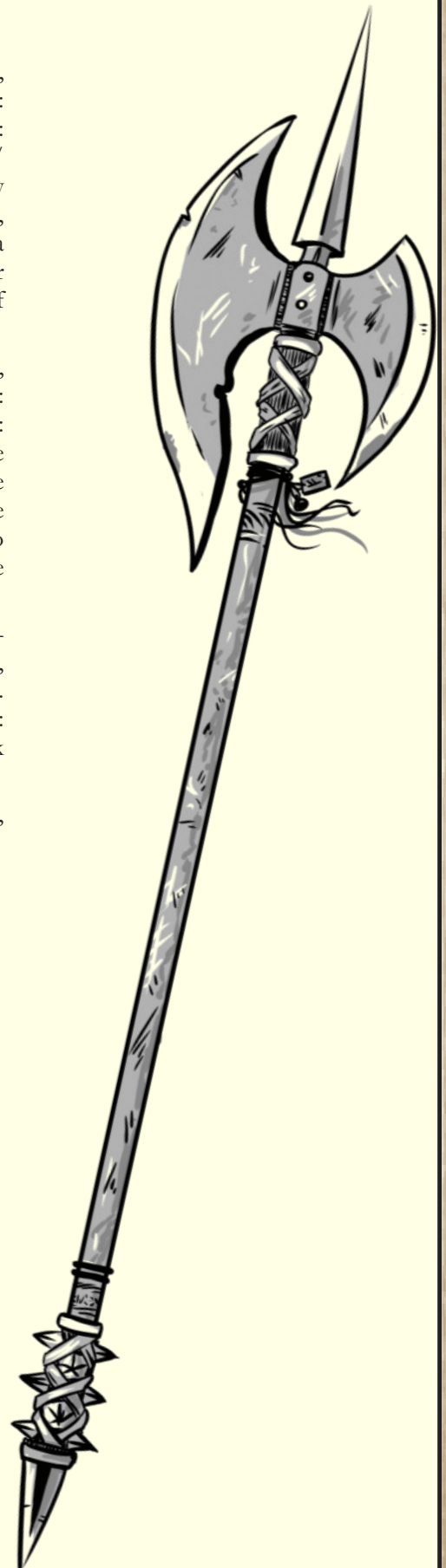
Powers:

Drink the Blood, Heal the Fool: Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-9, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Ind, +0. Based on Incantation/Consumption base 25, this permanently heals a target's Incapacitating Wound, and cause an Incapacitating Wound to a victim. The Axe usually uses this power while his wielder strikes, healing him of his wounds while killing his victims.

Drain Away Life's Vigor: Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-3, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Mom, +0, Target: Ind, +0. Incantation/Consumption base 5: Permanently restore a target's Fatigue level by causing a victim to lose a Fatigue level. This allows the wielder to constantly exert himself, until the Axe leaves him dry.

Lust for Blood: Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-10, Form: Mentem, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Diam, +1, Target: Ind, +0. Based on Incantation/Diablerie base 15: This grants the Wielder the Berserk Virtue.

When Tragedy Strikes: Points: 0, Initiative: Qik-10, Form: Corpus, Range: Touch, +1, Duration: Sun, +2, Target: Ind, +0. Incantation/Malediction base 10: This gives a -4 penalty to rolls to quit the Berserk state, as well as 4 additional botch dices when trying to do so. The Harbinger loves nothing more than to see her wielder murder his friends and loved ones, cutting him away from all human connections while swamping him in guilt.



THE THIRD LINEAGE: THE CURSED LINE

By MARK BAKER

This is the Third stage of my collection of Bonisagus lineages. Each of the following wizards are a collection of old and new Bonisagus magi who can be placed as NPC's in your campaign, and involve a basic story seed for each, or at least an amusing role-playing opportunity that will take up a little time. I have supplied the ages but not magical statistics, as each troupe appears to play at their own level of power.

This lineage also follows from Hypatia, similar to the First lineage, but is somewhat of an offshoot as its members follow their own paths and goals. Each of these members have

something of a fear of discovery of their true intentions, and tend to avoid a great deal of attention of Quaesitores.

MARIANUS BONISAGUS

Age: 130 (105)

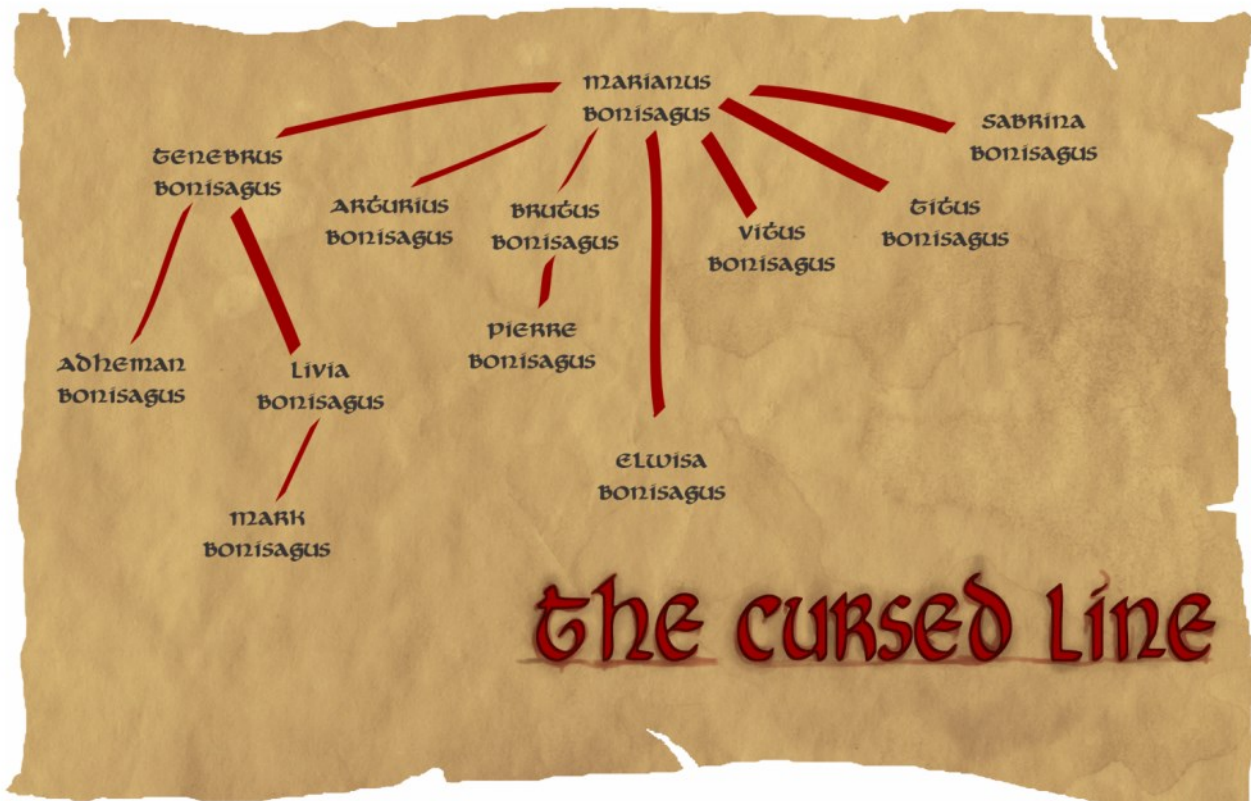
Theme: Teacher with a secret.

Quote: "I apologise, but Cordelia is twelve summers, and I have three younger students I am already looking after; as you know, the best effect for

teaching is within the younger years. I believe Aemilla is looking for someone to help in the lab, perhaps I can write to her on your behalf..."

Master: Hypatia Bonisagus

Description: Marianus is the traditional image of the Bonisagus wizard. He dresses in robes, has a kindly face and white beard, minds his own business, puts his research into his house and does his best to make his house succeed. He also has a major dark secret that he spends much of his life



fixated on, in that he is in a dark and mysterious cult devoted to raising Hell itself, and uses his reputation and powers to form the unfortunate apprentices under him into willing (or unknowing) cultists of Hell.

Marianus is a master of Mentem magics so the apprentices rarely remember much of what occurred other than in nightmares, and his teaching is so well known that he is often requested by other members of House Bonisagus to foster apprentices. He is careful to never take too many, in case of his secret somehow being leaked to the Order at large. He is well known for only taking apprentices under the age of 10, which is commonly believed (amongst those in his house) to be because he feels that is the most critical stage of learning magic and his teaching has the most effect at that point. He takes apprentices over this age occasionally, and only for the purpose of teaching and only when they have a special spark. One or two of these older apprentices have stumbled upon his secret laboratory, and it is possible that someone may be blackmailing him because of it. He looks forward to continuing his deception for many years to come.

Marianus often acts as a mystagogue for his students, granting them the Apt Student virtue. He has permanent arcane connections to all of his students, and has created an amazing network of contacts through his house, as well as inducting many of his students into his own cult.

Personality Traits: Cunning +3, Calm +2, Focused +2

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Dark Secret, Good Teacher, Good Reputation (Amazing teacher)

Story Seed: A PC may send his student to Marianus for teaching, and the student comes back better than he ever has been. But why is the apprentice collecting arcane connections, why is he suddenly cruel to those around him, and

what does he whisper into the fire late at night?

TENEBRUS BONISAGUS

Age: 75 (50)

Theme: Accidental Necromancer

Quote: “G-G-G-Ghosts are only on -on-one f-f-f-f-form of und-d-d-d-ead-d sp-sp-sp-spirit...”

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Tenebrus dresses in black, has an unruly mop of dark hair and is often followed by his companion, Grimm the Grim Dog. (Fear: Ghosts) Tenebrus originally saw himself as a healer, but has long since realized his greatest passion is researching ways to summon more and greater hordes of dead, manipulating spirits, or otherwise necromantic spells and skills. He occasionally still denies that he identifies as a necromancer, but his flying throne made of ancient bones usually makes him consider the idea thoughtfully.

For Tenebrus, actually casting ancient and powerful necromantic spells is something he may never do, but he finds great fascination in the intricacies of the magical theory of Necromancy. Tenebrus is rather naïve, and a necromantic cult are using his talents for evil. Tenebrus would be crushed if he knew what they actually thought of him.

Tenebrus has the capacity to summon legions of armies from the dead if he had some reason to do so, enough that he could easily conquer small mundane kingdoms and set himself up as a Necromancer Lord. He knows that’s rather mean and people would be hurt, so he hopes if he ever did summon up legions of the dead people that the other side would surrender... because otherwise he would surrender before a blow is given.

Personality Traits: Nerd +3, Compassionate +3

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Major Magical Focus (Necromancy), Social Handicap (Stutterer), Naive, Compassionate

Story Seed: A necromantic cult are using items and spells Tenebrus has created to cause havoc with the dead near the covenant on a truly apocalyptic scale. Investigation of his sigil might lead to him, and then to a cult with very nefarious purposes. But what to do with Tenebrus?

ARTURIUS BONISAGUS

Age: 40 (20)

Theme: Possessed and Deluded Summoner

Quote: “The Tytaleans were foolish, easily deluded by their own pride. I have a foolproof, Hermetic method of summoning that guarantees no corruption of the soul...”

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Arturias life is an unfortunate one; while apprenticed to Marianus, he swore a blood oath with a demon to promised that “He would make the pain go, and wouldn’t even remember how bad it has been.” The demon, Calliax, was unable to affect Marianus personally but created enough hints that Arturias had found out Marianus secrets and was going to betray Marianus to the Quaesitores so that Marianus used his magics to wipe the boys mind, creating an entirely new mind from the ashes of the old.

Arturias is mad, his mind broken from the abuse and mental instabilities placed upon him, and for far too long looking directly into the pits of Hell. He uses his magics cruelly to deceive and



gain power over those around him, knowing it as the only way to survive.

Unfortunately for most, Arturias is also smart enough to maintain a façade for the Order of Hermes, though maintaining it completely is difficult for him. Calliax intends to grow Arturias' power into something that could threaten Mythic Europe itself. The demons no longer tempt Arturias into sin, but use him to tempt others into sin on sometimes a rather large scale, or simply to pave the way for more corruption.

Arturias, due to his infernal promises, can feel no pain, and suffers no wound penalties.

Personality Traits: Wrathful +5, Lustful +5, Psychotic +5

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Summoning, Commanding, Plagued by Supernatural Entity (Infernal)

Story Seed: The PC's receive a tractatus on Infernal lore after noticing some increase in demonic activity locally. Finding the tractatus simultaneously written as a tractatus and also a diary, they find the last diary of the boy Samuel, who is writing this Tractatus in the hope that his master will not punish him with the hot chains or 'worse, take me downstairs...' again. He doesn't know what has happened, but his friend Calliax swore to Samuel that he wouldn't even remember the

years of pain after he was finished with his Master. The tractatus ends suddenly, slightly incomplete.

Do the PC's investigate a strange, coded diary from a desperate boy? But who would remember the birth name of a boy from over forty years ago?

ADHEMAR BONISAGUS

Age: 30 (5)

Theme: Cursed Wizard on a Mission

Quote: "You want to take your time? Neither of us have the time!"

Master: Tenebris Bonisagus

Description: After he gauntleted, Adhemar received a mixed blessing; an hourglass from Death showing the exact moment of his death, one hundred years from when he received it (Or at least it has 100 written on it, with sand endlessly flowing through.)

Adhemar swore to do his utmost to make a place of peace and prosperity for all before his inevitable death, and so has found himself a decent sized area he seeks to turn into a place that he can organise. He uses his time carefully, using his seasons as optimally as possible to create guardians, improve crop yields and so on within his magical demesne.

Adhemar thinks constantly about how his land will survive after he has died, and is currently considering how to have an apprentice to pass on his legacy whilst not giving up fifteen of his valuable seasons of instruction.

Adhemar is only violent to those who impede upon his lands or threaten the safety of those within it.

Personality Traits: Hurried +1, Driven + 5

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Death Prophecy (A Century) Driven (Major) Make a land of peace and prosperity.

Story Seed: Adhemar could commission some grand scale works from more powerful PC's, or put the PC's through a series of tests to see if they fit into his 'new world' before he invites them in. He could also be an interesting case as a friend to the PC's, as the local Quaesitores might object to him taking a large area of land and taking it as his own fief; especially if a local mundane lord wishes the same arable land.

ELEWISA BONISAGUS

Age: 35 (10)

Theme: Protagonist

Quote: "I don't care if you were here twenty years ago! Galeron Tremere, This vis source is mine! Draw your Certamen circle, I can take you or any of the weak minded buffoons you call your housemates!"

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Taken as an apprentice relatively late for Marianus, Elewisa Bonisagus was cute, self-confident and aware of her abilities. She ran her master into the ground demanding better instruction, her own time, and access to whatever books she wanted. At the time he was feeling remorseful, and so kept his darker side hidden, seeing Elewisa as his 'saving grace'.

After gauntlet, Elewisa found she was far more powerful than many of the other gauntleted magi. An early altercation with a Flambeau five years her senior showed her she was more than capable in battle, and now Elewisa is looking to tackle challenges well beyond her. Elewisa is intelligent, greedy for power, and willing to seize it from anyone who can't stop her. She



also has a very good relationship with her master who will protect her, as he sees her as one of his crowning achievements, and has an odd sense of morals and correctness when she is involved.

Despite being mostly unaware of her Masters particular brand of evil, she is entirely ready and willing to follow it. Her Master wishes to keep her from it, and sees her as a demure and powerful young Maga making her mark, and interferes with older magi who wish to stop her.

Elewisa "hits" as a maga 20 years her senior due to her amazing apprenticeship.

Personality Traits: Overconfident + 3, Brash + 3, Greedy +2

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Skilled Parens, Self Confident, Overconfident (Minor), Minor Magical Focus (Certamen), Mentor

Story Seed: Elewisa is a good example of too much power and not enough wisdom. She's unafraid of power and knows that while most wizards can be powerful, they are as frightened as anyone else. She may bully wizards movements and move tribunals when the heat gets too hot for her, but will easily use Wizard War to get anything she wants.

It may be better if she doesn't pick on the PC's, but they see the results of

her actions; her friends magical power stolen and innocents murdered.

BRUTUS BONISAGUS

Age: 70 (45)

Theme: Lord of Air and Thunder

Quote: “My father is the Everlasting Sky and my mother was a princess gifted with the sight of the future. There is a future in mastering the skies; those landbound will pay us the respect we are due.”

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Brutus wears a crown made of thunderclouds, regal clothes adorned with lightning and winds and bears a great horn. He is tall and muscled, with eyes that crackle with lightning and long hair that is always blowing in the wind.

Brutus believes that his blood and the fact he has incredible mastery over the skies indicates he is greater than those who do not have it. Brutus can be subtle, but has a grand and magnetic personality and welcomes those with Mythic Blood as his fellow princes and lords. Everyone else are to be treated with respect, but are obviously lesser than himself.

Brutus is looking to show that he is without peer the greatest master of Auram in the world, and no creature or wizard can resist him, hoping that this will bring more Mythic Blooded wizards to his banner, so that one day they will have enough to to take their ‘rightful place’ over the ‘Lesser magi.’

Personality Traits: Regal +3, Brave +1, Arrogant +2

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Mythic Blood, Blessing of Venus, Inspiring

Story Seed: Brutus may have the notion that one of the wizards in the covenant claims to be a powerful ‘Master of Air’, either through political machinations of the PC’s enemies or simply mistaken identity. Brutus resents any such implication and will only accept utter surrender of all assets and appropriate remuneration. Anything else is war, and he will not be fooled by ‘blabbering cowards who seek excuses.’

LIVIA BONISAGUS

Age: 45 (20)

Theme: Faerie Raised Hermetic researcher

Quote: “There is so much more available to us in the magic of stories. Oooh! Hi there!”

Master: Tenebrus Bonisagus

Description: The elf-eared, green skinned slip of a girl might seem like an airheaded ditz outside the laboratory, but inside it is a focused monster of a researcher. She usually wears pretty (and skimpy) dresses and wanders about barefoot, where the local village men believe she is a local mainly benevolent faerie of having a good time. The majority of village women have their own, rather less benevolent opinion, excepting the few who are as interested as the men.

Livia was originally of house Merinita, and has been inducted into their outer mystery. She was taken by Tenebrus as an apprentice after her original master disappeared for several seasons and no-one from the house came to claim her. When her master returned years later, he had forgotten some years of his life and no longer desired an apprentice.

Livia is attempting a major Hermetic breakthrough - to unite the cultic background of House Merinita and standard Hermetic theory, allowing all magi to feel the beneficial effects that

House Merinita enjoy. While this would normally be extremely dangerous, House Merinita are not unified enough other than to have some of the more traditional Merinita interfere with Livia’s business now and again. Some threats to her life have taken place, but she is smart enough to keep her research mainly to herself. If it gets out, she realizes she may have problems with her former house.

Personality Traits: Fey + 3, Lecherous +3

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Faerie Upbringing, Blessing of Venus, Affinity with Magic Theory, Affinity with Faerie Magic, Puissant Faerie Magic, Lecherous (Major), Enemies

Story Seed: Livia of Bonisagus reveals her knowledge of Faerie Magic, and her interest in integrating it to a player magus she knows, as she needs some help in the laboratory and asks for help. Will the magus help? And what happens when a jealous Merinita magus doesn’t want any of that information leaving the house?

VITUS BONISAGUS

Age: 14 (4)

Theme: The Prodigy

Quote: It won’t be long now before I’ve changed the nature of Hermetic Theory! They won’t treat me like a child anymore!

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Vitus is young - he passed his Gauntlet at only 10, and made several interesting advances even before his Gauntlet. Unfortunately, he lacks respect from almost everything due to his adolescent (And sometimes childlike) demeanor.

Vitus is interested in hedge traditions and integrating their magical abilities into Hermetic Theory. He has met a



coven of pretty young (teenage) gifted Folk Witches and works with them regularly to integrate their magics within the order.

Vitus doesn't know that the 'young' witches are in fact ancient crones who have long since sold their souls for beauty and power. Unable to affect him with their powers directly without some effort, they use their feminine wiles and his hormones to control him utterly. They have completely invented a love triangle situation that Vitus has fallen for completely. Their ultimate goal is to taint Hermetic magic with Infernalism, and Vitus is good enough to have made amazing strides on just that in a short time.

Personality Traits: Teenager +2, Angry +1, Driven (Show them!) +3

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Skilled Parens, Inventive Genius, Great Intelligence x2, Enemies

Story Seed: Something might seem off about Vitus' different girlfriends to any who meet them. But any investigation will meet with the wrath of an overpowered teenager separated from his harem.

TITUS BONISAGUS

Theme: The Guy Who Likes Aquam

Quote: "Aquam? Aquam is just the best! It's way better than any other art. You see..."

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Titus Bonisagus lives underwater and dislikes being on dry land. He has few friends other than other lovers of Aquam, and even they think he goes a little too far with it. At Tribunal meetings people do not sit near him as small puddles always ooze out near to him, causing wet, cold robes. And that he always tries to turn every conversation into one about Aquam.

Titus works nobly to integrate the Puissant Aquam virtue into Hermetic Theory. He has horrible nightmares, but his driving obsession with Aquam overtakes many personal thoughts.

Personality Traits: Damp +3, Loves Aquam +5

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Obsession (Aquam), Puissant Aquam, Affinity Aquam, Greater Immunity (Drowning)

Item of Virtue: Titus owns a small seashell bracelet that emanates heat. Ignem is by far his weakest so Titus values this item greatly as he cannot easily make it.

MARK BONISAGUS

Age: 25 (0)

Theme: Magus with a plan.

Quote: "Let's all do this together... and then we'll all grow hale and strong."

Master: Livia Bonisagus

Description: Mark is a friendly and happy magus with a fairly simple plan; to get several Bonisagi into a lab at the same time and break down the idea of 'lead' researcher taking all the credit and in the process make great strides in Hermetic theory.

Mark dresses like a scholar and is cultivating a brown beard in the hope that it will make him somewhat more respected. Mark fights against a great deal of social pressure in organising his plan, but he is hoping to find a few young wizards who are interested in more than just their own power. Mark writes to anyone, not just members of his own house. He usually focuses on more scholarly magi simply because he (wrongly) believes they are more susceptible to his ideas.

Mark is a prolific letter writer and through this process deliberately sounds out who is or isn't interested in following his idea, and who may oppose it. Mark has an odd sort of friendship with House Tremere who give him minor support in his goals. Mark is young and is not the first Bonisagus who has attempted such things, and so has a bit of a reputation of "There's one every decade. He'll get over it." amongst older magi.

In effect, Mark wants people to combine their research on similar topics; for example, organising several magi to work on the same Hermetic Breakthrough and then combining their various Breakthrough points. He is also interested in the idea of shared assistance in the laboratory; magi giving up a season to be an assistant in return for that benefit granted to them at a later point.

Mark's first plan is to Integrate the virtue of Cautious Sorcerer, and is hoping to find enough wizards with the virtue to be able to help him do such a thing. Mark is willing to serve as an assistant for reasonable amounts of time to organize his plan.

Personality Traits: Friendly +3, Cautious +1, Organised +2

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Inspirational, Cautious Sorcerer

Story Seed: Mark begins writing letters to the PC covenant about his plan. How do they respond? And how

do they respond when other members begin talking about them as mere 'lab assistants'? How about when they get reputation points in 'Assistant'? Is all that worth the cost?

PIERRE BONISAGUS

Age: 19 (0)

Theme: Seer

Quote: "The future is clear to one with the Sight."

Master: Brutus Bonisagus

Description: Taken perhaps a little early by Brutus, who took Pierre as an apprentice due to Pierre's mythic blood and unwilling to take the risk that another magus would claim Pierre. Brutus' philosophies haven't rubbed off on the much calmer Pierre.

Pierre has some minor abilities with prophecy but seeks to explore his talent. He is often investigating other seers, Hermetic or otherwise, ancient sites and so on to find out about his ability to prophecy. He is not particularly interested in passing on this knowledge, so the various cults that have such knowledge are definitely interested in him as a member; they are just watching to see how he acts over the next few years.

Personality Traits: Calm +3, Wise +2

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Mythic Blood (Merlin), Visions, Premonitions

Story Seed: A hermetic Seer who has investigated the mysteries of Divination has been watching Pierre for some time, but Pierre has recently made his Parma Magica stronger, stopping some of the divinations. He may ask mercenaries in the PC covenants to steal arcane connections; a difficult proposition for someone who regularly

uses Premonitions and is more than willing to leave annoying traps for those who want to steal from him.

Pierre could foretell something horrible for the covenant. Did he really see it... or was there more involved?

SABRINA BONISAGUS

Age: 25 (20)

Theme: Teenage Witch

Quote: "Like, whatever."

Master: Marianus Bonisagus

Description: Sabrina has an unfortunate 'blessing' from a supernatural being, 'to never grow old.' At the time Sabrina was impressed with her blessing but has long since regretted it. While Sabrina still learns, she hasn't mentally changed or matured since 15 either, meaning she will always make decisions like a 15 year old girl; day to day and moment to moment. She feels abandoned and alone, riddled with doubt and angry at the world, and abandoned by her once friends who have grown up around her.. and nobody understands.

Personality Traits: Teenager +3, Angry +1

Virtues/Flaws of Note: Greater Malediction (Teenager), Small Frame

Story Seed: Sabrina functions as an example of getting what you wish for. She may star in an adventure involving the PC's apprentices or the PC's. She truly wishes to get rid of the curse, which may involve dealing with the faerie who cursed her in the first place. Getting to know Sabrina is quite difficult, as she is only friendly with people her own age.

1470AD: AFTER THE PLAGUE

BY MARK SHIRLEY

The year is 1470. No-one would have guessed two hundred years ago that they were living in the Golden Age of the Order of Hermes. Magi have suffered a series of devastating insults beyond their control: the worsening of The Gift's social penalty, the Great Mortality, the subsequent backlash against the Order, a protracted shadow war with the witches, and the Inquisition. Each of these, if tackled alone, would have been bad enough, but the combined effect has been catastrophic. The Order of Hermes now hangs on by a thread, and some wonder whether it is possible for it to be saved at all.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

A CHANGE IN THE GIFT

Around 1300 it first came to the notice of the Order that The Blatant Gift was becoming more common amongst apprentices. Xavier of Bonisagus was the first to report this phenomenon to Durenmar, and he conducted a careful demographic analysis of House Bonisagus to confirm that if one divided the magi of the house into groups based on the year of their birth, that proportionally more Blatant Gifts were present in the younger generations. Xavier later confirmed that this effect was present in all houses of the Order, and also discovered it amongst selected hedge wizards as well. The excess Blatantly Gifted were being born at the expense of both The Gentle Gift and the standard Gift, with the former

becoming very rare. In 1320, Xavier was unable to confirm any magus passing his Apprentice's Gauntlet who possessed the Gentle Gift, and only four joined the Order in the following decade. He was unable to come up with any explanation why this should be.

THE GREAT MORTALITY

The Great Mortality arrived in 1347 and devastated Europe. In the South of Europe where the pestilence raged for four long years, over three quarters of the population died. In France, it was half. In Germany and England, protected by geography, it was one in five. The high mortality rate led to a scarcity of apprentices, and for the first time since its foundation the Order entered a period of stagnation, where growth in the number of magi stalled. Nevertheless, the Order was in no immediate danger given that it numbered a century shy of two thousand members.

The people of Mythic Europe struggled to understand the cause of the plague, and they looked for scapegoats. The blame was laid on Jews, lepers, "egipcians" (Gypsies), but most of all, upon magi of the Order of Hermes. At the height of the plague magi were accused of withholding a cure, because they demonstrated an unusual resilience to the pestilence. This, coupled with the spontaneous eruption of The Blatant Gift left the Order at the sharp end of condemnation from all three estates. The Order was repudiated by the pope, and at the Diet of Mainz in 1350 the Holy Roman Emperor condemned magi as plague-bearers. Magi started to abandon their towers and castles and go into hiding, afeared for their lives. (it

should be noted that the Diet of Mainz is fictional).

To add insult to injury, at some point during the height of the Pestilence, a coven of Gifted Folk Witches wrested the secrets of the Parma Magica from the Order. What actually happened is unknown: some blame the naive actions of a magus wanting to protect his non-Hermetic friends; others believe that sinister forces were at work. While the witches could not teach their unGifted cohorts the Parma Magica, Gifted witches across Europe travelled to France to learn the Order's biggest secret. Armed with their new magic, the Folk Witches went to war against the beleaguered Order, a conflict which still wages today in secret.

AFTERMATH OF THE PLAGUE

The Diet of Mainz had far-reaching consequences. Many noblemen saw the decree of the Diet as an excuse to dispossess magi, renege on age-old treaties and seizing their land, possessions, and franchises. Merchants and craftsmen cancelled their contracts with covenants, and even peasants abandoned their lands for the 'safety' of nearby mundane demesnes. This process began in the Holy Roman Empire, in the heartlands of the Order of Hermes, but soon spread outside this core region as other sovereigns repeated the sanctions imposed by the Diet.

It was widely but incorrectly reported that magi had been excommunicated by the pope, and allies fled in fear of anathema. In truth, Pope Clement VI had condemned the magi in

THE NATURE OF THE PLAGUE

The Great Mortality (Latin Mors Magna; the term 'Black Death' was first used in the seventeenth century) is a truly devastating disease. Whereas the most serious epidemic raged from 1347 to 1351, there has been a smaller wave of mortality in every generation since then.

The disease is contracted through inhaling corrupted air, but the cause of the corruption is hotly debated in fourteenth and fifteenth century Europe. The prevailing opinion was that the corrupt air originated in the breath of demons and propagated by their mortal

agents (willing or otherwise). Not all subscribed to this belief; some churchmen believed that the Great Mortality was sent by God to cull the sinful in preparation for Judgment Day. The accusation that magi are plague-bearers may actually be true, as the result of a curse by some supernatural agency, or it may simply be a false conclusion from the observation that fewer magi died (due to their access to magic and the Corpus Form Bonus which makes them more resistant to disease).

This fearful disease is contracted through breathing in corrupt air, particularly from corpses. It defies medical investigation, adding three to the Ease Factor of medical prognosis (Art & Academe page 58) meaning that there are few physicians who can successfully treat this disease. Magical prognosis does not suffer the same penalty.

Symptoms: weakness in the limbs, constant fever, persistent wracking cough, swellings in neck, armpit and groin filled with corrupt blood.

MORS MAGNA

Critical Sanguine Disease, Severity 18

Stable: 9, **Improve:** 15, **Interval:** Month

his epistolary missive, but had imposed no official sanction. His pronouncement had authorised the papal legate to the Order of Hermes to conduct an investigation, but with the souring of the political climate this investigation soon became a witch-hunt.

The response of the Order was initially uncoordinated. Tribunals sent delegations to kings with little effect. Disquiet about the Order's practices and activities had been brewing for a while, fuelled no doubt by the burgeoning Blatant Gift. At the Grand Tribunal of 1360 the continued existence and safety of the Order was the only topic under discussion. It was widely feared that if the situation continued in the same vein, it would not be long before there was open warfare between magi and mundanes. Diplomatic efforts to imperial and papal courts had failed, and short of direct application of magic, there seemed no way to remedy the situation. Houses Tylalus and Guernicus called for the disbandment of the Order of Hermes, stating that it had run its course. However, the ensuing (heated) discussion revealed that some of the proponents of this view wanted to be unshackled from the restraints of the

Code, and free to launch retaliatory actions against the mundanes who opposed them. The motion was thrown out by a near unanimous vote of the primi.

No decisions or solutions were arrived at in 1360. The Grand Tribunal agreed to search for solutions and reconvene in three years. At this meeting in 1363, the discovery of the Pallium Magicum was announced (see later). The decision was made that the Order should do its best to disappear from sight. Conspicuous covenants across Mythic Europe should disband, and their members go into hiding. Over a few generations of anonymity, the Order could subtly work to restore its reputation

THE STATE OF THE ORDER

In 1470, the Order of Hermes is still in hiding. Condemnation and persecution of the Gifted is widespread, with a tendency for rulers and clergy alike to blame society's problems on sorcerers; and because of the vilification of the Order of Hermes specifically by

the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, the name of the Order has become synonymous in common parlance with wizardry of all flavours and traditions, not just magi. 'Hermetic' now carries the same condemnation as 'sorcerous', and magi are blamed for all manner of calamities. The persistence of this demonization of sorcery is in part down to the changes in The Gift.

A LIFE IN HIDING

Magi no longer occupy physical covenants of the type common in the thirteenth century. Instead, magi live in secret amongst the mundane folk, practicing a mundane trade to pay for their living expenses and pursuing their magical studies in secret whenever they can. Many magi take on an intellectual role, which complements their magical training: jobs such as teachers, physicians, scribes, merchants, and even clergymen are common. Others favor more manual trades, although this leaves them less time for study. A lucky few have the wealth and/or status to pose as minor noblemen, independent scholars, or gentlemen of means.

While solitary magi have become more common, magi still form

covenants for mutual protection. Rather than providing a home to magi, the covenant is instead the agreement that details the arrangements by which the magi share common resources such as books, enchantments, and vis, and the oaths made to support and defend each other in times of need. Because of these shared resources, members of a covenant tend to live close to one another, often within a day's travel. Larger towns can support several magi, with others living in outlying hamlets. Often a magus does not dwell alone, but might share a dwelling with a companion and several grogs who pose as members of the household, employees, or even proprietors. Many grogs and companions are actually the offspring of magi; the *Pallium Magicum* (see later) has made it more possible for magi to form lasting relationships with

mundanes, and raise families. Marriages between magi are also not uncommon.

Should a covenant want or need to meet physically, it does so in secret, beyond the prying eyes of their neighbors. Such meetings might be unlikely combinations of local figures, which is likely to be viewed as suspicious by outsiders.

A few covenants have managed to retain the old model of maintaining a physical structure. This typically happens in remote areas of Mythic Europe (although there are fewer and fewer of these left these days), where all locals are associates of the covenant and committed to preserving their secrets. Some of these covenants pose as religious communities, others operate as remote forts under license from local lords or pose as private schools. Some

have tried taking over institutions within cities such as universities; such ventures inevitably fail due to the inability to isolate them entirely from mundanes who are not in the know about their masters' true identities. More than one covenant has been discovered by the Inquisition and its members put to death.

THE NINE HOUSES

The houses of the Order of Hermes have not come unscathed through the Order's most recent troubles. Desperate times have wrought changes that would have been unconscionable a century ago.

Three houses (Ex Miscellanea, Guernicus, and Jerbiton) no longer exist. House Tremere and Mercere have



changed from houses accepting only members trained in the house into being societates. The lines between the houses, even the mystery cults, have softened somewhat, more akin to political factions rather than the more tribal stances of previous generations, and moving between houses is more common. For the first time in the Order's history, another option is available — membership of no house at all. Not joining a house represents a reticence to 'nail your colors to the mast' and declare for a particular position. Those magi who do not involve themselves in Hermetic politics often do not join a house.

THE LOST HOUSES

Houses Ex Miscellanea, Guernicus, and Jerbiton no longer exist. House Ex Miscellanea was left devastated by the Plague, the Inquisition, and the witches. It has no relevance in the new Order, and has ceased to be. House Guernicus has also gone — with the abandonment of tribunals (see later) the need for a house of professional quaesitores seemed superfluous. Its members joined other houses, and quaesitores can be found spread throughout the Order as members of any house. House Jerbiton has ceased training new apprentices, and its remaining members work out their days. The second fall of Byzantium was the death-knell for their fading house. There is hope; artists in Italy have been experimenting with new techniques, and this might revive the house once again.

HOUSE BONISAGUS

House Bonisagus has become a caricature of itself. The Bonisagi profess to be interested only in the preservation and advancement of Hermetic magic, and yet typically are terrified of change. House Bonisagus are paralysed by indecision: last time they intervened through the Pallium Magicam, the Order altered completely — a change which many are now regretting. The Bonisagus do not want to be the ones responsible for the downfall of the Order.

House Bonisagus is the sole remaining lineage. They have adopted other magi in the past, but only by that magus completing a fifteen year apprenticeship where their 'faulty' learning is corrected. No research that derives from outside the house is valued by House Bonisagus, and a faction within the house has actively suppressed discoveries deriving from outside.

THE MYSTERY HOUSES

The four Mystery Houses (Bjornaer, Criamon, Merinita, and Verditius) have fared the best. The cultic nature of these houses has served them well, forging tight bonds of mutual protection, united by the mysteries they serve.

House Criamon has changed the least. Bound up in its own philosophy of apt living, the house is seen by some as existing in glorious isolation from the rest of the Order. However, there are some Criamon magi who are active proponents of the Garian viewpoint (see later).

House Merinita has changed the most. It has abandoned the central authority of a single primus, and is instead now run by a council consisting of key members of each sub-cult. The policies of the house shift with the dominance of the different mystery factions within the house: when the Wayfarers or Line of Quendalon are dominant then the house withdraws from the world; whereas the Heirs to Merlin or the Keepers of a Thousand Tales are more interested in integration with society, an agenda supported by the Shadow Masters but for different reasons.

House Bjornaer remains much as it has throughout its history. The Harmonist-Wilderist debate has still not been solved, and the house still debates the relative merits of integration versus isolation. They are actively encouraged to form single-house covenants and over half of the house lives in this fashion. A whole village might consist of a Bjornaer sept, their kinfolk and covenfolk.

The services of House Verditius have become even more valuable, since enchantments are often more subtle than spellcasting. This has done nothing to reduce the arrogance of the average magus of House Verditius. This house typically sponsors a member to set up in an area with the expectation that other magi will join him and service his needs. A negative consequence of the changes in the Order is that magi of House Verditius can no longer afford to concentrate heavily on a single form of manufacture; many have diversified to be masters of multiple crafts.

HOUSES TREMERE AND TYTALUS

Houses Tremere and Tytalus appear to have settled their centuries-old differences, and now work closely with one another to combat the threat posed by the witches. House Tremere has largely retreated to Transylvania and is in open warfare with the leaders of the witch cult. It no longer considers itself a lineage, although still recruits most of its members internally. Anyone wanting to join House Tremere must serve a stint on the front lines of the war. If the magus survive a three-year tour, then she may call herself a Tremere. Those Tremere who operate outside Transylvania are usually recruiters for the war effort.

Tytalus works covertly to discover spies within the Order's midst and to unravel the schemes of the witch cult. They are not altogether trusted in this, and some have been accused (and some actually convicted) of collaboration with the enemy. Despite this, Tytalus magi train some of the best infiltrators and investigators. Some very daring members of this house have worked with the Inquisition (with or without their knowledge). However, they are criticised by some of their allies in House Tremere for pursuing other interests as well, since the central philosophy of this house ("strength through conflict") has not changed. Unusually, more Tytali have taken up

the role of quaesitor than any other house. The leper magi of the house have struggled with the origins and cure of the Great Mortality since its inception.

It is due to the efforts of these two houses that the war with the witches does not interfere with the daily lives of most magi.

HOUSE MERCERE

House Mercere has become the glue that holds the Order together. They are one of the main political factions within Hermetic circles, with the continued existence of the Order being their main aim. The Cult of Mercury has united disparate factions like the Neo-Mercurians and the Flambeau Mercurians under a single banner. It is the main route by which magi join House Mercere. While the pagan aspects of the cult remains at its heart, the Mercurians cannot really be said to worship Mercury and they focus on the communication and travel aspects of his Mysteries.

House Mercere adopted the Rusticani when House Ex Miscellanea fell apart, and now rival House Verditius as craft-magi. While the touchy Verditius take umbrage at this encroachment into their traditional role, they will always remain artisanal magi, creating elegant and powerful enchantments. The Rusticani rather make workaday items of relatively meagre power which make life easier, particularly for the unGifted redcaps who still ply the roads of Mythic Europe.

HOUSE FLAMBEAU

House Flambeau struggled to find a place in the new society, and it teetered on going the same way as Houses Guernicus and Jerbiton. However, it was the Milites that brought the house back from the brink. Adopting the thirteenth century reforms of the primus Garus, this faction took up the lofty goal of defending the innocent whether they were magi or not. This has



gradually morphed into an agenda of rehabilitating the Order in the eyes of the mundanes. Exhibiting a subtlety that few would have considered possible for Flambeau magi, the Garians (as they are known outside the house) have been working hard to encourage a more positive attitude. Different magi adopt different techniques, which as lead to a number of debates and subtle factions within the house. Some work to rescue hedge wizards (and where necessary, magi) from the Inquisition. Others fight prejudice amongst the clergy and nobility, whilst another faction work on the Third Estate providing support to peasants, often against the injustices of

their liege lords. Clashes between factions of Flambeau are not uncommon.

Of the remaining societates within House Flambeau, the Mithraians work alongside House Tremere, refusing to join that house despite having earned the status. They consider themselves the 'True Flambeau', and often denigrate the Milites for having abandoned the mission of The Founder in favour of a love for mundanes. The modern Mithraians have little to do with the cult of Mithras, being mostly committed Christians and eschewing any Initiatory elements. However, the imagery of a

soldier *societas* is a strong one and they have retained the name.

The Cult of Mercury has fully integrated with the *Mercere* cult; although some continue to refer to themselves as magi of House Flambeau, their philosophy is much more in line with that of House *Mercere*.

TRIBUNALS

The Order of Hermes no longer holds scheduled tribunal meetings every seven years: the risk of exposure is too great. The thirteen regional tribunals have all but collapsed, and magi no longer consider themselves belonging to a tribunal.

Magi wishing to prosecute others for a crime against the Code of Hermes must gather together an impromptu tribunal, consisting of at least twelve magi from at least four different covenants. This jury examines the evidence, hears the defence of the accused (if she chooses to attend), and then hands down a sentence which is usually requested by the accuser. It is down to the prosecuting magus to enact this sentence; although there is a social (but not legal) obligation on the tribunal to assist where needed. Sometimes the prosecutor or accused attempts to use the Peripheral Code of the former tribunal for legal support; this meets with varying success. Most magi prefer to return to a purer form of the Code, consisting of the Oath of Hermes and the dictates of the Grand Tribunal, and nothing else.

THE GRAND TRIBUNAL

The Grand Tribunal still technically meets, although its 33 year cycle is disrupted; and meetings occur as often as they are convened. These are termed 'irregular Grand Tribunals' in the official records, distinguishing them from the old-style or 'regular Grand Tribunals' which last met in 1363.

Only the primus of a house can convene a Grand Tribunal, and it is only done when a matter that affects the

whole Order is up for discussion. The primus of House Tremere usually calls for one if seven years have gone by without the Order meeting. Grand Tribunals must be announced a year in advance and House *Mercere* circulates the date and location to all members of the Order. Anyone is free to attend, although few choose to (or are able to do so). The Grand Tribunal is only valid if there is at least one member of all nine houses attending, and it is presided over by the most senior member of House Bonisagus present. At the end of the Grand Tribunal, a vote is held by all attendees to validate the proceedings; if this is carried then the decisions are disseminated to all members by the redcaps.

The Grand Tribunal has lost much of its legal teeth since 1363. Although it is the only authority empowered to alter the Peripheral Code of the Order, the fact that many *primi* do not attend weakens the decisions that are made. Each Code ruling made at the Grand Tribunal is taken to the *primi* who have not attended for ratification. The strongest dictates, those that few magi would willingly ignore, are those that attract eight or nine signatures. One or two point laws (as they have become known) are widely ignored. Those that occupy the middle ground are more problematic, and the cause of much strife to tribunals.

BREAKTHROUGHS AND DISCOVERIES

In the 250 years since 1220, there have been a number of advancements in Hermetic theory. The significant ones are discussed below.

Some of these were the discoveries of Almeric of Merinita. Almeric was a magus who rose to prominence in 1287 when he introduced the first of his discoveries, the new Range of Conversation. He followed this with several other inventions, including his greatest, *Fastened Concentration* (see later for details of his discoveries). About fifty years after his work had

disseminated through the Order it was discovered that Almeric was a faerie. Whether he had always been a faerie or whether he had become one by way of the Merinita mysteries is unknown, but it threw all of his discoveries under suspicion, and many magi stopped using them in fear of what it might do to their magic. Given what happened next to the Order, many of these fears were forgotten.

THE PALLIUM MAGICUM

The Pallium Magicum has been praised as the saviour of the Order, and possibly the most significant discovery since the Aegis of the Hearth. In a world where magic is reviled and demonised, the Pallium Magicum is a mystical cloak that hides magical emanations and dampens the effects of The Gift. The Pallium Magicum was the work of two magi, Andrew Dolius of Bonisagus and Polytropos of *Mercere*, who announced their discovery in 1363, at the last regular Grand Tribunal of the Order of Hermes.

Dolius is now reckoned one of the greatest minds the Order has produced, although he came from unremarkable beginnings, and none had heard of him prior to his discovery. His fame brought him the leadership of House Bonisagus, making him *de facto* head of the Order of Hermes, a role for which he was (and still is) completely unsuited. Polytropos claimed descent from Hermes himself, and was a prominent member of the Cult of Heroes. His role in the development of the Pallium Magicum is unclear, although it is known that Polytropos was Invisible to Magic (as per the Heroic Virtue, *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 106) which was undoubtedly part of the discovery. Dolius always insisted on assigning joint credit for the Pallium, although Polytropos himself never sought the acclaim. He retired to an island in the Aegean Sea, and his death was reported by his eldest filius in 1452.

The Pallium Magicum is named after the Roman cloak which became popular

amongst philosophers before eventually replacing the toga as everyday wear. It works in direct analogy to the Parma Magica in that it is activated via a ritual (not a ritual spell) performed twice a day at sunrise and sunset. The Pallium Magicum is an Arcane Ability that can only be learned by characters with The Gift, and like the Parma Magica it is a closely guarded secret. When active, the Pallium Magicum negates the detection of any magic affecting the magus or carried on his person. It is able to negate the magical emanations of any spell or enchantment with a level less than or equal to five times the character's score in Pallium Magicum. This includes use of magic (from any Realm) capable of detecting the presence of active spells, enchantments, magical knowledge, and The Gift. A magus's familiar shares the same protection, shielding its Might score and any active powers. The Pallium Magicum also mitigates the negative social consequences of The Gift, reducing the penalty to all social rolls by an amount equal to the magus's score in the Pallium Magicum (this mitigation cannot result in a bonus). It also ameliorates the negative reputation engendered by a Gifted individual by a similar amount; and if the character's whole social penalty is reduced to zero then this effect vanishes as well.

However, the Pallium Magicum does have a major downside as well. Just as it dampens the detection of magic, it also

Magicum must reduce all Casting Totals and Lab Totals by an amount equal to five times his Pallium Magicum score. The effects of any invested item he carries about his person are entirely negated if it was prepared for enchantment with more pawns of vis than his Pallium Magicum score. Lesser enchantments are treated like invested items that were prepared with a number of pawns of vis equal to those used instill their effect. Charged items are not suppressed by a Pallium Magicum.

A familiar's powers are not suppressed, although it must spend one point of its Might pool per five levels of a bond enchantment while operating under a Pallium Magicum, and its natural powers cost twice as many Might points as normal (with a minimum of one). The Pallium Magicum can be dropped at any time, but it cannot be suppressed like the Parma Magica; if dropped it takes at least two minutes to repeat the ritual to re-establish it. The Pallium Magicum does not suppress the Parma Magica, although the Parma Magica may still be able to be detected by supernatural powers if its score is greater than the score in the Pallium.

FASTENED CONCENTRATION

One of the breakthroughs of Almeric, Fastened Concentration has now virtually replaced the standard Concentration Duration. Fastened

the spell, the magus can opt to include a fastening with the gestures of the spell. This prevents the caster using the subtle gestures or no gestures spellcasting option. A fastening consists of tying a knot in a cord or rope, the buckling of a belt, the hooking of a latch, turning of a key in a lock, or any other symbolic fastening (this must be more than simply closing a box or shutting a door). The spell is then maintained without need for the magus to actively concentrate, for 15 minutes per point of his Concentration Ability. The spell can be ended prematurely by opening the fastening, and it need not be the caster who does this. Some spells using Concentration Duration can be altered by the caster during the spell's effect, this is not possible if the spell is fastened when cast. However, a spell designed with this Duration need not be fastened when cast, in which case it operates like a standard Concentration Duration effect (and cannot be later fastened; this option is only available during casting).

PERFORMANCE MAGIC

Performance magic (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 29) has become part of standard Hermetic theory and is now taught to most apprentices as a standard spellcasting option applicable to spontaneous or formulaic spells without them needing to take the specific Virtue. A maga can still take the Performance Magic Virtue if she wants access to a second Ability with which to cast spells.

Each magus chooses one Ability with a physical and/or verbal component to it; although it cannot be applied to a Language, Supernatural, Academic, or Arcane Ability. This is typically an Ability that they will use while masquerading as a mundane. An Ability that is verbal replaces the words of spellcasting; similarly an Ability that is physical replaces gestures. Abilities can be verbal and physical. The magus must actually perform the Ability to count as using Performance Magic. Words and gestures that are not being

THE PALLIUM MAGICUM IS AN
ARCANE ABILITY THAT
CAN ONLY BE LEARNED BY
CHARACTERS WITH THE GIFT, AND LIKE THE
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reduces the magus's ability to perform magic. A magus under a Pallium

Concentration is in all respects the same as Concentration; however when casting

replaced with Performance Magi remain as normal mystical components of spellcasting. For example, a magus with Performance Magic: Storytelling can replace the verbal component of his spells with the telling of a story, but must still make the gestures.

This Virtue was integrated into Hermetic theory by Julia of House Bonisagus, who had been trained by a Rusticanus before becoming the apprentice of a magus of the First House. It was later expanded to multiple Abilities with the help of the Rusticani tradition when they joined House Mercere following the breakup of House Ex Miscellanea.

NEW RANGES, DURATIONS, TARGETS

Range: Conversation

The target of a Range: Conversation spell must be within three paces of the caster and engaged in conversation with him. The minimum level of conversation required to use this Range consists of a brief sentence from both participants. Naturally this Range cannot be used on non-sentient targets. Range: Conversation is equivalent to Touch. This Range was the product of Almeric of Merinita's research.

Range: Prop

The caster touches the target with something that he is also touching. The prop cannot be larger than a standard Individual of the Form applicable to the prop (although the prop need not match the Form of the spell), and it must be a discrete object rather than part of a whole. So a ten foot pole of wood is an appropriate prop, as is a stone wall as long as it is within one cubic pace of volume (e.g. 13' long, 2' high, 1' thick). The prop can be a living being: If Albus can touch Bertram and Bertram is touching Carolus, then Albus can cast a spell of R: Prop on Carolus. This is another product of Almeric's research, and is equivalent to Touch.

PERFORMANCE ABILITIES

Physical: Athletics, Brawl, Chirurgy, Hunt, Legerdemain, Ride, Stealth, Swim, Bows, Great Weapon, Single Weapon, Thrown Weapon

Verbal: Bargain, Charm, Guile, Intrigue, Leadership, Teaching

Verbal and Physical: Animal Handling, Carouse, Music

Varies: Craft, Profession

Using Brawl and Martial Abilities in

Performance Magic requires the caster to use semi-ritualistic movements to cast spells. If the magus is in combat, then Performance Magic only applies if they roll a stress die for any Attack and Defense Totals, with three extra botch dice.

Use of Performance Magic can occlude spellcasting even from other Hermetic magi; if the magus is not Fast casting then the roll to identify the Form of a spell is 3 points harder if neither Hermetic words or gestures are employed, 3 points easier if Hermetic words are used but not gestures, and unchanged if Hermetic gestures are used but not words.

Duration: Performance

The spell lasts as long as the caster continues to use the Performance Ability he used to cast the spell. To cast a Duration: Performance spell the magus must succeed in a roll of appropriate Characteristic + Performance Ability against an Ease Factor of 3; this is a simple or stress roll depending on circumstance. The spell fails if this roll fails and botches if this roll botches. The spell ends when the magus ceases to perform the Ability but no Concentration rolls or further Ability rolls are needed to maintain the spell. This Duration is equivalent to Concentration, and its inclusion in Hermetic theory is a consequence of integrating Performance Magic (see earlier).

Target: Container

The targets of the spell are anything within a defined container within range at the time of casting. This Target operates in a similar manner to Target: Room, but the container can be no larger than a standard Individual of the applicable Form. The contents need not be a single object, and they can be removed from the container after casting and still carry the effects of the spell. Like Target: Room, this Target cannot be used in Creo spells that create substance. Container is equivalent to Part.

CHARACTERS

Magus characters are created somewhat differently than presented in ArM5. Firstly, magi have The Blatant Gift by default, although they can buy The Gift as a Minor Hermetic Virtue. The Gentle Gift has not been seen for at least a century; although there may be some ancient members of the Order who still have it they have failed to successfully transmit it to their apprentices.

In addition to the Free Social Status Virtue of Hermetic Magus, all magi characters must take another Social Status Virtue to represent their 'cover' in mundane society:

If a magus has a Free Social Status Virtue, then he must spend two seasons a year maintaining their place in society and earning a living wage

If a magus has a Minor Social Status Virtue, then he needs to spend one season a year actively maintaining his cover. If this is a Virtue that would normally provide access to Academic Abilities, then it can be assumed that the 'free' seasons are actual continuous seasons.

If a magus has a Major Social Status Virtue, then he does not need to spend any time maintaining his cover; he is sufficiently remote from mundane society or independently wealthy. Note that this includes the Magister in



Artibus and Doctor in (Faculty) Virtues: in the fifteenth century these roles have junior staff who can assume all teaching responsibilities if desired.

If a magus has a Minor or Major Social Status Flaw, then he needs to spend three seasons a year avoiding the attention of authorities

Magi can also take the Wealthy Virtue and Poor Flaw; these free up one season for study or remove one season respectively. A character can never have more than four free seasons or less than zero.

Fifteenth century characters are frequently older than typical thirteenth

century characters before commencing apprenticeship to a Hermetic magus. It is not unusual for a magus to take his Apprentice's Gauntlet at the age of 30 or more.

During Apprenticeship, a magus in 1470 still acquires 240 experience points and 120 levels of spells. However, some of these experience points should be put into mundane Abilities that promote the magus's role in society. A character should have one key Ability appropriate to their Social Status with a score of at least 4, and a second Ability with a score of at least 2. Characters without these minimum requirements

are likely to attract stories where they raise suspicions due to their inability to perform the basic functions of the role to which they pretend. Characters with a Major Social Status Virtue do not escape from this suspicion, but may have more social freedom to flout this rule.

The player should decide upon an Ability which the magus uses in Performance Magic. This is probably the Ability that he uses as part of his cover. Magi with Major Social Status Virtues often eschew Performance Magic altogether, deeming it belittling to magi to hide their magic in such a fashion.

During apprenticeship a character should learn the Pallium Magicum Ability at a score of at least 1; unlike Parma Magica they are free to put as many experience points into this Ability as they see fit.

Following apprenticeship, a magus character gains a number of experience points every year appropriate to his Social Status Virtue, rather than the 30 experience points gained by thirteenth century magi. Characters with one free season gain 15 experience points per year, those with two free seasons gain 20, those with three free seasons get 25, and only those with four free seasons get 30 (these are higher than for non-magus characters due to the better sources of study available to magi).

OTHER POWERS

THE WITCH CULT

The folk witch tradition had spread steadily through Mythic Europe during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The Order of Hermes had been watching it closely but it seemed to be harmless. As a mostly unGifted tradition of magic, few witches were capable of more than a handful of magical arts. Magi often made alliances amongst the local witch communities.

Since there was never any hint that the witches were organized beyond contacts between local covens, it came as a great shock to the Order when they suddenly started acting in a coordinated fashion. Some magi believed that this was a new innovation — that there was some witch-equivalent of Trianoma who had united the covens. House Tremere is of the opinion that they had always been unified, but had kept this well-hidden. The most commonly-held opinion is that a cult arose within the Folk Witch tradition, perhaps under a charismatic leader with a deep knowledge of Mysteries and Initiation. This cult spread by adopting existing covens and spawning new ones.

Whatever the truth, folk witches across Mythic Europe suddenly started acting in a coordinated fashion. The secret of the Parma Magica had been acquired by a Gifted Orleanais witch by the name of Ursanne, and within a few short years her apprentices were disseminated into several centers: in Berwick on the England-Scotland border; in Friuli in Venetian-controlled lands; in the Pomeranian wildernesses; in Moldavia; and on the Balearic Islands. From these strongholds, Gifted witches across Europe learned the Parma Magica alongside the panoply of the Folk Witch powers. Furthermore, the witches began a concerted attack against other magical traditions, with most of their attention going on the Order of Hermes. There is evidence that following the Diet of Mainz, Entrancement was used on several key rulers to encourage them to adopt the condemnation of the Order themselves.

One of the key advantages of the folk witch tradition is that they can Initiate unGifted members into their ranks and intensively train them in one to three Supernatural Abilities, one of which is nearly always Ceremony. This means that witches can increase their numbers quickly, and have many followers to involve in communal rituals using Ceremony. Flying and Shapeshifting are excellent powers for spying on enemies, and Cursing through

use of a Ceremony can break through even the most powerful Magic Resistance given sufficient numbers. Furthermore, folk witches seem to have no compunctions regarding the combination of their magical abilities with Faerie charms and Infernal maleficia. How far the infernal corruption of the tradition goes is uncertain; where demons have been working in concert with witches it appears to be as servants rather than allies but with demons one is never sure.

No-one is sure what the witches want; their leaders have not been identified with any great success for they take pains to remain anonymous, using pass phrases and signs to identify one another. Gleaning information from captured witches is frustratingly difficult, since most of their members know nothing about the grander schemes enacted by the tradition as a whole, and the Order is yet to apprehend one of the regional “grand witches”. House Tylalus has devoted a lot of effort to identifying the “Queen of the Witches”, and it is believed that they are closing in on several promising candidates. Obviously, the house is unwilling to reveal too much of what is known to their intellegencers, for fear that the witch cult has its own spies within the Order (who are likely themselves to be of House Tylalus).

Meanwhile, House Tremere is in open warfare with the witch cult. Moldavia has become a land ruled by witches ever since Prince Stephan III took over; himself a witch from an ancient line. Meanwhile, House Tremere retains its franchise in Hungary over magical affairs despite persecution of magi elsewhere: King Matthias Corvinus has refused to bow to pressure from his peers amongst surrounding nations, and holds House Tremere (although not necessarily the rest of the Order) in high regard. However, Corvinus’s ability to ignore detractors is being eroded by the need to seek allies against the Ottoman Empire with which he is at war, and it is

debatable how long his support of House Tremere will continue.

House Tremere and the witch cult are both courting the Prince of Wallachia — whose lands lie between Hungary and Moldovia — to lend their support to one side or the other. However, Prince Vlad Dracul of Wallachia is obsessed with his war against the Turks. His hatred of the Ottomans is legendary, and House Tremere believes that he will be prepared to ally with the witches if they can give him victory. Fortunately for the Order, conquest of lands does not seem to be a priority for the witches. At every Grand Tribunal, House Tremere campaign for a relaxation of the Code to allow them to ally with Wallachia. Magi of other houses see this as a step too far: if defeat of the witches comes at the cost of abandoning the Code, then why fight in the first place?

OTHER MAGICAL TRADITIONS

Gifted traditions of magic have suffered at least as much as the Order of Hermes, if not more. They too have been affected by the increased harshness of The Gift, and have neither been sheltered from its effects from each other (via the Parma) or from society (via the Pallium).

AUGUSTAN BROTHERHOOD

The Augustan Brotherhood have gone into hiding; treated with the same suspicion and fear as the Order of Hermes but without the protections that magi possess. They still operate behind the scenes, particularly amongst the republics of the Italian peninsula.

LEARNED MAGICIANS

The Learned Magicians have become significant in universities across Europe. Despite originating in Bologna, they have since become more prominent in northern Europe, that have a focus more on philosophy and medicine. The majority of the tradition

remains unGifted, although most universities have a Gifted member hidden deep in the faculty who acts as Mystagogue for the others.

VITKIR

The vitkir have become a rarity, and may even be extinct as a magical tradition. There may be sole practitioners hanging on in isolated areas — Scandinavia is a big place with lots of room to hide — but as a society the rune magicians have gone. The same is probably true of their enemies, the Muspelli.

ORDER OF SOLOMON

The Order of Solomon has suffered no overt religious persecution in the Ottoman Empire. However, sahir are unfashionable at court due to a cooling of relationships between the Solomnic Council and the Shariya courts; many Islamic scholars have spoken against those who deal with spirits and demons, and there is a body of hadiths which forbid sorcery explicitly. Nevertheless, the Order of Solomon remains strong — it simply does not get involved in politics.

THE INQUISITION

The Inquisition is an informal name for an institution within the judicial system of the Church whose aim is to combat heresy. It began with the Episcopal Inquisition (1184 – c.1230) and the Papal Inquisition (1230s). Pope Gregory IX (r. 1227–1241) assigned the duties of the Inquisition to the Order of St Dominic. They judge heresy along with bishops and assessors (clergy serving as jury), using the local authorities to establish a tribunal and prosecute heretics.

The Inquisition involves a number of procedures. During the Investigation procedure, the townspeople are gathered and invited to denounce themselves and inform upon others in exchange for easy punishment. Anyone denounced by another can only stand



trial if two witnesses implicate him. The accused are imprisoned awaiting trial for up to a year while evidence is gathered. When the trial begins, the accused is invited to name those who have mortal hatred against him, and if any of his accusers are amongst those named, he is set free and the accusers face life imprisonment. It is considered better for the guilty to go free than the innocent be punished. During the trial, 'confession in full' (which includes the mandatory implication of others) is

encouraged in return for lighter punishment, but no confessed heretic will escape punishment altogether. During the trial, no-one is barred from providing testimony: even evidence from criminals and convicted heretics is admissible.

The papal bull *ad extirpanda* was issued in 1252 by Pope Innocent IV, and authorized the use of torture by the Inquisition for eliciting confessions from heretics. It was limited in that it

could be only used once, and could not cause the loss of life or limb. It was also limited to circumstances when the inquisitor was certain of the evidence against the accused — it could not be used to uncover guilt, merely to confirm through confession. The bull conceded to the state a portion of a convicted heretic's possessions, in return for assuming the responsibility for carrying out the death penalty.

Punishments include prayer, pilgrimage, shaming (such as wearing a yellow cross for life), banishment, and long term imprisonment. The unrepentant and apostate are 'relaxed' — handed over to the secular authorities. This leaves them open to corporal punishments forbidden to churchmen, such as mutilation and execution by burning. However, execution was viewed as admitting defeat, a soul that the Church could not save.

WITCH HUNTING

In the fourteenth century witch-hunting became a procedure of Inquisition. Pope John XXII authorized the Inquisition to prosecute sorcerers in 1320, but it took a few decades for the witch hunts to begin in earnest.

In 1376, Nicholas Eymerich published the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, which defined witchcraft, and described means for discovering witches. In compiling the book, Eymerich used many of the magic texts he had previously confiscated from accused sorcerers. The *Directorium* classified magic into *mantike*, *thaumaturgia*, and *goetia*. **Mantike** (divination) is the questioning of God's plan and denial of free will. **Thaumaturgia** is the reordering of the natural world through unnatural means, and **Goetia** is the command of demons and spirits. The Order of Hermes is specifically called out as a purveyor of sorcery, although it is clear that the author had a confused knowledge of Hermetic practices, or simply didn't care to tell the truth. The *Directorium* was considered the manual

of witch-hunting for the next hundred years, although it has been supplemented with other such manuals.

The Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) became an important figure in the witch-hunting tradition in the early fifteenth century. He popularized the confusion possessed by many witch-hunters, combining 'fooleries' of spells and enchantments with much more serious crimes such as murder and infanticide. Collections of his published sermons are widely circulated, many consisting of personal testimony allegedly from confessed witches, sorcerers, wizards, and magi. In many of these, the accused admit to heinous acts. Bernardino never went as far to claim that devil-worship was at the heart of these practices, but many of his readers made the connection he was implying.

In the coming years, more manuals of witch-hunting will be published. The *Fortalitium Fidei* by Alfonso de Spina is just published (1470), and is a treatise on various types of arguments to be used by preachers and others to oppose witches; the fifth and final book gives instructions on the battle against the devil through faith and inquisition. Johannes Nider prints the *Formicarius* in 1475, and the notorious *Malleus Maleficarium* ("The Hammer Against the Witches") is due in 1487.

The latter has an interesting history. In 1484, two Dominican inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger are refused permission by the local bishops in Germany to investigate heresy and witchcraft. In response they appeal to Pope Innocent VIII, who issued *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, a Papal bull authorizing the "correcting, imprisoning, punishing and chastising" of devil-worshippers who have "slain infants", among other crimes. Now with papal authorization, the inquisitors complete their work, and publish the results of their investigation as the *Malleus Maleficarium*. Thanks to the newly-invented printing presses, the book enjoys a wide readership. It was banned by the Church in 1490, and its

authors placed under papal censure; nevertheless, the *Malleus Maleficarium* never lost popularity and was reprinted in 14 editions over the next thirty years.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN 1470

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY IN BRIEF

The fourteenth century was a time of great political, religious, and social turmoil. By about 1400 there was no dominant state in Europe. Italy and Germany were already fragmented, the Iberian peninsula was prey to civil war, and France was torn apart by the feud between the Burgundians and Armagnacs.

The Great Famine of 1315 – 1317 presaged a period of social decline. Land went out of cultivation and timber supplies were exhausted. Manufacture and mineral production all over Mythic Europe went into decline and maritime trade fell off sharply. The great Florentine banking houses collapsed in the 1340s. Social insurrection erupted all over Mythic Europe as the manorial system was eroded and serfdom gradually abolished. Meanwhile urban labourers organized to bargain for economic improvement, and revolts occurred in both cities and the countryside.

All these disasters and unrest were then followed by the Great Mortality. It originated in the East, with Constantinople being one of the first cities to succumb in 1347. By mid-1348 the pestilence had spread through the Balkans, Italy, southern and central France, Savoy, and eastern Iberia. By the end of 1348, the rest of Spain and France was infected, as was Hungary and Austria. The year 1349 saw the disease conquer the British Isles, the rest of the Holy Roman Empire, and

Denmark. In the next four years, the rest of Scandinavia, Lithuania, and the Russian Principalities were conquered by the plague.

The dynasties of Wittelsbachs, Habsburgs, and Luxembourgs who contested the Imperial crown were

Roman Emperor is Frederick III, called 'the Peaceful', who has reigned since 1452.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY IN MORE DETAIL

England's attempt to conquer France in the Hundred Years War (1331–1453) came close to success; but even without decisive victory the war fomented local dissention in France. The Duchy of Burgundy became a significant check on French ambitions, encompassing the imperial county of Burgundy and Flanders. In 1453 the English (Burgundian supporters) were finally expelled from France, and in 1477 Charles the Bold of Burgundy will be killed in battle, ending the conflict.

The Iberian peninsula is dominated by the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, and Portugal.

Resistance to the royal authority of Castile triumphed in the usurpation of the kingdom by the House of Trastámara in 1369, an illegitimate lineage which came to rule both Castile and Aragon (under different lines) over the coming century. The two kingdoms have warred over succession ever since, a conflict which is destined to end in 1479, when Isabella (heir to Castile) marries Ferdinand II (King of Aragon).

In England the failure in France and the loss of Normandy provoked civil war (the Wars of the Roses, 1453–1485), which will be finally settled in the new dynasty of the Tudors. Edward IV is the current king, although he is briefly expelled and replaced by his cousin and predecessor Henry IV in 1470. Scotland has been ruled by the House of Stewart since 1371. James III sits on the throne, and has acquired Orkney and Shetland as dowry for his bride Margaret of Denmark. James III is an unpopular monarch, largely due to his policy of alliance with England.

In Germany, the Golden Bull (1356) intended to settle matters of succession, but resulted instead in an impotent king.



more interested in strengthening their own domains rather than stabilising the German monarchy. A complex network of leagues emerged to fill the political vacuum, the most successful of which was the Swiss Confederation (founded 1291). A series of dynastic alliances finally united the Habsburg lands with those of Luxembourg (1437) and Burgundy (1477). The current Holy

By 1400 five Italian states had risen to prominence: the Republic of Florence under the de'Medici, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Genoa (including Corsica), the Kingdom of Naples under the Kings of Aragon, and the Duchy of Milan under the House of Sforza (after the extinction of the House of Visconti some twenty years ago). As well as

Naples, Aragon also controls Sicily and Sardinia. Genoa is a state in decline. Having warred with Venice for well over a hundred years, Genoa met its defeat at Chioggia in 1380, and it has become a pawn in the struggle between France and Aragon. It has been recently conquered by the Milanese and is being held as a fief of the French crown.

In Scandinavia, a crisis of succession lead to the uniting of the three crowns of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden under one ruler, Margaret of Norway, in the Union of Kalmar (1397). Despite the dynastic union, the aristocracy of these nations were by no means united.

Papal prestige during the fourteenth century was greatly diminished, firstly by the transfer of the papacy to Avignon (1305 – 1377) and secondly by the Western Schism (1378 – 1417). The Avignon Papacy arose when the pro-French Pope Clement V refused to move to Rome following his election to the papal throne, and instead moved his court to the papal enclave at Avignon. Clement was famously a supporter of the French crown unlike his predecessors. He famously suppressed the Order of Knights Templar, possibly to free the French king from the massive debt he owed them. Six Avignon popes followed Clement, culminating in Gregory XI who returned his court to Rome ending the Avignon Papacy. However, on the untimely death of Pope Gregory less than a year later, his Neapolitan successor Urban VI proved an unpopular choice. The majority of the cardinals elected a rival pope Clement VII, who ruled from Avignon. For nearly forty years there were two simultaneous popes (and in 1417 a council of cardinals in Pisa elected a third pope), and divided loyalties amongst the rulers of Europe, with some declaring for Rome, some for Avignon, and some shifting their allegiance as it suited them. The conflict was eventually resolved in 1417 by securing the resignations of John XXIII (Pisa) and Gregory XII (Rome), and excommunicating Benedict XIII

(Avignon), and electing a new pope (Martin V) who was recognised by all. Since then there have been five popes, including Nicholas V who founded the great Vatican Apostolic library (which in 1470 consists of over three thousand manuscripts), and the current pope Paul II.

Two new empires have risen in the east; that of Casimir IV of Poland (1447 –92) and Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1458–90). Casimir rules over a United Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania is a vast realm stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea; and Casimir, heir to Poland's throne, was elected Grand Duke when still in his minority. Matthias Corvinus is king of Hungary and Croatia by birth, was elected king of Bohemia in 1469, and will become Duke of Austria in 1487. His empire is in a state of perpetual war: he has fought against Czech insurgents in Upper Hungary, against Frederick III the Holy Roman Emperor who had designs on Hungary, and most significantly against the Ottoman Empire. Matthias is a famous patron of the arts and philosophy, promoting the new style of Italian art introduced to him by his wife Beatrice of Naples. He has been characterised as the platonic ideal of a philosopher-king.

Ivan III is ruler of the Grand Duchy of Moscow to the east of Lithuania. He considers himself ruler of all the Rus, and has began to be recognised as such by the other princes of Russian territory, earning him his name of "Ivan the Great". He is in the middle of an invasion of the vast Republic of Novgorod, which in 1471 becomes a puppet state under Muscovy control.

The last great power of Mythic Europe is the Ottoman Empire. Rising out of the last years of the thirteenth century, the empire capitalised on the demise of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum to dominate Anatolia and the Balkans. The current Emperor is Mehmet II, called "the Conqueror" for his acquisition of Constantinople, Serbia,

GUNS AND GUNPOWDER

Those keen to add a little gunpowder to their 1470 saga should refer to Mark Shirley's article "*Explosive Power in an Aristotelean World*" available in **Sub Rosa** issue 4. The article provides details of important alchemical reagents and discusses what weapons might be developed.

It's also makes clear that small-bore weapons might not be possible in **Ars Magica's** Aristotelean universe, at least not without some degree of magical intervention.

Morea, Trebizond, Wallachia, and Bosnia. The principality of Wallachia is hotly contested by its prince, Vlad III the Impaler, called Dracula or "son of the Dragon". Vlad and his brother Radu grew up with Mehmet as hostages to the Ottoman court; Vlad grew to hate and despise the young Mehmet whereas Radu became his confidante (and some say lover). Wallachia was conquered by Mehmet in 1462 and Radu installed as its prince. Vlad was imprisoned for treason by Matthew Corvinus on the strength of a forged letter, and currently languishes at his majesty's pleasure.

MAP OF EUROPE IN 1470

A useful map of the political landscape of 1470 Europe is available at:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4f/Europe_in_1470.png

SIX STRANGERS GATHER 'ROUND A TABLE:

RUNNING ARS MAGICA FOR CONVENTION PLAY

By BOB KARCHER

As a passionate and long-time **Ars Magica** player (I started with Third edition way back in 1993!), I've enjoyed introducing my fellow gamers to what I consider to be the greatest fantasy RPG of all time for some time now. The one thing that has consistently surprised me is that lack of **Ars Magica** events at most cons I go to; I suppose part of this might be due to the Grand Tribunals, one of which frequently conflicts with GenCon in early August, but I think most Storyguides see the task too daunting. I would like to discuss my

personal experience with running **Ars Magica** at convention tables, in the hope of inspiring other gamemasters to join me.

I started running **Ars Magica** games at GenCon since in 2000, in part because I love the game, but also to promote it in the greater gaming community; most of the players at my games have either never played it but "heard good things", or played earlier editions and have been trying to get their buddies to play for years. I've done

my best to create interesting pre-generated characters for the players to choose from, and designed stories that give them ample opportunity to test out the system, in the hope that they'll go back home and start **Ars** games in their hometowns.

Typically when I start a new convention saga, I seize upon some concept or element that intrigues me, and then flesh the idea out over time.



SUB ROSA

Often an idea for a pre-generated character leaps into my head and gets me rolling, and then one character follows another; they will be tinkered with for a year or two, and sometimes replaced altogether if they don't work out in play. I run these games year after year, offering the same pre-gens and setting as a sort of "brand name", so that players who had a good time one year can return the next for another go, and maybe bring a friend. For sanity's sake, I limit myself to six characters, though I have sometimes run games with four or five if the event hasn't sold out.

I will now describe the three convention sagas I have run to date; what worked, what didn't and what I learned from the experience. The first game has been retired, but the second is still going strong, and the third, which was just begun in August of 2012, will be returning in 2013 and hopefully many years to come.

SOCIETAS ESOTERICA - PARIS 1620S

"We, the deputies of the principal College of the Brethren of the Rose-cross, have taken up our abode, visible and invisible, in this city, by the grace of the Most High, towards whom are turned the hearts of the just. We show and teach without books or signs, and speak all sorts of languages in the countries where we dwell, to draw mankind, our fellows, from error and from death."

Two factors combined in my head to form my first **Ars Magica** convention saga; the first was the quote above, a translation of a mysterious poster that historically appeared all over the walls of Paris in April 1623; these were the first public declaration of the Rosicrucians, a so-called "secret society" interested in alchemy as well Protestantism and moral philosophy.

The second element was the fourth edition Hedge Magic rules, which were much simpler than Hermetic magic and in theory could be practiced by anyone. From these two ideas I imagined an informal club of students at the University of Paris intrigued by the occult; what would they think of these strange announcements on the walls of their city? What if the Order of Hermes, thought to have vanished sometime in the early 14th Century, had somehow survived in stunted form, and they were now looking for eager new minds to induct into their mysteries?

So I changed a bit of the original Rosicrucian text and made up some posters of my own on 11x17 parchment

stock, to be handed out to the players; the posters were now printed up by the "Ordo Hermeticus", and it was up to the players to find them and hopefully begin to learn their secrets. To mimic the odd bits of magic the characters already possessed, I gave three of them hedge magic abilities; one cunning-woman (technically not a student, but one of their girlfriends), one natural philosopher and one spirit master. All six characters were built as companions, and I did my best to make them well-balanced and interesting, updating several skills and weapons for the 17th Century setting. I also built bits of interpersonal conflict into their sheets, giving them issues that I hoped would generate sparks in play; for instance, the



Flemish medical student was secretly a Protestant, and the French law student was convinced there was a Protestant conspiracy. And I included quotes on each sheet that reflected each character's opinions of the other six, similar to the Stereotypes that used to be included with each House in the old Order of Hermes book; it worked fairly well, but I have since dropped this device to allow the players to develop their own attitudes about the other characters based on actual play.

Of course, the choice to use hedge magic rather than the Hermetic magic rules made my job much simpler; I didn't have to explain techniques and forms, and we could jump into play fairly quickly. True, as hedge magicians they would be missing out on much of the flavor of the game (and the Mythic Europe setting as written altogether), but at the time I was more intrigued by the strength of the **Ars Magica** character generation system itself; I still think it provides richer characters than any other system I have played in my thirty years of gaming. And as a lover of historical fantasy writers like Tim Powers, I was tickled pink to have both black powder and magic in my game.

But as successful as the games was, I began to feel I was doing my players a disservice; by now, Fifth edition was out and looking to be the best edition yet, and I still had them mucking about in Fourth with the limited hedge magic rules. If I was going to running the only **Ars Magica** game at GenCon, shouldn't I be showing them the game's true potential? And so it was with heavy heart that I said 'adieu' to 17th century Paris, leaving many stories yet to be told; we never got to the Burning Court or the Thirty Years War (two themes I really wanted to get into), but we had a good run and I enjoyed it all.

THE HUDSON VALLEY ESOTERIC SOCIETY - NEW YORK 1730S

First of all, I must tell you that this was not my original idea; I just rode on the coattails of somebody else's game, with their full approval.

A player by the name of JamesCat on RPG.net came up with the idea for a play-by-post **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** game set in Colonial America, and I was delighted; somebody else was seeing the wonderful possibilities of combining **Ars Magica** and the black powder era! I've been a Colonial history buff for years, as well as a huge fan of the Pirates of the Caribbean films, and I saw this as my chance to finally play an awesome maga in a nice tri-cornered hat, ala Elizabeth Swann in Dead Man's Chest. JamesCat came up with some very interesting new rules, spells and other details of the background, even setting up a wiki for us all to edit. I was so pumped!

And then, the game abruptly died, as online games are wont to do. I was devastated; I loved my character and the setting, and we had barely gotten the saga off the ground before it petered out. Surely all that work didn't have to be wasted?

And then I got an idea; with JamesCat's permission, I would come up with a new set of pre-gens and adapt his setting for convention play. I'd make sure to tell all my players this was not my idea, and even direct them to the wiki (wiki.rpg.net/index.php/L'Orphelin_Saga) to have a look around, because I had no interest in stealing credit from another gamer; I just wanted to see some good come out of all the work we did.

I still opted for a "mixed party" of spellcasters (full-on Hermetic magi

now) and companions, to give players a good overall feel for the game and roles each type of character plays. At the first session, I also had a grog, but I dropped him from later games, as he was clearly underpowered and seemed disappointing to new players; since then, I have relegated grogs to NPC status. Now that I was using the full magic rules, I wanted to give my players a better sense of how they worked, and so I chose my pre-gens accordingly; three magi with all three versions of the Gift (so they could see how each affected social interactions), and three companions, including a non-Gifted Redcap. To date, this balance has worked out well, though I must admit to doing a lot of tinkering between conventions with the non-Hermetic companions over the years to get them just right.

To date, this game is still going strong; I will admit going into GenCon last year, I was thinking of retiring it, but I had so much fun running the sessions that I think will be around for a few more years.

UNGAUNTLETED - GERMANY 1220S

This is a brand-new saga that debuted at GenCon 2012, and it was a big success; the idea came from the new *Apprentices* book, with the goal to run an all apprentices game. Every player would get a chance to try their hand at Hermetic magic, including spontaneous casting, but at lower casting totals to keep things more manageable. I was also excited about running a game set in the default version of Mythic Europe, since it would give them a better idea of the game as written; additionally, it would allow me to use the official game supplements without tinkering, which is not possible in the Hudson Valley game.

I also wanted to run a game that was lighter in tone, taking its cues from the Harry Potter novels and teen-oriented

TV shows; to that end, I began a very nonscientific analysis of pop culture, including several visits to the wonderful site tvtropes.org, and then started to plug those findings into the established Houses to create teenage apprentices with what I hoped were iconic resonances. I will admit that on the surface these are not very deep, but I've done my best to give them all hidden layers.

Nerdy smart girl = Bonisagus

Weird girl = Merinita with Blatant Gift

Big jock = Tremere with Giant Blood (later adjusted to Verditius for "metal shop kid")

Sarcastic guy = Tytalus

Popular girl = Flambeau with Gentle Gift and Venus' Blessing

Adventurous guy = Jerbiton (later changed to Gifted Mercere)

There is clearly a lot of logic-stretching going on here; having this many apprentices from this many houses, all studying at the same covenant? The only place I could imagine this being remotely possible is at Durenmar, which is the covenant I chose; not only does it have a classic sort of "Hogwarts feel" to it, but it's fully detailed in *Guardians of the Forests*, including a wonderful illustrated map that I photocopied and handed out to the players. On the back of the map, I copied the glossary from page 8 of the core book, something I can't believe I never thought of before; it was a nice bit of reference during play, and something they could show to other players back home.

When I designed the characters, of course I did more than create two-dimensional high school stereotypes; I made them teens so they could have at least one good Form score and decent Magic Theory, as well as a wide variety of skills, Virtues and Flaws. I must admit also fudged a bit in one area: I gave them a few spells for free, just so they had a few powers up their sleeves

and to give them a little idea how spell levels works. I provided each with two cantations and one level 10 spell that they might have learned in secret; this didn't seem too abusive, and would give them something to work with if the player had a hard time grasping spontaneous magic.

The game went very well this year, but I decided to add two new features for next year; NPCs to act as male and female foils, romantic rivals, etc., and a common dining area in the main hall, to stand in for the ubiquitous cafeteria scenes associated with high schools. I hope these two elements will give my players for more things to interact with in a fun way.

I recently had an opportunity to run a game in this setting with four of my coworkers; one had a wide variety of gaming experience, another had only played Pathfinder, and the remaining two had never so much as touched a roleplaying book. The learning curve was very steep, and it took me much longer to explain everything to everyone, but once we got up to speed everyone had a wonderful time; I would normally not use Ars for a neophyte player's first game, but the two newbies were both very creative and quickly locked onto their troubled teen characters.

THE SAGA CONTINUES

Based on my experience, **Ars Magica** is indeed compatible with convention play, though it does require a great deal of work on the storyguide's part; pre-generated characters are a must, due to the considerable length of time it takes to create good characters in the system, and the storyguide will need to take several minutes to explain the rules and setting. Player handouts are also a good idea, especially a copy of the glossary from the core book, as it lays most of the unfamiliar terms out neatly

in one place. A great deal of patience is also required, since **Ars Magica** asks a lot more from its players than most games, and there will of course be a number of questions you will have to field. In general, I have chosen to take a "rules light" approach to running the game, and let the players be aware of this, so that they know this particular session might not mirror their own future game experiences, as well as let them "off the hook" to not sweat the details too much and focus on fun.

I strongly encourage other storyguides to run at their local cons; my experience shows there is a great deal of interest in **Ars Magica** in the gaming community, and if we reach out to new players, we can keep **Ars Magica** going for many years to come.

THE INTANGIBLE ENCHANTER

BY PELLE KOFOD

In issue 15, Pelle Kofod and Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen gave an extended build guide for those wanting to create Intangible Assassin characters, as first described in the *Hermetic Projects* supplement. Also provided was this appendix covering assassin characters focused on enchantments. As is sometimes the case, the appendix didn't make it into issue 15, but we're pleased to present it here.

THE INTANGIBLE ENCHANTER

The Intangible Assassin article in issue 15 focused strongly on spells, not mentioning devices at all. Does this mean that a Verditius Magus cannot join in the fun? Not at all - but their needs are slightly different.

Collecting Arcane Connections is handled much like any other magus, though some Verditii may struggle in this, but the major difference is seen in the execution of things.

PREPARATION

Enchanters need time to prepare. This is true for almost any hermetic magus, but devices are even less flexible than spells. It must also be understood that when using a device, the magus is not the caster, the device is. This means that a separate effect must be used in order to sense the Intangible Tunnel in order to use it. Knowing that it has to be there isn't good enough. Further more, devices do not improve as the enchanter improves, and the device that opens a Tunnel that will penetrate the defenses of you enemies today may well not be able to do so in 20 years' time, much less 50 year. Should an enchanter wish to keep up with the increasing power of his enemies, he will need to build new devices to keep penetration high.

Does this mean that an magus focused on enchanting cannot take advantage of this approach? By no means! It just means that some of his priorities are different.

BUT WHAT PREPARATIONS?

To pursue this idea to it's fullest extent, first realize that not a single XP needs to be spend on the Ability Penetration, ever. Penetration comes from the device and is invested into the device when it is made. This also means that no Penetration Ability is involved, so while an Arcane Connection is needed to establish the Tunnel itself, it has no further use. Nor have any other Sympathetic Connections. Instead, pour those experience points over into Magic Theory without thinking twice (unless you're a Verditius). The Enchanter is based purely on his lab total, almost regardless of what he's trying to achieve. Since this lab total can be increased independently of Arts, enchanters can potentially be extremely versatile "generalists" - in that they specialize in enchanting devices, not in any particular Arts. Instead the enchanter focuses on Magic Theory almost to exclusion, unless he has other ways to add abilities to his lab total, the main ones being the purview of house Verditius. Also useful are the lab-specialization rules presented in Covenants, which can add a significant amount to lab totals, once you realize that enchanting items is considered a single activity type within that rules set. And where Spells are limited in what Casting Bonus and Penetration Modifiers you can rack up, the Penetration for devices is merely a matter of time! If making an invested device the enchantment process can be broken up over as many seasons as need be, potentially getting a huge Penetration of those added levels. Alas, time is the magus' most valuable asset, so this little trick has a natural limit.

But doesn't this enchanting approach cost huge amounts of Vis? Ah, but that's the beauty of things, it needs not. The approach here is charged devices. Yes, it's horribly expensive in time (seasons), except that you can always design your device such that it takes a full season to complete, yet never wastes even a single point of your lab total. Even worse, by the rules as written, for every point of lab total, you get +2 penetration. Many troupes house rule this, but if your troupe isn't among them, there's potential for patently absurd amounts of penetration here - the Waime of *Antagonists*, page 134-135 has been defeated through this approach. With a single charged device. More specifically a single charge of Creo Ignem, causing +75 damage, with a penetration of 50. A common trick is to enchant the most powerful device you can, with so many added levels for Penetration that you can only just succeed. This first season only yields a single charge, but subsequent seasons spent recreating the process from a lab text gives one charge per 5 points Lab Total. So the huge totals needed for very powerful devices also gives more charges in the long run.

The beauty of Charged Devices is really two-fold. First, any increases in Lab Total e.g. from Arts can immediately be felt because of the need to make new Charged Devices (unlike Lesser og Invested Devices which should last along time due to the investment in vis and also time). In the same way the spell caster sees an increase in Casting Total by studying the Arts. Second, when enchanting up an additional batch of Charged Devices from a lab text the increased Lab Total means more charges.

Indeed it can be said that the Enchanter will cast effects using not his casting total but his lab total, which is likely to be much higher



(by including Magic Theory for starter), especially in the case of a dedicated enchanter, such as a Verditius Magus.

BUT WHY ENCHANT?

Now, remember how it was pointed out above, that the enchanter is not the caster, that instead the device is? That's one of the great beauties of this approach. Because that means that if your prey manages to sense the Intangible Tunnel your device has caused, and sends a spell back through the Tunnel, it will by default affect your device and not you. This will likely insulate you from e.g. Corpus or Mentem effects (as they wouldn't affect the device, as well as all T: Individual effects. Essentially, that Pilum of Flame thrown back through the Tunnel might set fire to your Device, but you will not be hit yourself, as you didn't open the Tunnel, and Pilum of Flame only a single individual. Sure, if your

device is set ablaze you might be burned as well, but this will likely be much easier to defend against. Sure, your target can throw T: Group spells back along the Tunnel, but these tend to have poorer penetration and must be of a kind that affects both you and your device.

LAB TOTALS

So this protects you to some degree. What other advantages are there to using devices?

The main one has already been mentioned above. You're effectively casting with your lab total, not your casting total. And there are simply more ways to improve that lab total.

We will not go into details about how to improve lab totals here - instead we recommend Mark Lawford's excellent articles in **Sub Rosa** issues 10 and 11, regarding the Hermetic Shipwright and Architect

respectively. We will just hasten to add that for some magi, Arts make up just a part of their lab total, and not even the main one. The main means of improving lab totals include:

- **Magic Theory:** Every enchanter should have this ability as high as possible, because it is used in every lab total you will ever generate as a hermetic wizard. It is an ability, so it costs 5 times as many experience points to improve as an Art - making it a much better investment than spreading these experience points among, for example, 10 different Forms.
- **Assistants:** You might not want to tell the world all about your murderous plans, but if you do have someone you trust, take them with you in the lab! You add the assistant's Intelligence + Magic Theory directly to your lab total. This is another excellent reason to focus on Magic

Theory in your own studies - it lets you improve your assistants by teaching them Magic Theory, effectively multiplying the effect of your own ability score by the number of people in the lab. Don't forget about familiars either!

- **Lab Specialization:** These were introduced in Covenants, and are sometimes disputed. We'd normally use them to add flavor to labs. But in the interests of this type of article, we'll use them for pure power! The trick here is that Items - all Items - are a valid single specialization. Usually, this is done by using the Greater Feature lab virtue - "balanced" by the Greater Focus lab flaw, for a total of +5 to lab total per installation. Some troupes will restrict this to just one Focus lab flaw, check with your troupe on this one. In this case, lab refinement will be your friend, and it is mainly limited by... your Magic Theory score.

- **Shape and Material Bonus:** Because there's no reason to not grab that "+4 Destroy things at a distance" bonus when it's free with using a wand, is there? Unless you've found something better. Verditius Magi get to add philosophiae to this total. Either way, it's capped by your Magic Theory. Do we see a pattern here yet?
- **Aura:** Rarely a big issue, but items can be argued to benefit from an aura twice. The aura of your lab is added to your lab total (and so affect the penetration of the items you enchant), but as they are magical effects, they also benefit from the aura they are in when the item is activated, which is likely to be friendly and fairly strong. This is rarely a major bonus, but it's worth mentioning, as it is somehow not affected by your Magic Theory score.

In short, the path of the enchanter is absolutely and entirely compatible with the

path of the Intangible Assassin, and there are some major benefits to be collected here. As with the spell caster Assassin there are a few vital choices to be made with regards to Virtues, however a few Minor Hermetic ones takes you a long way. There are nowhere near as obvious choices for a Major Virtue as for the caster variant. For Characteristics Int is vital for Lab Totals, however there still needs to be focus on how to obtain Arcane Connections. For Abilities the bulk of the experience points should go into Magic Theory instead of Penetration, plus Philosophiae and perhaps Craft for a Verditius. Leadership is useful for having assistants, and the procuring of ACs still needs to be covered as well.



MAPPA MUNDI

This issue does a great job of envisioning what the Order, or even just magi might be like across a number of eras. Each makes an effort to consider what sorts of challenges might face the wizards of those centuries, and what stories might be told. However, we're limited in the amount of material we can offer in **Sub Rosa**, and so we offer you additional resources from across the internet for you to augment your sagas.

Beginning with Britannia, 550, Before the Order, we can strongly recommend **Life in Roman Britain** by Joan Alcock as a good reference. It provides a good look at daily culture on the island in the years leading up to the setting. The diverse tribal situation on Britain in the 6th century is nicely shown here:

www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/maps/550_kingdoms.html

But no saga remains small in scope, and the larger world picture is wonderfully shown in this pdf: www.indiana.edu/~cahist/Readings/2011Spring/The%20World_500%20to%20700%20ce.pdf An interactive map, which focuses primarily on Europe can be found here: http://www.worldology.com/Europe/dark_ages_imap.htm and gives breakout explanations of important events, covering Viking raids, and looking at spread of the Germanic tribes as they consume Western Roman empire. The **Mythic Britain Companion**, by Runequest, is available on RPGNow (rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/144044/Mythic-Britain-Companion). For a small price, it offers cults which can be easily adapted to play, and most beneficial, a collection of

maps showing tribal divisions and sacred places. Zooming out again, **Legends of the Dark Ages** is a D20 variant which covers 416 AD to 816 AD, offering maps and convenient summaries. rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/2791/Legends-of-the-Dark-Ages?it=1

Moving forward into 865 AD, **Voventes Centennales**, you can find a solid look at the Islamic world in 850, www.indiana.edu/~cahist/Readings/2011Spring/Abbasid%20Caliphate.pdf. The Carolingian lands in 850 AD are wonderfully detailed here: www.indiana.edu/~cahist/Readings/2011Spring/Empire%20of%20Charlemagne.pdf. A site that will become familiar over this piece, www.worldology.com/Europe/dark_ages_imap.htm discusses Viking raids, and other useful bits for the years between 840-967 AD. The maps shown here: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd_1911/shepherd-c-056.jpg shows the disruption of the Carolingian Empire, showing many of the surrounding nations.

Pushing to 1050 AD, After the Schism, you can get an excellent bit of cultural material from the Chaosium monograph, **Cthulhu Dark Ages**. It begins in 1097, but still offers useful information for storyguides and players. rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/56334/Cthulhu-Dark-Ages?term=Cthulhu+Dark+Ages Another monograph from Chaosium, **The Abbey** details St. Bartholomew's Abbey rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/81969/The-Abbey, and while it is set in 962 AD, it should shift easily enough. Interactive maps at this era are available at: www.worldology.com/

[Europe/dark_ages_imap.htm](http://www.worldology.com/Europe/dark_ages_imap.htm) which continue to give details specific to the particular regions. A period map of the world is available here, and could be printed to serve as good prop in games: www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/unvbrit/a/zoomify82938.html For sagas which decide to pursue stories dealing with the pope, this map of Italy has a lot of value:

www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/italy_1050.htm

Finally, an excellent look at the Holy Roman Empire at its peak can be found here: schools-wikipedia.org/images/2468/246812.jpg.htm

Finally, for the setting of 1470 AD, After the Plague, there are many RPG options available, but most notably is **White Wolf's Mage: The Sorcerer's Crusade**, rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/201/Mage-The-Sorcerers-Crusade?it=1 Maps are also much easier to find for this period, but www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd/central_europe_1477.jpg offers a good look at Central Europe and www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd_1911/shepherd-c-084.jpg shows France and England in 1455-1494 AD.

While not comprehensive, hopefully this collection of maps, links, and additional game material will help enhance your sagas as you explore the lives of magi in epochs different from the standard setting and get you started looking for more supplemental material. Have ideas about more resources which could improve these settings? Post them in the Atlas forum thread for this issue and share them with the rest of us!



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