

Tribunals of Hermes:

ROME



A Guide to the Corrupted Lands of Italy
for ARS MAGICA™ 3rd Edition

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SPECIAL THANKS

To the whole damn White Wolf game studio. There are 20 damn people here now, dammit, and that's too many to come up with joke names for every damn month. So I'm not doing a damn Special Thanks. Dammit.

Tribunals of Hermes: Rome

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AUTHORS' DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the members of Berkeley's Roman Tribunal Saga. Many of the ideas in this book were originally presented in those stories. Thanks to Philip Brown, Billy Filios, Scott Gier, Philip Gross, Donald Kubasak, Doug Lampert, Dave Martin, Doug Orleans, Don Petrovich, Dave Pickering, Eric Rowe, Matt Seidl, John Tomasetti, Chris Van Horn, Dave Woo, Kevin Wong and everyone else who played.

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From the journal of Tamgor of Quaesitor

"In recent years, stories finding their way out of the Roman Tribunal have grown more and more bleak. Even messages from the great Magvillus itself, once beyond reproach, seem to suggest new factionalism within what I once considered the Order of Hermes' very Heart of Law. For decades, those of us beyond Italy have looked solemnly upon its degradation, and many of us had given up hope. Recently, however, there seems to shine a new light. Jarane of Quaesitor, the most respected of our House, save perhaps for Arliandus of Magvillus himself, has announced that he will gather a triad of Quaesitoris, and they will go to Italy to fix the ancient problems of the peninsula. It seems one of the oldest Tribunals of the Order may be saved.

"In preparation for that trip, Jarane announced that he would need current information on the Tribunal and its corrupt ways. It was decided that another Magus, one who would not seem to represent the official triad, would be sent. I am honored to say that I was chosen for the task. Following are my official records and insights into Roman Tribunal, made in preparation for the arrival of Jarane. May Guernicus grant that my perceptions have been clear, and my memory crisp.

"My first stop in the Roman Tribunal was Harco, the Covenant closest to Provençal's Doissetep, and Domus Magnus of Mercere, a place where Jarane and the others have met in the past. Since Mercere is one of the most respected Houses in the Order, I thought the visit would be a joyful one. Instead, I found myself catapulted into the brutal reality that is the Roman Tribunal.

"It was a full day before I was finally able to meet Insatella, Primus of Mercere. Several times there were false starts, when I was prepared to meet with the Primus, but other matters intervened. I am still astonished that two merchants and one priest were both deemed more important than myself.

"While I waited, I wandered around Harco, knowing that I could learn as much from the covenfolk as from the Primus. The opulence presented before me was something I have seen only in the highest courts of Europe. Everywhere the atmosphere was a mercantile one, something I expected to find in Venice, not in the heart of one of the most honorable Houses of the Order. Still, there was one glimmer of hope in the Covenant. Talking with Guiseppe, a visiting merchant, I learned Harco was extremely honest in its trade. So, even if Harco is much too involved in an arena where Magi have no business, at least they behave in a manner that will not bring dishonor upon the Order, nor fuel mundane fires against us. That does not mean, however, that the Covenant's mercantile actions should be condoned.

"When finally I met with Insatella, she was studying an agreement left by a merchant. By that time, I had no real want to talk with her, for I had all the information I needed. I simply presented my credentials as a Quaesitor, and asked for permission to use a Hermes Portal to pass on to Magvillus. I was again astounded, this time when Insatella said no. After considerable debate I finally convinced her that I was on important Quaesitor business, and she allowed me to pass. I could not believe that Mercere would have so little respect for a Quaesitor, particularly one performing his duties.

"Harco was overwhelming, for it shattered many of my illusions, but even Harco's realities could not prepare me for Magvillus. Despite my credentials and the fact that my master passed his apprentice's Gauntlet at Magvillus itself, I was not allowed into the Covenant's inner sanctum. When I inquired as to why, I was told certain matters were still being clarified. I suspect those within knew the true purpose of my visit and had something terrible to hide.

"So, I am unhappy to report that I was unable to gain the aid we hoped for at Magvillus. Instead, I was kept even from learning the true state of affairs within the Covenant's walls. I fear great machinations of power go on there, maybe to do with the Duresca scrolls of ages past. I recommend that an organization of supporters, outside Rome, move for an investigation of Magvillus, Quaesitoris' so-called home.

"Greatly disappointed, I moved on, traveling out to the city of Vieste. After several weeks I was able to convince a ship-captain to head to Tunis. I had to pay him a small fortune, for he was

very worried about pirates, said to make Tunis their home. Fortunately, the trip was an uneventful one, though the captain constantly engaged in superstitious rituals. Near the bottom of Calabria he intoned wards against the sirens. East of Sicily, he made a sacrifice to the Cyclopes, begging that they not take his ship. It is amazing that even in cultured Italy, Christians are still close to their pagan forefathers.

"When I walked through Tunis, it was clear that I was in a foreign land. The darker skin of the townsfolk intimidated me so that I cast spells upon myself, to appear as they did. I was quite relieved when I left the walled city behind. I heard stories of Moslems who dealt with great magicks and demons, and was worried that my disguise would be penetrated.

"From Tunis, it was just a few hours to the ruins of Carthage, where Sansaron is located. The trip was an awful one. The heat was oppressive and several times I considered turning back. Occasionally great gusts of wind from the south bombarded me with sand. However, infrequent olive trees became great oases to me, proving that the land is not utterly inhospitable.

"On the outskirts of Carthage's ruins I was met by Ahmen, who I later learned was one of Sansaron Covenant's five custos. He seemed surprised to see me, and as we picked through the ruins, he questioned me intensely. I prattled like some old hen, so pleased was I to hear Latin again.

"Sansaron itself is located in magically inspired caverns, below the temple of some ancient Carthaginian god. After trekking across many areas of ruin we came to that temple. My guide touched a huge block of stone, which stood within the temple ruins, and said a ritualistic phrase. When the block magically moved aside, I was ushered into Sansaron, which is not to say that I was welcome.

"Ahmen disappeared for a while, leaving me in the vestibule. When he finally returned, after abandoning me in that cold, dank chamber for an intolerable time, he said a room had been prepared for me, for the time that I remained at the Covenant. That was all that was done. After being led to my room, which was not fit for a peasant, I was left alone. I expected to be greeted by Narisian, head of the Covenant. Never have I been in a Covenant where visiting Quaestoris were not met at once. When Ahmen appeared hours later, to bring me a scant dinner, I realized I was being ignored. I demanded to be taken to Narisian. Ahmen reluctantly led me from my cell.

"To say Narisian was rude would be an overstatement. However, he was quite abrupt. He had no desire to talk to me, and refused to let me look around his Covenant. It was made quite clear to me that Sansaron had been founded in Africa, so far from the rest of the Tribunal, because its members sought isolation. Although Narisian was willing to put me up while I went about any other business, I was clearly not welcome.

"So, I left Sansaron. The gloom that had set upon me since I entered the Roman Tribunal had grown even more oppressive. All things in the land were corrupt, or so it seemed. As far as I could tell, Rome did not have one redeeming feature. When I walked through foreign Tunis once again, I scarcely noticed it. I joined the ship I had left behind, and we were shortly on our way to Cagliari, the Sardinian port near Verdi. This time, I paid no attention to the captain's rituals, although they were as constant as on our trip from Tunis.

"Perhaps the cool veneer I developed is evidence of how the Roman Tribunal became so vile. Perhaps its inhabitants, like me, were initially offended by the land's inhospitality and sin. In growing cold to their environment, they became as cruel and corrupt as it. Perhaps, had I remained in Rome, I would have become as foul as they.

"It was not easy to get from Cagliari to Verdi. All routes which might have once led to the Covenant were overgrown. When I finally did come close to Verdi, I faced a mental battle with spells of concealment set upon the place. Finally, however, I stumbled upon the hidden valley where Verdi has resided for so long. It was a place of beauty, seemingly an Eden upon the earth where magic is the great mother, protecting and comforting all those within its embrace. Almost at once, I was taken to Imanitosi's great mystical tower, where I met with the Primus of Verdi. She was kind and helpful, constantly pointing out the good that her Covenant was doing for the Tribunal and the Order.

"By then, I had become jaded, however, and refused to take Verdi at face value. After being given space in one of Verdi's huge guest houses, I spent a few days walking around the Covenant, listening. I heard Rellantali talked of disparagingly, and even observed two of Verdi's full members making secrets plans to further undermine that Covenant. Everywhere there were quiet plans and manipulations. If they had it their way, it seemed, Magi of Verdi would control the entire Tribunal, no matter what the cost to others. As I had suspected, the beautiful facade of Verdi concealed a core thoroughly rotten.

"I was very happy when I found myself, several weeks later, outside the walls of Rellantali, upon the island of Asinara. It was the fifth of the recognized Covenants of the Roman Tribunal, and thus marked the halfway point of my trip through Italy. Unfortunately, I was greeted by Magi more rude than those of Sansaron. When I hailed at the Covenant gates, I was forced to wait until Netirium, a young Magus, finally deigned to talk with me. Still, I stood outside Rellantali's walls while Netirium greeted me from atop them.

"Netirium steadfastly refused to let me within Rellantali's walls, claiming the whole time that I was a spy from Magvillus. As we argued, I did something that I now regret. Desperately trying to prove to Netirium that I was not a spy (for Magvillus, at least), I began to talk of my recent visit to Verdi. I warned Netirium of the plans afoot there, hoping to ingratiate myself with him. Unfortunately, it was to no avail. Despite all of my protests and arguments, I was sent away, never setting foot within Rellantali.

"Yet again I had allowed myself to be caught up in the frenzy of the Roman Tribunal. In bartering information on Verdi's plots, I am quite sure I inspired Rellantali to design a plot of its own. It is so easy to understand now, having faltered some myself, how the Roman Tribunal became what it is. It is clear to me that some central authority is needed within the Roman Tribunal, to control its members and regulate its Covenants.

"Leaving Rellantali, I sailed east to Vardian's Tomb, the first of the Tribunal's independent Covenants, comprised of Magi divested from the Order. I sought it out as word claimed it was a microcosm of the Tribunal as a whole. I also visited as a gesture of good will. After leaving my ship captain behind in Ostia, Rome's port, I went inland, circling south of the city until I came to the catacombs where Vardian's Tomb lies. The entrance is cunningly concealed from mundanes, who have forgotten its location since the days of Rome's fall. When I finally located that entrance, I descend into the catacombs. The passages of Vardian's Tomb were oppressively small. Surrounded on all sides by stone, earth, and the dead, I grew claustrophobic. Compared to Vardian's Tomb, the caverns of Sansaron are spacious and clean.

"In the Tomb, I was greeted almost at once by Fortunatas of Jerbiton and Rubaton Ex Miscellanea, the two heads of the Covenant. Unlike the Magi at Rellantali, they seemed extremely pleased to see me. However, it was only because they sought to use my influence in the Order against each other. Greatly sickened by its duplicity, and only then realizing the mistake I had made at Rellantali, I left Vardian's Tomb very quickly. I can say, however, that our old reports of Vardian's Tomb still seem to apply. The independent Covenant is deeply factionalized. Both the Jerbiton and necromancers seem intent upon destroying the power of the other, gaining the Covenant for themselves.

"Wanting nothing more by that time than to be out of the Roman Tribunal, I passed quickly on to Postestas. I was not sure what I would find, for House Tremere usually has a certain power hungry reputation. On the other hand, I had never heard anyone within the Tribunal say anything but good of them. The trip was a greatly peaceful one and it let me collect my thoughts. Hiking across the Apennines was somewhat arduous, but the pleasant scenery, the olive trees and the evergreens, all reminded me of the simpler things in life. Postestas itself is located on cliffs overlooking the Adriatic. I am quite envious of the beautiful, natural setting its members enjoy.

"The autocrat who met me was quite friendly. He quickly situated me in the Covenant's guest quarters and promised that a full council meeting would be called the next day, so that I could speak with all the Magi. I was invited to wander around Postestas' outer sanctum, and did so. All covenfolk that I spoke to seemed good natured. They spoke glowingly of their masters, saying they were kind and good people.

"The next day, I was welcomed into the Covenant's inner sanctum. When I was escorted to the council room, I gasped in awe. It was a beautiful room with a high, sweeping ceiling. Stained glass windows cast strangely colored light. The council room of Postestas reminded me of a beautiful Christian church, a church to Tremere perhaps. When I sat down, Garvil, Postestas' leader, began to speak of his Covenant,

telling how he hoped he could preserve order there. Order, he said, was what made his House strong, and he was sure he could help the Tribunal.

"I must admit that my entire sense of Postestas was a good one. Its members seemed friendly and ready to do what they could to save the Roman Tribunal. Although it was never said, it was clear that Postestas' Magi seek to be at the top of a new Roman order. From what I have seen that might be a good thing.

"I spent nearly a week in Postestas, so happy was I to be free from the intrigue of the surrounding Tribunal. Finally, I realized I had to go on, and set out for Bologna, specifically the nearby Covenant of Literatus.

"When I first toured Literatus, I was amazed by their library. Books were neatly organized across three entire floors of the Covenant's manor house. Never have I seen such a library save at Doissetep itself. Even more surprising, Literatus' Magi were willing to let others use their resources if, in return, Magi did work for the Covenant. When I spoke to the Covenant's head, Amberitus, I learned that his philosophy on life was cooperation itself. He believed the Magi of the Roman Tribunal should share what they have, making all stronger. Indeed, Literatus seems the greatest ray of hope for the Roman Tribunal. It is a place that could truly benefit all in Italy, if not the Order of Hermes itself.

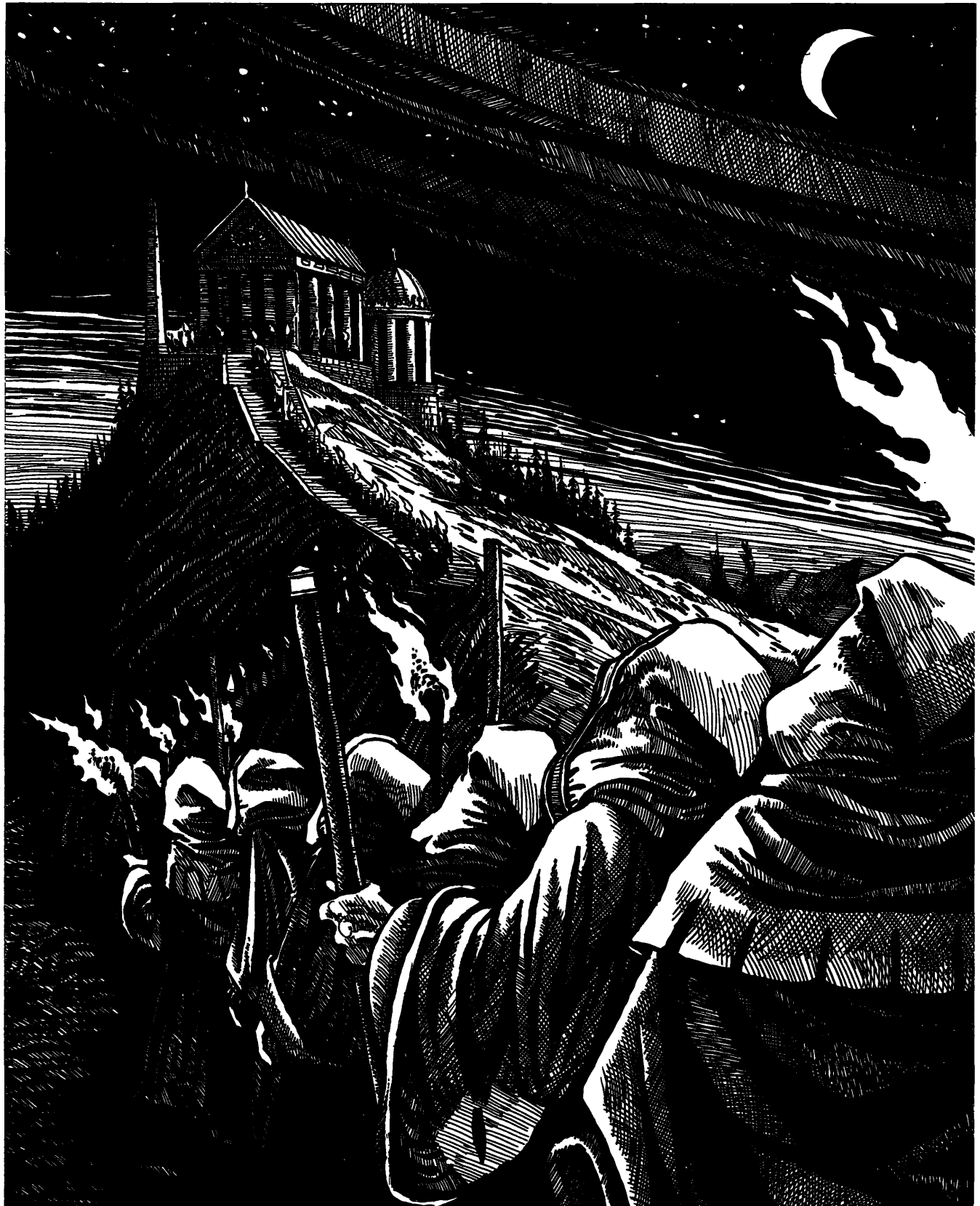
"However, I do fear there is a faction at Literatus which fears Quaesitoris. It seems they accepted our Treaty — that which limits relations with mundanes and curtails conflict between Magi — two hundred years ago, but with great reluctance. Indeed, the Magi of Literatus suspect the Treaty was designed by Magvillus and still serves that Covenant today. Although it was never said, Amberitus seemed to suspect that Magvillus was behind my visit as well. Frankly, having met the scheming Magi of Magvillus, I cannot blame Literatus' suspicions. We shall have to approach the Covenant carefully when foreign Quaesitoris return to the Tribunal, so much are goodness and distrust mixed within Literatus' walls.

"Finally, I set out for Luctatio, the last Covenant on my long list. As I trekked through the Po Valley, heading for Milan, near which Luctatio is located, I could not help muse. For a hundred years the cities of northern Italy have been independent, and in that time bitter rivalries and jealousies have erupted. The cities attack each other again and again, while alliances swing wildly this way and that. Their history is much like that of the Roman Tribunals' Covenants. Perhaps, as occurred with Rome's cities, we allowed Rome's Covenants too much power. Perhaps the Order of Hermes needs to become a greater power in the Roman Tribunal, a magical Holy Roman Empire as it were. Then, and only then, might order be restored. It is definitely an issue to consider.

"In any case, when I finally arrived at the fortifications of Luctatio, I once more met defeat. I was told that Magvillus had sent a proclamation to all the Covenants of Rome, decreeing that I was to be allowed entrance to none of them. The Magi of Luctatio seemed sympathetic, but would not allow me entrance. Their leader, a surprisingly hospitable member of Tytalus named Arasen, did come out and talk with me for a time, and left me with a relatively good impression. I should note that this encounter is yet another strike against Magvillus. I am astounded they would abuse their power so, and am confident that we should never let them do so again.

"That is the record of my journey through the Roman Tribunal. On my way back to Provençal, I stopped at Harco, hoping to use the Hermes Portal that leads to Doissetep. Unfortunately, the Primus was even less friendly than before, no doubt given Magvillus' decree. So, I set upon a long journey through the Alps and have finally returned.

"In conclusion, I must say that the Roman Tribunal is as bad as we feared, if not worse. Those who have been traditionally held in high regard seem to abuse their power most of all. A strong central power is badly needed there, to control the wars within the Tribunal. When the Quaesitoris travel to the Tribunal, I strongly suggest work be done with the Covenant of Postestas. Of all the Covenants in the Tribunal, it seems most likely to support us. There is a lot of work to be done in the Roman Tribunal, but by Guernicus' will, I hope it may be done."



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE



he Tribunals of Hermes: Rome is meant for use with the *Ars Magica* 3rd edition storytelling game. This game supplement is intended for players and Storyguides alike, exploring that region which Hermetic Magi call the Roman Tribunal, a span of land encompassing the Italian peninsula, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, the southern Alps and northern Africa. This is a land of intrigue, double-dealing, backstabbing, machination and Infernal corruption. Trust in Rome is a rare luxury and valued commodity. Anyone who blunders carelessly into relations with an inhabitant of the Roman Tribunal, be that person mortal or mystical, may wind up cheated of his hopes and robbed of his life. Indeed, even the Tribunal's Magi are often beneath contempt for they would double-cross fellow wizards, not only in Hermetic politics, but in competition for much-sought-after raw vis. Although much of the magic inherent to the Roman Tribunal is gone—given the influence of the Dominion and squandering since the days of Mercury—the place is no less dangerous. The maliciousness and sin of the Tribunal's citizens easily compensates for the dangers that magic and nature could present. It is in the Roman Tribunal, then, that humanity is proven the Order of Hermes' greatest enemy.

To investigate the dangers of humanity in the Roman Tribunal, this book details not only mundane and Hermetic history, but mundane and Hermetic politics. Not only can the corruption and duplicity of the land be found in its past, but in its present—the 13th century—and in the very way it is governed: by threat, plot and bribe. Given the Tribunal's heritage and culture, it's in the city that life thrives, and it's the

city upon which this book concentrates. As centers of a different kind of human society, all the Tribunal's Covenants are presented as well, in all their defiled glory. *The Tribunals of Hermes: Rome* paints a sullied portrait of Mythic Italy, a land willingly given up to damnation.

OVERVIEW

This book expands upon information provided in previous *Ars Magica* supplements. Indeed, it follows in the tradition of *Tribunals of Hermes: Iberia*, and sets the tone for Tribunal sourcebooks to come. Where *Mythic Europe* establishes a basis for life and activity in Italy, that book is inclined toward the history and geography of the land, offering a foundation upon which to set stories. This book goes beyond *Mythic Europe*, delving into the mystery, corruption, fantasy and just plain strange side of Italy. After all, members of the Order of Hermes are by no means ordinary, and the land and people they choose to deal with are, by default, unusual.

Rome also evolves beyond the bounds of the 2nd edition supplement, *The Order of Hermes*. Although that book provides a foundation for the Tribunal, this goes further, breathing life into the Covenants that are otherwise mentioned only in passing there. This book offers all you need to create or partake in a Saga in the Roman Tribunal. Indeed, you can just use what is provided here or can reach beyond, expanding upon this book, adapting it to your own imagination.



Even if your Saga is set outside Rome, in another Tribunal or even beyond Mythic Europe, this book is still valuable. Perhaps Covenants of the Roman Tribunal are behind political manipulations within your own Tribunal. Perhaps Magi of Italy journey to your Covenant, pursuing some dire mission or bearing some grave secret. Alternatively, you can take Rome's stories, mythic places or even Covenants and adapt them to your own Saga. Maybe the Covenant of Literatus, under a different name, lies near the University of Paris. Ultimately, though, the primary goal of this supplement is to create a coherent background for the Roman Tribunal, and to enhance your *Ars Magica* experience.

Theme

The theme of the Roman Tribunal is conflict. Conflict underlies both the Tribunal's chaotic past and turbulent present, both mundane and magical. Conflict defines what the Tribunal is. In the mundane world, conflict has proliferated the past millennium, since the dissolution of the Roman Empire. Constant invasions, centuries of dispute between Church and Holy Roman Empire, and Infernal corruption have left and leave their mark on Italian society.

By the same token, the Roman branch of the Order has, since its inception, unwaveringly descended into a downward spiral of political manipulation and betrayal, which may one day spell the Tribunal's doom. Since Rome's magic began to fade, given its abuse and corruption, conflicts over raw vis and magical resources have steadily mounted, and those are the conflicts waged over tangible prizes. There are far mystical more battles fought over prizes much more esoteric, and for reasons more unfathomable than mere sin or greed.

The only feeble measure that currently preserves the Tribunal from itself is an outdated document known as the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal. How long this bureaucratic relic can be held over Magi's heads is uncertain. When that law has no hold, all hell will break loose, in the very place where the Order of Hermes has its roots.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROMAN TRIBUNAL

Before moving on to the history of the Roman Tribunal, it's important to understand the basic geography of Italy. In many ways, the physical and political geography of the land combine to create the conflicts that underlie the Tribunal.

Physical Geography

At first glance, Italy seems an isolated, confined land (see the *Italy* map for the lay of the land). In the north, dividing the Italian peninsula from decadent France and the chaotic Holy Roman Empire, are the majestic Alps. These great mountains are frighteningly high, and make passage beyond nearly impossible in all but the summer months (and even then parties lose many lives to the forces of nature and strange beasts). Just to

the south of the Alps is the Po Valley, where even stranger beasts lurk among crops and in the oily pools of swamps, awaiting unsuspecting travelers. The Po and Adige Rivers run through the areas now known as Lombardy and Venetia. Perhaps it is along these threads that the beasts of the Alps have come down to the warmer lowlands, infesting the Po Valley with its vile residents.

South of the Po Valley are the Apennines, another range of mountains, forming a natural border to the Po, as if in a misdirected attempt to keep the valley's corruption from spreading to other lands. The Apennines rise in northwest Italy, running down the entire length of Italy. Moving inward from the east and west coasts of Italy, toward the Apennines, the land gradually grows hilly. In the southernmost reaches of Italy, where the land seem desperate to break itself from the rest of Mythic Europe, the Gulf of Taranto clefts the land, separating the peninsula into distinct western and eastern portions. Maybe it is actually the sea that seeks to overtake the peninsula, washing its corruption from the face of the world. The western of the divided lands is Calabria, and the eastern is Apulia.

Italy is bound by seas on three sides, pinning the land's prisoners against the looming Alps. The western sea is the harsh Tyrrhenian, the eastern is the wild Adriatic Sea, and the southern is the pirated Ionic Sea. Even further south is the Mediterranean Sea. The Tyrrhenia is bound to the west by Corsica and Sardinia, and to the south by Sicily. Although these islands are all hilly, Sicily is considered one of the most fertile places in the entire Mediterranean, maybe by virtue of Infernal contract.

Political Geography

Although Italy's political geography is constantly changing, there are several constants. The majority of southern Italy and the island of Sicily are under the rule of the Kingdom of Sicily. At the start of your *Ars Magica Saga* (around A.D. 1197), this kingdom is controlled by Frederick II, a young boy under the care of Pope Innocent III. In 1211, Frederick gains control of the Holy Roman Empire as well. Rule of both under the King of Sicily persists until 1245.

To the northeast of Italy lies the Holy Roman Empire. It has strong sway over Germanic regions and has theoretical control over most of northern Italy. In truth, most cities in northern Italy are independent. The question of who truly controls these cities, whether it be the Papal States, the Holy Roman Empire or the cities themselves, is one of the chief mundane conflicts of this time. The city of Venice and its small empire remains aloof from this jurisdiction controversy.

When "independent" Italian cities, particularly in the north, are not warring with the Holy Roman Empire and Papal States, they are warring with each other. Constant struggle wracks not only northern Italy, but the two islands to the west, Corsica and Sardinia, as well. In the century preceding your *Ars Magica Saga*, the islands have been fought over by the cities of Pisa and Genoa. In 1197, the Genoese Church has supremacy over much of Corsica, and Pisa has control over much

of Sardinia. Large portions of the islands are split into fiefs granted by the two cities.

Between Sicily to the south, the states to the north, and the Holy Roman Empire further beyond lie the Papal States. They run from Rome in the southwest to Bologna and beyond, in the northeast. The Papacy seeks to preserve a delicate balance to avoid being swallowed by its feuding neighbors.

Hermetic Geography

Eight recognized Covenants make up the Roman Tribunal. To the northwest, on the edge of the Alps, is the Covenant of Harco, Domus Magnus of Mercere. Nearby, in the war-torn lands of Lombardy, is the newly founded Covenant of Luctatio. Further south is Literatus, on the outskirts of Bologna. On the eastern Italian coast is the Covenant of Postestas, home of the scheming Tremere.

The remaining Covenants of the Tribunal are all well-hidden, far from mundane society. Verdi, the Domus Magnus of Verditius, is located in a secret valley on Sardinia. Rellantali is sequestered on Asinara, a small island just north of Sardinia. On the mainland, Magvillus, Domus Magnus of House Quaesitor, is located in the mountains of southern Italy. The Covenant farthest removed from the entire Roman Tribunal is Sansaron, built in the ruins of the ancient city of Carthage, on the northern coast of Africa. Political interaction between these Covenants, and with those beyond the Roman Tribunal, is explored in Chapter Five.

True to the chaos of the land and its society of Magi, there are also two independent Covenants in Italy — Feritel and Vardian's Tomb — divested from the Tribunal. They have existed for years and, strangely, have not been marked for destruction by official Covenants. The economic, mystical and political power these outsider Covenants wield may be what keeps them alive.

ROMAN SAGAS

Establishing a Saga in the Roman Tribunal can be tricky since the land is already overcrowded. Characters can create their own Covenant or join an existing one. Founding a Covenant is no easy task, especially given the land's lack of vis and untouched, remote areas. What's more, older Covenants rarely accept new members. What are young, enterprising characters to do in the Roman Tribunal? The following are some suggestions for getting your Roman Saga underway.

Rellantali

Unlike so many other Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, Rellantali is a fairly liberal one. Its main facility is already located in a remote region and populated by a mix of Magi, so is receptive to further variation with new members (although more is said on that below). Rellantali is one of the best Covenants in which to begin a Roman Saga.

Since Rellantali has a strong ruler, new members may frequently be ordered to perform missions for the Covenant.

Indeed, the Covenant might only accept new members if they go abroad, collecting what vis they can find, and investigating events. There is much story potential here.

Ultimately, Rellantali is an excellent Covenant to use if Houses such as Flambeau, Tremere and Tytalus are represented. Members of these Houses easily lend themselves to the journeys demanded by Rellantali's leaders; the journeys may often lead to intrigue, subterfuge and violence.

Literatus

Literatus is another Covenant open to varied membership and is thus another good choice for characters, if they can barter their way into the charter. Literatus also has a strong leader, in Amberitus. Young Magi in the Covenant might have many tasks assigned them by Amberitus, such as finding lost books, protecting the Covenant, and bringing peace to the Tribunal — the stuff that makes great Magi. Jerbiton is the most common House at Literatus, but any friendly, good-natured Magus can fit in.

New Covenants

If Magi want to start a new Covenant, Sicily is the most likely location. The land is owned by the Covenant of Magvillus, but, with entreaties and promises of friendship, new Magi might establish themselves without a fight. The resultant Covenant is undoubtedly deeply in debt to Magvillus, and is expected to pay those debts to bolster Magvillus' power in the Tribunal. Debts owed Magvillus might cripple you if fate frowns upon your Covenant's efforts. Moving out of Magvillus' shadow could be the theme of your Saga.

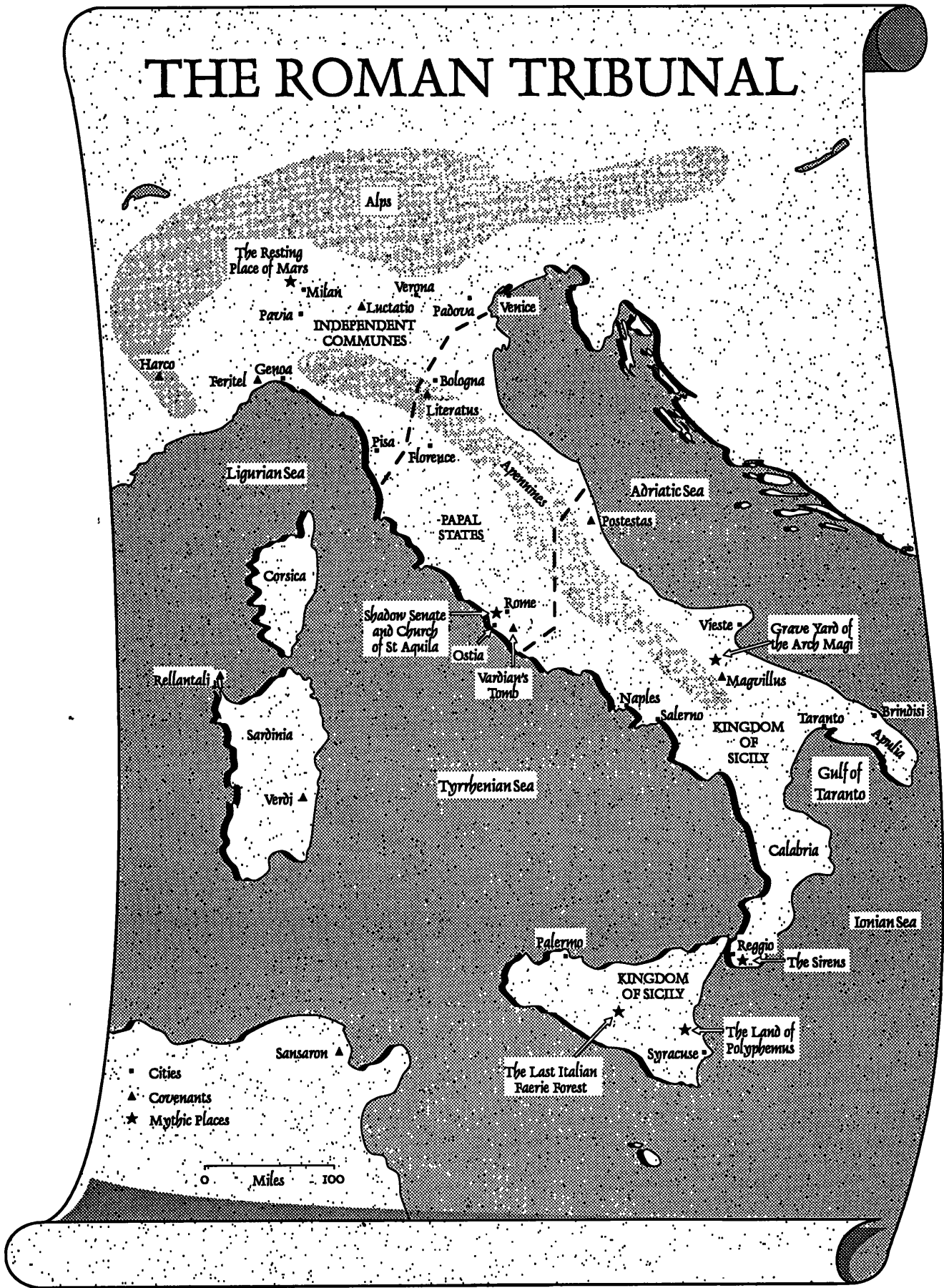
Although limited, other possibilities for new Covenants in the Roman Tribunal do exist. Although the surroundings are harsh and mundane support would be nonexistent, a Covenant might be founded deep in the Alps, but not so deep that the Tribunal of the Greater Alps is infringed upon. Then again, maybe the Roman Tribunal sets Magi up there to spy on the Greater Alps.

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THE ROMAN TRIBUNAL





MYTHIC HISTORY

CHAPTER TWO

Italy's heritage of conflict goes back centuries, well beyond the foundation of the Roman Tribunal and the Order of Hermes. Indeed, the peninsula's legacy of war and contention reaches back almost beyond the reckoning of history. Set in such a war-torn land, is it any wonder that the Roman Tribunal has itself degraded into constant struggle and machination?

By the time of your *Ars Magica* Saga (presumably set at the "official" starting date of A.D. 1197), civilization has existed on the Italian peninsula for over two thousand years. The Greeks first settled Italy in the 8th century B.C., establishing city-states there and on Sicily. The Greeks joined with the Etruscans, people of unknown origins, who already dwelt on the peninsula. For a time, there was growth, a blending of cultures. It was in this environment that the people living on the seven hills of Rome first founded what would become the Most Holy of Cities, nearly eight centuries before the birth of Christ.

The Rise of Rome

Although many stories tell of the city of Rome's foundation, only one holds the fancy of the people. It tells of two sons, Romulus and Remus, born of a virgin. They were saved from drowning by a she-wolf, and raised by her. Eventually Romulus killed his brother, and went on to found the city of Rome. This story may very well be true. Perhaps the she-wolf was a powerful faerie who still lives in the 13th century. Maybe the

shade of Remus still haunts the lands of his brother, seeking vengeance.

The foundation of Rome was the first step in Italy's great rise to power. The city gained independence slowly, finally throwing off the yoke of Etruscan rule just five centuries before the birth of Christ. The Republic of Rome was then founded, and began to conquer surrounding lands. Indeed, for 250 years Roman expansion was hindered little. Then the Republic of Rome met the Empire of Carthage.

Folklore of the Roman Tribunal: Romulus and Remus

"The Vestal Virgin was raped and gave birth to twin boys. Mars, she declared, was their father. . . Neither gods nor men could save her or her babes from the savage hands of the King. The mother was bound and flung into prison; the boys, by the King's order, were condemned to be drowned in the river. Destiny, however, intervened. . . When the basket in which the infants had been exposed was left high and dry by the receding water, a she-wolf, coming down from the neighboring hills to quench her thirst, heard the children crying and made her way to where they were. She offered them her teats to suck and treated them with such gentleness that Faustulus, the King's herdsman, found her licking them with her tongue."

— Livy, *The Early History of Rome*

Carthage had once been a Phoenician trading post, but through the ages built up a sizable empire. When the young Republic first challenged it, in the third century B.C., Carthage controlled much of the Mediterranean, including Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily. Yet, somehow, the Republic of Rome beat its adversary in the three Punic Wars. When the third war ended, 100 years after the first had begun, the Empire of Carthage was obliterated. Over 50,000 had been killed in the final siege of Carthage, and the survivors were enslaved. It was a brutal act of conflict which set Italy's tone of violence for centuries to come.

Perhaps, in their final death throes, the Carthagenians cursed their victors to endless war, never allowing them peace after such a terrible massacre. Some Hermetic Magi, deeply obsessed with the diabolic, believe the Republic of Rome was only able to break Carthage with Infernal aid. They point to the final slaughter and say it was actually an act of Infernal sacrifice. According to these Magi, the Dark One foresaw the coming of Christianity and personally made pacts with Romans to forever taint the Italian peninsula. One of these magical researchers, Terith of Jerbiton, has wandered the Tribunal for 30 years, looking for evidence of this diabolic pact. He hopes to destroy its power, thereby freeing the land to find its true destiny.

For a century after the Punic Wars, the laws of the Rome stood; the Republic was sound. Indeed, 30 years before the birth of Christ, Octavian, nephew of Julius Caesar, was given the title Augustus, and the Roman Empire was officially begun. For a time it seemed Rome was the great light of civilization in

a barbaric western world. And yet, the corruption of the Punic Wars put its mark upon the Empire. As the years passed, Rome's light faded, as did the Roman Empire.

Decline of the Empire

The final dissolution of the Roman Empire began in the early 3rd century. During one 50-year period, 22 Roman Emperors were crowned. At the same time, the capital was becoming less important to the Empire as a whole. In A.D. 284, the Roman Empire's administration was split in two. By the end of the 4th century, a complete break had occurred. Constantinople was named head of the Empire, and it seemed the glory of Rome was forever gone.

RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

As the Roman Empire slowly faded, a new influence came to the city of Rome. During the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the new religion of Christianity spread throughout the Empire. For a time it was received with intolerance and persecution. Then, in the early 4th century, Emperor Constantine declared Christianity a recognized religion.

Among some, a strange tale is told of a dove made of gold which came to Constantine. It proclaimed to him that it brought the Holy Word, that it could help save his Empire from



the Infernal powers that had infiltrated it in preparation for the coming of Christianity. After a time, Constantine believed the amazing bird. With his golden seer, Constantine rooted out the Infernal corruption that was rife within his Empire, and for a time, he was able to contain it. Constantine eventually died and his golden seer was lost, but much diabolism was driven from the dying remnants of the Roman Empire, and thus Christianity had time to grow. Where that Holy Regent might be now, no one, save the Divinities themselves, can say. However, should it return to Mythic Europe, in the hands of the Church, the Order of Hermes might be its first target.

BARBARIAN INVASIONS

What was left of the Western Empire soon fell to the invasions of numerous barbarians, starting with the Germanic Visigoths. At the start of the 5th century they descended upon the north of Italy. Within 10 years they had sacked the city of Rome itself.

One account of the invasion tells of a huge monster at the head of the Visigoth army. It was a great, hairy creature with fur the color of darkest obsidian. Two arms sprouted from each shoulder, each arm ending in a claw of bright red talons. The face of the creature was so awful that some died from looking upon it. According to the account, the creature moved through the city of Rome, bellowing blasphemies and killing Christians as it went. It was finally stopped when a young priest stood before it, putting his faith in God. There was an explosion of light from the priest and the creature began to fade, the whole time swearing that it would one day return to finish its master's work. It seemed the Dark Lord of Hell had not yet given up his attempts to destroy the still growing Christianity. Where the Dark One's attempts to discreetly infiltrate the Church had been defeated by Constantine and his holy aid, the Lord of Flies tried to destroy Christianity directly. But, as the Dark One's failures continued to mount, the power of Christianity grew.

Though the Visigoths were eventually beaten, barbarian invasions continued. Several times creatures of the Devil were seen leading the wild forces, making it clear that the Devil still sought to undo Christianity. Shortly after the end of the Visigoth invasions, Rome lost its African holdings to the Germanic Vandals. By the middle of the century, the Vandals too had sacked Rome. They would go on to conquer Sicily and Sardinia, as well.

At the same time, invasions from the north persisted. Attila and his Mongolian army of Huns took northern cities. The Huns' attacks were quite successful, although diplomacy kept them from the city of Rome itself. Finally, in the late 5th century, the last invasion came. A man named Odoacar led a Germanic army into Rome in 476. Romulus Augustulus, the last head of the Western Roman Empire, was deposed. Thus, the Dark Ages began.

Growth of the Church

As the remnants of the Roman Empire were torn apart by barbarian invasions, the Papacy came to power. In the middle of the 5th century, Pope Leo I declared the Church independent of the Eastern Empire. At the same time, he showed that the Church was a growing power on the Italian peninsula, convincing Attila the Hun to spare Rome (though Papal records suggest the Pope presented Attila with the demons that Leo had at his command, and the barbarian turned the tide of his invasion rather than face those beasts again).

Following the Papacy's rise to power, the Donation of Constantine was found. It was a document that recorded Constantine's gift of the Western Roman Empire to the Papacy. Of course, no one pointed out how those who saw the document all died within a year of their witness. Perhaps no one made the connection because the document bore some Infernal power, or perhaps the perceptive remained silent out of self-preservation. Legitimate or not, this document, combined with the works of Pope Leo I, did much to increase the prestige of the Church in the west. The Church demonstrated that it would be the future of Italy.

Byzantine Influence

Although the Church would have a very long life, the Germanic rulership of the Italy proved very short-lived. In the middle of the 6th century, Emperor Justinian of the Eastern Roman Empire reconquered the Gothic capital of Italy and brought it back under Imperial control. The Byzantines only controlled Italy for 30 years, but in that time had many influences on Roman culture.

During Eastern occupation, great volumes of law were written and compiled in consistent form. New customs came from the Orient, as did new art and new architectural styles. Some of this bright, intense artwork reflected the newborn piety of Italy's people. Other pieces were secretive expressions of magical power, made by wizards whose survival since the fall of Rome and the death of the Cult of Mercury was frustrated by the chaos of the times. This magically infused art was one way for isolated wizards to thumb their noses at unsuspecting mundanes. Some of these paintings can still be found in forgotten Roman storehouses.

The Greeks also brought many interesting arcane items with them, items mysterious even to the ancient Greeks. They apparently thought their trinkets, the remnants of the Cult of Hermes, to be interesting charms or amulets that brought luck. Some brought luck, some power and some utter destruction. Regardless of these artifacts' powers, many found their way to Italian shores. Those that have been found are very valuable to Magi of the Order of Hermes, not only as heirlooms of the Order's origins, but as receptacles of ancient magic.

The Church managed to garner great power under the rule of the Byzantines. The courts and senates of old Rome disappeared, and it was clergy who filled the void in the Roman hierarchy. Bishops were given far-reaching powers of supervision and protection, and in truth held even more power than the law permitted. Although all of Italy was prospering under the rule of the Eastern Empire, it was the Church that prospered most. Then, in A.D. 568, barbarians once again descended upon Italy.

Lombard Rule

This time, the invaders were the Lombards, a Germanic tribe who had settled just north of Italy for some time. For 40 years heavy fighting ensued. Accounts of the time tell of many disasters, including floods, famine, plague and dragons. Eventually, though, the fighting passed and the invaders were integrated into Italian life (perhaps too easily, as if their will was robbed from them). Soon, the Lombards adopted Latin as their own language and Catholicism as their religion. They abandoned their own customs for those of the Romans. At the same time, the Italians assumed some Germanic words and customs. Lombardy, in northern Italy, still bears the scars of Lombard rule, as well as the name of that tribe.

Even after the Lombards' absorption, Italy was a divided land. While the Lombards controlled northern portions of the peninsula, the Eastern Empire held much of the south, as well as some lands to the east. Occasionally there would be Lombard excursions into Byzantine lands, but for the most part borders remained stable. Surprisingly, the prevailing condition under the 200 years of Lombard rule was peace. It would not last, though, for demons can never allow harmony to prevail.

Frankish Reconquest

Control of Italy passed on once more in the middle of the 8th century. Frankish invasions, headed by King Pepin, broke Lombard control of Italy. As the invasions ended, the Donation of Pepin was signed. It was meant to appease the Church, giving it land that had once been controlled by the Byzantine Empire. Despite this donation, it became clear that the new-born Papal States were actually under Frankish control. After Pepin's death, Charlemagne came to Italy and assumed the title, King of the Franks and the Lombards. Twenty-five years later, when Charlemagne controlled much of western Mythic Europe, he returned to Rome, this time crowned Emperor of the Romans. In that year, the Holy Roman Empire of the Franks became heir to the old Empire of Rome. However, by giving the popes of Rome the power to bestow this title, the new Frankish Empire planted the seeds of future conflict.

While the Franks controlled much of Italy, it was not all theirs. The Byzantine Empire still controlled much of the south, as well as bits of the north, including the city of Venice. Nor had the Lombards been entirely driven out. The Duchy of Spoleto, just to the north of Rome, and the Duchy of Benevento, just to the south, were still in Lombard hands. Of course there

was also the new Papal domain. It would become more independent as time passed. To a large extent, this pronounced division of Italy still exists in the Mythic Europe of 1197.

FRANKISH RULE

After Charlemagne's death, the Holy Roman Empire, Italy included, was divided among the Great's sons, and, in turn, grandsons. Under the influence of Italy's demons, all these leaders and siblings fought amongst themselves.

However, in the 9th century the new Empire faced the same dilemma that the old had: foreign invaders. Islamic Saracens of Africa attacked Sicily. Shortly afterward they attacked the mainland as well, sacking buildings just outside Rome. Some lost territories of the mainland were recaptured by the Empire, but Saracen invasions did not end until the close of the 10th century, more due to improved Italian fortifications than anything else.

While southern Italy was trodden upon by southern invaders, northern Italy was tainted by the Magyars, or Hungarians. These nomadic horsemen made many raids against Italy, Germany and France, sacking defenseless, unfortified towns. Like the Saracen threat, the Magyars slowly faded. By the end of the 10th century the Magyars had become part of the community of Christian Mythic Europe, absorbed by the will of God.

In the 13th century, small enclaves of Saracens and Magyars can still be found in Italy. They practice their own magicks and worship their own gods. Christians who come upon these groups rarely live to tell the tale. The last members of these clans may either die or re-emerge to attack Italy. As of yet, neither has occurred.

CHAOTIC INDEPENDENCE

Falling to the temptation of greed and pride, Frankish and Germanic portions of Charlemagne's Empire began vying for control of the Italian kingdoms. A number of German and French rulers were crowned Emperor of Rome, but every one was killed or overthrown. Throughout these wars, it was the Church that benefited, gaining concessions of land and power as it crowned kings. Perhaps the Church, recognizing the power available, incited wars between Franks and Germans, seeking to bolster its own influence at the expense of the Empire and its people.

Government chaos continued until the rise of Otto I. His family held the Empire for nearly half a century, ending Italy's conflicts for a time. The period of Ottonian rule was something of an intellectual renaissance for Italy. It was a time of scholars, many of whom devoted themselves to honorable pursuits that benefited the crown.

However, several others took advantage of the Empire's relatively liberal attitudes and explored diabolism and other vile dedications, revitalizing Infernal activity in Italy and the

Empire as a whole. Many of the diabolic groups that formed at this time still exist, in one form or another, seeking to undo social and political structure. Many have discovered that trade and the greed it fosters is one of the best means to lead Italians to corruption.

The greatest of scholars to arise during this Germanic "enlightenment" was Gerbert of Aurillac, who became Pope Sylvester II. Some say he, above all others, was the pawn of the Dark.

POPE SYLVESTER II

Gerbert is not only known for his work in the Church. In the city of Toledo, he first came upon the great art of magic. In that place, he also gained the Brazen Head, a great prophetic device that some say was Infernal, sent to corrupt Gerbert given his coming greatness. In the years before his Pontification, in 999, Gerbert became known as one of the greatest scholars of the world, tutor to even Otto III, the German Emperor. Of course, it might only be coincidence that Gerbert possessed an allegedly Infernal device and that Otto III was killed in a Roman revolt, after which his body was never found. (In fact, Otto III was last seen with the wife of a rebel, a woman whom he had suddenly developed an obsessive lust for.) At the least, it seems likely that Gerbert and his Brazen Head motivated Otto toward the enlightenment that arose in the Empire. Gerbert undoubtedly sought to make possible the re-emergence of diabolism that occurred during the period, perhaps that he might become its leader.

In his later years, Gerbert tried several times to create a school of magic, to teach the Gifted. He was quite successful in Rheims, but political difficulties caused him to leave and his school dissolved shortly thereafter. When he became Pope, Gerbert, now Sylvester II, tried to form a place of magical learning in Rome, but scrutiny put upon him as Pope was too much and Gerbert was again forced to disband his organization.

It was then, however, that Sylvester learned of the Order of Hermes. Together with House Jerbiton, he was able to create a place of learning for his most talented students, and was content in knowing that their education would be administered by competent Magi. From this organization grew the Covenant of Literatus, a place where the worlds of the mundane and magic meet. The Order of Hermes, beyond House Jerbiton, knows little of the friendship with Sylvester II. The Jerbitons have always feared such a revelation would cause a backlash against their House.

Among Magi there are rumors told of Sylvester II. Some say he was a diabolic wizard who created a Roman order of wizards to rival the Order of Hermes. Others claim that if he had been Pope for a longer period, he would have utterly destroyed the Order, to protect his own, less savory, practices. If pressed, Roman Jerbitons claim these rumors are absolutely false, but in truth wonder about their old alliance and the effects it may have had on their modern House.





Pope Sylvester II died after only four years as Pope. Accounts of his death are mysterious ones. He was preaching in one of Rome's countless churches when convulsions overcame him. He fell to the ground and was pronounced dead shortly afterward. For seven days and seven nights, Sylvester's body was watched over, as was the custom. When it came time for his burial, his body disappeared. Another corpse was quickly substituted for Sylvester's own. Only the highest of Rome's clergy know this fact, and they keep it quiet. To this day, the true fate of the Pope-Magician, Sylvester II, is unknown. Magi of Literatus, having learned the Church's secret, suspect Sylvester II may still be alive, watching over them.

CONTINUED GERMANIC RULE

When Pope Sylvester II "died," just a year after Emperor Otto III, new hardships afflicted Italy, almost as Sylvester II's last hurrah. Antipathy between Italy and Germany intensified and the Italian people struck out violently against their German overlords. Only under Germany's Henry III was some order established, when Germans were appointed to the Papacy. What leverage Henry had with these popes is unknown, but Imperial accounts claim Henry found the popes guilty of diabolism and kept them in line by blackmail. The fear Henry inspired was so intense that a Church reform movement was

subdued during his reign; the Papacy feared provoking his ire in any matter.

Conquest of the South

While Italians and Germans squabbled to the north, southern Italy was wracked by its own wars, and rising from them came an unlikely Norman lord. The mercenary Robert Guiscard conquered much of southern Italy, and shared domination with his brothers. When "envoys" in Robert's employ intercepted a Papal caravan, and suggested that the Pope recognize Robert's authority over southern Italy, Nicholas II did so, naming Robert the Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and future Duke of Sicily. In return, for appearance's sake, the adventuring Robert and his allies devoted themselves to the Pope. In private circles, Nicholas II's servants claimed that after meeting with Robert's messengers, the Pope never slept properly, and after Robert became his "ally," Nicholas' digestion never found a regular pattern.

Seizing most of southern Italy, the Norman brothers turned their daring upon the Byzantine Empire itself, striking out at it as a land of "heretics." After years of fighting, Robert Guiscard finally died, but not in battle. The success of his younger years led him to depravity and debauchery, making his death a happy if sinful one.

The Norman conquest of southern Italy had great impact upon the mortal world, but also upon the Hermetic world. Throughout many of the wars that had plagued the peninsula, magic items were quietly sold to mundanes. In the Norman wars, however, this practice reached an all-time high. Thanks to items sold to Norman mercenaries, brigands and heroes, the very elements became the enemies of the Byzantines. Few magical limitations were put upon items sold. As a result, many magical weapons of death exist among mundanes of southern Italy, even in the 13th century. It was the sale of these items that finally inspired Quaesitoris beyond the Tribunal to take action in Rome, forming the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal. As a result, the Norman conquest of Sicily was the last great conflict that Magi of Rome participated in, at least legally so.

Beyond his effect upon Hermetic politics, Robert Guiscard left a great legacy. He forged the warring people of southern Italy into a unified force. The Byzantines, Lombards and even Saracens worked together under Norman rule. In the 12th century, this achievement was recognized when Robert's nephew, Roger the Great, was named King of Sicily and southern Italy. This new Kingdom of Sicily, with its capital in Palermo, would become a great intellectual hope for all Mythic Europe.

Investiture Contest

While Robert was winning southern Italy, the Church reform movement complained of lay investiture. This was the practice by which nobles chose who would hold religious office. The result was often clergy who looked to noble interests first and God last. It was feared by many in the Church that Infernal corruption was spreading. Indeed, the reformers complained bitterly, saying the Devil had moved from his blatant attacks upon the Church, in its early days, to a much more insidious assault.

There was much warring to decide who would control state and government, battle occurring between mundane and Church forces. It wasn't until the 12th century that the investiture contest finally came to an end, and an ironic one at that. In 1122, Holy Roman Emperor Henry V met with Pope Calixtus II in the Concordat of Worms. Henry conceded lay investiture. In turn, the Pope allowed Henry the privilege of bestowing the symbols of territorial and administrative jurisdiction upon new clergy. It seemed the Church had won the battle, but in truth the emperors still held considerable power over the Church. The plots of the Devil (for the reformists' fears were just) were altered little. Many within the clergy were His minions and many more would be. The Devil had learned patience in such matters long ago.

Rise of the Cities

In the heat of battle over the investiture contest, the forces of darkness realized the lengths they could go to in corrupting Italy. Just as Church and nobility fought for control over the

land, so too were commoners growing interested in power, and all sought to bargain for control over fellow man.

With weak government, constant war and Infernal influence, cities of northern Italy seized power for themselves. During the early 12th century, many cities appointed their own judges, made their own laws, collected their own taxes and struggled for their own power. These new "communes" sprang up all over the land, becoming dominant powers. Many nobles gave up residing in their country estates and moved into the cities, to involve themselves in the newly forming councils. New power structures, built around wealthy merchants, craftsmen and minor nobles, evolved and took control. On the way out were Church dedication, fear of sin, mortality and ethics. The Dark Powers revelled.

In truth, the Infernal had long ago chosen Italy as a target for decay. In the burgeoning, crowded cities it was easy to single out the poor, weak and helpless, those eager to accept any might offered them. And so diabolism was born in the cities of northern Italy. It was the demon Peris who bound these people. At first their numbers were small, but as urban conflicts grew, so did the numbers pledging their souls.

In the 13th century the traveler of northern Italy is advised to keep an eye out and his wits about him. Not only might his purse be stolen by a cunning thief, but his soul might be captured when he considers sins to avenge the loss.

The Crusades

During the period that the cities rose in power, they were also benefited by the crusades. Ironically, wars fought in the name of God actually motivated the decline of Italy's people, luring them closer to damnation. Genoese, Pisan and Venetian fleets carried men and supplies to the Levant, and carried back rare goods from the east. Armies of the newly forming city-states joined in the fighting. Genoese engineers built siege engines that breached the walls of Jerusalem. Venetians joined in the siege and capture of Haifa, Sidon, Tyre and eastern cities. All of Italy had claim in the wars, and claim in the sins that resulted.

In return for their aid in battle, and in transporting and supplying the crusaders, Italians were given considerable share in booty taken from pillaged cities. Italians were also given the right to trade to the east without paying taxes. Indeed, most cities of northern Italy engaged in the crusades for the profit, failing to recognize the wars' true religious cause. Some cities even cheated crusaders, selling imperfect weapons, flawed armor and poorly built boats. How many died due to these deceptions is unknown, and the Italians did not care to know. The demons of the Infernal did their work well, dragging many souls to the pits of despair. Italian cities truly proved evil's breeding ground.

Urban Rivalries

Having fallen to the sins of pride and greed, the citizens of Italy's expanding cities also fell to the sins of hatred and

covetousness. Powerful cities, riding the tide of their newly-won money and civic freedom, set to subjugating their neighbors. In A.D. 1100, Pavia captured Tortona, and Cremona took Crema. Both defeated cities appealed to Milan for protection, inspiring a lasting enmity between all. Many battles were fought across land, but others were fought at sea, even between trading ships belonging to different cities.

Rivalries forged during this period of urban conflict lasted for centuries and influenced political maneuvers, regardless of common sense. To oppose rivals, cities would side with or oppose the Holy Roman Empire and other factions, even if the citizens' ideals would normally demand different allegiance.

Despite the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, Magi also became involved in urban rivalry. Roman Magi acted subtly, careful about what magic they offered mundanes, but still defied the Code of Hermes. Even Magi who sought to obey the Treaty were forced to defy it, when their less scrupulous competitors benefited so greatly from their crimes.

Frederick Barbarossa

In A.D. 1155, the cities of northern Italy were given a new reason to battle each other. Frederick Barbarossa, on his way to coronation in Rome, decided to put down the rebellious communes and re-exert the power of the Empire.

Few knew Frederick's secret to success in these wars, that he was a diabolist. Long ago he made a pact with a demon to gain power in Rome. The demon was named Deriten, and was a great enemy of Peris, who controlled many of the diabolists in the cities of northern Italy. While Frederick thought he controlled the creature that had promised him power, he was actually its pawn, used by Deriten to claim the earthly lands lorded over by Peris.

After exerting his power in northern Italy, Frederick moved on to Rome, claimed the crown and returned over the Alps. Once recovered, the northern cities that had been sacked set to the task of paying their enemies back, plotting against those who had helped Frederick. Peris, too, was ready to help, for revenge and further collection of lost souls. It is said that the Della Torre family, which at that time controlled Milan, eagerly entered into a pact with Peris. If this is true, it was a great victory for the demon. Previously, it had largely been the weak of the north who joined the Shadow. Now, it seemed the strong did too. Shortly afterward, Milan's enemies were destroyed.

THE DIET OF RONCAGLIA

In 1158, Frederick returned to Italy, with the intent of "clarifying" his rights in the region. He besieged Milan, defeated the city and took 300 hostages. It's unknown what Frederick did with the hostages, but those that were returned were never the same. Some brought dark secrets and tricks back to Milan, while others, who had once been pious, came back utterly broken in spirit and body.

Frederick also called legal scholars from Bologna to the Diet of Roncaglia, in order to define Imperial rights in Italy. Frederick's reliance on lawyers, surely the most corrupt among humanity, was for many evidence enough of his diabolism. The Covenant of Literatus, created long ago by Pope Sylvester II, had by this time seen Frederick for what he was (maybe because they bore some kinship?). The Magi sought to use their power to cast Frederick entirely from Italian society. But word of their plans leaked to the spies of other Covenants and an emergency Tribunal meeting was called. It was quickly decreed that Literatus would not interfere in mundane matters. This decision came about not because the Magi of Rome wished to support diabolists, but because they feared allowing Literatus more power. Thus, as tradition demanded, the Magi of the Roman Tribunal ignored the good and right in favor of political considerations. With the help of his lawyers, Frederick was bestowed the power he sought.

FIGHTING CONTINUES

Once Emperor, Frederick decided to destroy Milan once and for all, with the consent of Lodi, Pavia, Como, Cremona and Novara, all cities tainted with evil and lured toward sin. Milan's survivors were spread among undefended villages. Only churches and convents were spared. During the exodus, Frederick took great care to seek out and slay the Della Torre family, for his Infernal patron, Deriten, had suggested that they were his greatest enemies. Many Della Torres managed to escape, however, and the demon Peris helped them begin plotting their revenge. Fearing the same destruction of Milan, many communes of Lombardy submitted to Imperial control, placed under the rule of Imperial appointees bearing the title "Podesta." Needless to say, many of these appointees were under Frederick's direct control, and therefore the control of the Dark.

Fighting under Frederick's reign continued when he sought to appoint his own Pope, Paschal III. Determined to see Paschal, who worshipped the same lord as he, made Pope, Frederick returned to Italy once more in 1166. In 1167, Frederick marched on Rome and captured the city. Paschal's seat did not last, however, as Frederick's forces were stricken by disease. This was Saint Peter's vengeance against the Emperor. Frederick's demonic patron had overstepped his bounds when he tried to take the Holy City itself. Peris, whose followers were even then making new preparations against Frederick's forces, was quite pleased. Faced with the prospect of being attacked by the combined cities of Lombardy, and in a weakened state, Frederick was forced to return to Germany.

LOMBARD LEAGUE

While the Emperor was busy in Rome, representatives of the Lombard communes met in secret at the monastery of Pontida, to form the first Lombard League. The surviving members of Della Torre brought the communes together, for Peris had assured them that this was the way to defeat Frederick

once and for all. League members, which even included long-time enemies such as Milan (or its survivors anyway) and Cremona, agreed to support each other until Frederick Barbarossa was defeated and urban privileges restored. With secret support from the Republic of Venice, members of the League rebuilt Milan and founded a new city, Alessandria, named in honor of the "true" Pope. Soon most of northern Italy's communes, with the exception of Imperialist Pavia, were members of the League.

FREDERICK RETURNS

In 1174, Frederick returned to Italy to fight the communes once and for all. To his chagrin, he was defeated at Legnano. In fact, so complete was his defeat, it was thought the Emperor himself had been killed, until he appeared some time later, alone, at the gates of Pavia. Hell's demons were not yet satisfied with Frederick's reign of destruction and trickery, and granted him borrowed time in which to bring more souls into the Abyss.

Having tasted damnation, Frederick realized the sins of his life and devoted himself to a new direction, that of virtue. He bowed to the demands of the Papacy and the Lombard League, allowing them power independent from the Imperial throne. Frederick's ancient patron, Deriten, was outraged at the compromises, but it seemed Frederick had finally turned against the demon. Deriten was furious, for without Frederick his plans to take the lands of Peris would come to naught. In the end Frederick's will prevailed. He died by Infernal trickery while in the Holy Land, on pilgrimage to save his soul.

After Frederick's death, Henry VI became Emperor. With his land holdings, the Holy Roman Empire surrounded the Papal States, putting the very heart of the Dominion in mundane hands.

Interestingly, the northern communes, which initially despised their Imperially appointed Podestas, decided to keep them as executive officers appointed by city councils. At the close of the 12th century, almost all communes had a Podesta. Although Frederick was an enemy, his Infernal power was immense and succeeded at infiltrating even territories commanded by other demons. Frederick left his corrupt mark upon northern Italy.

At the close of the 12th century, the demon Peris still held much power in northern Italy, regardless of Frederick's influence. The Della Torre of Milan still called Peris their patron. In fact, skirmishes with the interloper Deriten did Peris much good. Of course, this did not mean Deriten relinquished claims to northern Italy. He proceeded to raise other pawns, seeking to continue where Frederick left off. Perhaps Deriten's future plans shall prove more subtle.

1197

In A.D. 1197, the beginning of the "official" Ars Magica Saga, Emperor Henry VI dies, leaving the crown of Sicily and claim to the Empire to his young son, Frederick II. In 1198, Frederick's mother also dies, leaving the Emperor-child in the





care of the Pope. Rumors spread in the back alleys hold that Innocent III is responsible for the death of Frederick's mother, that the Pope hopes to win control of all Italy.

INNOCENT III

In 1198, the College of Cardinals chooses a Roman noble as Pope, who takes the name Innocent III. The new Pope invites Otto of Brunswick to rule the Empire in lieu of the young Frederick II, in return for the Capitulation of Neuss, which defines the boundaries of lands controlled by the Pope, and in return for the renouncement of Imperial authority within the Papal States. Numerous cities, even many outside the "Patrimony of Saint Peter," rise against their Imperial overlords, deciding to pay homage to Papal legates. Innocent wisely decides not to press his powers within these cities. This time is an exciting one for Magi, for rebelling cities beg for magical aid, having heard tales of Norman conquests to the south, and of other Magi-aided campaigns. Accepting northern cities' offers and avoiding Hermetic justice makes for grand stories of war and intrigue.

When Otto goes back on his word and ignores the Capitulation of Neuss, the now grown, educated, streetwise, and liberal-minded Frederick II is invited to take the Imperial crown. Many again talk of Innocent's possible role in the death of Frederick's mother, wondering if Frederick has not been tooled by Innocent, made the Pope's Imperial pawn.

The pontificate of Innocent III represents the height of Papal power. The Church, under Innocent, extends its control over both secular and ecclesiastical affairs. Innocent calls the Fourth Crusade (which is subverted by demon-tainted Venetians into capturing Constantinople for them); calls for crusades against Albigensian heretics, which are rife in northern Italy; supports the foundation of both the Franciscan and Dominican Orders; and presides over the Fourth Lateran Council. By Innocent III's death, in 1216, the Church holds greater power and prestige in Mythic Europe than at any earlier time. Whether Innocent's power arises from true piety or demonic pact is unknown, but it's clear that some otherworldly power stands by him.

GUELPH AND Ghibelline

With wars between northern Italian cities and the Empire quelled for a time, cities once again concentrate on fighting each other. They polarize around Imperialist (Ghibelline) and Papalist (Guelph) parties. Indeed, fighting in piazzas and streets becomes common. Towers and fortresses are built by wealthy families, and battles are fought between them. When one side gains the upper hand in a city (through a majority of the consuls, or by the support of the Podesta, or by military means) it banishes all powerful members of the other, tearing down the families' towers. In cities where feuding is protracted, families become so insular that some inbreeding occurs, mak-

Wisdom of the Mundanes

"The Roman Church is like a leech; she calls herself my mother and nurse; but she is a stepmother, and the root of all evils. Her legates go through all lands binding, loosing, punishing; not to sow the seed of the Word, but to subdue all men and wring from them their money."

— Frederick II, Manifesto Upon His Excommunication

ing warring family members misshapen and twisted, an outer reflection of their inner corruption.

Despite the Code of Hermes, Magi involve themselves in family feuds. Some ally themselves with families and live within towers, becoming as insular and twisted as the families themselves. Even if the Quaesitor Jarane, who seeks to turn the Roman Tribunal around, succeeds at his task, new Hermetic problems based on family feuds will probably develop. Many new issues, concerning the protection of independent Magi and interaction with mundanes, may arise at Tribunal meetings. Some vulnerable Covenants, such as Luctatio or Harco, might be jeopardized if they are not able to deal with factional mundanes. They must either sever ties with mundanes to avoid Quaesitor punishment, or secure power with mundanes to have political leverage.

Of course, mundane factionalism and Hermetic involvement in feuds only bolsters the demon Peris' power. More

fighting means more souls for his territories of Hell, and the more he can lure into the sins of pride, covetousness and greed, the better for him. If outsiders can recognize the Infernal influence behind family wars, they might undo the wars, but convincing citizens that their actions destine them to Hell is difficult; matters of this world seem more important to northerners than do matters of the next.

FREDERICK II

By 1220, Frederick II is crowned Emperor and makes his son, Henry, King of the Romans and King of Sicily (ensuring, against the Pope's wishes, that the crowns of Sicily and the Empire are combined).

Unknown to most mundanes and many of the Order of Hermes, Frederick discovers the Order, specifically the Magi of Literatus. Realizing their power, he makes promises of friendship. The new University of Naples, which he founds, is staffed by Magi once apprenticed at Literatus. When other Covenants of Rome learn of Literatus' alliance, there is conflict over the Covenant's new power and many also seek to ally themselves with the Emperor or undermine Literatus' status.

Indeed, Rome's Covenants interfere in Literatus' relationship with the Emperor, when he seeks to adjust his Imperial rights in Italy. With that adjustment of rights, northern cities fear loss of their own rights, and reform the Lombard League to oppose Frederick. Tensions in Italy therefore rise, undermining Frederick's authority and undermining Literatus' power. A





specific Covenant of Rome is behind the spread of fear among northern cities. Luctatio is the most likely, but any Roman Covenant might be involved.

What Frederick II does not realize is that the Infernally corrupt Magi of Literatus seek to corrupt him as well, bending his will to that of the Dark. For many years Frederick stays above the Evil, all the while maintaining his alliance with Literatus, ignorant of the jeopardy of his immortal soul. Ultimately he does succumb and is set upon by all of Mythic Europe, as if in a concerted effort to condemn his soul to the damnation it now deserves.

Frederick's Crusade

After having promised to go on crusade for several years, Frederick is finally called to task by Pope Gregory IX and travels to the Holy Land. However, he returns before arriving at his destination, his army having fallen to illness.

What Frederick does not realize is that his "friends" at Literatus are responsible for the illness that besieges his army. The Covenants' Magi, fearing victimization by other Italian Covenants in the Emperor's absence, make excuses for him to remain in Mythic Europe. However, what Literatus' Magi do not anticipate is Frederick's resulting excommunication by the Pope.

A year later, in 1228, Frederick undertakes his crusade again, while still excommunicated. Gregory IX calls for Frederick's army to abandon the Emperor. Ignoring the Pope, Frederick and his troops manage to retake much of the Holy Land and Frederick is crowned King of Jerusalem.

On Frederick's return to Italy, Gregory IX excommunicates him again. Frederick confronts the Pope in 1230 and, surprisingly, gets his ban lifted. Jokes persist in the Imperial court, retelling how Frederick discovered the Pope in his chambers, in the company of a goat, three strong servants and a bucket of miller's grease. For appearance's sake, Frederick repays the Pope's "leniency" by issuing a strong edict against heretics, strengthening the newly formed Inquisition. (However, Frederick makes it clear that Roman Magi, particularly those of Literatus, are to be spared the Inquisitor's torch, at least in the early years of the purge.)

WAR BEGINS

The strained peace between the Empire and communes of northern Italy comes to an end in 1235. Hoping to gain greater independence from the Empire, northern cities aid Frederick's son, Henry, to rise against the Emperor. Frederick's forces, populated even by Saracens loyal to him — evidence of Frederick II's still liberal mind — defeat the communes.

The time is one of cataclysmic conflict. If the demon Peris still holds the Della Torre in thrall, Frederick might force Literatus to take an active role in the wars. The repercussions of the wars, in the Hermetic, mundane and Infernal realms, are felt for decades.

Even the Dominion is affected by the wars of this period. When the Pope supports the Guelph cause, he calls a Church council in Rome, to turn all of Mythic Europe's Church against Frederick. With information of the meeting supplied by Literatus, the Emperor is able to capture Rome and its attending council members, essentially putting all of Mythic Europe at Frederick's mercy. It is at this moment that Frederick's decline into evil, at Literatus' hands, begins. With the Covenant's help, Frederick captures most Papal States and reaffirms his power. If the Order of Hermes should learn the truth of Literatus' involvement, it might mean the end of the Covenant.

FREDERICK II DEPOSED

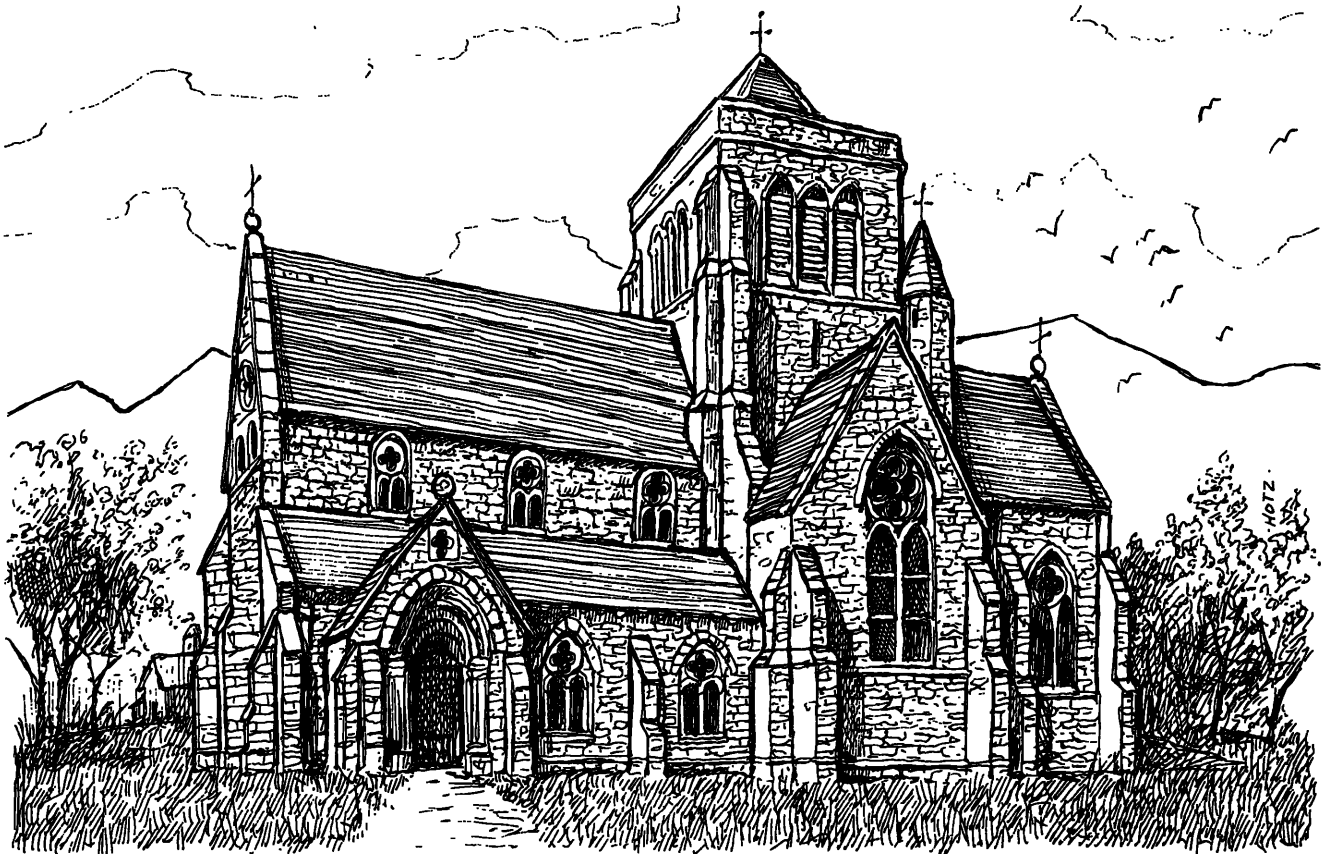
In 1243, almost two years after the death of his successor, Innocent IV becomes Pope. Innocent is determined to eliminate the blight called Frederick II. Posing as a Ghibelline, Innocent IV quickly flees Italy to Lyons, France, and there calls the long delayed general Council. Innocent IV excommunicates and deposes Frederick, absolving his subjects in Sicily and the Holy Roman Empire of their allegiance to him. The Pope doesn't stop there, though, calling a crusade against Frederick and reputedly attempting to have him assassinated.

Marching on Lyons, Frederick is stopped at the traditionally Imperialist city of Parma, which also turns against him. Some say the city's turn is spurred by the Pope's kinsmen. In truth, several Hermetic Magi are responsible, seeking to undo the damage done by Literatus.

The tides of fate (as well as the Magi of Rome) thus turn against Frederick. His court grows rife with intrigue, and one of his closest ministers, Peter di Vinea, is caught attempting to poison the Emperor. Also, in 1249, the Bolognese capture the Emperor's son, Enzo, holding him in their prison until he dies in 1271. So horrific is the abuse heaped upon Enzo that he forgets who he is, loses his mind, and occupies his years by harvesting his own excretions. Finally, in 1250, worn down by long wars or the sins his soul, Frederick II dies. His last days are spent in a Cistercian monastery, no doubt in an attempt to save his soul as Frederick Barbarossa had done. However, it's believed Frederick II's soul is carried by demons to the pit of Mount Etna.

The battles of Frederick's reign leave northern Italy in ruins, and under the rule of wicked tyrants. Furthermore, rivalries between cities and parties intensify, causing ceaseless fighting for the next half century. It's as if the evil of Frederick, at the end of his life, is so great that it lives in the minds and hearts of Italians for years to come. Indeed, Frederick II is remembered as the Anti-Christ.

It is unlikely that Covenants of Italy escape unscathed from the battles of Frederick's reign. Besides Literatus, Harco and Luctatio both face great troubles. If they are not destroyed by mundane wars and the Inquisition, they may relocate, probably inspiring great conflict at Tribunal meetings as new boundaries of control are established.





Wisdom of the Mundanes: Church and State

"If earthly power errs, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; if a lesser spiritual power errs it shall be judged by its superior, but if the supreme spiritual power [the Pope] errs it can be judged only by God, not by man, as the apostle witnesses, 'The spiritual man judgeth all things and he himself is judged of no man' (1 Corinthians 2:15). . . The spiritual power exceeds any earthly one in dignity and nobility. . . We declare, state, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

— Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*

RISE OF THE TYRANTS

Constant urban fighting in northern Italy makes possible the rise of military leaders. Cities are ruled by those Guelphs, Ghibellines or Podestas who can hold power, no matter how fleeting. Verona, for instance, falls under the rule of the Della Scala. The tyrants of northern Italy inspire much violence and hatred within their cities, in turn inspiring much sin and thought of revenge. Not even the demons of Hell can dream of greater sin, especially after the death of Frederick II.

Even in cities where rule by a single person seems effective, allowing for social organization and practical government, evil still arises. Under the control of a single ruler, some cities thrive in the arts and sciences. However, corruption through self-indulgence and pride arise as a result, for minds are not occupied by thoughts of war and rebellion, and time for creativity allows minds to explore life's possibilities, sometimes good but often foul.

Eccelino da Romano

No tyrant of Italy better illustrates the dangers of a powerful ruler than Eccelino da Romano.

During Frederick II's reign, Eccelino is one of the Emperor's toadies and "yes men." As reward he is given control of Verona and later takes control of all northeast Lombardy. He preserves his power through marriage and retains that power after Frederick's death.

Eccelino maintains control of his vast territories through a reign of terror. His spies are everywhere, and even the slightest suspicion is cause to torture and imprison entire families. He builds eight vast prisons in Padua, in which conditions are so vile that death is merciful. He has imprisoned women and children tortured and maimed before the eyes of their menfolk, and has men relieved of their masculinity.

After Frederick's death, Eccelino intensifies the terrors of his lands, imprisoning or butchering once powerful families and potential rivals. Strangely, these public atrocities make Eccelino popular with the masses. Maybe they applaud the

killings out of fear for the same fate, or out of an increasing appreciation for evil.

Few know Eccelino's dark secret, that he is the powerful demon Peris, taking flesh (which explains why the younger, still virtuous Frederick II could have been duped into supporting "Eccelino"). Peris' new plan for northern Italy is to lure it into evil by example.

In 1255, Pope Alexander IV calls a crusade against Eccelino, calling him the "*son of perdition, and man of blood.*" The cities of Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, Mantua and the people who fled Eccelino's lands join forces to defeat Eccelino. So near is Eccelino's victory that Magi of the Order have to intervene. Magi are finally able to drive Peris from Eccelino's body in 1259. Freed of the Infernal spirit, Eccelino, recovering wits so long submerged, realizes what he has done and takes his own life, tearing open bandaged wounds, allowing himself to bleed to death.

Many see Eccelino as a martyr. Even in his death, diabolic control of northern Italy's cities continues.

CHARLES OF ANJOU

After Frederick II's death, his bastard son, Manfred, Prince of Taranto (whom some say was actually spawned from a demon), manages to gain the crown of Sicily and Apulia. Naturally, the Pope is disturbed by this potential threat to the Patrimony of Saint Peter.

In 1261, a French Pope, Urban IV, seeks assistance from France against Manfred, offering the crown of Sicily and Naples to Charles, Count of Anjou and Provence. In 1266, Charles of Anjou is crowned King of Sicily and sets out to conquer his new kingdom. Charles brings with him Magi from the Provençal Covenant of Windgraven. The Magi of Italy are greatly offended by this outside Hermetic interference, and a great feud between the Roman and Provençal Tribunals results.

Within a month, Manfred is killed in battle, his wife and children permanently imprisoned. During their prolonged imprisonment, mother and siblings grow crowded in their confines as children are born between them. Unfortunately, Charles proves completely ineffective at leadership, making even the later career of Frederick II seem respectable.

The Sicilian Vespers

On March 31, 1282, at the hour of Vespers, the people of Palermo stage a bloody revolution, known as the Sicilian Vespers. They seek to free the island of Sicily from French rule. The revolt is ignited by brash Frenchmen who seek to have their way with a Sicilian bride, daughter of the influential Don Corleone. Indeed, in a rare demonstration of cooperation, feuding criminal families put aside their differences. Magi from Provençal's Covenant of Mistrige, Windgraven's traditional enemy, are involved in this revolt, trying to destroy Windgraven's power in Italy. Of course, this increased foreign influence in Rome only intensifies animosity between the two Tribunals.



•HOTZ•

By their own efforts, the ruthless Sicilians are freed of French rule and invite Don Pedro, King of Aragon, to take their throne. Spanish aid further confounds the French, as does the song of the sirens, heard on the Straits of Messina, which lures French sailors to their deaths. The French are thus denied rule of Sicily.

DECLINE OF THE CHURCH

After the time of Innocent III, the power and prestige of the Papacy is on a steady decline. The Church becomes mired in local politics, dynastic disputes and bickering between its leaders. Diabolic groups which long ago gained control in northern Italy now infiltrate Rome itself, perpetuating the chaos of the Vatican.

Indeed, the only Popes who can hold power in this tumultuous time are those ruthless and corrupt enough to inspire fear and to carry out their threats. By example, Celestine V, a saintly Pope, is overwhelmed by the intrigue surrounding him. He is duped into resigning by the very man who replaces

him, Benedetto Gaetani, who becomes Boniface VIII. Boniface proves one of the most vile diabolists to ever hold the Papacy, and even seeks to corrupt the virtuous Celestine V. Boniface's primary goal as Pope is to secure as much power as possible for his Infernal coven, and for his Roman family.

Perhaps out of Divine justice, Boniface's crimes are his undoing. To remove Boniface from power, the French King makes public accusations that Boniface is a heretic, sorcerer, assassin and sodomizer. Unknown to the French King, his accusations are accurate. The King's agents stalk Boniface to his summer residence. They are received by locals (who have been directly victimized in the Pope's vile pursuits) with shouts of "*Death to Boniface! Long live the King of France!*" Though rescued by Infernal servants, Boniface dies shortly thereafter, his Infernal manipulations ultimately resulting in his own damnation.

Having eliminated a Pope, the French eventually take command of the Papacy itself, moving it to Avignon, France. In moving the power of the Church from Italy to France, the Church is to some small degree freed from the Infernal manipulations of the Roman Tribunal. Maybe, with this move, Italy shall become less of a battle ground for Infernal agents, resulting in a rebirth of Italian culture. However, the fate of France might be sealed, for Italy's demons are not happy with the loss.

Timeline of Mundane History

753 B.C.	Foundation of Rome	875	End of Frankish rule of Italic Kingdoms
509	Foundation of the Roman Republic	875 to 962	Chaotic Italic Independence
264 to 241	The First Punic War	962 to 1002	Germanic Rule of Italy
218 to 202	The Second Punic War	999 to 1003	Pontificate of Sylvester II
149 to 146	The Third Punic War	1059	Robert Guiscard becomes Duke of Apulia and Calabria
27	Octavian becomes Augustus	1060	Norman conquest of Sicily
A.D. 284	The Roman Empire is begun	1084	The Normans sack Rome
	Administration of the Empire first split	1096 to 1099	The First Crusade
313	Christianity recognized as a legitimate religion	1100 to 1150	Constant wars between the cities of northern Italy
330	Seat of the Empire moved to Constantinople	1122	Concordant of Worms ends Investiture Contest
395	Final splitting of the Roman Empire	1125	Cities of Northern Italy begin to seize power
401	The Visigoths invade Italy	1130	Roger the Great becomes King of Sicily
410	The Visigoths sack Rome	1147 to 1148	The Second Crusade
429	The Vandals invade Roman African holdings	1155 to 1190	The wars of Frederick Barbarossa
452	The Huns invade Italy	1189 to 1193	The Third Crusade
455	The Vandals sack Rome	1190	The cities of northern Italy resume warring
476	Gothic conquest of Italy	1194	Germanic conquest of Sicily
	Fall of the Western Roman Empire	1197	Frederick II becomes King of Sicily
	Beginning of the Middle Ages	1198 to 1218	Pontificate of Innocent III
540	Byzantine conquest of Italy	1201 to 1204	The Fourth Crusade
568	Lombard conquest of Italy	1212	The Children's Crusade
754	Frankish conquest of Italy	1217 to 1221	The Fifth Crusade
774	Charlemagne becomes King of the Franks and Lombards	1236 to 1255	The wars of Eccelino da Romana
800	Charlemagne becomes Emperor of the Romans	1248	The Sixth Crusade
831	The Saracens invade Italy	1250	Death of Frederick II
	Saracen conquest of Sicily	1266	Charles of Anjou's French crusade against Sicily
843	Charlemagne's empire is divided	1270	The Seventh Crusade
847	The Saracens nearly sack Rome	1282	The Sicilian Vespers



HERMETIC HISTORY

CHAPTER THREE



he Roman Tribunal has a very long history. Going back to the earliest days of the Order, it has been a power in both mundane and Hermetic worlds. However, even before the days

of the Order, Italy was a place full of potent magic. In the days before the rise of the Dominion, the Cult of Mercury plied an older sorcery in what would become the Roman Tribunal.

The Cult of Mercury

Much about the Cult of Mercury is shrouded in mystery, from its origins to its eventual fall. Seekers and many other Hermetic Magi have dedicated their lives to recreating the history of the Cult, but they gain tantalizing insights only after decades of research. What is known is that the Cult came into existence some time after the foundation of the city of Rome, perhaps five to six hundred years before the birth of Christ. It seems to have roots in the Cult of Hermes, which was at its height in Greece at that time. Perhaps the Cult of Hermes was trying to expand, and became the far-reaching entity that the modern Order grew from. Or perhaps some wizards of the Cult of Hermes were fleeing Greece for some unknown reason. In any case, it is quite clear that the Cult of Mercury incorporated the ideals and some of the magicks of Greek sorcerers.

For nearly a millennium, the Cult of Mercury existed on the Italian peninsula. For much of that time, it was a very potent power, rivaling and perhaps exceeding the modern Order of Hermes. Tales are told of the cultists' adroit manipulations

throughout the history of Rome, although none of these tales has been proven. Some even say it was the Mercurians who caused the city of Rome to first become a republic, and then an empire.

During its years of power, the Cult of Mercury was accepted as a legitimate entity. In temples throughout Italy, common folk, alongside the sorcerers of the Cult, worshipped the god Mercury. Only the most gifted were initiated into the inner mysteries of the Cult.

It is clear, as well, that the Cult of Mercury bolstered the power of the Roman Empire. Roman roads seem to have been some great magical network, meant to connect much of Mythic Europe. Marcelo of Verdi has long tried to fathom the magic of these roads, but has not succeeded, no more than all those who came before him.

Modern accounts tell of great meetings of Mercurians in the great city of Rome itself, but none have ever discovered archaeological or historical evidence of these gatherings. Perhaps there is some secret room, deep within the sanctum of the Church itself, or some hidden chamber in the catacombs surrounding Rome, waiting to be discovered. Throughout Italy, temples to Mercury have been discovered, and it is clear that some of these housed the Cult as well. Verdi often sends its Magi out when such places are discovered, hoping to gain Mercurian magic from the sites.

Most of what is now known of the Cult of Mercury comes from stories and legends. Tales tell of Hasophis, said to be a



founder of the Cult, and his burial site somewhere in the southern Alps, allegedly full of Mercurian magic. Tales also tell of the Great Iron Tree, enchanted by one hundred Mercurians for some mysterious task. Occasionally, a Magus of the Order stumbles upon an ancient secret, but such discoveries are rare. Much knowledge of the Mercurians is still out there, waiting for Magi to discover and decipher it, but much more may be lost forever.

THE FALL OF THE CULT

The fall of the Cult of Mercury seems to closely reflect the fall of the Roman Empire. After the first century, the Cult began to stagnate. Since expansion beyond the Italian peninsula became sporadic, following only where the Roman Empire went, new ideas ceased to come in and new learning stopped. During this time, Christianity was also made the official religion of the Empire. The worship of Mercury and the other old gods was made illegal. By that time, it was clear that the Cult of Mercury did not have long to live.

Some point to the division of the Empire as the event that finally destroyed the Cult, saying the Cult's hierarchy was split between the two powers. Others say that when Rome was sacked in 410, the Cult realized its peace was forever lost. Tales of the Cult's final dissolution vary widely. What is known is that in 412, it was officially disbanded. Some sorcerers simply disappeared, while others returned to the privacy they had known before the Cult.

Some Magi who seek knowledge of the Mercurians put little credence in the commonly accepted reasons for Mercury's dissolution. They believe such a powerful magical body could never have been destroyed by mundane means alone. A host of other theories have therefore arisen, ones involving mystical events.

A group of Seekers who reside in the Roman Tribunal say that wizards of the Cult of Mercury found the resting place of long-gone Tarhutis, who the Romans worshipped as Mercury. When the god awoke, still full of old hatred, it took the lives of Mercury's best to pacify him again. Thus it is postulated that the greatest of Mercury's knowledge was lost, followed by the remaining Cult.

A Sardinian of House Merinita claims to have found evidence that the greatest of Mercurians knew a ritual to see into the future. When stagnation weighed upon the Cult, she claims they used their ritual to foretell of a time when they would find allies, and a vigorous new magic. When the Mercurians located that time, they supposedly fled into the deepest depths of Faerieland, where a day is a year in the mundane world. It is there that the Merinita claims the Mercurians wait.

Terith of Jerbiton says the explanation is much more simple. He claims that as the Church gained control of Italy, Mercurian priests feared for their future. So many turned to diabolism. The Devil had been infiltrating Italy since the dawn of time, and was happy to have them. As time passed, and Mercurian temples were abandoned, these newly arisen diabolic priests forgot their old ways and the Cult of Mercury was soon lost. If Terith is correct, these Mercurian diabolists might still exist. If they do, they pose a great threat, combining Infernal and Mercurial powers.

Other theories on Mercury's fall abound, often involving epic battles, long-hidden enemies or diabolic manipulation. Although any of these could be true, it is generally accepted that, in all likelihood, the Cult simply faded, a fossil whose time had come. Perhaps, one day, someone will find a surviving text which reveals the entire history of the Cult of Mercury. If not, the Cult shall remain a mystery.

Finding the truth behind the fall of the Cult of Mercury is a great task for almost any Covenant in Rome. The story of that discovery, and its repercussions, could inspire many adventures.

In the end, although the Cult was gone, some of its members and its way of magic lived on and would eventually be inspiration for Hermetic magic.

The Age of Chaos

For the first time since before the rise of Rome, the wizards of Italy were without hierarchy or law. What resulted was chaos. The hunt for new magical knowledge ended, and for 350 years Italian sorcerers lived in fear of each other. Most of their lives turned to mere contests for survival. Some sorcerers slowly began to develop new magicks, less powerful than what had come before, but still strong in their own right, allowing

quick, spontaneous spells. Epic battles were then fought, where flame and light filled the sky. Eventually one or both sorcerers would fall, killed by the powers cast between them.

For a time, if a sorcerer made a quick foray from his hideaway and encountered another wizard, battle lines were invariably drawn, no matter how public the forum. Peasants of the time were often witness to these events. They would hide behind their doors, praying to the new Christian God for aid. As sorcerers killed for knowledge, fear for others grew greater and greater.

Even in the 13th century, when questing in the depths of Sicily or the wilderness of the Apennines, Magi of the Order occasionally come across paranoid hedge wizards, still afraid that the Age of Chaos is upon them. Sometimes these encounters result in new knowledge for the Order. More often they result in tragedy.

Foundation of the Order

Ten Roman Magi founded the Order of Hermes, along with the shapechanger Bjornaer and the Druid, Díedne. With so many Roman descendents, the new Order had many qualities of the Cult of Mercury. Not surprisingly, the Roman Tribunal began its existence with immediate power, three of the Order's founders — Guernicus, Mercere and Verditius — calling it home.

Although it restored the power of old Magi, the Order also brought with it more killing and bloodshed, as bad as any in the Age of Chaos. Flambeau, Tytalus and many of their followers went among the wizards of Mythic Europe. Sometimes they offered a chance to join the Order. More often they killed with their new-found arts. Blood covered Mythic Europe as the brutal slaying continued. The Order of Hermes was thus built upon an unsteady foundation: the graves of the many hedge wizards that Flambeau and Tytalus stalked.

Near the city of Rome, Flambeau found three hedge wizards hidden in the old Christian catacombs. They had heard of Flambeau's coming and hid, hoping they might survive his tumultuous passing. Even in the catacombs, Flambeau sought them out, gleefully shouting that soon three more corpses would join the hundreds before them. Bravely, the hedge wizards stood, drawing upon an ancient artifact they held, named Vardian's Skull. Flambeau laughed at their power and destroyed their artifact, shattering it into a thousand pieces. He killed the wizards one by one, making each death more painful than the last. Behind him, Flambeau left a mystical legacy. The power of Vardian's Skull imbued the catacombs, creating a Magical Aura that would be appreciated 200 years later by the independent Covenant of Vardian's Tomb.

Revenge of the Hedge Wizards

While some hedge wizards joined the Order, and many more died, other Italian hedge wizards fled to northern Africa, hoping Flambeau would not be foolish enough to travel so far into unknown lands. There, for 400 years those refugees have carefully plotted their revenge. They first learned the Hermetic arts, realizing the power they offered. Later, when a demon came to the refugees, they accepted its aid. In the 13th century, surviving refugees and their descendents are nearly ready to move against the Order, starting with the Roman Tribunal. They have already infiltrated the African Covenant of Sansaron, acting as Grogs and servants, shielded by their Infernal ties. When the time is right, and some flaw is seen within the structure of the Roman Tribunal, the wizards will take Sansaron and then move against the rest of the Tribunal, wielding both political power and threat of death. From Italy, the wizards plan to advance across all of Mythic Europe, not stopping until the Order, which caused the death of so many so long ago, is either subjugated or utterly destroyed.

Varator, the demon to which the wizards are tied, has goals of his own. He is a demon of vengeance, fueling the fires of the wizards' sin. When the wizards move across Italy, they will attack those who worship other Infernal powers, thus increasing the areas that Varator may control. In turn, those conquered lands will be offered revenge, resulting in anarchy and the absolute power of Varator.



EARLY CONFLICTS

As the 9th century began, peace descended upon the Magi of Italy. In the mundane world there were still squabbles for land and there were still invasions, but for the most part Magi were able to turn from these things, concentrating on knowledge. Indeed, it seemed for a time that the Roman Tribunal was destined to become a place of great learning. In the growing Covenant of Verdi, magic items were created, broadening the limits of Hermetic magic. In the nearby Covenant of Auctus, followers of Bonisagus, Criamon and Merinita joined together, hoping to create a new theory of magic as Bonisagus had before them. In Harco, a great library of cartography was created. At Magvillus, the first books on Hermetic law were written. By the middle of the 9th century, more Covenants were founded. Newly arriving Magi spoke of joining the Renaissance of magic occurring within Italy, and they were welcomed by existing Covenants. Rellantali and Calabria were both accepted during this period. Friendship and comradery reigned. Then, in the latter part of the 9th century, prosperity came to a crashing halt.

By the end of the century, it became clear that magic was fading from Italy. Raw vis sources were drying up, fantastic beasts were becoming rare and Magical (and Faerie) Auras were shrinking. The Covenant of Postestas was founded during this period, its Magi hoping to gain power from the politics they foresaw arising from the land's predicament.

A widely accepted reason for the decline of magic in Italy has never been found, but, as in all things, many theories exist.

Some point to the Church, saying that as its power increased, magic across the Tribunal dwindled. Juden of Verditius, a Magus of Verdi, was obsessed with this theory and began killing clergy on Sardinia, convinced that he could reclaim the island for magic. Unfortunately, his victims became martyrs and the power of the Church grew even stronger. Juden was put to a Wizard's March by the Order. He was cut down on the streets of Cagliari by a Flambeau sent by Magvillus. The villagers, unaware of Juden's true means of death, declared that the flames were the Fire of God, sent against the heretic.

Others blame the decline of magic on Roman Magi themselves, saying the land was dying from the abuse of its resources. Furthermore, it's argued, the frenzied hunts for magic that occurred in the days of magic's fade only made matters worse. Some Roman Magi were nearly driven to insanity by their situation. Magic was their entire life, and as it disappeared, they set out to do what they could to repair the problem. The excesses of Juden, for example, were not isolated. Many wizards stooped to murder and destruction, each thinking his actions could restore what had been lost. As these frenzies continued, more and more magic passed forever from the world.

During this period Wizard's Wars became rampant. Many independent Magi in Italy, who had been given grants to magic in the once bountiful land, now found themselves facing a choice between death or flight. Some of those who tried to flee were still killed, lest they return in more lawful times to reclaim

what little there was. Although some Covenants were victimized more than others in the fight for magic, all of them engaged in illicit activities. Associate members of Magvillus, Magi of Verdi, Calabria, Auctus and Rellantali, and independent Magi all joined in the frenzied hunt for raw vis.

Other Roman Magi reacted to magic's decline in a much more calculated manner. They realized that magic's death was in the Tribunal's future. They therefore determined to drive other Covenants from the Tribunal, by any means necessary. Verdi once convinced an army of Mussulmans to invade southern Italy. By some great coincidence, the Mussulmans' invasion site was also the location of the Covenant Calabria. Two of Calabria's Magi were slain in the assault, while Magi of Verdi gleefully stole Calabria's arcane resources. This was not the only time mundane wars were used as an excuse to attack other lands and Covenants. Many Magyar and Mussulman attacks of the later 9th century were directed and aided by various Magi of the Roman Tribunal.

For every physical fight, whether mundane or magical, waged over the magic of Italy, another 10 political ones were fought. In one 20 year period, six emergency Tribunal meetings were called. Word of these meetings was usually kept quiet, so a subset of Roman Magi could make decisions that all would be bound by. *Certamen*, threats and broken promises were all wielded in this political maelstrom.

As a result of all this fighting, the independent Magi of the Tribunal were the first to go, but whole Covenants followed. Auctus was the first to fall, when Verdi directed an ever



increasing barrage of political arrows upon the Covenant. Auctus was destroyed, its Magi scattered and its magical resources seized by Verdi.

As the 10th century closed, conflict continued to increase. Rellantali was Verdi's next target, and the victimized Covenant entered into a struggle for survival. The Magi of Calabria simply disappeared one day. They had been gravely weakened by the attack of the Musulmans, and associate members of Magvillus continued to harass them. A letter from faraway Novgorod arrived at the next Roman Tribunal meeting. The letter proclaimed that the Magi of Calabria could no longer bear to live in Italy.

During this period of conflict, several new Covenants tried to establish themselves within the Roman Tribunal, but most failed. Only Covenants in the most remote and inhospitable of places were tolerated. Sansaron managed to gain Covenant status in northern Africa, while the independent Vardian's Tomb was allowed to remain in the catacombs near Rome. Only the new Covenant of Literatus was allowed to establish itself in mainland Italy, and only because its Magi were backed by all of House Jerbiton.

MUNDANE INTERFERENCE

At first look, the foundation of Literatus would seem to have been of great historical import. At the time, such a melding of the mundane and Hermetic was all but unheard of. Later, others, such as Bellaquin in Provençal, would follow Literatus' example, and many would find the union of mundane and magic a valuable one. However, the foundation of Literatus simply marked the end result of a hundred years of ever-increasing interaction with mundanes in the Roman Tribunal.

In the early 10th century the Magi of Rome had supplanted their raw vis stores by trading books and services for pawns from beyond the Tribunal. However, as the years passed Magi realized it was easier to buy vis with silver, commonly available in the cities of Italy. Thus, they began to sell magic and services to mundanes, and used the silver collected to purchase raw vis.

At first Roman Magi conducted their magical sales in secret, but rivalries between Covenants arose and competition for magic markets increased, making transactions more public. The Quaesitoris of Italy condoned such violations because those Magi were as guilty as any. If Magvillus spoke out against any in the Tribunal, they would have crippled their own Covenant, something they were not prepared to do. So the abuses continued.

When it became clear that magic was nearly gone from the Tribunal, many great schisms were created, ones that would never be healed. By the end of the 10th century, Roman Magi were blatant in their business dealings. Greater and greater magic items were sold to mundanes, and Magi became open about the truth of their nature. One Flambeau even acted as court wizard for a Venetian doge. A Jerbiton opened shop in



Rome, healing all who could afford his prices. All over Italy, Magi were revealing themselves, interacting with the mundane world in such a blatant way that those outside the Tribunal were astonished and horrified.

The revelation of magic to mundanes reached a crescendo when the Norman Robert Guiscard led his attack against the Byzantines in southern Italy. Great weapons of magic were sold to him, assuring his victory. The art of magic was made evident all across southern Italy. Byzantine troops were scorched by fiery columns and were assaulted by the very air. Ships were sucked deep under the sea and the earth opened up to swallow troops. Members of the Church, witnessing these "Infernal" displays, became frantic. Sermons against Magi were common in many places and the occasional Magus was lynched.

As the power of items sold by Roman Magi increased, so did the animosity between the merchants. Competition for mundane markets became so great that several poisoning and assassinations were staged, putting Magi in fear for their lives. It seemed that the Age of Chaos had returned.

Finally, in 1061, the year after Robert Guiscard's crusade ended, a Verditius and Tylalus Magus fought a full Wizard's War on the streets of Venice. It was then that the Quaesitor Iernilus came to Rome to heal its wounds.



TREATY OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNAL

Iernilus traveled from Covenant to Covenant within the Roman Tribunal, listening to the complaints and needs of each. Based on his travels, he worked out a preliminary treaty, which the Magi of Magvillus, where Iernilus was staying, immediately agreed to. Unfortunately, no other Covenants agreed to Iernilus' terms, at least not without adding provisions that benefited themselves and not without removing provisions which they viewed too restrictive or beneficial to other Covenants. Others demanded subtle changes in the treaty's wording, providing loopholes which they could exploit. Iernilus, who was an exceptionally stubborn Magus, and, despite charges to the contrary, an exceptionally fair-minded Quaesitor, persisted in traveling around the Tribunal, amending the treaty for more than seven years.

Finally, in 1068, Iernilus developed a treaty which each of the Covenants in the Tribunal agreed to support (or were forced to support). A meeting of representatives from all Roman Covenants, as well as several of the better known independent Magi, was held in September of 1068 to finalize the treaty. Even though each of the Covenants had separately agreed to the treaty, when gathered together arguments broke out. Several Covenants refused to support the treaty and their representatives stormed out of the meeting, claiming that

Magvillus wielded too much influence in preparing the agreement. Only after several months of bitter bickering were all the Covenants compelled, some by *Certámen*, to accept the treaty.

The treaty itself was exceedingly complicated, filled with special cases and loopholes, and is still very difficult to interpret. Nonetheless, it represented a major breakthrough in relations between Covenants of the Roman Tribunal, agreeing on something for almost the first time in history.

There were only a few provisions of the treaty which were of lasting importance. They are:

- "No Magus may take silver, gold or other goods as payment for arcane services directly from a non-associate mortal." (The Magi must work through intermediaries, generally *consortis*. It should be noted that this provision does not prevent a Magus from exchanging a magic item for services).

- "No Magus may sell any item which does not eventually wear out, its magic lost." (This and the following stipulation both use the word "sold," which makes it quite legal to give away powerful magic items).

- "No Magus may sell a magic item, which has more than one pawn worth of spells invested to a commoner. No Magus may sell a magic item which has more than two pawns worth of spells invested to a minor noble, bishop or merchant prince. No Magus may sell a magic item which has more than three pawns worth of spells enchanted to a high noble or archbishop. No Magus may sell a magic item which has more than four pawns worth of spells enchanted to a king or cardinal."

- "No Magus may sell any item that affects things other than the item or the person holding the item to any except high nobles, archbishops, kings and cardinals. High nobles and archbishops shall not be sold items that affect more than one remote person. No non-Magus shall be sold any magic item which can directly harm large masses of people." (This provision was developed as a result of problems caused during the Norman conquest of Southern Italy. These rules are greatly abused by Magi who know certain crooked high nobles. Items are sold to the nobles and then passed on to their true recipients.)

- "No Magus may reveal any other Magus as a member of the Order of Hermes or as a worker of magic in general, nor may cause any suspicion to fall on any *sodalis*." (This provision was designed to prevent Magi from exposing the identities of competitors working incognito. Note that the provision only applies to Magi. There have been cases where mundanes working for members of the Order have been bribed or otherwise compelled to reveal their masters.)

- "No Magus may become involved as a mercenary in a battle of more than five men, nor more than three knights." (This provision keeps Magi from becoming a threat to the political powers that be. It does not prevent political advancement through intrigue. The term mercenary is also questionable, for the Magus might not be paid.)

- "Each seven years, a meeting of the Roman Tribunal's Magi shall be held within the city of Venice, to ensure that this treaty's rules are respected and regulated."

On Making Magic Items

When creating invested devices, a good deal of effort is devoted to assuring the permanence of the enchantment. Thus, it is somewhat easier to make items that eventually fade, as is required by the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal for items provided to mundanes. When making items of limited use, the Level of all effects is divided in half, just as it is when an effect is made to work only on the item itself. When an item of limited application is complete, a stress die is rolled, the resulting number being the years that it lasts. On a Botch the item discharges almost immediately, wasting the Seasons of work devoted to it.

The Treaty of the Roman Tribunal is part of the Peripheral Code and can be used to provide precedents in other Tribunals, but it has no legal power outside the Roman Tribunal.

Effects of the Treaty

The Treaty of the Roman Tribunal most severely affected those Covenants who relied on the mundane world for their income. Both Harco and Rellantali had problems for several years, before they were able to establish an indirect method of selling their services. Those Covenants with their own, if limited, vis sources rapidly became the most powerful in the Tribunal, leaving the others to suffer. Magvillus also benefited,

as it was left to the Quaesitoris to enforce provisions of the Treaty, which they did only when it benefited them.

Though the Treaty forced much of the Roman Tribunal's in-fighting from mundane view, it did little to bring peace to the Tribunal. If anything, it deepened animosity between Covenants, as it quickly became apparent that some Covenants benefited from the Treaty while others suffered. In the end, the Treaty had relatively little lasting effect; Magi of the Roman Tribunal have found ways around almost all the Treaty's major provisions.

INDEPENDENT MAGI

Rome's lucrative magic market and the Tribunal's resistance to new Covenant combined to force many Magi into independence, and lured others in. These independent Magi did not belong to any Covenant, and it is unknown how many actually came to the Tribunal (although most did belong to the Order of Hermes). Their numbers were great enough that by the Tribunal of 1095, it was estimated that they outnumbered chartered Magi. Politically, independent Magi in Rome have always been weak. Most are not officially recognized, do not bother to attend Tribunal meetings or fight amongst themselves.

Even in the 13th century there are many independent Magi in Italy, plying their trade and generally ignoring the provisions of the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal. Since most independent Magi are unknown, they believe their actions are legal until



Timeline of Roman Tribunal History

c. 700 B.C.	Greek Cult of Hermes comes to Italy
c. 600	Foundation of the Roman Cult of Mercury
c. 150	Roman Cult of Mercury at its height
A.D. 412	Cult of Mercury officially disbanded
412 to 767	Age of Chaos
767	Order of Hermes is founded
775	Verdi is founded
776	Harco is founded
793	Auctus is founded
830	Magvillus is founded
838	Rellantali is founded
841	Calabria is founded
870	Postestas is founded
888	Auctus is destroyed
907	Calabria disbands
951	Sansaron is founded
1001	Literatus is founded
1014	Vardian's Tomb is founded
1061	Iernilus of Quaesitor comes to the Roman Tribunal
1068	The Treaty of the Roman Tribunal is signed
1095	Independent Magi estimated to outnumber Covenant members
1172	Luctatio is founded
1196	Tamgor of Quaesitor tours the Roman Tribunal, to bring information back to Jarane

they get caught. There are even Covenants which have never sought to be officially recognized by the Tribunal, or which formed even when recognition was denied. The official Covenants of the Roman Tribunal generally do not care about these independent Covenants, so long as the independents do not exert political power (although Vardian's Tomb wields considerable power). Those independents who make enemies of recognized Magi usually find themselves expelled from the Tribunal, or they become targets of magical attack (unless independent Covenants are too powerful to be faced directly).

THE CRUSADES

The mundane crusades helped alleviate the Roman Tribunal's problems, both lowering its Hermetic population and brining in supplies of raw vis. Many of the greatest Magi of the Tribunal left for the Levant. Some hoped to discover Arabic magic and bring it back to Rome, while others simply went to kill unbelievers, testing the Treaty of the Roman

Tribunal in regards to mercenary work. When the Levant was opened to Italian trade, many more Magi from the Roman traveled there seeking greater supplies of vis. For a while, vis from the Levant poured into Italy, alleviating many of the difficulties there, and temporarily ending many disputes between Roman Magi. Problems with independent Magi were also lessened, as many left Italy on trading vessels, setting themselves up in the Levant.

The Levant Tribunal, though it has existed since shortly after the founding of the Order, never had much power nor gained much Hermetic attention until the crusades. The Magi of the Levant welcomed their Italian brethren with open arms, and helped in the establishment of several new Covenants.

When the Moslems recaptured Jerusalem and repelled the crusaders, many independent Magi left or were killed. Those who had established Covenants, however, were able to stay. Many of these Levant Covenants maintained (and still maintain) close ties with Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, providing Rome with vis in return for needed items from Mythic Europe. The Covenant of Al Arama, for example, maintains close relations with Rellantali, Verdi and Harco, and is very active in the trade of vis for goods and magical devices.

CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

Battles between the cities of northern Italy have had wide ranging effects on the Roman Tribunal. Magi have several times found themselves in the middle of conflicts and have had to call upon their magical powers to kill, maim and survive. Even worse, many have become willingly involved in battles, and though the Treaty prevents them from displaying their powers, they often use their magic in subtle ways to sway events. Magvillus is staunchly set against Magi of the Tribunal becoming involved in mundane politics, and in 1162 two Flambeau Magi were banished for participating in the destruction of Milan.

It is true that constant mundane fighting has provided a great source of income for Roman Magi. Even the minor enchantments which they have been allowed to sell bring large profits, and the market for magic weapons and armor is virtually limitless. Numerous clever devices for spying have been sold, so many that Magi now worry about the items being used against the Order.

Constant mundane battles have also attracted a certain warped variety of Magus to the Roman Tribunal. Independent Magi have come to Italy to participate in trade, strife and warfare. In 1172, through masterful political manipulation of Rome's Covenants, a group of Tytalus Magi managed to found the Covenant of Luctatio, locating it in war-torn Lombardy, only a few miles from Milan. These Magi thrived on the perpetual fighting and upheaval of the region, always walking a fine line between respecting and breaking the Code of Hermes. So far the Tytalus have avoided upsetting Magvillus, and have avoided being banished or Marched.

Magi of the Roman Tribunal have also become involved in the politics of Italy's cities, seeking to inspire further warfare to fatten their purses. It is rumored that Magi have served on councils, and even as Podestas of cities in Tuscany and Lombardy. This political intervention, while not prevented by the Treaty, certainly violates the spirit of the Treaty, and may even violate the Code. If anything, Magi's efforts to sponsor warfare by influencing town authorities does defy the Code.

Of course, there are those who justify interference in mundane affairs and mundane wars. Members of House Jerbiton, of which there are many in the Roman Tribunal, staunchly defend their right to participate in the politics of the mundane world, so long as their actions do not endanger the Order itself. Other Magi worry that such political involvement will inevitably lead to problems, especially if those involved are discovered to be Magi. So far, the Quaesitoris have not acted to solve this dispute, and have made money of their own by supporting mortal armies.

IN CONCLUSION

At the start of your *Ars Magica* Saga, the Roman Tribunal is probably as strife-torn as ever. The Treaty of the Roman Tribunal is showing its age, and has failed to alleviate the animosity between Magi of the Tribunal. Things have degenerated to the point where Magi constantly spy on each other, hoping to catch each other in acts violating the Code or Treaty. And to make matters worse, Tribunal meetings are useless, quickly degenerating into bickering, shouting and accusatorial harangues.

Three prominent Quaesitoris from other Tribunals, led by the Quaesitor Jarane, are currently on their way to Venice with the intent of setting things straight in the Roman Tribunal. Many Magi, however, fearing that the conflict has already progressed too far, doubt that their efforts will have any effect.

Future of the Roman Tribunal

Although future events in the Roman Tribunal are left open for every Saga to decide, the mundane history of the next hundred years suggests many possibilities. These possibilities are described in Chapter Two and are summarized here, but in magical terms. Use these events as you see fit. They can be ignored, or Saga development can prevent several of them from occurring. Hopefully, though, these events help enrich your Saga, combining the Hermetic and mundane events of the time.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| c. 1200 | Rebelling cities ask Hermetic Magi for aid, offering great rewards. |
| 1220 to 1250 | Conflicts in northern Italy increase, putting both Luctatio and Harco in great danger. During this time, they may be moved, hidden or destroyed. |
| 1224 | Literatus allies itself with Frederick II. A Covenant is founded in Naples by apprentices of Literatus. |
| 1226 | Another Covenant in Rome begins to move against Frederick II, hoping to diminish the power of Literatus. |

1237

Magi of Literatus take an active role in destroying Milanese diabolists for Frederick II. As a result, the demon Peris takes flesh in Eccelino, ready to conquer Italy once and for all.

1240

Literatus helps Frederick II capture hundreds of clergy. The Tribunal later disbands Literatus. The Covenant in Naples picks up where Literatus left off, before Frederick II corrupted Literatus.

1247

Magi of the Roman Tribunal move against Frederick II.

1259

Magi of the Roman Tribunal move against Eccelino-Peris.

1266

Windgraven Magi enter the Roman Tribunal. Conflict between the Roman Tribunal and Provençal begins.

1282

Conflict increases when Mistrigde Magi begin to move against Windgraven in Italy.

1294

Grand Tribunal where the Provençal-Roman conflict comes to a head.



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ROMAN LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER FOUR



At the time of the "official" starting date of your *Ars Magica Saga* (A.D. 1197), Italy is divided into many factions (see *The Roman Tribunal* map). In the north there are the communes, occupying the Po Valley and areas to the west of the Apennines. These are cities which declared independence from the Holy Roman Empire during the turbulent 12th century. Genoa, Pavia, Pisa and Milan are all members of this group. Also in the north is Venice, an independent entity. For much of history, Venice stayed above the conflicts of Lombardy. Recently, however, this has changed, as Venice enters into the affairs of the north.

Moving down Italy, you come to the Papal States, extending from Rome in the southwest to the Po River in the northeast. This land includes the cities of Ostia, Rome, Florence and Bologna, and is ruled by the Pope and his bishops, although some cities do have considerable autonomy. Finally, in the south there is the Kingdom of Sicily. It is one of the most stable lands in Italy.

Each of these areas is examined here, to provide background and story ideas for Sagas set in the Roman Tribunal.

The Communes

The city-republics are undoubtedly among the chief forces contributing to the political turbulence of northern and central Italy in the 13th century. Indeed, the city-republics are among

the greatest cities of Mythic Europe, and their structures and struggles shape northern Italy.

STRUCTURE

The political organization of the city-republics, though always changing in minor ways, evolved into its current multi-level form. Urban governments consist of a consulate, several councils and a general assembly of citizens. Unlike most other forms of government, that of the city-republics involves a wide range of people. Everyone from wealthy merchants and powerful nobles, to ordinary citizens and craftsmen partake in commune governments.

The Consulate

The consulate consists of a body of between two and 30 elected officials who are responsible for the civil and military administration of the city. Their duties include enforcing laws, hiring watch, judging criminals and running prisons. The consulate is also responsible for the city military. Consulate members may even lead a city's soldiers into battle (but not usually without assurances of continued survival from the Infernal).

Concerned for city defense, members of the consulate may seek out Magi to act as mercenaries. These Magi are usually independent, and sometimes members of recognized Hermetic Covenants, but always careful to deal money through *consortis*



and to act only as guardsmen, or occasionally thieves and assassins. Most do not fight outwardly in the wars of the north. Indeed, many Magi working for communes have learned to hide their magical abilities, casting spells indirectly.

There are currently about half a dozen Hermetic mercenaries plying their trade for commune mundanes. On occasion Magi's loyalties are tested when communes take action against people and places allied with the Magi's home Covenants. *Certāmen* and Wizard's War have both resulted from such situations. For the most part, commune mercenaries are ignored by "respectable" Magi of Rome.

Members of the consulate often use their powers to help their own families, or to pursue their own business interests. By the start of the 13th century, many consulate members are indebted to diabolic powers. The demon Peris works through many lesser demons in northern Italy. As entire consulates become ruled by demon-tainted nobles, the Covenants of the Roman Tribunal may be forced to take action, or chance losing the entire peninsula to the Dark.

Consuls are generally drawn from among a city's wealthy or noble citizens, or from specific trade guilds. The election of a consul is often something that involves great intrigue and trickery. If a consul asks a Magus to support his election, through some magic item or effect, that Magus or even his entire Covenant might get caught up in the back-stabbing politics of the election.

The Podestà

The Podestà, a solitary position, usually offers the powers of the consulate (where a consulate does not exist), or the Podestà presides over the council (where both consulate and Podestà exist). The Podestà is usually subject to an extensive set of rules to avoid corruption, but as the position was originally created by the Infernally tainted Frederick Barbarossa, people assuming the rank are usually corrupt already. A small sample of rules applying to the Podestà (taken from various cities) state that:

- the Podestà cannot be from the city over which he or she presides. This rule is almost universal, designed to ensure that the Podestà is neutral in city matters. This rule is also usually extended to all relatives of the Podestà, meaning the appointed cannot have relatives in the city. What most do not realize is that an appointed Podestà is likely to favor diabolists in the city.
- the Podestà is required to bring a number of judges to the city as part of his or her retinue. This is intended to ensure that the city is provided with impartial judges. However, the rule also allows for a Podestà to travel with his or her diabolist followers and not be suspect.
- the Podestà cannot dine, drink, walk or have any social contact with any consuls or citizens of the city — all the better for the Podestà to hide corrupt activities.
- the Podestà cannot leave the city during term of office without the consent of the council (see below). With the Infernal supporting him or her, the Podestà can probably dupe

others into granting right to leave, or might magically conjure a doppelganger to take his or her place.

- the Podesta is required to remain within the city for a period of time after stepping down, so any charges of corruption can be raised. Of course, if the Podesta has been careful, all of his or her enemies are dead, souls lost in Hell, by the end of office.

- the Podesta cannot engage in trade during time in office. However, just as Magi have trade with mundanes coordinated through aides, so too can the Podesta, thereby acquiring the base things that perpetuate sin.

A Podesta's term of office is typically between six months and a year, though exceptions to this rule are sometimes made (when the Podesta's diabolical plans would be ruined by stepping down, upon which Infernal influence is plied to prolong standing). The office is always drawn from among the wealthy or powerful. Whole families sometimes become involved in this "business," father, sons, and grandsons all serving as Podesti in various cities (spreading their web of corruption).

Since the Jerbiton of Literatus and Mercere of Harco are both highly respected among mundanes, they may eventually become Podesti. However, only the Infernally tainted or those with the potential to be tainted are selected. If a player's character is elected as Podesta, some group might have plans for him or her, and the character's temptation soon begins, assuming the character is not already sinful. The array of abuses offered the character, and the choice to pursue or pass on them, makes for great roleplaying potential. Furthermore, not only does the character have to deal with the many intricacies of running a city, but he or she has the Order of Hermes to deal with. Can the character observe duties to the city and remain loyal to his or her Covenant?

The Council

The council is the main ruling body of the commune. It has the power to make laws, decide on foreign affairs — declaring war and making peace — and, most importantly, has control over city finances.

Typical councils usually have between 100 and 400 members. Due to the difficulty of making any meaningful decisions in so large a body, most cities supplement the great council with an inner, secret council. The secret council is responsible for most of the real decisions. However, being so insular and private, this inner council is probably the most corrupt of all political bodies. Indeed, all members might belong to the same diabolic coven led by the Podesta. Certainly council members of all levels have no qualms about hiring people, especially Magi, to push their proposals through.

Council members are selected by a variety of methods. They might be chosen by direct citizen election, each region of a city might choose members of the council, electors or councils themselves might be chosen by lot from among the citizens, or out-going councilors might choose their replace-

Offices of Sienna

Examples of offices occupied by the people of Sienna in 1257: 171 night watchmen; 114 toll and customs officials; 90 tax assessors, hangmen, supervisors of grain and salt sales, officials to see to the upkeep of streets and houses, moneyers, supervisors of weights and measures, and trumpeters; six "good men" to oversee taverns and prevent swearing; six men to keep out wild donkeys, swine, lepers and to prevent people from spinning wool in the streets; and many others — 860 in all, not counting councilors.

ments. All manners of councilor selection are subject to corruption; it's rare for someone to be chosen fairly.

An entire Covenant can become involved in a commune's council, assuming a character is a councilor. Most Roman Covenants would kill to have such a representative, to seize power within a city. The councilor might push for votes that support the Covenant, and magic might be used to sway council decisions. If the representing character is ever charged with crimes or corruption, covenfolk may search for the crime's true culprit (or a patsy), to preserve power in the city.

The General Assembly

The largest body of commune government is the general assembly, or parliament. This body sometimes consists of all the citizens of a city. However, membership is usually limited to citizens with property of a certain value, or to citizens with the right connections, mundane or Infernal.

Meetings of the general assembly are called by bell, to one of the city's central piazzas. There, issues are presented by the council or Podesta, and accepted or rejected, usually by loud acclamation. For the most part, though, important decisions are made by higher levels of government, particularly the Podesta and his or her minions.

The general assembly is often targeted by manipulators. Magi have several times, often with magical powers, convinced the general assembly to take action against independent Magi and other Covenants. If a commune's military forces suddenly appear at a Covenant's walls, the Magi within might not have the chance to learn who has conspired against them. Across northern Italy, general assemblies are falling more and more to the control of diabolists. It's in the general assembly that diabolists are most numerous, granting them certain voting power.

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

With the amount of fighting that goes on between communes, their military organization is extremely important. Cities can usually field sizable armies at need and can supplement this force with mercenaries, some of which are Magi.

A commune's call to arms could be a problem for any Covenant in northern Italy, for Grog might be residents of the local city and are required to report for duty. Calling away all Grog might result in awful problems for a Covenant. If such soldiers do not report for duty, and their specific residence is known, other soldiers might come knocking on the Covenant door. What's more important to your Covenant, its own defense or a direct confrontation with troops ready for war? Worse still, a rival Covenant might instigate a mundane war to draw Grog defenses from your Covenant, making you vulnerable.

On the field, commune armies are typically poorly organized. Soldiers usually lack discipline and training, and are often allowed to follow their own initiative in battle, as long as their company or standard is in sight.

OTHER OFFICIALS

Numerous other officials are needed to administer the communes. Notaries (by the hundreds), officers to see that walls, roads and wells are in good repair, and people to keep track of finances are but a few of the many needed commune officials.

These officials, along with lower servants, such as night watchmen, are all drawn from the commune population. Given the scale of commune administration, it should be evident that most civil servants have other professions; there are very few professional civil servants. At any given time, as

much as a third of a city's citizens might be involved in the administration of the city.

A Magus living incognito within a city might find him or herself thrust into the position of city official. In fact, urban officials might insist on the Magus' involvement in civil government. How does the Magus juggle study time and administration time? Does working for the commune interfere with yearly lab devotions? Is civil status beneath the Magus' Hermetic standing, and therefore an insult? Indeed, just trying to deal with city bureaucracy and maintaining a fake identity might make for humorous tales.

CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship in the communes is often rather limited, and subject to many restrictions. Many communes have a birth requirement and lengthy residency requirement (sometimes as much as 20 or 30 years) to qualify for citizenship. Citizenship requirements of northern Italian cities may prove troublesome for Magi who work in the mundane world. As years pass and Magi fail to age, council members may become quite suspicious, perhaps stumbling upon the long-lived citizens' secret. Discovered Magi might be thrown out of the commune, forced to move to another place where records of birth and residency can be faked. Or council members might stay quiet about the matter, blackmailing the Hermetic citizen.



INTERNAL POLITICS

Internal politics of communes is brutal. Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries cities are literally turned into armed camps. Defensive towers are built by wealthy families inside city walls, and fights break out in the streets between members of enemy parties and rival families. Indeed, most conflicts are between powerful families, whose interests clash both within the city and on estates in the countryside. Political parties form around these families, struggling for political power.

Later in the 13th century, urban political struggles follow the same Guelph-Ghibelline lines as do larger conflicts in Italy. Old family conflicts are recast into the new form, with some families fighting for the Guelph cause, and their enemies the Ghibelline. Whenever one side gains power in a city, notable people of the other faction are banished, their property taken or destroyed. Unfair laws are also enforced, favoring whichever side is in power.

Magi of Italy might be born of the north's powerful families. If so, Magi might find themselves embroiled in intercity battles, fighting traditional family enemies. Family members might also come to a Magus, begging for help. Alternatively, a member of an enemy faction might learn of the Magus and begin plotting to kill him, before he steps in to help his family. Magi involved in these feuds have to be careful not to break the Code of Hermes.

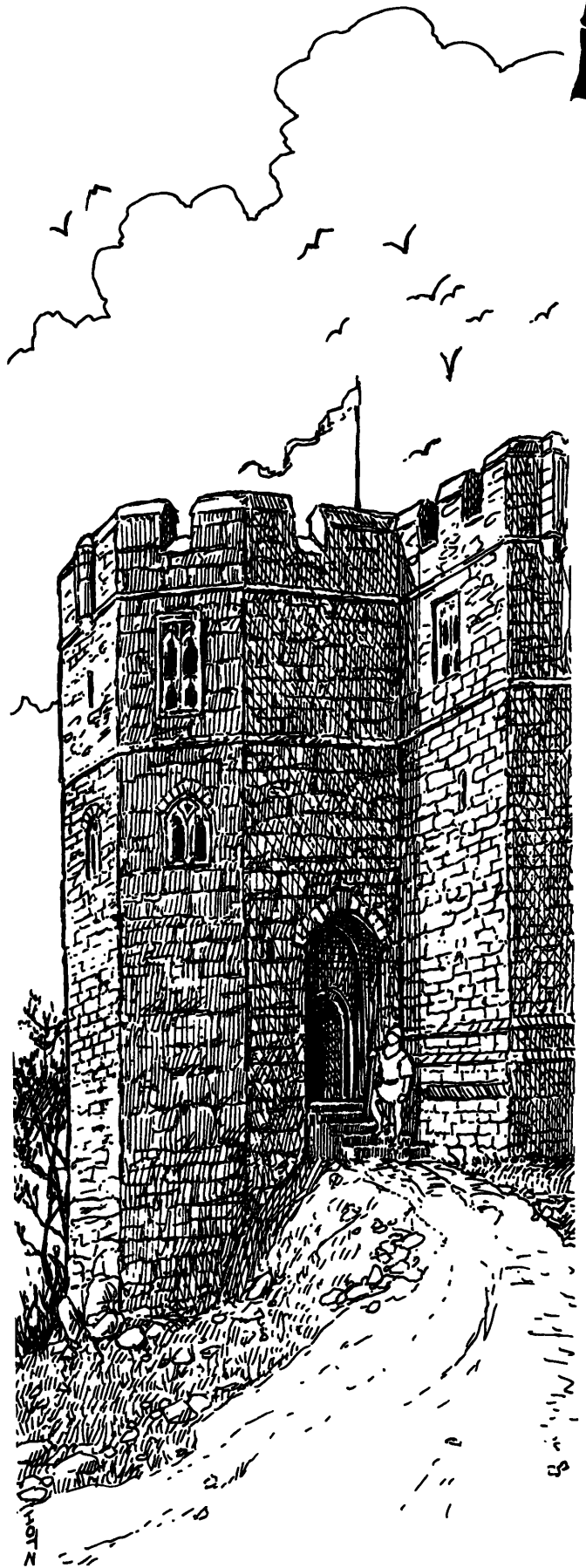
THE *POPOLO*

Another source of political conflict in the communes exists between the classes. By the end of the 12th century, city politics is run exclusively by the powerful nobility and magnates. These powerful people set themselves above city laws, and use city resources and power to further their own economic and dynastic interests. Naturally, this upsets the guilds and wealthy tradesmen, who feel left out of the political structure.

In response to these abuses, city tradesmen organize political societies referred to as *popolo*. The *popolo* immediately clash with established commune powers. In 1202 Milan, for example, the *popolo*, called the "*Creidenza di San Ambrogio*" after the city's patron saint, selects its own council, effectively separating the *popolo* from the communal government. In many cases, the *popolo* even has its own military, ready to be used against the great magnates.

The *popolo* is not an organization of the poor and down-trodden, though. The poor were generally denied a voice in the *popolo*, for fear that the nobility might be able to wield undue influence, corrupting the goals of the party. More accurately, members of the *popolo* only think of themselves, uninterested in the general good. The membership of the *popolo* is made up of wealthy guildsmen, notaries and shop owners. In short, it is made up of those wealthy and educated enough to wield political power, but not as wealthy or powerful as the magnates.

In many cities, the *popolo* gains political control and immediately sets to the task bringing its own power on par with





that of the magnates. The *popolo* often sets much stricter standards of justice on magnates than on the general populace, making life more difficult for the nobility.

THE CONTADOS

The influence of city-republics in northern and central Italy extends beyond city walls. Each commune includes an area of countryside (or *contado*) surrounding the city, as well as numerous villages and even lesser cities subject to the rule of the city-republic. The treatment of people in the countryside and subject towns is not at all like that afforded commune residents.

Nobility and Peasants

Originally, communes simply replaced overlords, with rural lords swearing allegiance to an entire city instead of a single, higher lord. With time, however, communes took direct control of the *contados*, specifying what could be grown there and how the land would be used. Communes had very specific needs and used the surrounding land to fulfill them. So tight was control exerted on the countryside that in times of famine, food was more plentiful in the city than in the countryside.

Covenants located in the countryside, near communes, might be in for a surprise if the local commune buys feudal rights to the land. Characters might find their liberties curtailed, depending on the nature of the commune's demands or

attitudes. If the commune discovers the true nature of the "astrologers," characters might find themselves at the commune's beck and call. Do the characters take drastic action or pick up and leave?

Subject Communes

All the powerful communes have smaller communes subject to their control. Subject cities are usually required to accept a Podesta chosen by the controlling city (spreading that city's Infernal corruption), to accept the jurisdiction of the controlling city, to pay a large portion of their income to the ruling city and to serve in the ruling city's military. This agreement, however, is not as one-sided as it appears. In return, the subject commune receives the protection of the controlling city, and its subjects gain the rights enjoyed by residents of the controlling city.

The independent Covenant of Feritel, described in Chapter Five, is a subject commune of Genoa. The situation is a rather odd one, for to a certain extent it gives mundanes power over Magi.

CONFLICTS AMONG CITIES

The conflicting interests of the communes leads to continual warfare. Cities seek more territory, greater political

power and more trading privileges. Civic pride leads to petty jealousy, which in turn leads to greater animosity. Neighboring cities are almost always enemies. When they can be found, outside justifications for war are adopted. Sometimes alliance against the Empire leads to city war, as does alliance with the Papacy.

When a city defeats one of its enemies in war, large numbers of prisoners are taken and the defeated city might be plundered, destroyed or forced into subjugation. Prisoners make ideal victims for Infernal ceremonies, and diabolical activity within a victorious city often rises after a war. The mistreatment of prisoners and the vindictiveness of the winning side only add to the bitter nature of commune wars.

Of all the Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, only Luctatio is openly involved in the conflicts that arise in the north. Luctatio's Magi seem to revel in the anarchy that conflict brings. However, there are also various independent Magi, including commune mercenaries, who become caught up in conflicts. Other Magi are drawn into wars against their own will, or at least that is what they claim.

THE COMMUNE OF GENOA

A sea port, Genoa has been a great center of trade for over a millennium. Its citizens have been traders, sailors and pirates. In the capture of Sardinia from the Saracens, Genoa became an enemy of Pisa, as the two fought over how to divide captured territories.

Genoa became a commune in the 11th century, and became anti-imperialist just a few years before 1197. In the late 13th century Genoa and Pisa go to war. Possession of Sardinia is at stake, which could prove dangerous for the Covenant of Rellantali, whose members hold land as a fief from Pisa after 1050. Without Hermetic intervention, Genoa wins the war and becomes one of the wealthiest cities in Italy, surpassing even Venice.

Many Covenants in the Roman Tribunal have naval concerns. Harco and Rellantali both engage in large amounts of trade, and even Vardian's Tomb has a trading vessel. If Covenant finances are endangered when a ship goes missing shortly after docking in Genoa, Magi might be sent out to deal with the problem. Maybe the ship is taken as part of a Pisan plot to embarrass Genoa. Alternatively, some great magical effect might have caused the ship to disappear one night.

THE COMMUNE OF MILAN

Milan, which becomes one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities in Italy, was founded around the 3rd century B.C., by the Celts. It first reached prominence in 305, when, for a hundred years, it was the capital of the Western Roman Empire.

During the 12th century, Milan began to enslave its neighbors, making enemies who later helped Frederick Barbarossa destroy the city. Milan is rebuilt after the wars and remains a center of anti-imperial sentiment, constantly plotting against Frederick II.

Between 1141 and 1277, control of Milan is disputed between the Della Torre and Visconti families. Parties form around these factions and battles ensue. In 1277 the Visconti (Ghibellines) defeat the Della Torre. By 1197, many of the Della Torre family are corrupt, having made black deals with the demon Peris to save their lands from Frederick Barbarossa. Like Frederick, the Della Torres do not realize they are just pawns in a battle between two ancient demons.

Milan has the oldest and richest archbishopric in Lombardy. The Church in Milan has its own ritual, that of Saint Ambrose, Milan's patron saint. Saint Ambrose serves as the focus of a great deal of Milanese civic pride. Ironical that a saint should be means for one of the seven deadly sins.

Characters may journey to Milan for many reasons. Perhaps they believe a Divine regio has settled around the Church in Milan, or that the ritual of Saint Ambrose bears aspects of Mercurial ritual. A Grog or Companion might be a relative of either the Della Torre or Visconti families, and begs aid from the Covenant for his family. Magi may want to search through archives left from the time when Milan was the capital of the Western Roman Empire, looking for information on the Cult of Mercury. While in Milan, characters could get involved in any number of conflicts, from the war between the two great families to that against the Empire.

THE COMMUNE OF PAVIA

Pavia was founded by the Papirian tribe. Pavia first reached prominence at the end of the 6th century, when it became the Lombard capital under King Albion. In 774, Pavia fell to Charlemagne, ending Lombard rule. Since 1112, Pavia has been ruled by consuls.

Numerous wars have been fought between Pavia and nearby Milan. This fighting reached its peak in the middle of the 12th century, when Milan defeated Pavia. Six years later, Pavia was one of cities to aid Frederick Barbarossa in the destruction of Milan. During your *Ars Magica* Saga, Pavia remains a strongly Imperialistic city. Only Pavia and the city of Montferrat refuse to join the Lombard League.

Internally, Pavia is a sundered city. Over a hundred towers rise above the walls, each owned by a prominent family. Some within the Order believe that several Magi live in Pavia, hiding within the tall towers.

Characters might travel to Pavia seeking some artifact of the Lombards. Very little is known about the long-bearded barbarians, but many possibilities abound. Perhaps the Lombards knew some ancient shapechanging magic, similar to the German Bjornaer's, and hints of that magic still lie within their former capital. Alternatively, strange tales may be heard

of an ancient man in Pavia, said to have lived for hundreds of years. If the man is truly a Lombard, originating from the time of Pavia's conquest, what information might he know?

THE COMMUNE OF PISA

Like Genoa, Pisa has long been a maritime power, in trade and war. Indeed, the Pisans joined forces with the Genoese to attack the Saracens on Sardinia. Though Pisa provided the majority of ships and men, Genoa demanded an equal share of the spoils. This led to the first of a long series of wars between the two cities. Each claimed supreme power over the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. By the time of your *Ars Magica* saga, the Genoese Church holds claim over much of Corsica, while Pisa has grants to much of Sardinia. Wars between the two cities continue throughout the 13th century, as Genoa defeats Pisa and for a time subjects the city to anti-imperialist rule.

Magi may visit Pisa for the same reasons as they would Genoa. It is a great trading city, valuable to many Magi of the Roman Tribunal. If some of Pisa's nobles understood the true power of Magi, they might use them as pawns in the ancient contest against Genoa.

The Republic of Venice

Although it lies near the lands of Lombardy, the republic of Venice has traditionally stayed free of the Imperialist-Papal conflict. Venice is an old republic, going back to the time of the fall of Rome. Now Venice is a chaotic city, home to many Magi of the Roman Tribunal.

GEOGRAPHY

Venice is one of the oddest cities in all of Italy. Several rivers empty into a shallow, marshy lagoon on the northeast coast. Numerous islands occupy that lagoon, and it is upon the largest of these that Venice rests. Lying just inches above the high tide mark, Venice plays a dangerous game with the elements. And yet, the city has somehow survived for ages.

For the location of Venice, see *The Roman Tribunal* map. For the layout of the republic, see the *Venice* map.

HISTORY

Venice was founded in A.D. 452, at the time of the Huns' invasion. Refugees of Padus, Treviso, Vicenza, Verona and other great cities of Venetia all fled to the islands that would



become Venice. By the time the Lombards invaded Italy, Venice had become a republic.

When the Lombards threatened to invade Venice itself, the city turned to a more strict form of government. A chief magistrate was appointed with the title of Doge (Duke). The Doge had many civic rights, including the power to call general meetings, to appoint tribunes and judges and to call councils of the clergy.

By the 10th century, Venice had become a rich and powerful city, independent from the two empires that confined it. Even by that time Venice traded on the Mediterranean and its commercial fleet sometimes became a military one. Within the city, feuding factions already existed. So intense was inner city fighting at the close of the century, the Doge was forced to sign a law making all acts of public violence punishable by fine, or death for those who could not pay. Subsequent factionalism proved more difficult to manage as Magi got involved in feuds. Indeed, after the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal Venice became the heart of Hermetic politics in Italy. Effects upon the republic were not beneficial.

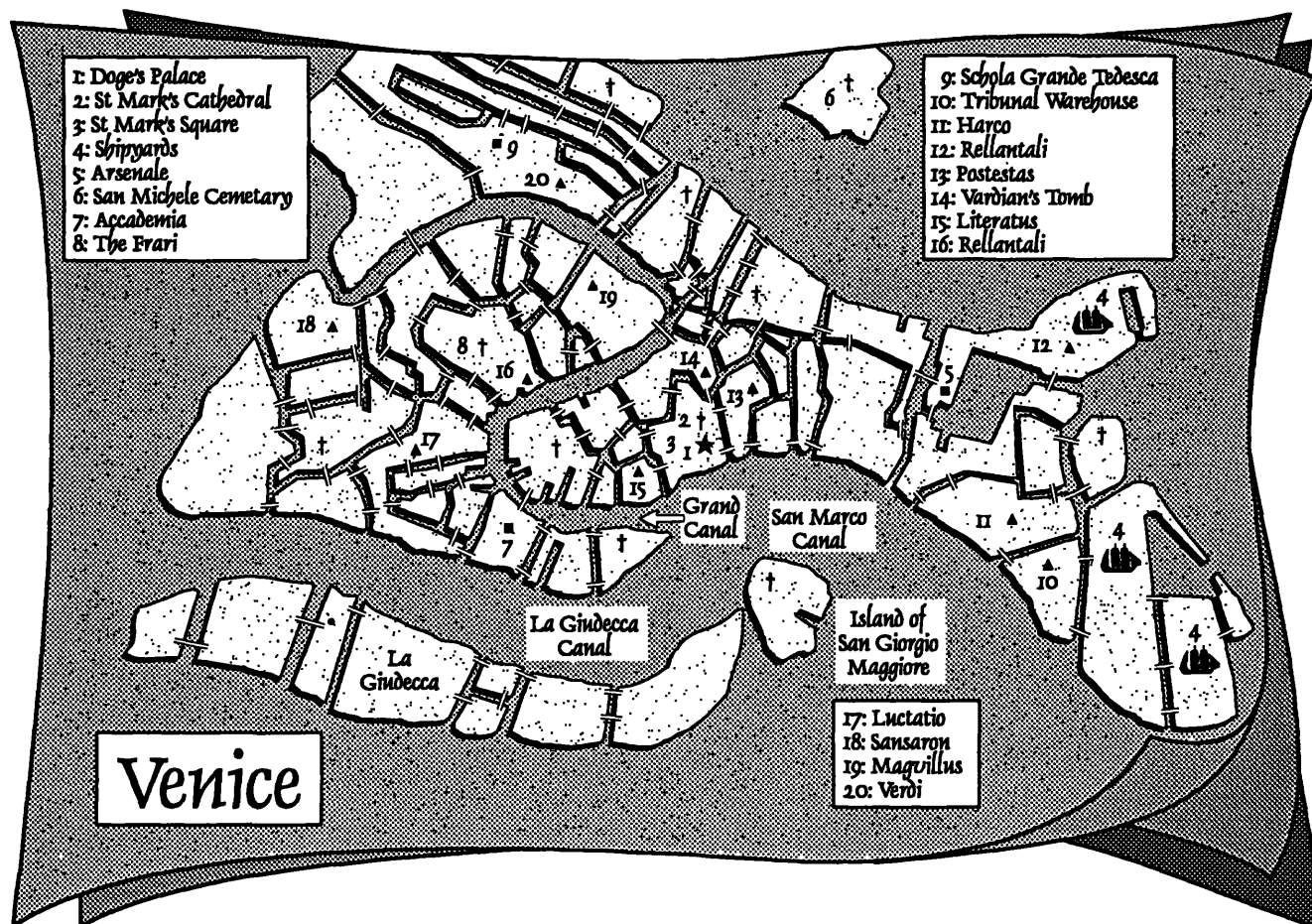
In the 13th century, great events rock Venice. The Doge, Henry Dandolo, and Venice's citizens agree to transport European soldiers on the Fourth Crusade. When it arrives, the crusading army is short nearly 30,000 silver marks in payment. To make up the difference, the crusaders agree to help the Venetians take the city of Zara. The Doge of Venice himself leads the huge fleet.

It is likely that Hermetic factionalism grows worse during the two years that the Doge is absent. Magvillus may have to step before the situation gets totally out of hand. Of course, many Roman Covenants have little respect for Magvillus, so Rome's Quaestoris may have insufficient power to quell fighting in Venice.

Under the influence of Doge Dandolo, the Fourth Crusade never reaches the Holy Lands. Instead, Venetians and crusaders capture both Zara and Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. The crusaders are excommunicated, but Pope Innocent III recognizes them again when their attack upon Constantinople reunites the two halves of the Church. Magi may be excited by the results of the Fourth Crusade, for it returns the intellectual works of the Greeks and Byzantines to the western world. Magical lore of the two cultures is brought back by victorious crusaders and the Magi who accompany them.

MUNDANE POLITICS OF VENICE

By 1197, the republic of Venice has a multi-leveled political structure. A Doge sits at the head, with a Grand Council below him, which he consults. To a large extent, the Grand Councilors are the true rulers of the republic. Four hundred and eighty members make up the group, elected on the last day of every September. (It may be mere coincidence that this day



is also the anniversary of a local coven of diabolists.) The same people are usually elected again and again, and their children after them, perpetuating Infernal activity within the city government.

A body of judges also exists in Venice. These judges are usually independent, irremovable and above the law, thus subject to much corruption. In the past, Magi have faced the judges of Venice, who are usually displeased by the disruption Magi cause in the city.

Below all of these groups is the General Assembly of Venice, which meets in Saint Mark's square to loudly shout acceptance or refusal of various proposals. This group, composed of common citizens, is given only marginal power, being a bone thrown to the power-hungry masses.

THIEVES OF VENICE

There is a group of thieves in Venice, brought together long ago by the Magi of Rellantali. The thieves act secretly, moving through Venice by way of a web of tunnels beneath the city, which empty into the canals. Most of the thieves are burglars; Rellantali feels burglary is the least attention-getting of crimes. Venetian thieves also act in several nearby cities. In those places, Rellantali allows more violent and obvious thefts to occur.

As Hermetic conflicts have increased in Venice, the city's thieves have been hired by Magi from various Covenants. These thieves are usually asked to steal some trinket of an opposing Magus, which might be used as an Arcane Connection or as leverage to buy some favor from the victim. Since Rellantali's thieves provide that Covenant with a cut on all such activity, Rellantali allows other Magi to buy the thieves, unless a thief is bought to take action against Rellantali itself.

HERMETIC POLITICS IN VENICE

Each Covenant of the Roman Tribunal has a townhouse in Venice. Venetian townhouses are places where Covenants receive information and deal with each other on a social level. Since the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, townhouses have become centers of intrigue as well. Many Roman Magi reside in Venice rather than their home Covenants. There they deal with each other, trading information, hatching plots and making plans. Hermetic alliances are constantly made and broken in Venice.

Sometimes arrangements between Magi are legal ones, such as when Magi agree on issues to support at upcoming Tribunal meetings, or when plans are made to reveal others' mundane dealings. Harco, Rellantali and Verdi are notorious for making legal claims on vis delivered from the Covenant of Al Arama, each claiming right to the imports.

Most schemes hatched in Venice are far from legal, though. Murders and thefts have been arranged and carried out by Magi in Venice. In recent years, conflicts in Venice have been made

more intense by the Magi of Luctatio. They carefully play Covenants against each other by a combination of truth and lies. No one has yet realized that Luctatio is at the heart of increasing animosity in the city.

Spies abound in Venice, as Magi seek to learn who other Covenants deal with. For just this reason, many Covenants have one or more secret townhouses. Few secret townhouses are truly secret, though. The majority of Venetian spies are quietly in the employ of Rellantali. Rellantali knows of almost everything that occurs in Venice. The Covenant's Magi are quite careful with their information, using it only sparingly so as not to tip their hand.

Occasionally, a Venetian spy learns too much or is found out by his victims. A month does not go by without a spy being killed, left dead before the townhouse of the Magi who hired him. Most Venetian Magi have learned to take these deaths in stride, as part of city politics.

GANGS IN VENICE

Most Covenants in the Roman Tribunal station nearly a fifth of their Groggs in Venice, to protect Magi there and to watch over other Covenants in the city. Many of these Groggs have befriended Venetian locals, and roam the streets in mortal gangs or allow mortals to join their Covenant gangs. Thus, Groggs fight in mortal conflicts, and mortals get involved in Covenant feuds. Indeed, occasional brawls break out between Covenant toughs. Sometimes full melees ensue, usually resulting in a few deaths and the flight of all combatants. The judges of Venice have recently begun full inquiries into Covenant street rivalries, but they have done little so far, and citizens are afraid to name Grog combatants.

THE LIFE OF A MAGUS IN VENICE

Covenant townhouses in Venice are decadent in their luxury. Every Covenant townhouse maintains an extremely high standard of living, each determined to prove themselves better off than the others. Given the luxury found in Venice, Covenants have no problem finding members willing to take up residence there. For most Covenants, the Magi that live in Venice rotate, but each townhouse has at least one Magus in residence at all times. The only exception is the Covenant of Sansaron. Their townhouse lies empty.

Not all time in Venice is spent plotting; Magi who spend time there allocate some of it to learning. Most townhouses have a Divine Aura of two, as part of the city Aura, making Venice a poor place to engage in magical invention. However, learning from books is little affected. Most Covenants thus maintain partial copies of their arcane libraries in Venetian

townhouses. In addition, every townhouse has a good mundane library. Library subjects are usually eclectic, books that strike the interest of the Magi who stay there. Verdi, for example, has a large selection of books on eastern lands, telling of the languages and religions of that area.

The Papal States

In the center of Italy lies the Papal States. The States consist of a wide strip of land trapped between empires to the north and south. The Papal States' continued existence is the result of careful political negotiation and hard-won battle. Here you may find the heart of the Church — the city of Rome — although it is not at all the clean, pure city of God you might expect.

Many of the cities within the Papal States are relatively independent. Rome, for example, has achieved partial commune status. This does not mean, however, that the papacy wields no control over such "independent" cities. The Church is ubiquitous in the Papal States, and Papal decrees have tremendous effect upon citizens.

Each of the cities of Rome, Florence and Bologna is examined in turn.

THE CITY OF ROME

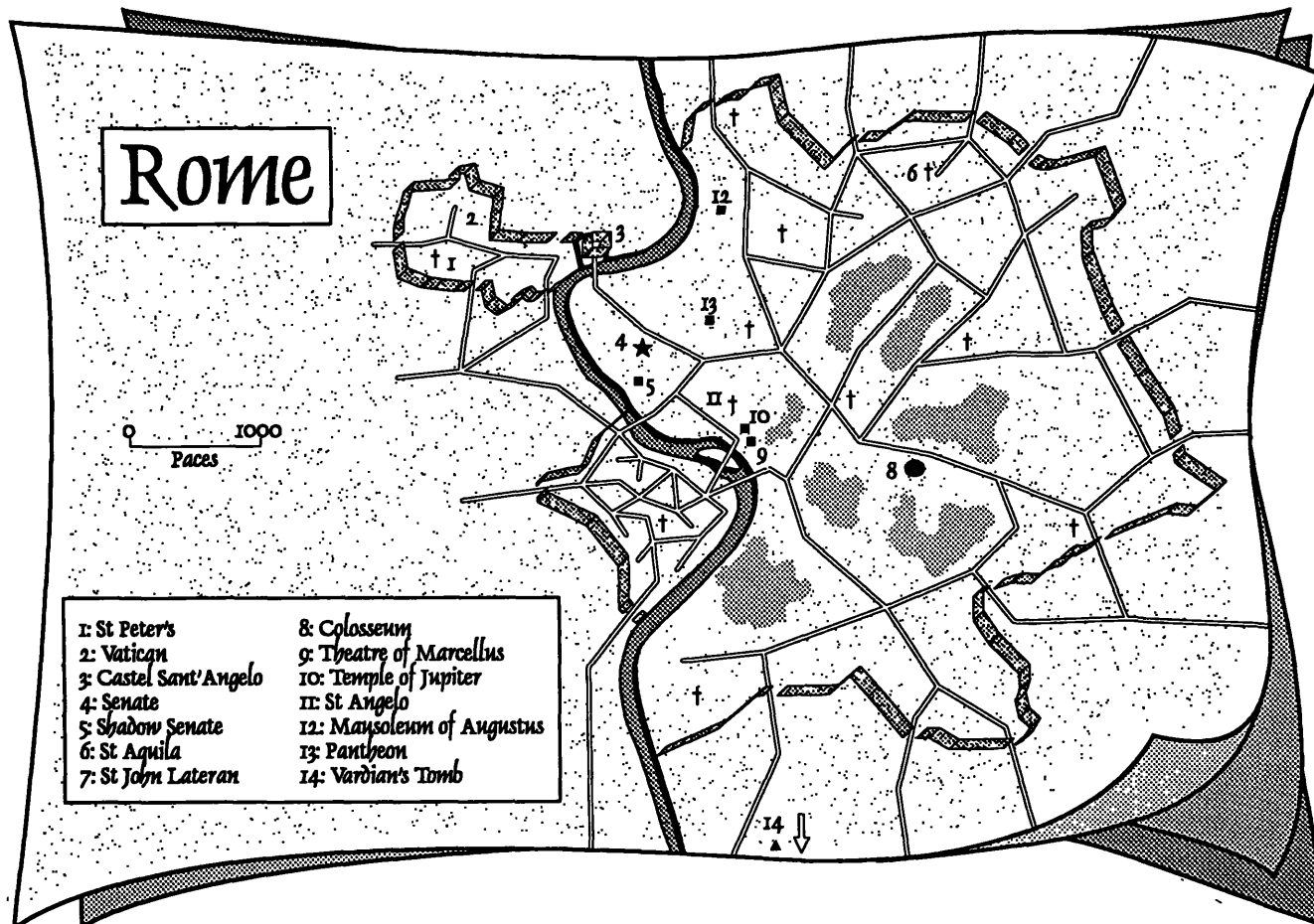
Rome is the greatest city of Mythic Europe. It is not, however, like any other impressive cities, such as Venice,

Genoa or Paris. Its permanent population is not as huge as some of those other cities, and it is neither a city of commerce nor a city of trade, at least not in the usual sense. Rome is the center of the Church and the ancient capital of the Roman Empire, where German emperors still travel to be crowned. Rome is a great storehouse of saintly relics and artifacts of the fallen Roman Empire. It is the foremost center of pilgrimage, and is known throughout Mythic Europe as "The City." (For the location of Rome, see *The Roman Tribunal* map. For the layout of the city, see the *Rome* map.)

In stark contrast to this grandeur, Rome is a place overflowing with corruption. Powerful families control the city, take as much money as they can from the pilgrims, control the election of popes, and battle endlessly among themselves. Disease is rife; the famed "fever of Rome" is feared by all visitors. The people of Rome are said to be unmatched in their greed. Within the Papal Curia, money, placed in the proper hands, is the key to everything.

Geography

At its height, during the glorious days of the Roman Empire, Rome had a population of perhaps half a million. At the beginning of the 13th century, the population is only about 35,000. The vast city walls, built in the 3rd century by Emperor Aurilian, enclose the city's seven hills — more than 3,000 acres. Within these walls lie both urban Rome and a strange sort of rural city. In the western part of the city, across the river from





Sant' Angelo, are crowded streets, busy market squares and everything that makes a normal city. The eastern part of Rome, however, is very sparsely populated. This area contains small farms, monastic vineyards, small estates and the fortresses of noble families. In many ways, Rome is a vast, empty city.

Spread throughout Rome are the remains of the city's former greatness. Triumphal arches, columns, old palaces, fragmented aqueducts and other ruins of ancient times dot the city. Many of these relics have fallen into decay, their stones used for other construction. Many of the houses, tenements and even churches of Rome are built of materials taken from the ruins of the old city. It is thus that long-forgotten magical artifacts sometimes end up in new buildings. The powers of these artifacts can have strange effects upon residents put in proximity to them, warping victims' minds or turning them toward Darkness.

Other ruins of ancient Rome are put to use by the people of the city. The Colosseum is controlled by the Frangipane family, who use it as a family fortress. The ruins of an ancient temple to Jupiter, near the Theater of Marcellus, is controlled by the Savelli family and serves as the center for the city's fish market. Little do the residents realize that their food is corrupted by magical artifacts lying within the temple. The people are slowly tainted in ways they cannot fathom. Even the ruins of the aqueduct Acqua Claudia are in use. From 1209 to 1213 they serve as home to the urban hermit Giovanni of Matha, who founds the Order of Trinitarians and is later canonized.

The ruins of ancient Rome are of great interest to Hermetic Magi. Rumors say, as suggested above, that ancient artifacts of the Cult of Mercury may be found in ruins not yet excavated (and in places since built from the ruins). In the past, some old scrolls and dysfunctional magic items have been located, but such discoveries have always been minor. With Rome having been the head of the Empire, it seems likely that somewhere in the multitude of Rome's ruins a great Mercurian discovery must lie waiting.

Outside the old walls of Rome, along the ancient roads that lead to and from the city, are numerous estates, farms, churches and homes. The families and monasteries of Rome have vast rural holdings. Also outside the city walls lie numerous underground catacombs, housing the physical remains of early Christians. By the 13th century many of these catacombs are sealed or forgotten, lost by the Romans. For those that do enter, the catacombs are extremely claustrophobic. There is scarcely room for a man to walk down a passage. Niches usually line the walls to the right and left. Some hold bodies. The catacombs can also form meandering mazes. They wind back and forth, sometimes doubling back on themselves. It is very easy to become lost in such places. Inside one of the catacombs of Rome, located to the southwest of the city, near the Tiber, is the independent Covenant of Vardian's Tomb.

Church And Pilgrims

Rome is the center of the Church. The Pope and his court reside here through much of the year, though they also visit Anagni, Perugia, Viterbo, Orveito and other cities. A continual stream of petitioners and supplicants comes to the city to see the Pope. Several of the Jerbiton of Vardian's Tomb are known to meet regularly with the Pope and his court, making other Magi in Rome very nervous. Whether the Jerbiton are simply being polite about their interactions with the Church or are engaged in some plot, is unknown.

The Vatican, which is located in the northwestern part of the city, across the Tiber, is surrounded by its own walls. On numerous occasions the Pope has had to defend himself, even against the people of Rome. Indeed, in times of need the huge Castel Saint'Angelo is used as a fortress by the Papal court. Underground passageways connect it to the Vatican.

The presence of the Papal Curia is a great source of income for the Roman people. The Papal court, with its vast numbers of advocates, scribes, accountants and minor functionaries greatly increases the population of the city, enhancing its wealth. Many petitioners to the Papal court must spend months or even years in the city, pursuing their business. All this is very expensive. In addition to the bribes and gifts which are necessary in dealing with the curia, petitioners must pay for lodging, food and clothes.

There are more than 300 churches and monasteries in Rome, all housing a vast collection of relics. The two greatest basilicas of the city, and the Western world, are the Vatican and the Lateran. The Vatican, in the northwest of the city, houses the relics of Saint Peter, the greatest of the Apostles. The

Basilica of Saint John Lateran, in the southeast of the city, is the cathedral of Rome and the seat of the Pope. The Lateran holds a wide variety of relics, including the heads of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, kept secure behind the Papal altar. Adjoining the Basilica of Saint John Lateran is the Lateran Palace, where the Pope usually resides.

These most holy relics attract huge numbers of pilgrims to Rome. At times there have been so many pilgrims that people have been trampled to death trying to get near the Lateran's artifacts.

Magi of Italy are nervous about the great number of relics within Rome, for they realize the power that Divine relics can give those with True Faith. Some of the more violent Magi of the Tribunal, such as the Tytalus of Rellantali and Luctatio, have suggested that a secret raid be staged upon the City of God, to steal and replace the great relics of the Church. These Magi have been called radical and advised not to worry about the relics, assured by others that the Church is too indolent to take action against the Order.

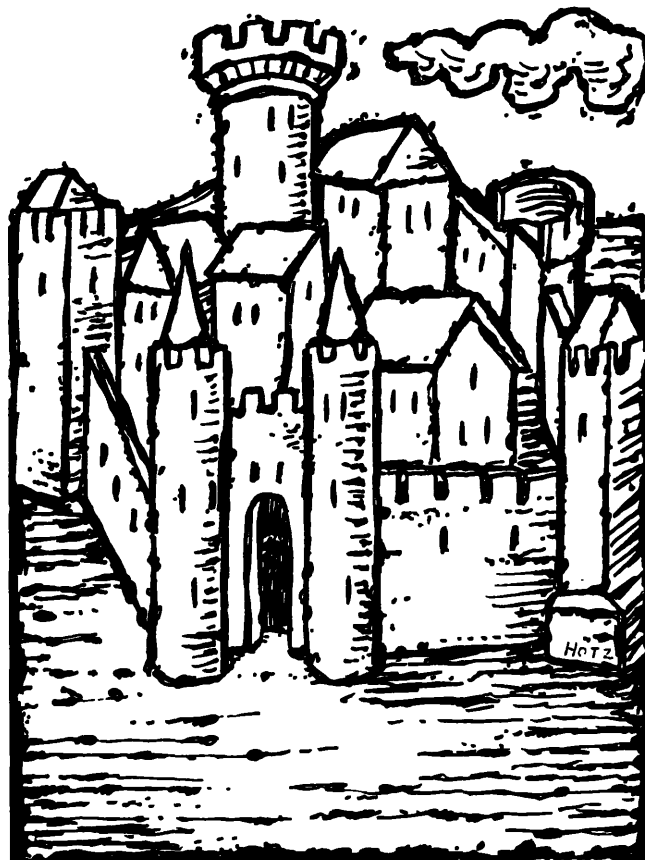
Throughout the year, on various holy days, great Papal processions wind through the streets of Rome. Music, flowers, banners, nobles on horseback, relics, the great prelates of the Church, pilgrims and the common population of Rome all partake of these occasions. The greatest of processions are held for the crowning of a pope. This entourage is led from the Vatican to the Lateran, crossing the entire city. Processions are also held for the arrival of emperors and kings.

Politics

Rome is ruled by a senate, with members appointed by the Pope or elected by popular acclaim (or by those duped into voting for them). After 1197, the senate ranges in membership from one to 56. Senators are almost always from the leading families of the city. In addition to senators, the city has numerous councils. In all, the official government of Rome is a mess.

Real power in Rome is not held by the official government or by the Pope. For practical purposes, power is held by a small number of noble families. The greatest of these are the Orsini, the Conti, the Colonna, the Savelli, the Annibaldi and the Capocci. The emblems of these families, their towers and their power are evident throughout Rome. Whole sections of the city are dominated by these groups. The senate, the councils, the cardinals and the Pope are almost always chosen from among these great families.

The great families of Rome, like great families throughout Italy, are constantly fighting among themselves. Their battles involve the usual brawls in the streets and piazzas, the besieging of towers within the city, and banishment and property seizure by the family that comes to power. Even Popes have been involved in family disputes, being instrumental in aiding their own families. Battles between the great families of Rome are cutthroat, and have effects felt throughout Mythic Europe.



The Port of Ostia

Some 25 miles to the south and west of Rome is the port of Ostia. It is a small city that exists solely to serve the needs of Rome. The city of Ostia is notable to the Hermetic world because the chief clergyman of the place, the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, has had interaction with Magi. He sees them as a great threat and would have them swept from the face of Mythic Europe. So near to the Pope, such opinions are quite dangerous. If word should ever leak that a Papal Bull against Magi is being considered, the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia might quietly disappear.

THE CITY OF FLORENCE

Like many cities in Italy, Florence has its origins in Roman times. By 1138, Florence had become a commune. By 1207, Florence follows the example of the northern cities, entrusting a Podesta with the jurisdiction of the city.

So close in attitude to the cities of the north, Florence is involved in the north's feuds, often allying with Pisa. Florence also finds itself in the middle of the Imperialist-Papal conflict, supporting the Papal party. Ultimately a schism formed in the city, leading to battles fought in the streets.

Although animosity continues into the 13th century, there is little open fighting. Struggles between families and political factions have turned more toward intrigue and duplicity than open warfare. One radical Guelph faction, known as the



Blacks, occasionally involves Magi in its struggles, blackmailing them into action. Only later in the century does open warfare break out again, as political tensions run high. In fact, the Blacks move to support Guelphs throughout Italy and blackmail Magi into extended service. When Magi refuse, the corrupt among the faction, who have gained power through diabolical pact, threaten those Magi into action.

Magi who visit Florence, and are perceptive of its culture, might recognize signs of higher learning in the city's universities, libraries and other places devoted to thought. Indeed, reason is on the rise here, and Auras of Reason may be found throughout the city. Although these Auras are small and weak now, they are growing in size and magnitude. Magi see this development as both good and bad, good for its means the spread of advanced thought, and bad because it might mean the eventual discounting of magic as fancy. Intellectual changes in Florence will undoubtedly be an issue in coming Tribunal meetings, with some wanting to take direct action against Reason.

THE CITY OF BOLOGNA

In early histories, very little is said of the city of Bologna. It was a small city with no redeeming qualities. Now, however, there are three types of schools in Bologna. First, there are schools of letter, sponsored by both the city and Church. Second, there are lay schools of Roman Law. Third, there are schools of Canon Law, taught at monasteries near the city.

Students have also begun to found universities, national groups meant to protect students' interests. Through universities, students are able to control what is taught by Bologna's schools, and can protect themselves from high fees and municipal taxes.

With the rise of student universities and the power they wield, teachers are coming to exist in humiliating subservience to students. Teachers must swear loyalty to students and must promise to obey various statutes. The University of Law at Bologna has recently been officially recognized.

The rise of schools and universities in Bologna has resulted in the development of Auras of Reason in the city. These largely arise where students meet to study. However, subtle Infernal Auras also arise in the same locales as students, mostly male, form private and illicit relations, and seek any means by which to acquire knowledge, even by pact with the Dark. In their arrogance, several students have decided to match wits with the Infernal, convinced they can outwit demons and gain power in the bargain.

It's also in Bologna that Magi of Literatus can be found. These Magi have a great influence on the city, with many apprentices from the Covenant helping found and organize student universities. Of course, this means some apprentices are tainted by the Infernal. Full-fledged Magi from the Covenant also spend a great deal of time in Bologna, learning and teaching. In fact, they devote so much time to these efforts that their magical studies are neglected.

The Kingdom of Sicily

Of all of the lands of Italy, the most politically stable is the Kingdom of Sicily, spanning the entire island of Sicily and all of Italy south of the Papal States. Since the Norman conquest of Sicily, the island has been the center of great culture, possibly the greatest in all of Mythic Europe. In fact, the kingdom's intellectual climate may attract many Magi.

THE PEOPLE

The lands of southern Italy blend a strange mixture of people not seen anywhere else in Italy. The oldest residents of the southern peninsula are descendents of the Greeks. The Byzantines also have a cultural influence upon the land, as do the Saracens who occupy it for a time, even being accepted as part of southern society. Finally, there are the blond-haired, blue-eyed Normans, who came from the north as mercenaries and became rulers of the land. The speech of the south is a strange one, a combination of Italian, Norman, Arabic and Spanish.

PALERMO

At the center of the Kingdom of Sicily, Palermo has always been one of the great intellectual lights of the west. From Palermo, numerous Greek and Arabic translations come, providing Mythic Europe with important Classical works. Several

good libraries are found in the city, inspiring Church officials and Magi to travel to Sicily to consult them. As in Florence and Bologna, Auras of Reason have arisen on the sites of these libraries. When clergy and Magi do research in the city, they do not realize that they carry with them the means of their own ruin. New thought discovered at Palermo's libraries means a movement away from faith and magic, toward science and logic.

In 1199, Palermo is sieged by Saracens seeking to capture the city. The attack lasts 70 days before crusaders drive the Moslems off. The invaders are ostensibly after the city for its mundane value and wealth. In truth, they seek a religious treasure lost in the city when the last Saracen army was driven off. Moslem sorcerers and their djinn are among the attackers, and Magi in the city are pitted against the foreigners' strange magic. Whether the Saracens recover their treasure is unknown, for Christians had lived with it and never realized its presence.

In Conclusion

Magi in Italy typically have more interaction with cities and mundanes than do Magi anywhere else in Mythic Europe. Italian cities are far-reaching entities which affect Magi whether they like it or not. Constant conflicts between cities provide lucrative opportunities for Magi of the Roman Tribunal, and many take those opportunities, understanding the power that silver has, even in the magical world.



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COVENANTS

CHAPTER FIVE



Those who do not know the truth behind the politics of the Roman Tribunal look upon its Covenants with a great deal of respect. After all, the Tribunal does hold Harco, Magvillus and Verdi, all Domus Magni. It also boasts Literatus, which is renowned for its teachings and interaction with the University of Bologna. However, admiration for the Roman Tribunal is unfounded. The Tribunal is actually a place of persistent bickering and infighting. Even Literatus and Magvillus engage in intrigue and subterfuge, under the pretense of alleviating the Tribunal's problems. It doesn't seem important that their solutions are widely disliked and often disregarded by the Tribunal.

To make matters worse, there are several independent Magi in the Tribunal. Some are Hermetic, who came to Italy to set up Covenants of their own but didn't want to settle in the city. Their plans were upset by the lack of magic inherent to the land, and by political pressure from established Covenants. Some independent Covenants formed anyway, outside the Tribunal order. Other independents in the Tribunal are completely outside the Order of Hermes, and though they should be indoctrinated, they are ignored by Italian Magi too concerned with their own schemes.

Antipathy is the by-word of the Roman Tribunal. At times, it seems the Tribunal's Magi are actually a pack of dogs, warily circling each other, looking for signs of weakness upon which to pounce.

Politics

Roman Tribunal politics are dangerous at the best of times and deadly at the worst. Magi fight constantly, as much over genuine concerns as out of habit, being opposed over a number of changing and constant issues. Visiting Magi who find themselves in the midst of Tribunal struggles have been known to flee Italy, not looking back until well over the Alps.

Covenant Relations

Although relations in the Roman Tribunal shift from year to year, there are a few political constants. First, there are endless feuds. Rellantali and Verdi have hated each other for several hundred years, since Verdi tried to drive Rellantali from Asinara. Verdi now thinks little of the matter, but Rellantali is almost totally consumed by it. Likewise, an old animosity exists between Literatus and Magvillus. Literatus believes Magvillus has been manipulating the Roman Tribunal since before the Treaty, and Literatus blames many of the Tribunal's troubles on Magvillus. Sansaron, too, is deeply offended by Magvillus, whom Sansaron Magi feel constantly violates their privacy. This animosity is one of the reasons why Sansaron does not attend Tribunal meetings. And Postestas and the independent Vardian's Tomb have been fighting for the past 10 years, given the accidental death of a Postestas Grog. The event

was a truly minor one, but shows how readily tempers flare in the Roman Tribunal.

Assuming a neutral stance in any conflict is a common ploy in the Roman Tribunal, but always implies deep involvement in many plots. Harco swears total neutrality, saying it is above political issues of the Tribunal. When matters come to a head, however, Harco's Magi usually side with either Verdi or Magvillus, since the three are all Domus Magni. Postestas' Magi also claim innocence in the plots of the Tribunal. Naive Roman Magi believe Postestas' Tremere are reputable people, always seeking the good of the Tribunal. In truth, Postestas always chooses sides so as to appear helpful and supportive. One day Postestas' Tremere will turn their reputation to their own favor.

For its part, the Covenant of Luctatio has been souring relations between Covenants. Indeed, the young Covenant has been manipulating its older brethren in subtle and almost imperceptible ways, as if playing some obscure game.

Tribunal Procedures

Since the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, Tribunal meetings have been held in Venice. The city is considered neutral ground, where no one Covenant holds sway. Since that declaration, all recognized and some independent Covenants have established townhouses in Venice (although Sansaron no longer maintains its townhouse). Most official correspondences applying to the whole Tribunal are sent through these townhouses. In fact, Rellantali insists upon this procedure.

Intrigue and manipulation occur constantly between the inhabitants of Venetian townhouses, as alliances change and promises are broken. Since a decision made by the Tribunal in the 1150s, it has become a rule that Magi visiting or passing through the Roman Tribunal stop at Venice, and there announce their presence to each of the Covenants who maintain a townhouse. Only foreign Quaesitoris are exempt from this legislation. More often than not, visitors of Venice find themselves drawn into the Machiavellian web of manipulation that marks the Tribunal.

Every seven years, Venice becomes even more frenzied than usual as Magi of the Tribunal flock in for their meeting, to argue the issues of the day. Every Covenant is well-represented. Some independent Magi attend as well, although most stay to themselves. Several weeks of buying favors precedes the actual meeting, and it is during this period that old and new rivalries usually flare up. Eventually, when everything has settled down, the Tribunal meeting is called to order.

The actual Tribunal meeting occurs in a large warehouse owned by Magvillus. The warehouse sits empty for most of the year, except for tables and chairs scattered about it. Some Venetian mundanes, particularly those around the waterfront, have made note of how odd the warehouse is, given that it is only lit and full of activity once every seven years. Rumor has it that the place is haunted, and most give it a wide berth.

Magi of the Roman Tribunal always have issues to present, and are usually obsessive in their devotion to them. The majority of concerns are not dealt with satisfactorily. Only

those Covenants with extremely strong backing are able to pass their ideas, and even then not without arguing terms for days or even weeks. The average Tribunal meeting lasts about a Season. Attending Magi are not allowed to return to their Covenants, so must pursue studies in their off time, under Venice's Dominion Aura. Most Magi arrange their schedules to complete lab work before setting out for Tribunal meetings. When issues are particularly important, Tribunal meetings can last longer than a Season.

ISSUES FOR TRIBUNAL

A wide range of matters are discussed at Tribunal meetings. Below are a few examples:

Bitter Independents

For several hundred years, young Magi hoping to found new Covenants in the Tribunal have been denied their request, ever since magic began to wane from the land. Bitter Magi, who once tried to form Covenants but failed, still remain in Italy. In the past, these independents have tried to manipulate matters to take power from established Covenants, to distribute it among individual Magi. By and large such efforts have failed.

Tribunal Expansion

The Roman Tribunal sits near Africa, which lies largely unclaimed by the Order of Hermes. This matter has been discussed at previous Tribunal meetings, but nothing has come of it. The Tribunal may eventually decide as a whole to begin large-scale expansion into Africa. No one can guess at the results. Relations with Saracen sorcerers could lead to new heights of understanding, or to total destruction.

New Friendships

Literatus and Magvillus would both like to see an era of new friendship descend upon the Roman Tribunal (but under their own terms, of course). In the past they have tried a number of schemes to force order upon the Tribunal. Future ideas could include enforced service at Literatus, so that Roman Magi all learn together. Or mandatory education in Hermetic Law and Lore might be imposed, to help Magi of the Tribunal learn from the mistakes of the past. Any of these issues could be brought up at Tribunal meetings. In the past, these suggestions have been defeated, largely because Magvillus and Literatus are unwilling to work together.

Vis Supplies

Maps of the Roman Tribunal hang inside the warehouse where Tribunal meetings are held. They clearly mark which areas each Covenant may collect raw vis from (although some areas are contested, either due to independent Magi or different Covenants' interpretations of the maps). Redistribution of collection rights is discussed at Tribunal meetings, as influence

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of Covenants rises and falls, dictating how much Covenants can claim or how far they can protect themselves.

Abusing the Weak

Although the majority of Covenants in the Tribunal are vis poor, there is one Covenant that has many sources of vis: Sansaron, on the north coast of Africa. Other Covenants may seek to abuse an apparently weak Covenant like Sansaron. Perhaps they seek to force the Covenant to sell part of its collected vis, or force it to open its lands to collection by other Covenants. Limited knowledge of Sansaron's Magi keeps mainland Magi wary of taking direct action, for now. . .

Harco

Symbol: A pointed red cap with a band around the base and a triangle on the band

Season: Autumn

Year Founded: A.D. 778

House Affiliation: Mercere

Aura: Magic 2

Members: 11; Insatella, Aldero, Antho, Elegans, Frederick, Harstein, Iris, Pipio, Spica, Tentare and Velox, all of House Mercere

Number of Groggs: 40

Armaments: Superior

Library Art Scores: Creo 3, Intéllego 8, Muto 3, Perdo 4, Rego 9, Animál 3, Aquam 6, Auram 6, Córpoem 2, Herbam 0, Ignem 3, Imágonem 0, Mentem 4, Terram 3, Vim 8.

Library Ability Scores: Hermes History 6, Geography 8, Mythic Europe Lore 5, Hermes Lore 6, Schism War Lore 7, Travel Lore 5, Roman Tribunal Lore 7, Various Language Texts 4 (average), Magic Theory 3, Trade Policies 5

The center of one of the most respected Houses of the Order, Harco is a name spoken with much reverence in far away places. Unfortunately, reality rarely matches reputation. Although the Magi of Harco still perform their duties with pride, they are also at the center of a vast mercantile empire. To some denizens of Harco, wealth and trading have become as important as obligations to House Mercere and the Order of Hermes.

HISTORY

Harco was founded by Mercere shortly after the founding of the Order of Hermes. A reasonably secluded site was chosen, one centrally located within the reaches of the Order (which at the founding included Italy, France and southern Germany), not too far from trade routes and old Roman roads. The Covenant spent its first centuries providing excellent service to the Order, training Redcaps and developing expedient systems by which to deliver messages. During the building of the Order, Harco was able to secure numerous Hermes Portals, uniting each of the Tribunals, assemble a sizable collection of maps, keep accurate records of events throughout Mythic Europe, and build a shining reputation throughout the Order.



It was not until the Schism War that the full power of Harco's information, and the ability to control its flow, became apparent. House Mercere opposed the Schism War from the start, but due to political weakness, not having "real" Magi, it was unable to dissuade the other Houses from persecuting Díedne. However, the Domus Magnus did have some political influence. The Primus of the House, Aldico, instructed Red-caps to gather information from the factions, distributing messages more quickly to those who sought peace rather war. Information was brought to Harco from all corners of the Order. Using this material, and House Mercere's ability to convey messages, Aldico was able to help negotiate a peace between the factions.

When magic started to become scarce in southern Mythic Europe, Harco was in an ideal position to provide access to the vis supplies of more remote areas. The Covenant profited greatly, and continues to profit. Harco uses its Hermes Portals to acquire vis and other magical supplies in distant corners of the Order, transporting these goods to Italy where they fetch a high price. As well as transporting magical goods, Harco profits by transporting all nature of luxury items throughout Mythic Europe. Shortly after utilizing message routes for trade, Harco built a small mercantile empire.

During the crusades, Harco was able to use its magical ships, as well as, in very special cases, its Hermes Portals to transport men and supplies to the Levant. Harco was therefore able to secure trading privileges in the Holy Land, and estab-

lished important mundane connections both in mainland Mythic Europe and the Holy Land. Many of those contacts continue to provide Harco with a market for magic items and other luxuries.

Over the past century, Harco has managed to remain neutral in most conflicts of the Roman Tribunal. It has also managed to increase its profits and increase the scale of its mercantile operations. By providing services to both Magi and mortals, Harco has become one of the wealthiest Covenants in the Order, and one of the best connected. There is some worry that Harco's wealth and connections in the mundane world may attract undue attention from the mundanes. The Quaesitoris of Magvillus are investigating the possible dangers of Harco's mundane relations.

LOCATION

Harco is located in the hills of Piedmont, on a wooded hillside overlooking a village which bears the Covenant's name. Although the region was originally sparsely populated, mundane numbers have increased in recent times, and there are several villages within easy hiking distance of the Covenant.

The village of Harco grew in order to support the growing needs of the Covenant and its large mundane staff. Most of the villagers are aware of the magical nature of the Covenant, but do not mind, as most are relatives of covenfolk. Villagers farm numerous vineyards and fields around the Covenant.

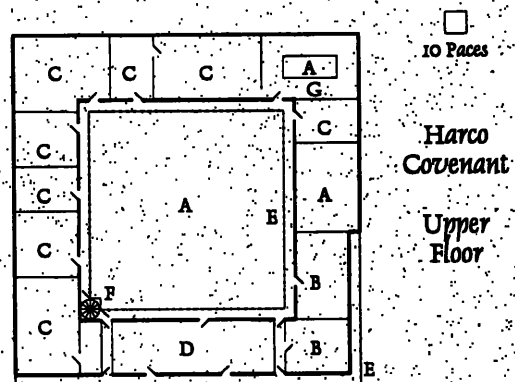
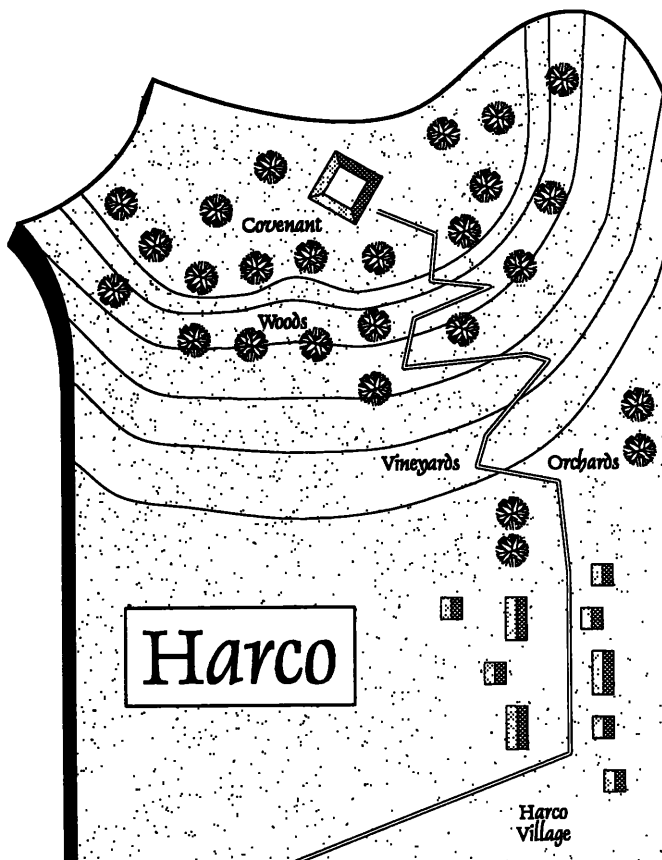
In addition to its hillside location, Harco owns several buildings and a sheltered harbor some 50 miles to the south. Several members of the Covenant prefer this locale, and spend most of their time near the sea. The Covenant docks its ships at this holdings on the sea, and uses its sea access for carrying messages, trade and fishing.

The location of Harco is illustrated on both *The Roman Tribunal* and *Harco* maps.

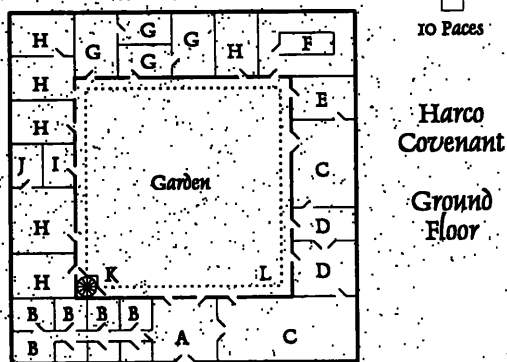
FORTRESS

The members of Harco live in the luxury that the Covenant's huge income allows. The main Covenant building is a large square villa, surrounding a beautiful central courtyard. A winding trail leads up from Harco village, past orchards and vineyards, through a small wood that surrounds the Covenant, to the large bronze doors which have served as entrance to Harco since its foundation. As Harco has always maintained reasonably friendly relations with its neighbors, the Covenant is not particularly well-fortified, and has numerous spacious balconies which offer a commanding view of the woods, vineyards and village below.

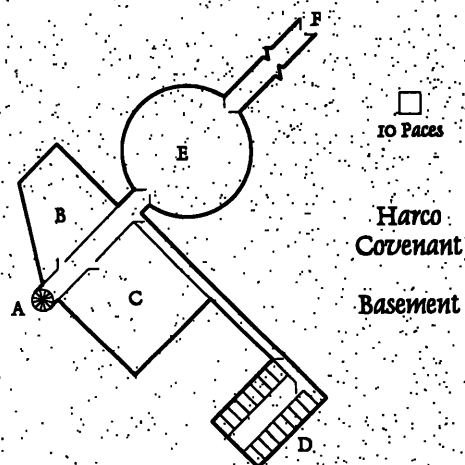
What few defenses the Covenant has are located in the woods surrounding the main building. A number of clever magical traps allow the Covenant to discourage unwanted visitors. Invaders may be afflicted with fear, confusion and weariness. Individuals may also be swallowed up by the ground around the Covenant, emerging in the Covenant's underground dungeons, or never emerging at all.



- A: Open to Lower Floor
- B: Work Rooms
- C: Living Quarters & Labs
- D: Meeting Room
- E: Balcony
- F: Stairs (Down)
- G: Storage



- A: Entry Hall
- B: Servants
- C: Hall
- D: Kitchens
- E: Solar
- F: Open Courtyard
- G: Visitors
- H: Living Quarters & Labs
- I: Mundane Library
- J: Hermetic Library
- K: Stairs (Up/Down)
- L: Covered Walkway



- A: Stairs (Up)
- B: Maps
- C: Archives
- D: Prison
- E: Hermes Portals
- F: Gate in Hillside

In contrast to the main Covenant, Harco's harbors are exceptionally well-fortified. A high wall with several towers surrounds the docks. Within the walls are located several large warehouses and quarters for the keepers of the Covenant docks.

Harco's wealth has allowed it to hire and train excellent Groggs, who serve as guards at the Covenant and as protectors of the Covenant's ships, caravans and other interests. In addition to being well-trained, guards at Harco are provided with the best equipment money can buy.

For the layout of Harco proper, see the *Harco* map.

INHABITANTS

Harco is home to the Primus and several of the most important members of House Mercere. Mercere is a highly structured House; its members are not usually attached to any particular Covenant. Instead, they are assigned to areas according to their rank within the House. The highest ranking members of House Mercere, as well as their assistants and servants, are generally assigned to Harco, where they concen-

trate on the administration of Mercere. There are currently 11 members of Harco, including the Prima, Insatella.

Each member of Harco has a well-defined position within the Covenant, and has well-defined duties. The Prima is the leader of Harco (as well as House Mercere), and is responsible for overseeing the operation of the House. Below the Prima, there are two elder members, currently Aldero and Harstein, who are responsible for overseeing Harco's mercantile activities and the day-to-day operations of the Covenant. Next in rank are Elegans and Velox, two actual Magi of Mercere. They are primarily responsible for creation of longevity potions for Covenant members, maintenance of the Covenant's magical defenses, and creation of magic items. Three members of the Covenant are scribes, who keep up Harco's archives and have earned their place through lifetimes of service to their House. Pipio, Spica and Tentare currently fill these positions. The lowest ranking members of Harco are the three youngest members, who serve as Redcaps for the Roman Tribunal. They have earned their places through the energy and diligence with which they perform their duties. Antho, Frederick and Iris are these Redcaps.

Insatella

Characteristics: Intelligence (crafty) +2, Perception (discerning) +2, Strength (fragile) -1, Stamina (infirm) -2, Presence (small) -1, Communication (forceful) +2, Dexterity 0, Quickness (rickety) -1

Age: 147 (Longevity potion, Level 85, -17 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues & Flaws: Redcap +3, The Gentle Gift (no -3 penalty on social rolls) +1, Arthritis (Botch in a physical action results in seized joints; -5 to succeeding rolls) -3, Painful Magic (*Ars Magica*, p.72) -3, Temporal Influence (mundane influence) +2, Greater Leadership +6, Well-Traveled +1, Wealth +4

Abilities: Speak Arabic (trading) 3, Speak French (messages) 5, Speak Italian (orders) 5, Speak Latin (magic) 6, Scribe Latin (magic) 5, Magic Theory (longevity potions) 9, *Certámen* (challenged by Tremere) 3, Concentration (loud noises) 5, Finesse (beauty) 4, Hermes Law (mundanes) 5, Hermes Lore (Mercere) 10, Hermes History (Mercere) 6, Meditation (resting body) 6, *Parma Magica* (Mentem) 8, Penetration (Mentem) 4, Athletics (running long distances) 5, Dodge (fleeing) 5, Chirurgy (binding wounds) 6, Evaluate Luxury Goods (from Levant) 8, Bargain (luxuries) 11, Diplomacy (poise) 9, Folk Ken (merchants) 8, Intrigue (rumors) 6, Leadership (Mercere) 12, Church Lore (corrupt priests) 5, French Lore (dangers) 4, Humanities (arts) 5, Levant Lore (luxury goods) 3, Lombardy Lore (merchants) 4

Confidence: 6

Reputation: Hard Bargainer (merchants) 6, Greedy (Roman Magi) 3

Personality Traits: Enjoys Luxuries +3, Fair +2, Greedy +1, Sad +1

Techniques and Forms: Creo 19, Intéllego 12, Muto 11, Perdo 10, Rego 20, Animál 10, Aquam 10, Auram 11, Córpoem 17, Herbam 7, Ignem 10, Imágonem 11, Mentem 24, Terram 10, Vim 9

Spell Casting Speed: 3

Twilight Points: 12

Effects of Twilight: Painful Magic and Arthritis are both due to Twilights

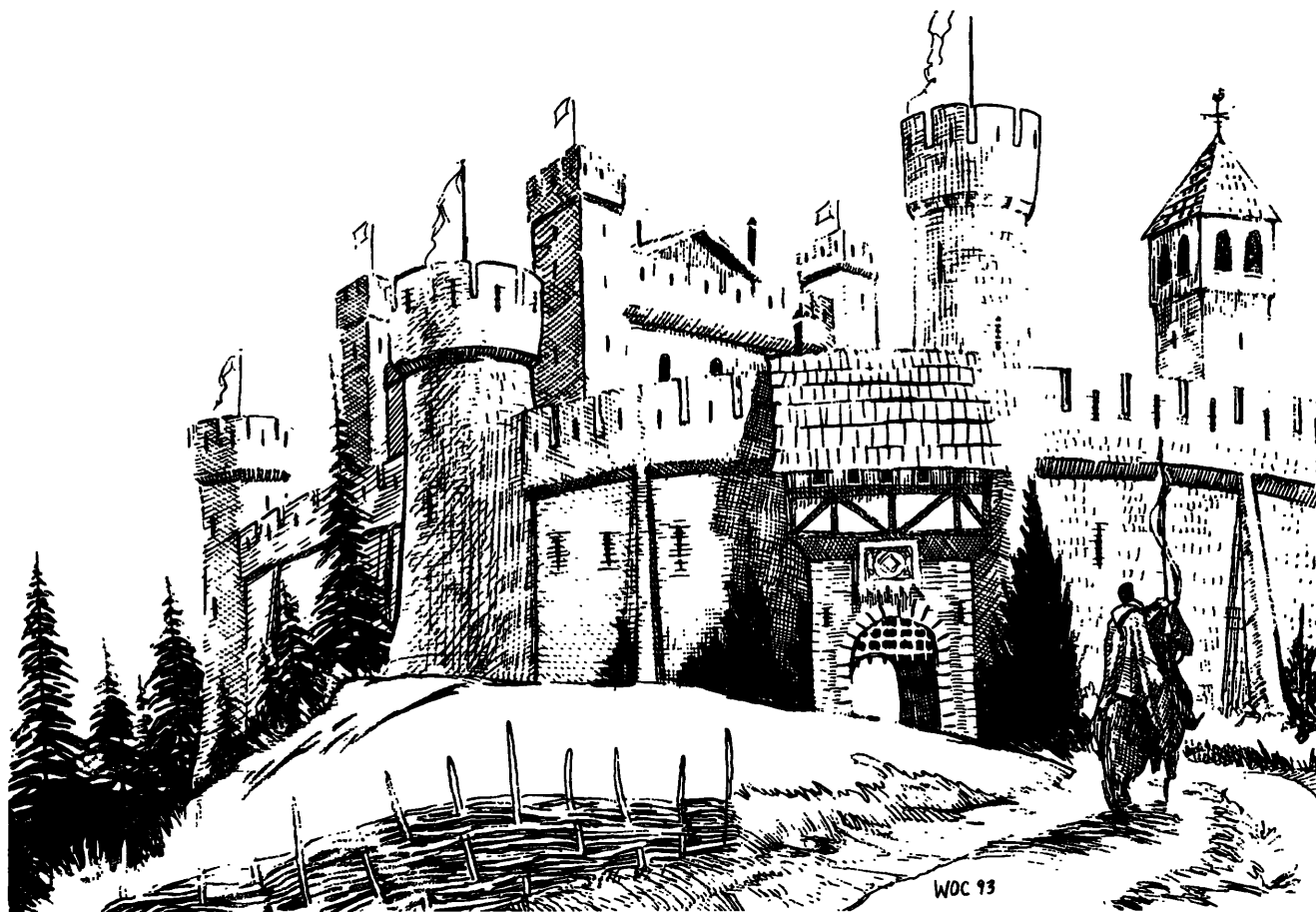
Spells Known: *The Chirurgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo 20) +34, *Incantation of the Body Made Whole* (CrCo 45) +34, *Lifting the Dangling Puppet* (ReCo 20) +35, *The Leap of Homecoming* (ReCo 35) +35, *The Seven League Stride* (ReCo 35) +35, *Repel the Wooden Shafts* (ReHe 10) +25, *Panic of the Trembling Heart* (CrMe 15) +41, *The Gift of Reason* (CrMe 30) +41, *Thoughts Within Babble* (InMe 25) +34, *Peering into the Mortal Mind* (CrCo 30) +34, *Enchantment of Detachment* (MuMe 15) +33, *Recollection of Memories Never Quite Lived* (MuMe 20) +33, *Trust of Childlike Faith* (PeMe 10) +32, *Aura of Rightful Authority* (ReMe 20) +42, *Scent of Peaceful Slumber* (ReMe 20) +42

Wizard's Sigil: The target of Insatella's spells often feels or looks sad

Weapons & Armor: None

Encumbrance: 0

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense +4 (10 Action), Soak -2 (4 Action), Fatigue -2



Although all members of Harco have earned their positions through exemplary service to the Tribunal, House and Order, they are not all absolutely honest or trustworthy. The power and luxury of Harco has led to the corruption of several of its members, particularly its younger ones, who spend much of their time seeking personal power and profit. For the right price, it may even be possible to gain access to private correspondences.

In addition to the elite members of the Covenant, Harco has a very large staff, consisting of all nature of servants. The Covenant employs numerous merchants and traders, who lead caravans on Covenant trading expeditions throughout Mythic Europe. Harco has 40 Groggs, of whom 15 are usually on duty at the main Covenant. The rest usually serve as guards for the Covenant's many activities. Sailors, captains, navigators and other seamen are also required to serve on the four ships owned by the Covenant. At any given time, Harco also provides employment for numerous entertainers and artists.

Insatella

Prima of Mercere, Leader of Harco, Praeco of the Roman Tribunal

Insatella is an old woman who has been Prima of Mercere for many years. She is also Praeco of the Roman Tribunal, which makes her feel her age even more. As Tribunal Praeco, Insatella finds herself assailed by political issues, her time constantly sought after by those with an issue to raise. She tries

her best to remain neutral in matters, but occasionally fails, either because of personal feelings or bribes offered her.

Insatella only finds true enjoyment in the mercantile world. She loves bargaining with others, revelling in victory when she gains some concession. Her love for trade is so great that she sometimes puts it ahead of Hermetic matters. When faced with important issues, Insatella usually tries to do what is right for the Order. Sometimes, however, the good of her House and her own mercantile enterprises cloud her judgement.

Antho

Follower of Mercere, Redcap for the Roman Tribunal

The youngest of the Redcaps of Mercere, and lacking magical skills, Antho carries the most messages to Covenants of the Roman Tribunal. It is a task that he begrudgingly accepts, for he believes he is fit for better things. Traveling to different Covenants, he has seen the wealth that many Magi have amassed and has seen the power they wield. He wants the same for himself, and realizes that the corrupt Roman Tribunal is the only place he's going to win those prizes, aside from performing exemplary, legitimate deeds in other Tribunals (which does not appeal to him). To gain power, Antho has become involved in Tribunal politics. Not only has he stooped to misplacing messages, but he has sold copies of letters and has been bribed into circulating false ones. Should Insatella learn of Antho's crimes, she would probably oust him from the Order, but might

Antho

Characteristics: Intelligence (inquisitive) +2, Perception (watching for dangers) +1, Strength 0, Stamina (long journeys) +2, Presence (arrogant) +2, Communication (long-winded) +1, Dexterity 0, Quickness (fleeing) +1

Age: 37 (Longevity potion, Level 60, -6 on Aging rolls)

Virtues & Flaws: Redcap +4, Long-Winded (+3 to Fatigue rolls) +1, Strong-Willed (+3 on willpower rolls) +1, Versatile Sleeper +1, Over-Confident -1, Well-Traveled +1

Abilities: Speak French (messages) 2, Speak Italian (messages) 5, Speak Latin (messages) 5, Athletics (running long distances) 5, Bargain (cheating) 3, Charm (being witty) 4, Guile (elaborate lies) 3, Intimidation (peasants) 2, Intrigue (plotting) 3, Subterfuge (con) 2, Bologna Lore (Literatus) 1, Hermes Law (Tribunals) 2, Hermes Lore (Tribunals) 3, Lombardy Lore (Luctatio) 1, Sardinia Lore (Verdi) 1, Venice Lore (townhouses) 3, Broadsword Attack (disguised opponents) 4, Dodge (missiles) 3

Confidence: 4

Reputation: Arrogant (Roman Magi) 3

Personality Traits: Haughty +3, Political +2

Weapons and Armor:

Leather Cuirass

Broadsword: First Strike +10, Attack +10, Damage +10

Encumbrance: 1

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense +0 (6 Action), Soak +3 (9 Action), Fatigue +1

simply ensure that his indiscretions do good for Harco and might collect a share of the rewards.

OUTSIDE RELATIONS

At first glance, Harco appears harmless. Speaking with members, they give the impression of impartiality in the political machinations of the Tribunal. To mundanes, members of the Covenant appear as a wealthy group of merchants, though nearby mortals know the truth. Ironically, mundanes have a more accurate perspective on the Covenant than do foreign Magi.

Although Harco styles itself politically neutral, it can control the flow of information and messages throughout the Roman Tribunal, and to a lesser degree the Order. Harco seldom abuses its power, to avoid persecution, but the Covenant's allies tend to receive messages long before enemies. Within the Roman Tribunal, Harco uses its ability to control information, as well as its immense knowledge of Covenant internal affairs, to attempt to keep the peace and to ensure continued profits.

By and large, Harco does remain neutral in the bickering that occurs within the Tribunal, unless involvement would prove profitable. As a result of its apparent neutrality, and the numerous services it provides for other Covenants of the Tribunal, Harco is generally well-liked. Covenants of the

Tribunal view Harco's Redcaps as useful servants who deserve the wealth they have acquired. This harmless image serves Harco well.

Within the mundane world, Harco maintains a vast web of important connections. Merchants working for Harco ply their trade in every corner of Mythic Europe, trading in luxuries, lending other Covenants money (regardless of the sins attached), and generally profiting Harco. Many of the Covenant's merchants are well-known among the nobility, and Harco is respected as a reliable business partner and rival.

There is some concern felt by those who study the Tribunal. They fear that Harco's mundane relations will lead to disaster for the Order. Harco is very careful to avoid making enemies, and avoids attracting the attention of mundane authorities. Ultimately, Harco's "illicit" activities are trivial compared to those of other Roman Covenants, and foreigners trying to realign the Roman Tribunal will undoubtedly focus on Harco last.

MAGICAL ATTRIBUTES

Harco's magical resources are considerable, in spite of the Covenant's weak Magic Aura. Obtaining raw vis is easier for Harco than most other Roman Covenants, by importing it from other regions of the Order. The Covenant also possesses numerous magical devices, most of which are useful for travel and healing.

Harco's single most valuable magical resource is a set of Hermes Portals. Harco has at least one Hermes Portal leading to each of the other Tribunals of the Order. In some cases, such as in the Roman Tribunal itself, there are several. The Portals are all located within a single large subterranean room of the Covenant. For the most part, the Portals lead to neutral locations maintained by House Mercere, near the center of each Tribunal. In a few cases powerful Covenants in Tribunals (Doissetep, for example) have secured Portals within their own locales. House Mercere usually tries to avoid such favoritism, fearing others will interfere with Mercere's distribution of information.

A few of the locations to which Harco has Hermes Portals are: Harco's townhouse in Venice; the outer sanctum of the Covenant of Magvillus; a merchant's house in Tunis; the Covenant of Al Arama in the Levant Tribunal; the Covenant of Doissetep in the Provençal Tribunal; the Covenant of Circulus Ruber in Hibernia Tribunal; the Covenant of Durenmar in the Rhine Tribunal; a small tower north of Madrid, in the Iberian Tribunal; an inn, secretly run by Redcaps, in Tours (Normandy Tribunal); a cottage with stables, near Coventry, in the Stonehenge Tribunal; and a cabin near Kiev, in the Novgorod Tribunal.

Access to Harco's Hermes Portals is tightly controlled. Only Redcaps are allowed to use them. Exceptions are occasionally made in emergency situations. When others are allowed through, they are usually favored individuals, such as Primi of Houses and special friends of high-ranking Redcaps.

Harco also has a small fleet of four magical ships. These sailing vessels are enchanted so that they need never fear for lack of wind (or too much wind). Additionally, they cannot sink, and can always find the way back to their home port. Harco has had these wondrous ships for several centuries, and has made excellent use of them, both in the delivery of messages and in mercantile activities.

Since there are few "true" Magi at Harco, the Covenant has little need for raw vis (aside from its trade value), and only has a very small Hermetic library.

Harco's *Aegis of the Hearth* is of moderate power, operating at Level 20. The *Aegis* functions only at the Covenant itself, not at the institution's seaside holdings.

MUNDANE RESOURCES

Harco's mundane resources are vast. The Covenant is one of the wealthiest in the Order, and maintains all its members in luxury. The connections and trade maintained by Harco allow the Covenant access to most mundane items that members desire.

Additionally, Harco maintains the finest collection of maps to be found in Mythic Europe. The accuracy of these maps is unrivaled, and they provide valuable information to all of House Mercere. Access to the map collection of Harco is limited to members of House Mercere, although Harco may occasionally allow others in the Order to have a copy of one of their maps, if the need is great and an appropriate counteroffer is made.

Though Harco has a very limited mundane library, they have excellent archives detailing the politics of the Order and the mundane world back to the founding of the Order. These records contain copies of all notices sent throughout the Order, and lists of members of all Covenants of the Tribunal. The archives also include a large amount of material concerning the politics of the various factions involved in the Schism War. Indeed, these are probably the best resources on the war.

OBLIGATIONS

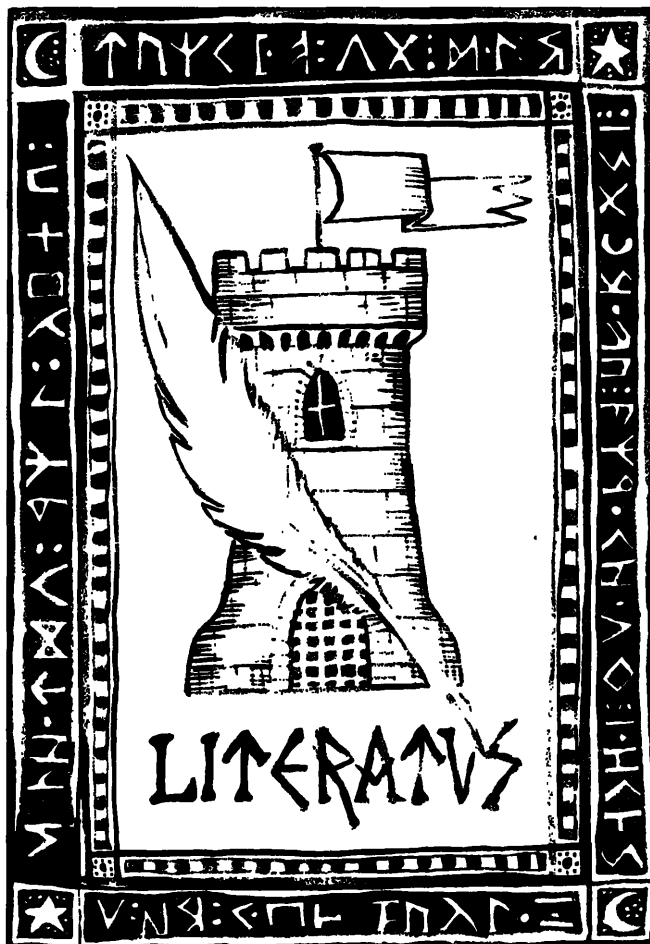
Running House Mercere, as well as a merchant empire, is no small task. The members of Harco spend almost all their time administering the affairs of their Covenant and House. Almost no time is spent studying. The magic-using members of the Covenant are allowed a little more time for study than the others, but not much. Magi at Harco are allowed three Seasons every two years to pursue their art.

Harco is responsible for seeing that vital information is spread throughout the Order. This is a great task and a tremendous obligation.

OUTLOOK

- Independents — A valuable asset, if only they could be brought together. The information they could provide, since so many live among the mundanes, might be great.





• **Literatus** — A good Covenant, trying to bring peace to the Tribunal. They understand the value of information.

• **Luctatio** — They cause problems among mundanes, which hurts business. However, they have often warned us of the manipulations of other Covenants.

• **Magvillus** — In the past, they have threatened our mercantile activities. If they ever act on their threats we shall have to move against them, else we will stay neutral to their manipulations.

• **Postestas** — Another of the Tribunal's manipulators. Their goals have always appeared good, though.

• **Rellantali** — Remaining utterly sequestered in their Asinaran home, the Magi of Rellantali are much too unfriendly.

• **Sansaron** — An unfriendly Covenant that must be brought fully into the Tribunal, whether it likes it or not.

• **Vardian's Tomb** — Although independent, the Tomb has considerable power, so often receives the messages we deliver to official Covenants of the Tribunal. The Covenant is disorganized, but for the most part appears to be made up of good people.

• **Verdi** — A valuable Covenant. Not only do they provide us with useful magic items, they are another Domus Magnus and should be supported.

STORY IDEAS FOR HARCO

• Members of your Covenant may need to travel quickly. Perhaps they have a Redcap friend who can provide them access to the Hermes Portals of Harco, for a price.

• A valuable item which your Covenant was expecting to be delivered by Redcaps never arrives. Perhaps your characters must travel to Harco to determine what happened.

• A Redcap is captured shortly after leaving your Covenant, after delivering a message. If Harco is forced to investigate personally, you might be tremendously embarrassed and perhaps politically devastated. What can you do to rescue the Redcap before word gets out? Do the people who captured the Redcap know who they have? Perhaps the kidnapping is a political move against your Covenant, performed by a rival Covenant!

Literatus

Symbol: A golden quill in front of a tower flying a pennant

Season: Autumn

Year Founded: A.D. 1001

House Affiliation: Jerbiton

Aura: Magic 2, around labs; Rational 4, around library

Members: eight; Amberitus, Arch-Mage; Arichis; Carlos; Duro; Exileratus; Favila; Gerbert; and Roger, all of House Jerbiton

Number of Groggs: 30

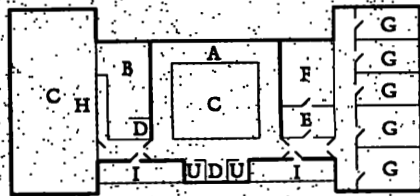
Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: None in the old Covenant. New Covenant: Creo 4, Intéllego 7, Muto 3, Perdo 3, Rego 4, Animál 4, Aquam 2, Auram 0, Córpoem 4, Herbam 2, Ignem 3, Imágonem 5, Mentem 6, Terram 5, Vim 6

Library Ability Scores: (combined in old and new Covenants) Humanities 9, Church Knowledge 8, Medicine 7, Law 7, Philosophy 7, Magic Theory 4 (at manor house), Hermes Lore 1 (at manor house), Arabic Instruction 4, Hebrew Instruction 5, Geography 3, Bologna Lore 6, Occult Lore 8 (hidden books), Hermetic Law 6 (at manor house), Hermes History 3 (at manor house)

Literatus is a large and active Covenant which has, for 200 years, dedicated itself to bringing about unity between the Order of Hermes and mundane world. Literatus is a Covenant of scholar-Magi who believe that the knowledge of the mundane world has value, and should be treasured at least as highly as the magical knowledge of the Order. To the Magi of Literatus, it is not enough to be skilled in the arts of magic; one must be both a Magus and a scholar.

Privately, many Magi of the Covenant cherish Infernal power as well, and have since Literatus' founding under the diabolical Pope Sylvester II. True, there are burgeoning Magi in the Covenant who know nothing of their home's true origins, but even they are the targets of demonic corruption, whether they know it or not. Perhaps the Covenant's efforts to unite



3 Paces

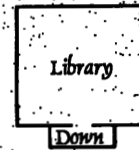
Literatus
Covenant

First
Floor

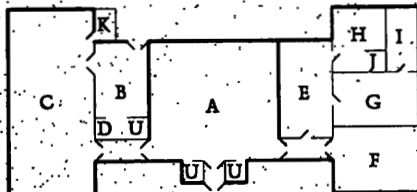
- A: Library
- B: Servants
- C: Open to Ground Floor
- D: Stairs Down
- E: Anteroom
- F: Master's Chambers
- G: Living Quarters
- H: Music Loft
- I: Balcony
- U: Stairs Up

3 Paces

Second
Floor



Literatus

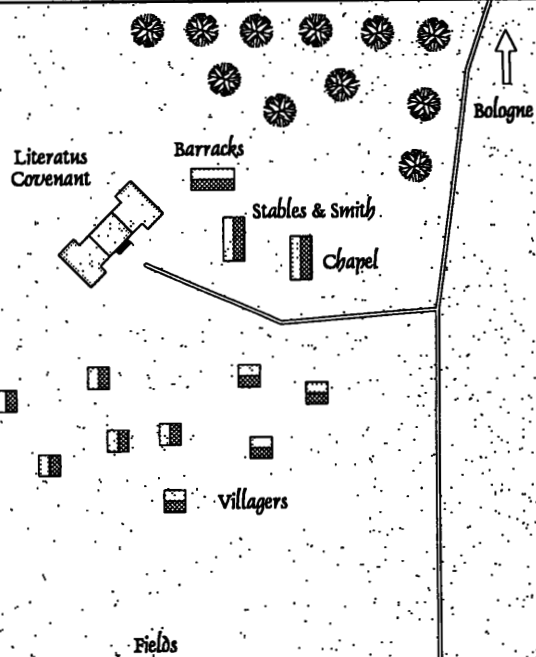


3 Paces

Literatus
Covenant

Ground
Floor

- A: Library
- B: Kitchen
- C: Hall
- D: Stairs Down to Cellar
- E: Scriptorium
- F: Solar
- G: Scirbes
- H: Supplies
- I: Study
- J: Stairs Down to Labs
- K: Latrine
- U: Stairs Up



magic and mortals is actually an effort on the Infernal's part to undermine the foundations of the Order of Hermes.

HISTORY

Literatus was founded in A.D. 1001 by House Jerbiton, in conjunction with Pope Sylvester II. Sylvester had gained magical understanding while in Spain, when he came into possession of the infamous Brazen Head, a supposedly Infernal tool of scrying. Whether Sylvester was corrupted by the head, and what happened to it after his death are matters of conjecture. However, a group of diabolists has been encountered in Rome in the past, and this group has proven to have knowledge which Sylvester also demonstrated. Perhaps this group still exists and has the Brazen Head, or maybe Sylvester was their leader and still is (his death is still shrouded in mystery).

During life, Sylvester twice attempted to create schools of magic, to teach Gifted students. Unfortunately, these attempts failed due to scrutiny endured as Pope. One school was based in Rome and may not have actually dissolved, perhaps going into hiding, building to re-emerge at a later time.

In 1000, Sylvester approached members of House Jerbiton with a plan to start a school of magic, in which students would be trained in both the scholarly tradition of the Church and the magical tradition of the Order. These students, and their Jerbiton teachers, became the founding members of the Covenant of Literatus. Shortly after the foundation of Literatus, Sylvester II died (or he appeared to — see *Pope Sylvester II*, in Chapter Two). Indeed, some Magi of Literatus worry that Sylvester II may still be alive, watching over them.

The agreement made between Sylvester II and the Magi of Literatus has ensured close ties between the Covenant and mundane world, and has shaped the Literatus' history. The agreement grants the Magi a fief of land outside the city of Bologna, to provide a constant income. It also stipulates that arrangements are to be made with each Archbishop of Bologna, allowing Literatus' scholars to become lay clergy, to hold the right to teach within the city. In return, the Magi agree to share their magical knowledge with the Church's students, and to see that all apprentices of the Covenant hold strictly to the Christian faith (although this last point is maintained only superficially, as diabolism is the underlying pursuit of Literatus and its students).

These arrangements have held since Sylvester II's death. The current Magi of Literatus are all lay clergy, granted the privilege to teach in Bologna. The current Archbishop of Bologna is hostile to the school and its Magi, but is forced to honor the past Pope's agreement. Of course, the Archbishop's concerns are well-founded, for diabolical Magi and students, acting as lay clergy, threaten to corrupt his Church.

When Literatus was founded it was located in the city of Bologna. A large building housed the students and teachers, providing all with space needed for instruction, labs and nightly discussion. The growing academic environment of the city provided members with a valuable source of mundane knowledge, as well as a lively outlet for scholarly energies. For

nearly two centuries Literatus has involved itself in the academic growth of Bologna, even after relocating (see below). Indeed, many of Literatus' Magi have gained reputations as eminent scholars. The Covenant has gone to great efforts to maintain a high level of magical and academic achievement — all the better to disguise members' true pursuits.

The Magi and apprentices of Literatus recently founded the University of Law at Bologna, which they consider an academic triumph. Through the University, Covenant apprentices now have access to some of the greatest mundane scholars of Mythic Europe. The University goes far toward promoting Bologna and furthers Literatus' reputation, mundane and magical. Furthermore, by their very nature, lawyers are almost always damned and the Magi of Literatus know it. Thus, by helping to found the University, the Covenant adds some 7000 students to its Infernal ranks.

Within the Order, Literatus has always been a voice for order in the Roman Tribunal. Literatus has raised constant objections against the continued manipulations of Verdi and other bickering Covenants. Literatus has, for appearance's sake, tried to set an example for other Covenants, indicating what can be achieved through cooperation. Furthermore, they are always quick to offer assistance in resolving Tribunal conflicts. In truth, acceptance of their aid offers Literatus' Magi the opportunity to infiltrate and undermine other Covenants.

At times, Magi of Literatus have virtually alluded to their true, diabolical intentions, or have at least suggested that they have ulterior motives in Tribunal politics. The need to bring in foreign Quaesitoris to settle Tribunal disputes has traditionally disturbed Magi of Literatus. When the Quaesitor Iernilus came to arbitrate political problems, Literatus moved to have him sent away, the Covenant's problems to be arbitrated by Literatus itself. When their effort failed, the Covenant refused to back the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, only agreeing to its provisions under threat of expulsion from the Tribunal.

Literatus' fear was that the foreign Quaesitor might uncover the Covenant's Infernal ties. Having some influence over other Magi of the Tribunal, Literatus is less worried about discovery by Roman Quaesitoris. However, concerns have recently arisen that Quaesitoris of Magvillus may suspect Literatus of questionable activity. Indeed, Magi of Literatus speculate that the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal was partly organized by Magvillus, in an attempt to gain power over the Tribunal, to test Literatus. To ensure its continued protection, Literatus still moves to arbitrate disagreements between Covenants of the Tribunal.

LOCATION

In 1180, Literatus moved out of Bologna to a newly-constructed manor house on the Covenant's fief of land, about a half day's travel southwest of the city. The addition of new members and new apprentices made the old building too cramped. The Covenant has retained its old building in the city, which is now used mostly by apprentices studying at the University of Law.



Literatus' location outside Bologna provides Magi with easy access to the city and University, but offers greater privacy. At any given time, roughly two-thirds of the Covenant's Magi and apprentices are at the manor house, the others in the city.

The terrain around Literatus' fief is hilly, but otherwise pleasant. The surrounding lands are sparsely populated. Trees grow abundantly about the fief, resulting in many pleasant, shady groves.

The Covenant also keeps a small townhouse in Venice, as do most other Covenants in the Roman Tribunal. By and large, Literatus does not involve itself in the Hermetic intrigues of Venice. Rather, the townhouse is used by members of other Covenants as a neutral meeting place. It's hoped that by allowing others to frequent the townhouse, Literatus will have greater influence over other Magi, and they may eventually be turned toward the Dark.

For the Italian location of Literatus, see *The Roman Tribunal* map.

FORTRESS

The old Covenant, within the city of Bologna, is housed within a single large building off a side-street in the students' quarter, about a hundred meters from the city's cathedral. The building is two stories high, and surrounds a small inner courtyard. It has the appearance of a wealthy residence, and though sturdily constructed provides little defense should the need arise. There is space within the old building to comfortably house four or five Magi, their apprentices and a few servants. After the move to the manor house, the building now houses no more than one or two Magi, three or four apprentices and half a dozen servants. A small library is kept within the old building for use by remaining Magi and apprentices. There are currently no labs in the old building.

The new manor house is much more spacious than the old house, and provides ample room for seven or eight Magi, their apprentices, 30 Groggs and about a dozen servants. It is three stories high, built in a double "I" shape, with the library occupying the central section, and the quarters of Magi and covenfolk in the two wings. Due to a strong Rational Aura, most of the labs are deep beneath the manor house, where a weak Magical Aura dominates. The manor is surrounded by a low wall which provides reasonable privacy, but poor defense. A small number of buildings around the manor provide housing for the families of the Covenant's servants, as well as for peasants who work the Covenant's land.

For the layout of the manor house and its lands, see the *Literatus* map.

INHABITANTS

There are currently eight Magi in Literatus, making it one of the larger Covenants in the Roman Tribunal. All members are of House Jerbiton, and the eldest, Amberitus, is recognized as an Arch-Mage. All the current members were apprentices of



the Covenant many years ago, so have full knowledge of its diabolic roots and seek to perpetuate that corruption.

Although the Magi of Literatus have no real hierarchy, Amberitus is recognized as the Covenant's leader and covenant master. The Covenant holds relatively few council meetings, usually only one per year, as there usually isn't much requiring adjudication in such a formal setting; each Magus pursues personal enlightenment and personal relations with the Infernal. More often, the Magi of Literatus meet informally to discuss their ideas, to instruct their apprentices, and to make plans for Dark rituals. Unlike the Magi of many Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, the Magi of Literatus usually agree on matters, acting on what they perceive is in the best interests of the Covenant (and for appearance's sake, the Tribunal).

Of Literatus' Magi only Duro, the youngest, believes the Covenant should withdraw entirely from Tribunal politics. He wants to pursue the Dark Arts in complete seclusion from Hermetic and mundane interference. The others realize he is young and naive, that he will eventually understand interference is required for the ultimate corruption of the Tribunal.

All Literatus' Magi teach in Bologna except Amberitus, who has ceased lecturing so mundanes do not grow suspicious of his age. Arichis, Carlos, Duro, Exileratus and Gerbert teach at the University of Law, while Favilia instructs at the school of

Medicine, and Roger teaches at various schools of the Humanities.

Since teaching and the subtle spread of sin are Literatus' greatest goals, the Magi place great importance on their apprentices. There are usually at least as many apprentices at Literatus as there are full Magi. These apprentices are taught in ways that might seem radical to much of the Order. They often learn in groups, all listening while one Magus speaks of a magical art (a teaching style borrowed from the mundane world). Furthermore, apprentices of Literatus spend a great deal of time studying under mundane masters in Bologna, or at other centers of learning, according to their interests. At various times, apprentices from Literatus can be found at Bologna, Paris, and other schools throughout Mythic Europe. When a Magus finishes his training at Literatus, he is a full Magus, an accredited scholar and usually a devoted diabolist.

When apprentices leave Literatus they typically travel to the far reaches of the Order, seeking to teach other Magi what they've learned. Initial encounters with other Magi involve a sharing of Hermetic understanding, then mundane experience, and finally diabolic insight (but only to those who show a predilection toward sin). These traveling apprentices usually stay in contact with Literatus, sending back newly learned information, and updating the Covenant on the spread of Infernal influence. Occasionally, after achieving notoriety

Amberitus

Characteristics: Intelligence (logical) +4, Perception 0, Strength (out of shape) -1, Stamina 0, Presence (commanding) +1, Communication (wordy) +3, Dexterity (careless) -2, Quickness 0

Age: 101 (Longevity potion, Level 70, -14 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: The Gentle Gift (no -3 penalty to social rolls) +1, Magical Affinity (Intéllego) +4, Strong Writer +1, Temporal Influence (scholars) +2, Major Magic Deficiency (scores involving Vim are halved) -5, Greater Leadership +6

Abilities: Speak Italian (simple words) 5, Speak Latin (teaching) 6, Scribe Greek (law books) 4, Scribe Latin (law books) 6, Magic Theory (Intéllego) 8, *Certámen* (forced peace) 6, Concentration (law) 5, Finesse (Intéllego) 4, Hermes History (11th century) 3, Hermes Law (mundanes) 9, Hermes Lore (Jerbiton) 4, Magic Affinity (Intéllego) 8, *Parma Magica* (Ignem) 3, Charisma (inspirational) 6, Debate (law) 7, Diplomacy (tact) 5, Leadership (Jerbiton) 8, Storytelling (morality plays) 5, Teaching (law) 5, Bologna Lore (students) 5, Church Knowledge (canon law) 10, Humanities (philosophy) 5, Legend Lore (Cult of Mercury) 4, Medicine (anatomy) 4, Roman Law (nobles) 10

Confidence: 5

Reputation: Stubborn (The Roman Tribunal) 2, Good Teacher (scholars) 6

Techniques and Forms: Creo 10, Intéllego 23, Muto 9, Perdo 8, Rego 12, Animál 11, Aquam 10, Auram 8, Córporum 20, Herbam 11, Ignem 5, Imágonem 15, Mentem 19, Terram 5, Vim 10

Spell Casting Speed: 4

Twilight Points: 6

Effects of Twilight: None

Spells Known: *Tongue of the Beasts* (InAn 20) +42, *Tongue of the Birds* (InAn 20) +42, *Peering into the Beastly Mind* (InAn 30) +42, *Revealed Flaws of Mortal Flesh* (InCo 10) +51, *The Inexorable Search* (InCo 20) +51, *Converse with Plants and Trees* (InHe 25) +42, *Vision of Heat's Light* (InIg 20) +36, *Eyes of the Past* (InIm 20) +46, *Summoning the Distant Images* (InIm 35) +38, *Perception of the Conflicting Motives* (InMe 15) +50, *Posing the Silent Question* (InMe 25) +50, *Thoughts Within Babble* (InMe 25) +50, *Peering into the Mortal Mind* (InMe 30) +50, *Stone Tell of the Mind that Sits* (InTe 30) +36, *Greeting the Maker* (InTe 30) +36

Wizard's Sigil: An extreme clarity and conciseness of information

Weapons and Armor: None

Encumbrance: 0

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense +0 (6 Action), Soak +0 (6 Action), Fatigue +0

within the Order and mundane academic world, former apprentices are invited back to Literatus to join as full members. Only a few are honored in this way. They are usually ones selected by demons in league with the Covenant.

The Covenant of Literatus employs and attracts a wide variety of covenfolk. There are two scribes, an alchemist, an overseer (who sees to the running of the Covenant's estates) and numerous other servants. The Covenant even has a book binder, who also sees to the organization and maintenance of the Covenant's library.

Literatus keeps 30 Grog, divided between its holdings, most of whom are used to perform various chores. Few of the Grog are trained warriors, though all are capable of wielding a weapon if necessary. The Grog Captain, Andrea, is a skilled swordswoman, who is always happy to teach her art to any who pays her attention. The Grog are reasonably loyal, being well-paid, and are given a great deal of free time to pursue their own interests (idle hands. . .).

The Covenant also allows a few trusted mortal scholars to use its mundane library. There are almost always two or three of these at the Covenant, availing themselves of one of the greatest libraries in Mythic Europe. The scholars pay for library access, adding some of their own works to the collection, or granting fees to the Magi.

Amberitus

Arch-Mage of Jerbiton, Leader of Literatus

Amberitus is the oldest and most respected Magus at Literatus. He holds status as an Arch-Mage within the Order, and is reasonably well-known as a master of Law among mundane scholars. Given his age, Amberitus has retired from teaching in Bologna, but still keeps two apprentices. He is the only current member of the Covenant who was an apprentice of one of the Covenant's founders. He therefore has closest ties to the demons whom Sylvester II originally introduced to Literatus. He also has the greatest Infernal influence, able to secure great favors from the Inferno.

Should Amberitus ever be challenged for the title of Arch-Mage, he gives his opponent a difficult test. He has one of the Magi of Literatus choose a difficult question, about some obscure mundane topic, and challenges his rival to discover the answer before he does. (Although regular Arch-Mage contests must involve a magical test, the rules don't apply here, as rules rarely do in the Roman Tribunal.) The challenger is not allowed access to the libraries of Literatus, but Amberitus makes the contest even by allowing the challenger a full Season's head start. So far, Amberitus has been challenged twice and both challengers have failed. One apparently opened

a book that, according to witnesses, literally engulfed him. The book was never found afterward. The other suddenly went into Twilight and was left a mental vegetable.

OUTSIDE RELATIONS

Literatus has always had good relations with mundanes, and has gone to great lengths to maintain these relations. Within the city of Bologna, the Covenant has connections among the consuls and nobility, and even in the Church. Mundane authorities are (largely) unaware that the Magi of Literatus are anything more than respected scholars.

The presence of Magi within Bologna has always been kept secret from mundanes, although rumors about some Covenant members have spread in the past. Since the death of Sylvester II, in 1003, the political climate of the city has denied Magi from revealing themselves to any but a small group of trusted, mundane friends. Even those Magi who do reveal their true natures only do so before those whom they believe weak-willed and easily manipulated. Most Magi of Literatus appear as devout Christians. That they almost never attend Mass is rarely mentioned. Any Covenant member who brings even the slightest suspicion upon the Covenant, based on magic or diabolism, is severely punished. So far, Literatus has never been successfully investigated by mundane authorities.

The Magi of Literatus enjoy their freedom to interact closely with the mundane world. They view their Covenant as a model (at least in appearance) of what other Covenants should strive to become, especially as Mythic Europe becomes more and more populated. Within the Order, the Magi of Literatus are well-respected but not well-liked. The Covenant's constant interference in the affairs of other Roman Covenants and its holier-than-thou attitude gives Literatus a reputation as pushy and arrogant in the Roman Tribunal. Many in the Tribunal feel Magi of Literatus will stop at nothing to impose their ideals. (Little do these Magi know how right they are.)

Beyond the need to disguise their diabolical ways, Magi of Literatus have political difficulties in the Order as a whole, as many are disturbed by their mundane ties. Magi of Literatus do little to allay these fears (preferring to distract outsiders with such paltry concerns, keeping them from the Dark truth). However, Literatus' Magi are quick to point out that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Magi to avoid such contact.

MAGICAL ATTRIBUTES

The Magic Aura of Literatus' old Covenant, within Bologna, is gone, overpowered by the growing Dominion and Rational Auras in the city. The manor house, outside the city, has areas with a +2 Magical Aura (which are limited to subterranean labs). Otherwise, the countryside Covenant has a +4 Aura of Reason, arising from its intellectually enlightened texts and pursuits.

The Covenant's magical library, in the cellar, is of considerable size but lacks the depth that would make it truly great. It contains a wide variety of low-magnitude tomes, suitable for

training apprentices, but has no high level books devoted to any Art.

Like other Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, Literatus lacks a constant supply of raw vis. What little supply it has is either bought at extremely high prices, or acquired from other Magi in return for access to the Covenant's mundane library. Due to its lack of raw vis, the Covenant maintains no *Aegis of the Hearth*, and most of the Magi put off use of Longevity potions for as long as possible.

MUNDANE RESOURCES

Although Literatus' mundane library is not quite as huge as the one at Doissetep, it does provide a huge variety of subjects. There is very little that is not covered at levels useful for teaching apprentices and students. The library occupies all three floors of the large central section of the manor house, and contains well over 10,000 volumes. Needless to say, the library contains copies of manuscripts which can be found nowhere else. There is extensive material from Mythic European, Greek, Hebrew, and even Arab sources, on nearly any topic of mundane interest. The Covenant also possesses a considerable collection of maps, and a number of scrolls from distant parts of the world, written in languages unknown to the Order.

The library is well protected by numerous spells which prevent the books from being stolen or harmed by the ravages of time or the elements. Additionally, the Covenant employs a bookbinder and two scribes to keep the books in good shape. They copy any new sources which the Covenant might acquire.

Literatus' income derives from the considerable fief of land granted to the Magi by Sylvester II. Additional money comes from the high wages many of the Covenant's members command for their services as teachers in Bologna. All in all, the Covenant has no lack of money, allowing Magi to live comfortably and pay for the mundane education of numerous apprentices.

OBLIGATIONS

The Magi of Literatus have, for the most part, placed the burden of running their estate on their servants. The Overseer takes care of managing the fief, and the Autocrat takes care of the day-to-day details of running the Covenant. The single greatest obligation Magi have is their teaching. Each Magus at Literatus is expected to have an apprentice at all times. Additionally, in order to generate revenue and to preserve their reputations, many Magi take mundane apprentices in Bologna.

OUTLOOK

- Harco — Useful servants who understand the power of the mundane world.

- Independents — Magi who may show us the future of the Order, where Magi will live among mundanes. Such isolated individuals are particularly susceptible to corruption.

• Luctatio — They have worked with us against Magvillus in the past, and are to be respected.

• Magvillus — Arrogant, blind judges responsible for many of the Tribunal's problems.

• Postestas — A Covenant which seems to seek the good of the Tribunal. In the past, they have sided with us.

• Rellantali — An unfortunate Covenant, victimized long ago by Verdi. They should be allies in seeking revenge, and peace, for the Tribunal.

• Sansaron — Unfriendly and impolite. They are a danger because they shirk from the mundane world. What is their secret? Are they brethren in the Infernal, and if so, are they allies or enemies?

• Vardian's Tomb — They shall not find peace in the Tribunal until they find peace with themselves. Perhaps we shall help them, or force our own brand of peace upon them.

• Verdi — A Covenant born of arrogance, uncaring of those they harm. Restraints must be put upon them. Maybe the Tribunal's shortage of vis can be used as a tool to lure them to sin and the Dark.

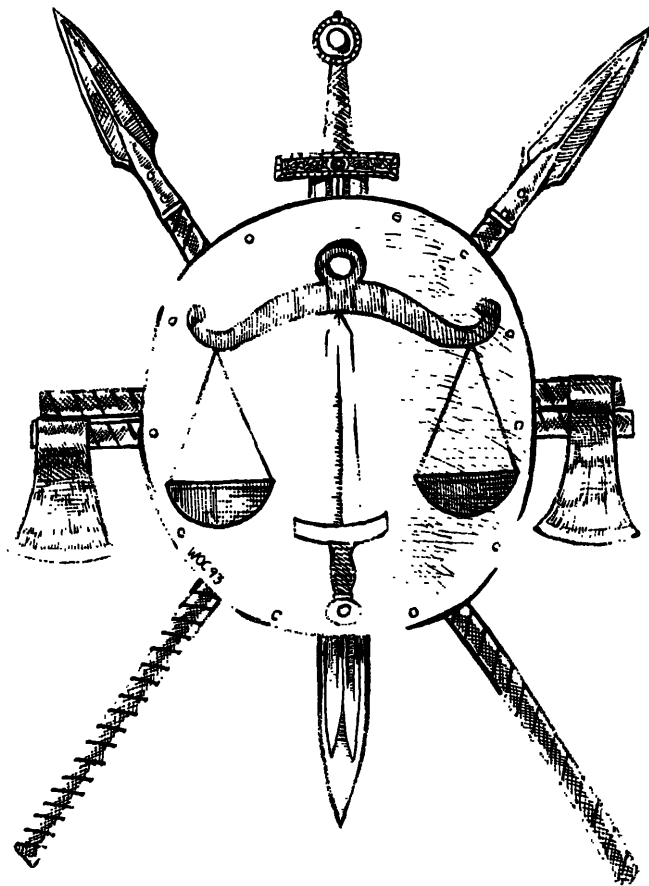
STORY IDEAS

• One way to bring Literatus into your game is to create a character who was apprenticed at the Covenant. Since Literatus keeps in touch with its former apprentices, it's easy to bring the Covenant into your stories no matter where in the Order your characters are located. The former apprentice might be a bright young scholar, anxious to share her knowledge with other Magi of the Order. Or perhaps she is an aloof academic, bent on showing that all other Magi are intellectually inferior. Or perhaps the Magus is tormented by demons who seek to corrupt her completely, making her a true apprentice of Literatus.

• If there is ever any mundane information that characters seek, a trip to Literatus might be necessary. In return for information, Amberitus might require the performance of some obscure task, perhaps the acquisition of some book lost in a ruined Italian city. Alternatively, pledges of friendship and peace might be required. Or characters may be presented with a contract which requires their signatures and nothing more. . .

• If a character is trying to become an Arch-Mage, she might challenge Amberitus for the title. Otherwise, a character might be challenged to *Certámen* by a scholar and the challenge takes the form of scholarly research. The character may be required to travel to Literatus to study.





Magvillus

Symbol: Scales balanced on a sword

Season: Autumn

Year Founded: A.D. 830

House Affiliation: Guernicus (Quaesitoris)

Aura: Magic 3

Members: seven; Arliandus, Primus of Quaesitor; Denique of Quaesitor; Dione of Quaesitor; Exquiro of Quaesitor; Friuli of Quaesitor; Protantus of Quaesitor; Procella of Quaesitor; and five associate members: Adria of Quaesitor, Largen of Quaesitor, Monferrato of Quaesitor, Morum of Tytalus and Verorox of Flambeau

Number of Grogs: 40

Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: Creo 5, Intéllego 15, Muto 5, Perdo 4, Rego 7, Animál 7, Aquam 6, Auram 7, Córporum 14, Herbam 7, Ignem 12, Imágonem 10, Mentem 15, Terram 6, Vim 13

Library Ability Scores: Hermetic Law 12, Hermetic Lore 8, Hermes History 10, Magic Theory 5, Occult Lore 8, Fantastic Beast Lore 3, Legend Lore 4, Faerie Lore 3, Jewish Instruction 3, Arabic Instruction 3

Magvillus is a Covenant of contrasts. It is the heart of law within the Order, yet is marked by great chaos. Traditionalists (those who have conservative perspectives on Hermetic Law) and Transitionalists (those with liberal views) war within the

Lore of the Order: Transitionalism

"As Quaesitoris of the Order, we carry a heavy burden. It is our duty to judge our brethren, always trying our best to be fair and impartial in all we decide. Fortunately, we have a great tool to aid us in this task — the Code of Hermes — carefully handed down to us from the original rulings to the most recent decisions of the Grand Tribunal. For ages we have made our decisions based upon strict interpretations of these laws, and it has always seemed enough.

"Now I must most humbly suggest this is no longer the case. The world has changed dramatically in the past centuries. Many of our laws have become outdated. It has become clear to many of us within Quaesitor that any law or tradition incapable of changing is a burden rather than a blessing. The time has come to accept new ideas, to again use the Code as a tool to help Magi, not bind them. In the coming years, we must make a transition to a new way of thinking and must begin to interpret laws in ways appropriate to changing times. If we do not, I fear we shall slowly die, a victim of stagnant decline, much like the empire that ruled this peninsula a millennium ago."

— Simprim of Quaesitor, speech to the Seven of Magvillus

structure's walls, each trying to lead Magvillus into the future. Arguments also abound over the application of Quaesitor power. Some feel that bringing peace is a Quaesitor's duty, while others see it as stepping beyond the bounds set by Guernicus. Beyond the Roman Tribunal Magvillus is respected, but within the Covenant's walls all the schemes and plots that underlie the Tribunal whirl about, uncontrolled.

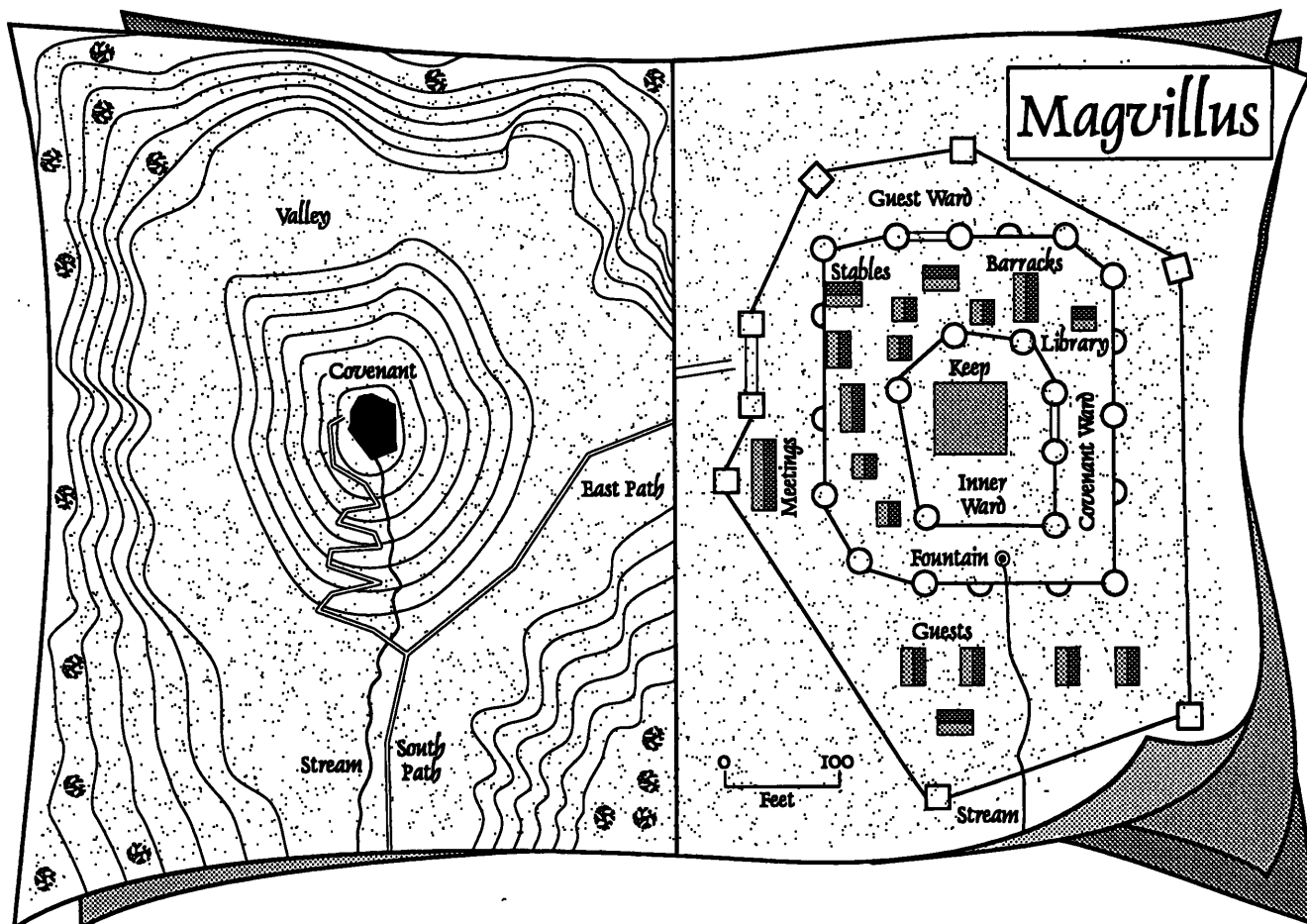
HISTORY

As Domus Magnus of House Quaesitor, Magvillus has always played an important role in the Order. Since the Order's founding, Quaesitor has been responsible for enforcing the Code, and since it was founded, Magvillus has been central to that effort.

Magvillus was established shortly after the death of Guernicus, at a central location where the results of investigations could be examined, and decisions on the Code made and recorded. Over the centuries, records of nearly all official investigations carried on throughout the Order have been kept at Magvillus.

LOCATION

Magvillus lies on the peninsula in a remote mountainous region of the Kingdom of Sicily (for the Covenant's precise locale, see *The Roman Tribunal* map). Isolated from the mundane world, and accessible only via steep paths, the Covenant receives few visitors from outside of the Order.



The Covenant is built on and around the top of a steep hill, giving it a commanding view of paths to the south and east, which offer the only access to the place. The trails wind through the steep hills and low mountains of the region, before coming to the sheltered valley which surrounds the Covenant.

Magvillus' location is rather dry as most rainfall runs off quickly. The region would not be very habitable without the use of magic to provide a water source; runoff from the Covenant's magic fountain runs down the hill, along the southern path.

The slopes around the Covenant are bare of trees, but grasses grow in abundance. As the land is useless for most agriculture, the Covenant uses it to graze sheep and goats. Most other food is imported.

FORTRESS

Magvillus' defenses are very impressive. With its steep slopes, limited accessibility, and clear view of the surrounding land, the Covenant is easy to defend. Added to this are the Covenant's massive walls and impressive design. An attacker has to breach the outer wall, surrounding the guests' ward, the wall surrounding the Covenant ward, and the high wall of the inner ward before reaching the massive keep where the Magi make their home. Added to these mundane defenses are magical ones designed to prevent even powerful Magi from mounting an attack. An *Aegis of the Hearth*, Level 20, protects the Covenant from magical assaults.

As noted above, Magvillus is divided into three wards. The outermost is the guest ward, which contains all quarters for visitors to the Covenant, as well as facilities for meeting guests. Magi and mundanes who do not belong to the Covenant, or who are not Quaesitoris, are not allowed any further into Magvillus than the guest ward.

The next ward of the Covenant, surrounded by a high wall with towers and walkways, is the Covenant ward. It is here that most of the internal business of the Covenant is carried out. Most of the covenfolk live and serve within the Covenant ward. There are numerous buildings for housing Grogs, servants and associate members of the Covenant. The main library is also located here. Foreign members of House Quaesitor are allowed to stay in the Covenant ward when they visit or travel to Magvillus to study.

The best defended area of Magvillus is the inner ward and keep, which may only be entered by the Magi of Magvillus and their most trusted guards. The keep contains the living quarters of the Magi, their labs and the Covenant's private library. Visitors are never allowed into the inner ward.

For the layout of the Covenant's locale and interior, see the *Magvillus* map.

INHABITANTS

Magvillus is the *Domus Magnus* of House Quaesitor. The official seven Quaesitoris who serve here are among the most respected of their House. When one of their number passes



away, the remaining select a new member from their House to assume the position. It is among the highest honors of House Guernicus to be asked to join Magvillus.

The seven full members of Magvillus keep a busy schedule. They act as the chief administrators of their House, and have their fingers in almost every important investigation carried out by Quaesitor. In addition to directing investigations, the Magi of Magvillus serve as supreme authorities on the Code and Hermetic Law. Many questions of law are brought before them, and at times they must make decisions which affect the entire Order. The Magi of Magvillus rarely carry out investigations themselves. Such tasks are usually assigned to younger members, and findings are brought to the elders.

Like all Covenants of House Quaesitor, Magvillus is split between Traditionalists and Transitionalists. Arliandus, Dione, Exquiro and Procella are all members of the first school. They are the four oldest members of Magvillus, and Arliandus is their leader. They believe that only strict interpretation of the Code can hold the Order together. They point to the problems of the Roman Tribunal, claiming they have been caused by judicial negligence. Denique, Friuli and Ferilan, meanwhile, want the laws of the Order to change to fit the times. Ferilan, the leader of the three, as well as one of the foremost Transitionalists in the Order, says laws should exist only when they are applicable to individual Magi.

The Traditionalist-Transitionalist conflict creates a rift in ideas on how Roman Tribunal affairs should be handled. To a Magus, the Traditionalists think that very strict control should

be imposed, that Magvillus should use its power to force its own brand of peace upon the Tribunal. The Transitionalists fear imposed peace will offend and ostracize Magi. Transitionalists point to Harco as a shining example of how well Magi and mundanes may interact when not bound by the strict letter of the Code. The Traditionalists state that in the long run, no good will come of letting Harco, Literatus and other Covenants test the limits of Hermetic law. They argue that if others control Hermetic law, Quaesitoris will no longer be able to enforce it.

It is likely that the next member of Magvillus to die will be one of the four Traditionalists. This death could lead to an extended deadlock between factions, neither faction wanting to appoint a new member who supports the other. If a Transitionalist majority ever comes of this confrontation, the character of the Roman Tribunal might dramatically change. Roman Magi might be quicker to obey Quaesitoris if they believe the judges are being generous, or total chaos might ensue.

Beyond the full members of Magvillus, there are always numerous other Quaesitoris on hand at the Covenant, studying from its library, reporting on investigations or arguing matters of the Code. Although these Quaesitoris are not allowed within the inner ward of the Covenant, they can go anywhere else. After spending a year at the Covenant, foreign Quaesitoris may be granted associate member status, which allows them permanent quarters and labs within the Covenant quarter, in return for an annual payment of raw vis and the occasional service.



Arliandus

Characteristics: Intelligence (logical) +4, Perception (wary) +1, Strength 0, Stamina 0, Presence (powerful) +1, Communication 0, Dexterity (shaky hands) -1, Quickness (slow walk) -2

Age: 139 (Longevity potion, Level 90, -18 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Quaesitor +1, Greater Leadership +6, Magical Affinity (magic that involves truth) +1, Flawless Magic (all Formulaic spells Mastered) +5, Fragile Constitution (-2 to wound recovery rolls) -1

Abilities: Speak Italian (Grog) 4, Speak Latin (decisions) 7, Scribe Latin (decisions) 6, Magic Theory (Intéllego) 9, Magic Affinity — Truth 5, *Certámen* (facing liars) 6, Concentration (talking) 11, Finesse (information) 8, Hermes History (justice) 7, Hermes Law (punishments) 12, Hermes Lore (The Roman Tribunal) 7, *Parma Magica* (Mentem) 9, Penetration (Intéllego) 7, Quarterstaff Attack (liars) 6, Quarterstaff Parry (liars) 5, Debate (laws) 5, Folk Ken (truth) 4, Leadership (Quaesitoris) 7, Occult Lore (diabolists) 4

Confidence: 5

Reputation: Just (The Roman Tribunal) 3, Respected (Quaesitoris) 4

Personality Traits: Just +2, Stubborn +1

Techniques & Forms: Creo 15, Intéllego 20, Muto 13, Perdo 14, Rego 14, Animál 11, Aquam 8, Córpoem 21, Herbam 10, Ignem 13, Imágonem 19, Mentem 23, Terram 10, Vim 14

Spell Casting Speed: 6

Twilight Points: 7

Effects of Twilight: None

Spells Known: *Voice of the Lake* (InAq 25) +28, *Enchantment of the Scrying Pool* (InAq 30) +28, *Clenching Grasp of the Crushed Heart* (PeCo 40) +35, *Pilum of Fire* (CrIg 20) +28, *Ball of Abysmal Flame* (CrIg 30) +28, *The Ear for Distant Voice* (InIm 20) +39, *Eyes of the Past* (InIm 20) +39, *Visions of the Wandering Eye* (InIm 45) +39, *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie* (InMe 20) +49, *Posing the Silent Question* (InMe 25) +49, *Peering into the Mortal Mind* (InMe 30) +43, *Passion's Lost Feeling* (PeMe 20) +37, *Stone Tell of the Mind that Sits* (InTe 30) +30, *Opening the Intangible Tunnel* (ReVi 35) +28

Wizard's Sigil: Each spell usually leaves a minor aftereffect that persists for hours

Weapons & Armor: Quarterstaff

Quarterstaff Totals: First Strike +9, Attack +7, Damage +10, Parry Bonus +11 (17 Action)

Encumbrance: 0

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense -2 (4 Action), Soak +0 (6 Action), Fatigue +0

Only three Quaesitoris currently have associate member status. The first is Adria of Quaesitor, a former apprentice of Ferilan. The Traditionalists at Magvillus fear that Ferilan is grooming her to become the next full member of Magvillus. They have initiated plans to send Adria far from the Covenant. The other two Quaesitor associate members of Magvillus, Largen and Monferrato, are very careful to avoid the Covenant's political struggles. Associate member status at Magvillus is a good way for young Quaesitoris to gain experience investigating important matters, and to gain contacts within the House. Taking sides in matters might make the young Magi enemies, denying their future potential. However, reluctance to prove any associations may also be disastrous.

In addition to offering associate member status to Quaesitoris, Magvillus offers the position to any Magus willing to serve for two Seasons of each year, defending the Covenant and enforcing its decisions. The opportunity to hunt down denounced Magi, destroy diabolists and attack hedge wizards, all under the authority of Hermetic Law, attracts many young Magi, particularly those of Flambeau, Tyalus and Tremere. Morum, an Arabic Tyalus, and Verox, a Flambeau from Iberia, both serve Magvillus in this regard (and are bitter enemies). They are both young and it's likely they will die young, as many of Magvillus' violent associates tend to.

Aside from its Magi, the Covenant has 40 Grog, 14 of whom are assigned to guard the seven full Quaesitoris (each has two personal guards). Numerous other servants, including two scribes, are also employed.

Arliandus

Primus of Quaesitor, Leader of Magvillus

In his youth, Arliandus was an extremely active practitioner of justice. He judged the Magi of the Order and, when the time was right, helped carry out judgements against them. His reputation for fairness eventually won him a seat at Magvillus, which he has held for many years, eventually rising to the position of Primus of the House and head of the Traditionalists. Arliandus takes his standing very seriously, always doing what he can to ensure that justice prevails.

As for the Roman Tribunal, Arliandus feels Magvillus should take control, maintaining order and ensuring that all Magi follow the exact letter of Hermetic Law. Whenever Arliandus sits in judgement, he weighs two great principles: strict adherence to the code and justice.

Verox

Characteristics: Intelligence (plotting) +3, Perception (dangers) +3, Strength (big) +3, Stamina (stubborn) +3, Presence 0, Communication 0, Dexterity 0, Quickness 0

Age: 45 (Longevity potion, Level 50, -10 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Affinity (Creo) +4, Magical Affinity (Ignem) +3, Blatant Gift (-6 to social rolls) -1, Warped Magic (smoke & heat) -1, Major Magic Deficiency (any Intéllego total is halved) -5

Abilities: Speak Italian (curses) 4, Speak Latin (curses) 5, Scribe Latin (curses) 3, Magic Theory (Vim) 5, *Certámen* (Ignem) 6, Concentration (Ignem) 1, Magical Affinity — Creo 6, Magical Affinity — Ignem 6, Finesse (Ignem) 3, Hermes History (crimes) 2, Hermes Law (criminals) 3, Hermes Lore (crimes) 2, *Parma Magica* (Perdo) 5, Penetration (Ignem) 2, Alertness (ambush) 1, Morning Star Attack (criminals) 3, Morning Star Parry (criminals) 3, Fantastic Beast Lore (mountains) 4

Confidence: 4

Reputation: Executioner (Magi) 3

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Hot-Headed +2, Cruel to Inferiors +1

Techniques and Forms: Creo 16, Intéllego 8, Muto 5, Perdo 6, Rego 11, Animál 5, Aquam 7, Auram 5, Córporum 10, Herbam 7, Ignem 12, Imágonem 6, Mentem 8, Terram 5, Vim 12

Twilight Points: 5

Effects of Twilight: Attracts fire. Hit by all of his own Targeted Ignem spells if he Botches.

Spells Known: *Arc of Fiery Ribbons* (CrIg 25) +43, *Ball of Abysmal Flame* (CrIg 30) +43, *Morningstar of the Virulent Flame* (CrIg 30) +43, *Visions of Heat's Light* (InIg 20) +15, *Well Without Light* (PeIg 25) +27, *Ward Against Heat and Flames* (ReIg 25) +32, *Gather the Essence of the Beast* (MuVi 15) +20

Wizard's Sigil: Smoke

Weapons & Armor: Ring Mail Hauberk, Morning Star

Morning Star Totals (1h): First Strike +6, Attack +5, Damage +14, Parry Defense +4 (10 Action)

Encumbrance: 0

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense +0 (6 Action), Soak +10 (16 Action), Fatigue +3

Verox of Flambeau

Associate Member of Magvillus

When Verox is not at Magvillus, protecting the Covenant and enforcing decrees made by its members, he is usually on the road, hunting down hedge wizards and magical creatures in various parts of Italy. Even when he does take the time to study, it is spent on the few arts of death that he obsesses over.

If met on the road, Verox is very sure of himself, explaining that he is a member of Magvillus. He expects all Magi to make way for him. If Magi are to oppose or annoy Verox, *Certámen* or Wizard's War might follow in short order.

OUTSIDE RELATIONS

Outside the Roman Tribunal, Magvillus is one of the most respected Covenants of the Order. The Quaesitoris of Magvillus are seen as defenders of the Code, responsible for keeping the Order together. Two great powers from beyond the Roman Tribunal give Magvillus much support. The first is the conclave of Arch-Magi, which helps Magvillus in return for a certain task that Magvillus performs (see *The Graveyard of the Arch-Magi*, in Chapter Six). The second is the Hopolites, a group of warrior Magi, many of whom are Arch-Magi of Flambeau who enforce the rulings of the Quaesitoris. Officially, the non-Quaesitor associate members of Magvillus are both Hopolites, but most of the group are much more powerful than those who reside at Magvillus.

Within the Roman Tribunal, the Magi of Magvillus are seen as arrogant meddlers who abuse their privileges to take power in the Tribunal. On numerous occasions they have attempted to force the Tribunal to adopt their plans for "peace." All such attempts have failed.

Magvillus keeps very close track of all other Covenants in the Roman Tribunal and is suspicious of its neighbors. The Magi of Magvillus blame the Tribunal's other Covenants for all problems that arise, taking none of the blame themselves. Literatus, which has opposed Magvillus at Tribunal meetings for years, is watched particularly closely.

Magvillus' remote location allows it little contact with the mundane world. This situation pleases most Magi at the Covenant, who believe close contact with mundanes has the potential to bring great harm to the Order, so should be avoided.

MAGICAL RESOURCES

Magvillus has few magical resources of its own, but still manages to prosper. Magi who bring cases before Magvillus, or who have specific investigations they wish carried out, are expected to pay for services in raw vis. Magvillus therefore has no great shortage of vis.

The arcane library at Magvillus is adequate, but little more. It is unique only in that it contains numerous spells and rituals of ancient origin, generally only used by Quaesitoris. It is said that the Covenant's private library, in the inner keep, contains a treasury of ancient magicks, many of them extremely powerful. None but the Seven, who are sworn to secrecy, are certain of what is held in the Covenant's private library. It is rumored that there are rituals of such power and price there that they would only be used if the entire Order were in danger.



It is also rumored that the Seven may possess a scrying device of ancient origin that can spy through even the most powerful of wards and *Aegis* spells. The Seven have never confirmed these rumors, but often seem to know the private business of other Covenants in great detail.

The Covenant's *Aegis of the Hearth* is Level 20.

MUNDANE RESOURCES

Magvillus, though not a particularly wealthy Covenant, has always been able to sell raw vis or charge for services in gold to meet its expenses. The Magi and covenfolk of Magvillus, though they have few luxuries, never suffer for lack of equipment. Most of the Covenant's income is used to keep up its massive defenses, and to pay its numerous servants.

The mundane libraries at Magvillus are poor, except in matters of law. Magvillus has vast archives detailing various investigations and legal questions. Additionally, there are good sources on Occult Lore (accumulated to conduct investigations into *Literatus*). Most of the material focuses on the Order and its internal affairs; there is almost nothing touching on the mundane world.

OBLIGATIONS

Magvillus exists to serve the needs of the Order. The Magi of Magvillus are responsible for enforcing the Code, and investigating those who may have broken it. Though they

usually do not conduct investigations themselves, the Magi of Magvillus keep track of investigations in progress throughout the Order. This duty is a tremendous burden on the time of Magi, who spend at least two Seasons each year on their assignments.

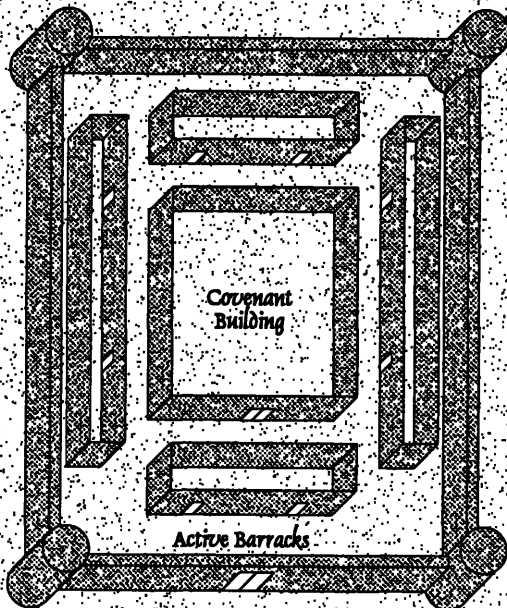
Keeping up mundane and magical defenses is also a great burden on the Covenant. Though such strong defenses may seem unnecessary, the Magi of Magvillus view them as very important. They argue that heavy defenses are required for the preservation of the Order's center of law. In truth, Magi of Magvillus fear that members of the Roman Tribunal might one day rise against them.

OUTLOOK

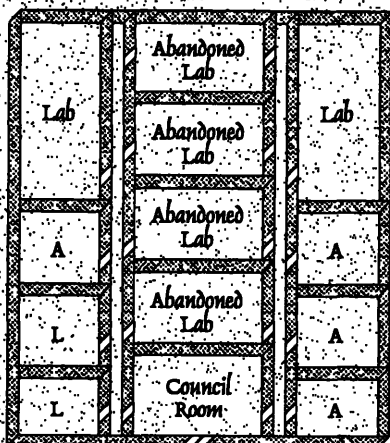
- Harco — A Covenant too deeply involved in mundane affairs. Their mercantile activities may one day ruin the Tribunal. They're useful, however, being diligent in the work their founder accepted centuries ago.
- Independents — Mostly Magi too closely caught up in the mundane world. They must be brought closer to the Order.
- Literatus — Another Covenant too deeply involved in the mundane world, and one that's too arrogant for its own good. Working with mundanes has turned these Magi against law, and may ally them, with more terrible powers.
- Luctatio — Troublemakers who have worked against Quaesitoris since they joined the Tribunal. They are clearly the pawns of one of the other Covenants.

Rellantali

Asinaran Fortress



Covenant Building



A : Abandoned Living Quarters
L : Living Quarters

• Postestas — Powermongers who have helped Quaesitoris in the past. We will continue to use them, but when we achieve our goals we will discard them.

• Rellantali — Their near destruction attests to why the Code must be severely enforced. If they ever seek revenge, however, we will have to make an example of them.

• Sansaron — Unfriendly recluses unwilling to help us do our work.

• Vardian's Tomb — Mostly harmless independents, incapable of agreeing sufficiently to pose a true danger. Perhaps when our order is imposed upon the Tribunal this Covenant can be officially recognized.

• Verdi — Arrogant toymakers who skirt the edge of the Code, constantly escaping our wrath by the narrowest of margins. One day we will catch them and make them pay.

STORY IDEAS FOR MAGVILLUS

• Characters acting as associate members of Magvillus can provide an interesting (if somewhat violent) Saga. Maybe characters are tricked into service to Magvillus, or forced into duty to avoid Hermetic punishment.

• The characters become involved in an investigation carried out by Magvillus. Are the characters being investigated? Are they helping the Quaesitoris? Are there political motives behind the investigation?

• The characters have to make a journey to Magvillus in order to bring a case before the Quaesitoris. Maybe the judges are sympathetic or have to be bribed. Maybe characters' rivals arrive at the Covenant first and undermine the characters' efforts, possibly turning the judges against them.

Rellantali

Symbol: A square with a lightning bolt striking the center

Season: Autumn

Year Founded: A.D. 838

House Affiliation: None

Aura: Magic 2 (fortress), Dominion 3 (townhouses)

Members: six; Mercatora of House Tylalus, Artur of House Jerbiton, Dareth of House Tylalus, Evoco of House Tremere, Idus of House Flambeau and Marius of House Tremere

Number of Grog: 20, plus many associates

Armaments: Poor (Asinaran fortress), Standard (Venice)

Library Art Scores: Creo 8, Intéllego 10, Muto 9, Perdo 12, Rego 11, Animál 6, Aquam 9, Auram 10, Córporum 12, Herbam 6, Ignem 9, Imágonem 8, Mentem 10, Terram 6, Vim 12

Library Ability Scores: Venetian Geography 9, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 3, Venice Lore 7, Church Lore 4, Church Knowledge 6, Humanities 3, Arabic Instruction 3, Mercantile Instruction 3

At a first glance, Rellantali seems composed of a group of violent isolationists, as unfriendly as Sansaron in far away North Africa. However, Rellantali's seclusion is simply a necessity. In truth, the Magi of Rellantali have largely moved from their home on the island of Asinara to various townhouses in Venice. There, they bring in the income necessary to keep their Covenant afloat, overseeing a well-organized group of thieves. Their activities dance around the fringes of the Code of Hermes. If other Covenants of Rome were to discover the truth behind Rellantali's activities, political battles would begin and what exists of Rellantali might be destroyed.

HISTORY

In 838, the Magi who would form Rellantali first came to the Roman Tribunal, to join what seemed a rebirth of magic in Italy. They set up on the island of Asinara, hoping that their proximity to the Covenants of Auctus and Verdi would allow them to participate in new magical learning. Unfortunately, proximity to Verdi soon caused problems.

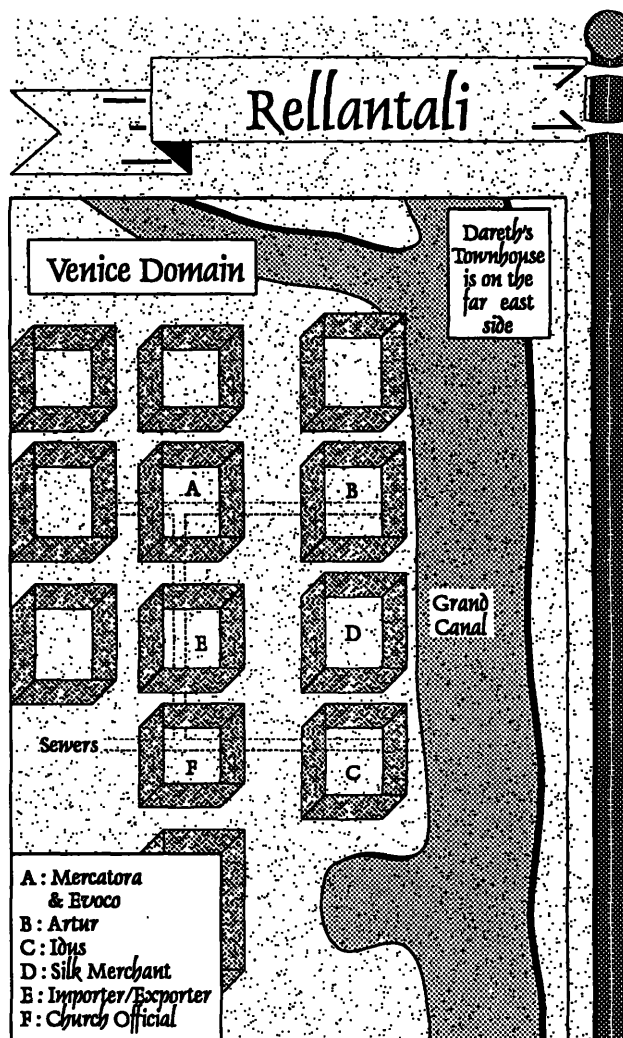
When sources of magic began fading from Italy by the late 9th century, Verdi proclaimed its authority over sources of raw vis on Italy's western islands. Auctus was destroyed in 937, victim of Verdi's political manipulations, its Magi scattered. For a short time Verdi was content with magical resources stolen from the dead Auctus. However, Verdi's Magi became greedy once more and turned toward Rellantali.

Unlike Auctus, Rellantali was prepared. The founders of Rellantali originally encouraged Magi of Bonisagus, Verditius and other great magical inventors to join. When Verdi moved against Auctus, Rellantali instead sought members in House Flambeau, Tremere and Tytalus, hoping warlike and manipulative Magi could keep the Covenant alive. However, such membership forever changed Rellantali's disposition.

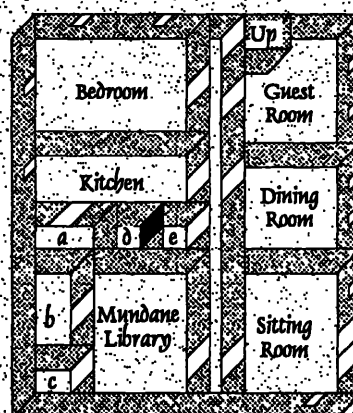
For over a hundred years, Rellantali and Verdi fought. Rellantali's power was constantly weakened, but the Covenant managed to survive thanks to earlier foresight. Finally, in 1068, the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal was issued. It nearly spelled the end for Rellantali. The Covenant's Magi fought bitterly against the Treaty, for as Verdi took more and more of Rellantali's magical resources, the Covenant's Magi were forced to rely upon dealings with mundanes. It seemed Verdi had finally won.

Fortunately, one of Rellantali's Tremere came up with a very innovative idea. In earlier years, when Rellantali first initiated dealings with mundanes, the Magi learned of Venice, where much trading was done. Though Rellantali was now forbidden to trade as they had before, Renser of Tremere had other plans. He worked for several years to bring the thieves of Venice together under a single authority, his own. Then, Rellantali began to replenish its monetary supplies through the crimes of these thieves.

For over a hundred years Rellantali has survived on the sins of others. If other Magi of the Tribunal learn the neutral city of Venice has been compromised, Rellantali could be undone. However, what Rellantali's Magi do not realize is that



Townhouse of Mercatora & Evoco Ground Floor

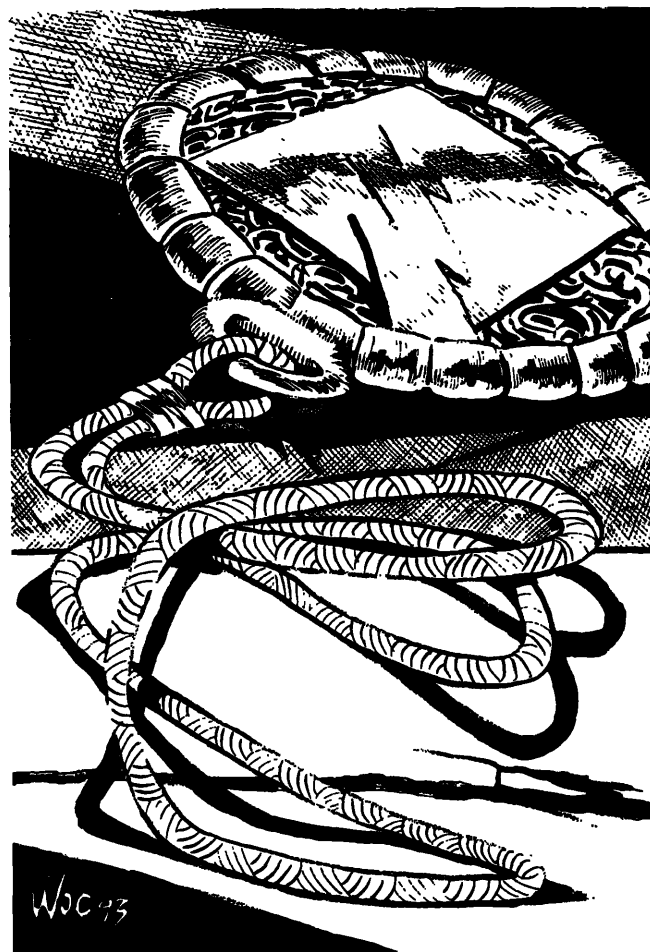


they are already doomed. By thriving upon others' crimes, the Magi have sacrificed their immortal souls, and all are bound for Hell. Though Rellantali's Magi and servants have not outwardly made pacts with the Dark, they unwittingly deal with its agents, who pose as thieves and fences, leading Rellantali's people further down the sullied path.

LOCATION

Rellantali is officially located on the island of Asinara, just north of Sardinia (as indicated on *The Roman Tribunal* map). When Pisans and Genoese began attacking the Saracens on Italy's western islands in the early 11th century, several Tytalus and Flambeau of Rellantali helped the Italian mundanes. In their gratitude the mundanes officially granted the land around Rellantali to the Magi as a fief. By and large, the Covenant of Rellantali is accepted as a fortress ruled by enigmatic lords. Nearby peasants do not realize Rellantali is a magical place, but still avoid it all the same.

In reality, Rellantali's Asinaran fortress is virtually abandoned. A few covenantfolk remain to keep up appearances. Only a single Magus, Idus of Flambeau, stays there for any extended periods of time. Another Magus only occasionally steps through the Hermes Portal that links Asinara to Venice, to do magical work. For the most part, however, the Magi of Rellantali reside in Venice.



FORTRESS

Rellantali's Asinaran fortress is well-fortified. (For the layout of the place, see the *Rellantali Covenant* map.) Four tall walls surround the Covenant and there's a tower at each junction. A solid iron gate protects the one entrance to the Covenant, which is located in the southern wall. A large rectangular building takes up a good portion of the center of Rellantali. It once housed the Magi and the council room. Now only a few labs are maintained here. The rest of the place is empty and deserted.

Surrounding the central building are four other large buildings. At one time two of these were used as barracks for Groggs, the other two designated for other covenantfolk. Three of these buildings have now fallen into disrepair. The last is still maintained, housing a handful of warriors and covenantfolk.

Rellantali appears in repair only from the outside. The warriors who remain at Rellantali do their best to keep up outer fortifications, so that others do not learn the true state of affairs at their Covenant.

The Asinaran fortress has no *Aegis of the Hearth* or other magical defenses.

In Venice, Rellantali maintains several townhouses. They are all near to each other, and members of the Covenant usually travel from one to another via the sewers of the city. Although none of the townhouses are built to withstand any type of military siege, they are fairly safe given the protections of the city itself. Warriors, as well as less savory thugs, maintain constant watch over all of Rellantali's holdings.

The locations and layout of Rellantali's Venetian holdings are depicted on the *Venice* and *Rellantali* townhouse maps.

INHABITANTS

The leader of Rellantali is Mercatora of Tytalus. Her position was earned through careful political manipulation. She has proven herself a adept at coercion and intrigue. Although Rellantali has been around for centuries, it is technically in Autumn given its approach to Winter, and destruction. At the age of 71, Mercatora is the eldest of Rellantali's members.

As if Rellantali's external conflicts are not great enough, a conflict is building between two of its members. The feud is between Evoco, of Tremere, and Dareth, of Tytalus. The younger of the two, Evoco, is Mercatora's second-in-command and lover. He is nearly 20 years younger than she, and utterly devoted to her. When Mercatora is off at Tribunals or traveling through Italy, dealing with various people, Evoco runs Rellantali. The 63-year-old Dareth is quite jealous of Evoco's position. He believes he should be the Covenant's second. So far the feud between Evoco and Dareth has gone no further than bickering. However, Dareth grows increasingly jealous of Evoco's power. He currently considers plotting with Verdi to have both Evoco and Mercatora disposed so that he may seize power. The question is, how to deal with Verdi without compromising all of Rellantali?

The remaining three Magi of Rellantali are all somewhat removed from the Covenant's internal politics. Marius of Tremere works closely with the thieves that Rellantali controls, while Artur of Jerbiton helps maintain relations with the rest of Venice. Idus of Flambeau is the Magus who usually remains at Rellantali's Asinara Covenant. He only travels to Venice when his skills for quick, violent action are required there.

Rellantali probably places more importance in its covenfolk than does any other Covenant in the Order. This comes as no surprise, as Rellantali's financial well-being is dependent upon mundanes. Rellantali's Magi treat their covenfolk like kings and queens, and provide them with full access to training of all kinds.

The Covenant has a small cadre of 20 warriors (split between Asinara and Venetian holdings), and another, much larger network of thieves and associates who are not as skilled as Grog. As a whole, however, these associates are a much greater resource. Other covenfolk — servants really — are well-trained and comfortable in their roles, but only of importance in day-to-day matters. Covenfolk are not retained by heredity, but paid well enough not to ask questions. All servants in Venice are required to live at Covenant townhouses, so as not to be vulnerable to spies.

Rellantali has three Companions in charge of covenfolk. These are the Grog Captain, the Steward, and the "Merchant's Associate" (Master Thief). The first resides at the Asinara fortress, the other two in Venice. The Merchant's Associate is clearly the most important of the three.

Mercatora

Follower of Tytalus, Leader of Rellantali

Mercatora puts on a mask of friendliness and helpfulness. In truth she is both greedy and ruthless, never worrying about those that she might hurt. Unfortunately, Mercatora lacks the self-control to be truly good at manipulation. She loses her temper far too often, threatening physical violence or terrible reprisals against those who do not bend to her will. In a Tribunal full of plotting Magi, Mercatora's weakness may eventually be her undoing.

Ultimately, Mercatora puts her own good before her Covenant's. She saw how short-lived her two predecessors were and has no desire to follow them into the grave. She will therefore sell out her Covenant if doing so would ensure her safety.

OUTSIDE RELATIONS

Rellantali has poor relations with the majority of the Roman Tribunal and the Order as a whole. The Covenant's Magi refuse to allow others into their Asinara fortress (so its abandoned state is not discovered), and demand that all Tribunal correspondences go through their official townhouse in Venice.

The Covenant of Al Arama, in the Levant, is one of the few places that Rellantali maintains good relations with. Ill-

Mercatora

Characteristics: Intelligence (scheming) +3, Perception (watching for ambushes) +3, Strength 0, Stamina 0, Presence (apparently courteous) +2, Communication (deceptive) +1, Dexterity 0, Quickness 0

Age: 71 (currently no Longevity potions)

Size: 0

Virtues & Flaws: Light Sleeper +1, Social Contacts (noble) +1, Social Contacts (merchants) +1, Fury (when balked; see *Ars Magica*, p. 80) -3, Leadership +3

Abilities: Speak Italian (orders) 4, Speak Latin (orders) 5, Scribe Latin (orders) 3, Magic Theory (longevity potion) 6, *Certamen* (Rego) 7, Concentration (fighting) 4, Finesse (targeting) 3, Hermes Law (mundane interference) 2, Hermes Lore (thieves) 2, Hermes History (Tytalus) 2, *Parma Magica* (Ignem) 7, Penetration (Mentem) 5, Charm (lies) 2, Diplomacy (negotiations) 1, Folk Ken (townsfolk) 3, Guile (elaborate lies) 4, Subterfuge (arguments) 2, Two-Handed Mace Attack (at the negotiation table) 6, Two-Handed Mace Parry (wild attacks) 4, Venice Lore (illegal activities) 4

Confidence: 5

Reputation: Liar (Roman Magi) 1

Personality Traits: Brave -1, Greedy +3, Manipulative +1, Paranoid +3

Techniques and Forms: Creo 11, Intéllego 10, Muto 11, Perdo 10, Rego 19, Animál 8, Aquam 10, Auram 10, Córporum 10, Herbam 8, Ignem 13, Imágonem 10, Mentem 17, Terram 8, Vim 10

Spell Casting Speed: -3

Twilight Points: 8

Effects of Twilight: Increased understanding of Rego

Spells Known: *Waves of Drowning and Smashing* (ReAq 20) +29, *The Treacherous Spear* (ReHe 20) +27, *Wizard's Sidestep* (ReIm 20) +29, *Pilum of Fire* (CrIg 20) +24, *Posing the Silent Question* (InMe 25) +27, *Thoughts Within Babble* (InMe 25) +27, *Loss of But a Moment's Memory* (PeMe 20) +27, *Black Whisper* (PeMe 30) +27, *Confusion of the Numbed Will* (ReMe 20) +36, *Aura of Rightful Authority* (ReMe 20) +36, *Scent of Peaceful Slumber* (ReMe 20) +36

Wizard's Sigil: Mercatora's spells are always abrupt (although Casting Speed is not affected)

Weapons and Armor: Full Ring Mail, Two-Handed Mace

Mace Totals (2h): First Strike +2, Attack +9, Damage +13, Parry Defense +6 (Action 12)

Encumbrance: 6

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense -6 (0 Action), Soak +8 (14 Action), Fatigue -6



begotten silver is sent east, and in return Rellantali receives raw vis.

Additionally, Rellantali keeps a very close eye on Verdi. Rellantali's Magi await the day when that Covenant will show a weakness that may be preyed upon.

Rellantali has little contact with the mundane world. Rellantali's force of thieves is really the only group which the Magi have any dealings with, and, in truth, much of that interaction is accomplished through the Merchant's Associate.

MAGICAL ATTRIBUTES

Rellantali's magical resources are relatively poor. The labs in Asinara are maintained at a high level of quality, but there are only two of them. Additionally, the Covenant's Magical Aura is poor, as it has faded along with much of the other magic of the Tribunal. Furthermore, the Covenant's holdings in Venice, as part of a city under God, suffer from the Dominion Aura which pervades that city.

Rellantali's only great artifact is a Hermes Portal which connects Venice to Asinara. If that were somehow destroyed, the Covenant would be in a great deal of trouble. Neither the Asinarian fortress nor the Covenant's holdings have *Aegis of the Hearth* spells protecting them.

Rellantali has an arcane library which is adequate, and which, due to trade with Al Arama, brings in a fair amount of raw vis.

MUNDANE RESOURCES

Rellantali would be quite wealthy if not for the exorbitant amount of money its Magi spend on raw vis. Still, the Magi all live comfortably, and fine items occasionally pass amongst them.

The thieves of Venice provide Rellantali with an excellent network of spies. Quite a bit of money is made from information sold, to Magi and mundanes alike.

Over the last century, Rellantali has collected a huge number of maps of Venice, covering most major buildings as well as the sewer system. These maps are kept together in a large room. Lately, the Covenant has begun to collect more maps, of places beyond Venice. The mundane library of Rellantali is right next to the map room. It is well-stocked too, particularly for a Covenant which has only limited mundane relations.

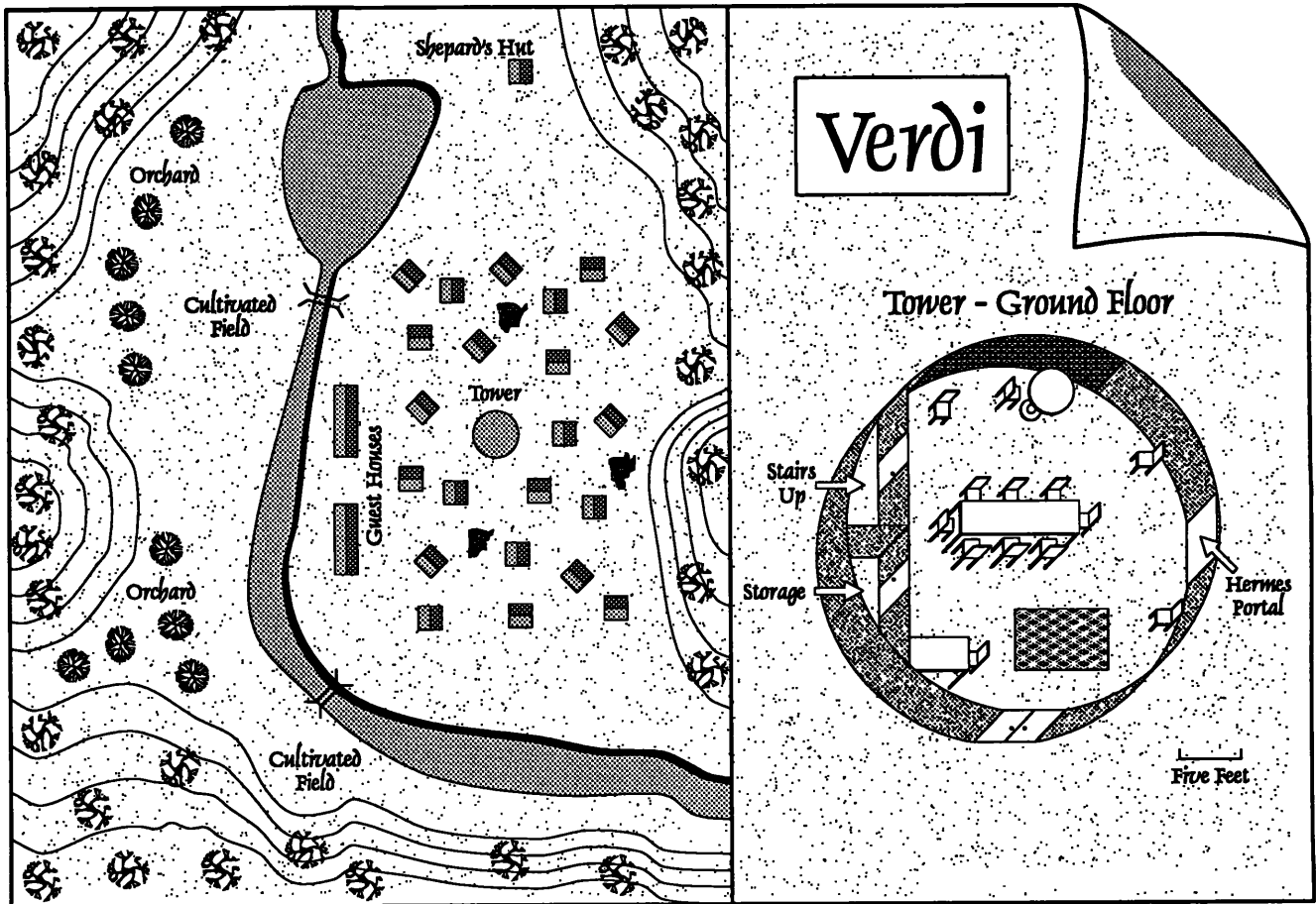
Rellantali possesses a number of sailing vessels, which it uses for trade between the Levant and Venice. Rellantali acknowledges ownership of these vessels, and they occasionally provide board and passage for Redcaps and other Magi. Such service has gone far to increase the Covenant's reputation within the Tribunal.

OBLIGATIONS

Although the Magi of Rellantali have no standing obligations, all are expected to provide whatever help that the Covenant requires. Usually, when new Magi are welcomed, a contributing role is chosen for them. That role is made clear at once, so that Magi are not surprised by occasional tasks that come their way.

OUTLOOK

- Harco — An overly nosy Covenant wanting to know too much about our affairs. They are useful, however.
- Independents — Likely our allies, if we could convince them to engage in the Tribunal's politics.
- Literatus — A relatively harmless Covenant. Their goals seem to be good.
- Luctatio — A new, untried power in the Tribunal. They have worked against Magvillus in the past, preventing several rulings that could have proven disastrous for us.
- Magvillus — Magi of great power who seek to bring their own order to the Tribunal. If we support them, they might provide the necessary laws to prevent Verdi from destroying again. On the other hand, much of what they have proposed in the past has proven detrimental (although not to Magvillus itself).
- Postestas — They seem to be trying to gain power, and it may be advantageous to support them. Their goals often seem the same as our own.
- Sansaron — Harmless Ex Miscellanea who do us neither harm nor good.



• Vardian's Tomb — Verdi manipulates them terribly. They don't seem to realize that they too shall be cast aside when they're no longer useful. It would be grand to free them from Verdi's control. Until we do, they are our enemies.

• Verdi — The worst of all the Covenants of the Tribunal, the fiends who tried to destroy us in the past. We shall avenge ourselves upon them, not resting until their walls have been torn down and Magi scattered. Perhaps their entire House shall follow.

STORY IDEAS FOR RELLANTALI

• The Magi of Rellantali could decide to expand their thieving empire beyond the city of Venice, into a town or city near the characters' Covenant. Groggs or Companions might be forced to investigate this new wave of crime. Tracing the thieves' chain of command, the covenfolk discover who's really behind matters and the Covenant's Magi might get involved. What do characters do with their discoveries? Frame Rellantali? Blackmail the Covenant? Or demand a piece of the action?

• Rellantali hears word of an ancient magic item, made by Verditius himself, located in a place near the characters' Covenant. Rellantali's Magi contact the characters and ask them to excavate it, with compensation of course, to spite their old enemies. What happens when characters find themselves in the middle of the ancient conflict between the two Covenants?

What if the item is powerful and the characters want it for themselves? What if the lost item proves useless and Rellantali accuses the characters of sabotage or alliance with Verdi?

• Characters visiting Venice are robbed of several possessions. Plumbing the city's underworld leads characters into confrontation with Rellantali's network of thieves. If Magi partake in the recovery of stolen goods, Rellantali's Magi may work covertly against the foreign characters, seeking to dissuade them from further investigations.

Verdi

Symbol: A hand with a ring on each finger

Season: Autumn

Year Founded: A.D. 775

House Affiliation: House Verditius

Aura: Magic 3

Members: six; Imanitosi, Primus of House Verditius; Astuth; Ferramentum; Marcelo; Retistius; and Steris, all of House Verditius

Number of Groggs: 15

Armaments: Superior

Library Art Scores: Creo 17, Intéllego 18, Muto 11, Perdo 7, Rego 10, Animál 7, Aquam 12, Auram 9, Córporum 12, Herbam 9, Ignem 13, Imágonem 9, Mentem 9, Terram 12, Vim 20

Verdi's Form and Effect Bonuses

Long ago, the Magi of Verdi carefully studied the nature of the island around them. Through their study, they have learned the benefits of using elements of their environment in magical enchantments. Below are the Form and Effect Bonuses of some of the Sardinian wildlife:

All Dead Wood	+3 to affect living wood
	+4 to affect dead wood
Cork Oak Wood	+3 trapping and binding
Maritime Pine Wood	+2 to affect the sea
Olive Wood	+3 to bring about peace
Pomegranate Wood	+3 when speaking with the dead
	+2 to controlling the dead
Strawberry Tree Wood	+2 to bring about contentment
Wild Grape Vines	+7 to bring about charity

Library Ability Scores: Legend Lore 4, Fantastic Beast Lore 3, Hermes Lore 5, Hermes History 5, Magic Theory 8, Verditius Magic 10, Faerie Lore 3, Occult Lore 3

The heart of House Verditius, the Covenant of Verdi is one of the great powers in the Roman Tribunal, and, as Domus Magnus, is willing to flaunt its power. For centuries Verdi has bullied nearby Covenants, causing untold harm. Magi of Verdi only have one true motivation: the acquisition of magic for magical inventions. Indeed, Covenants have been crushed and others vivisected in pursuit of this prize. Who knows what great discoveries might have come from the Covenants that Verdi has consumed in its insatiable hunger?

HISTORY

After Verditius studied with Bonisagus for several years, trying to learn the secrets of spell casting, he returned to his native Italy, ready to teach apprentices in both his own arts, and those taught by Bonisagus. Verditius wanted to be sure that mundanes would not interfere in his magical efforts, so sought out a magical site deep in the wilds of Sardinia. There Verditius and his first apprentice built a hut with their own hands, and Verditius began to teach the art of magic.

In the following centuries, the site of the hut, which became known as Verdi, grew considerably. Verditius' original building crumbled away and was replaced by a score of buildings, all surrounding a central tower. That growth, however, did not come without cost. As more and more Magi invested raw vis into their enchantments, magic began to fade from the land. Such was the case across all of Italy. The Magi of Verdi had, by that time, grown haughty and arrogant, and

decided that the peninsula's remaining resources could be better spent by them than others. So the Magi began a reign of terror.

In the late 9th century, there was another Covenant on Sardinia — Auctus — on the plains to the west. Auctus' founders, a Bonisagus, a Criamon and a Merinita, hoped to continue the studies of Bonisagus himself, bringing together Enigmatic, Faerie and Hermetic magic into a greater whole. They wished to form a new theory of magic, just as Bonisagus had done with the magic of the Mercurians and Druids. Unfortunately, Verdi turned on Auctus. By using its considerable political power, Verdi was able to crush the Covenant and steal its vis sources, claiming more and more of Sardinia. Auctus' Magi were scattered and their promise of new knowledge lost. Now, only the ruins of three stone buildings mark what could have been.

The conflict with Auctus was not an isolated event. In later years, Verdi's political maneuverings did great damage to Rellantali, which lies just north of Sardinia, on the small island of Asinara. Coupled with the later Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, Rellantali was almost destroyed. Verdi now holds claim to almost all of Sardinia and Corsica. Rellantali's claims are curtailed to their own island. Somehow, though, Rellantali manages to survive.

Throughout the centuries, Verdi has managed to remain hidden from the mundane world, utilizing both magic and deception. Its Magi have thus avoided the fear and suspicion which plagues many other Italian Covenants. However, should local mundanes ever learn the truth of their neighbor, and discover the duplicity of its inhabitants, a violent, fearful response might result.

Recently, Verdi succeeded in having Luctatio, to the north, recognized as a Covenant of the Roman Tribunal. Magi of Verdi think the young Covenant's official status will be a great boon in the future, particularly for Verdi itself. Luctatio, however, has its own ideas about its debts to Verdi, and doesn't plan to honor them in the least. To the magi of Luctatio, it's all part of a grand game.

LOCATION

Located in a valley hidden in the eastern mountains of Sardinia, Verdi is quite isolated. Even if it were not magically warded, only a very diligent or lucky explorer would happen upon the Covenant. The Covenant's valley is further protected by the heavy vegetation that surrounds it. Evergreens, such as the cork oak, grow heavily in areas furthest from the Covenant, while olive trees have been cultivated on the hills nearer Verdi.

A stream flows through the Covenant's valley, originating from the high mountains to the north. The stream flows into a small, crystal clear lake before continuing on to the southeast, and eventually out to the Tyrrhenian Sea.

The climate at Verdi is varied, as is that of most of Italy. The summers are long, hot and without rainfall, while the winters are mild and wet. Magical items control the temperature in

Magi's Covenant dwellings, and also protect Verdi from floods and other natural disasters.

For the location of the Covenant see *The Roman Tribunal* map and, for its surrounding lands, the *Verdi* map.

FORTRESS

The physical dwellings of Verdi are relatively unimpressive. In the middle of the valley rises a single tower, created long ago with the *Conjuring the Mystic Tower* (Creo Terram, Level 50) Ritual. The tower is said to be located exactly where Verditius' original hut once stood, and has always been the dwelling of the Primus of Verditius. The ground floor is devoted to a meeting place of Magi, while the two upper floors are devoted to the Primus' living quarters and sanctum.

Surrounding the tower, arranged with no apparent rule or order, are many of huts. In general, huts closest to the tower house Magi and their labs, while Grog, covenfolk and their families live in huts further away. But this is by no means an absolute. Scattered among the huts is the occasional patch of blackened ground, the mark of a Verditius who conducted dangerous experiments and paid the price. On the western edge of the valley, next to the river, are two large guest houses. These are usually unoccupied, but during the great Verditius contests, wherein Verditius Magi from all over the Order come to compare magical creations, the guest houses are full of Magi eager to test their magic items against others'.



No walls nor ramparts protect Verdi, nor even a moat, for the Magi put their faith in magical and natural defenses. As earlier noted, the valley is naturally hidden. Long ago, that defense was augmented by the casting of *The Shrouded Glen* (Rego Mentem 40). Thus, only a person actively searching for Verdi may find it, and even then, only with luck or perseverance. Finally, an *Aegis of the Hearth* spell, Level 30, protects the Covenant and valley from magical attack.

However, Verdi does not let its seeming invulnerability lull it into a false sense of security. The turb of Grog is constantly kept ready for combat. Patrols often sweep the nearby forest, and there is always a watch atop the tower.

For the layout of the Covenant, see the *Verdi* map.

INHABITANTS

Six full Magi form the core membership of Verdi. As it has always been, the leader of Verdi is the Primus of House Verditius. The current Primus is Imanitosi, a reclusive woman who is quite pleased with Verdi's seclusion from the world.

The other five members of Verdi are all respected Verditius, who have each made their mark on the Order. Astuth and Ferramentum are both middle-aged Magi. Astuth is 93, while Ferramentum is 101. They spend most of their time within the Covenant, studying and applying the results to more creative inventions. Many of their lesser enchanted items are sold to other Roman Covenants. Retistius is the Magus who won the Verditius contest of 1181, with his mechanical dog. For two

Imanitosi

Characteristics: Intelligence (inventive) +4, Perception 0, Strength (thin) -1, Stamina 0, Presence (powerful) +1, Communication 0, Dexterity (clumsy) -2, Quickness (dignified) -1

Age: 132 (Longevity potion, Level 110, -22 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Clear Thinker (+3 to confusion rolls) +1, Inventive Genius (+3 to inventing, +6 experimenting) +1, Verditius Magic (must use Spell Foci to cast Formulaic spells) -1, Greater Leadership +6

Abilities: Speak Italian (orders) 4, Speak Latin (magic) 5, Scribe Latin (magic) 6, Magic Theory (enchancing items) 14, Verditius Magic (Intéllego items) 12, *Certámen* (fighting for Covenant) 11, Concentration (talking) 9, Finesse (small details) 5, Hermes History (magic items) 6, Hermes Law (Covenant interactions) 5, Hermes Lore (Verditius) 5, *Parma Magica* (Intéllego) 3, Penetration (Intéllego) 2, Quarterstaff Attack (panicked) 1, Quarterstaff Parry (fleeing) 2, Leadership (Magi) 5, Faerie Lore (tricks) 2, Legend Lore (magic items) 4, Sardinia Lore (magic items) 5

Confidence: 5

Reputation: Uncaring (Roman Magi) 5

Personality Traits: Loyal to Covenant +6, Friendly +1, Ruthless +3, Curious +2

Techniques and Forms: Creo 21, Intéllego 23, Muto 13, Perdo 10, Rego 13, Animál 14, Aquam 10, Auram 10, Córporum 24, Herbam 12, Ignem 10, Imágonem 11, Mentem 24, Terram 11, Vim 30

Spell Casting Speed: 4

Twilight Points: 11

Effects of Twilight: None

Spells Known: *The Surgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo 20) +45, *The Bountiful Feast* (CrHe 30) +33, *Calm the Motion of the Heart* (PeMe 15) +34, *Aura of Rightful Authority* (ReMe 20) +37, *Sense the Nature of Vis* (InVi 10) +53, *Scales of the Magical Weight* (InVi 15) +53, *Perceive the Magical Scent* (InVi 20) +53, *Wizard's Boost* (MuVi 25) +43, *Circular Ward Against Demons* (ReVi 25) +43, *Aegis of the Hearth* (ReVi 30) +43

Wizard's Sigil: Most of Imanitosi's spells are quiet and dull. Normally bright lights are dim, bright colors are pastels and loud noises are quiet whispers

Weapons and Armor: Imanitosi no longer carries weaponry

Encumbrance: 0

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense -1 (5 Action), Soak +0 (6 Action), Fatigue +0

years now he has been working on some secret project, no doubt an entry for the next Verditius contest, in 1199. Marcelo is one of the greatest experimenters at Verdi. For several decades he has worked at investing foreign magical traditions into the items he creates.

The final — and youngest — full member of Verdi is Steris. As the youngest, Steris is the most likely to interact with outsiders. Steris is expected to represent Verdi at Tribunal meetings, and greets visitors to the Covenant, unless travelers' business is so urgent that a higher ranking Magus must attend to it.

Besides the full members, perhaps a half dozen other Verditius reside at Verdi at any given time. All Verditius are welcome, as long as there is room. For the most part, Magi come to Verdi for a few years to escape the outside world. If young Verditius Magi wish to join Verdi, they are almost always accepted. Such Magi can expect to be sent on journeys, such as locating ancient Verditius items thought lost, and can expect to undertake menial tasks, such as acquiring supplies from an ally in another land. After five or 10 years at Verdi, young Magi are expected to move on, to spread their knowledge across the Order and to prove their ingenuity. Only those who have made great things are granted full membership at Verdi.

There is little hierarchy among Verdi's Magi; full members are in authority and lesser members are their agents. At the start of each Summer and Winter a council meeting is held, with all Magi of Verditius attending. Discussion predominates and if a vote is ever taken, each ballot cast is given equal weight. For the most part, the councils at Verdi involve discussing ideas and discoveries. However, political matters do arise, especially before Tribunal meetings, when Verdi must decide how it will manipulate the decisions of other Roman Covenants.

Besides the Covenant's Magi, 15 warriors and a number of covenfolk live at Verdi. A shepherd watches over the sheep that provide the Covenant with both meat and parchment, while several farmers work the land, providing fruit and grain. Compared to the average peasant's lot, Verdi's covenfolk live luxuriously, largely due to various magical tools Magi have granted them over the centuries. The covenfolk of Verdi are all extremely loyal.

Many of Verdi's covenfolk are of Arabic descent. The Saracens invaded Sardinia in the 9th century. Although Verdi managed to stay distant from invading forces, the Covenant later accepted these people as covenfolk, before Pisa and Genoa fought to reclaim the island.

Imanitosi

Primus of Verditius, Leader of Verdi

Imanitosi is a relatively good-hearted person who tries to be helpful when able. However, she always put the good of her Covenant first, even if it hurts others, and can be ruthless in pursuit of her Covenant's goals. She has acquired a reputation for being uncaring, which isn't entirely untrue.

During her life Imanitosi has enchanted some two score magic items. Below are some of the most useful ones that she

still keeps with her: a silver amulet (*Charm Against Magic*, Rego Vim 45), a golden ring with an inset agate (*Rise of the Feathery Body*, Rego Córpoem 10, unlimited uses, item maintains Concentration), a golden ring with an inset ruby (*Ward Against Heat and Flames*, Rego Ignem 25, constant application), a golden ring with an inset sapphire (*Thoughts Within Babble*, Intéllego Mentem 25, unlimited uses), a bracelet woven from a lion's mane (*Gift of the Bear's Fortitude*, Muto Córpoem 30, 24 uses per day), leather boots (*The Seven League Stride*, Rego Córpoem 35, unlimited uses), and a wooden wand (*Scent of Peaceful Slumber*, Rego Mentem 20, unlimited uses).

Steris

Follower of Verditius, Spokesman of Verdi

Steris' priorities in life are himself, his studies, his Covenant and his House, in that order. As the youngest established member of Verdi, Steris is charged with going out into the world to investigate phenomenon, to find new sources of vis, to attend Tribunal meetings, and to look into rumors of lost magical items. Should anyone get in Steris' way, no matter what his business, Covenant or personal, he grows very determined, intent upon seeing his mission through regardless of the consequences. Like Imanitosi, Steris does little to improve Verdi's reputation, but is generally loyal to his Covenant and House.

When he has been allowed Seasons of study and creation, Steris has invented the following magical devices: an amulet



Steris

Characteristics: Intelligence (cunning) +4, Perception (watching for mistakes) +1, Strength 0, Stamina 0, Presence (always smiling) +3, Communication (fast talker) +3, Dexterity (clumsy) -2, Quickness (careful) -1

Age: 54 (Longevity potion, Level 65, -13 on Aging rolls)

Size: 0

Virtues and Flaws: Inspirational (+3 to others' Brave rolls) +1, Verditius Magic (cannot cast Formulaic spells without Spell Foci) -1

Abilities: Speak German (making deals) 4, Speak Latin (making deals) 5, Scribe Latin (lab notes) 4, Magic Theory (enchanting items) 9, Verditius Magic (longevity potions) 7, *Certamen* (when furious) 5, Concentration (when attacked) 2, Finesse (targeting) 2, Hermes History (Tremere) 2, Hermes Lore (Tremere) 3, *Parma Magica* (Ignem) 2, Penetration (Ignem) 2, Charisma (politics) 3, Folk Ken (nobles) 3, Guile (lying to authority) 2, Intrigue (plotting) 3, Leadership (Magi) 2, Sardinia Lore (leaders) 2

Confidence: 4

Reputation: Stubborn (Verditius) 3

Personality Traits: Stubborn +3

Techniques and Forms: Creo 17, Intéllego 8, Muto 5, Perdo 5, Rego 5, Animál 7, Aquam 12, Auram 9, Córpoem 10, Herbam 8, Ignem 13, Imágonem 5, Mentem 6, Terram 5, Vim 13

Spell Casting Speed: 1

Twilight Points: 3

Effects of Twilight: None

Spells Known: *Wreaths of Foul Smoke* (CrAu 15) +26, *The Surgeon's Healing Touch* (CrCo 20) +27, *Pilum of Fire* (CrIg 20) +30, *Arc of Fiery Ribbons* (CrIg 25) +30, *Vision of Heat's Light* (InIg 20) +21, *Weight of a Thousand Hells* (CrMe 25) +23, *Sense the Nature of Vis* (InVi 10) +21, *Gather the Essence of the Beast* (MuVi 15) +18, *Change the Nature of Vis* (MuVi 5) +18, *Wizard's Boost* (MuVi 25) +18

Wizard's Sigil: Steris' spells are usually bright and flashy

Weapons & Armor: None

Other Combat Totals: Dodge Defense -1 (5 Action), Soak +0 (6 Action), Fatigue +0

with a Verditius symbol (*Charm Against Magic*, Rego Vim 21), a stone ring with an inset sapphire (*Perceive the Magical Scent*, Intéllego Vim 20, 24 uses per day), and a stone ring with an inset green turquoise (*Whispers Through the Black Gate*, Intéllego Córpoem 15, 24 uses per day)

OUTSIDE RELATIONS

At first glance Verdi seems idyllic, almost a magical paradise. However, when examining Verdi's political history, one realizes Verdi's Eden is built upon centuries of conflict, that the

Magical Items of Verdi

The following are just some of the magical inventions that can be found at or in the vicinity of Verdi.

- **The Potent Pot of Tasty Tea** — This unique magic item was created a few decades ago by an apprentice named Aratol. It is a brass tea pot, enchanted with a simple spell. When the tea pot is tipped up to pour, a cup of perfectly seasoned tea spills forth (*Conjuration of the Tasty Tea*, Creo Aquam 5, Herbam Requisite, unlimited uses). Unfortunately, the apprentice was experimenting when he created this item, so the enchantment has a slight side effect. The tea is intoxicating as if it were a light wine. Of course, since no vis is used, the tea is not filling and the intoxication disappears at the next sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first. For a time, Aratol's tea pot was quite popular among Verdi's Groggs.

- **Gabricon's Doormat of Welcoming** — This magic item takes the form of a simple woven door mat with the word, "Salve!," etched across it. Two spells have been enchanted into it. The first is an informational spell, which senses the name of one who steps upon the mat (*Sense the Mortal's Name*, Intéllego Mentem 10, unlimited uses), while the second loudly and clearly announces that name (*Announce the Name of the Approaching Visitor*, Creo Imágonem 10, unlimited uses). The first spell is triggered by a person stepping on the door mat, and the second spell

is triggered by the first. Little do the Magi at Verditius realize that the device would also reveal the True Name of any demon that stepped on the mat.

- **Geran's Iron Pick** — Long ago, Verdi owned a small mine in the hills to the northwest. It has since been mined out, but when it was being used, several of the Covenant's Magi made magic items to help increase production. Geran's Iron Pick is a lesser enchanted item. When two lines of verse are sung, and the pick swung, about 20 pounds of rock is destroyed (*Obliterate the Stone Walls*, Perdo Terram 15, unlimited uses). Only plain stone is destroyed, so that valuable metals being mined for are not damaged, and enchanted walls cannot be scratched. Since the mines have closed, Geran's Pick has been stored away in the tower. The pick might be invaluable to a prison break, in which prison walls can be easily felled.

- **Verdi Light** — The rumored Pious Magus, Nerius, is said to have once visited Verdi Covenant and destroyed an Infernal talisman that even the greatest of Magi there could not undo. It is said that Verdi Light, the everburning torch that lights the main hall of the Covenant, was a result of Nerius' blessing, testament to the eternal power of the Lord. Whether the light source kept at the Covenant is actually Divine in nature has never been proven, and Covenant Magi are closed-mouthed on the subject.

Covenant's success is due to the death of at least one other Covenant. Long ago, Auctus was destroyed by Verdi, and nearby Rellantali nearly followed. In the centuries since, Verdi has blocked many new Covenants from becoming members of the Roman Tribunal. As a result, those Covenants were never formed, or arose as independents, outside the Order and therefore vulnerable to unjustified attack.

Today, Verdi is just as guilty of the mercantilism that damages the Tribunal as any other Covenant. Verdi constantly skirts the edges of the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, covertly selling magical devices to mundanes and making mundane trade agreements for laboratory supplies. When other Covenants seek to outbid Verdi in mundane markets, Verdi uses all of its resources to ensure mercantile success. In the past, Verdi has forbidden all associated members from dealing with certain Magi. Denied the magical devices the Verditius offer, those Magi are harmed as a result of mundane competition. Some active Verditius have even declared Wizard's War to eliminate competitors.

Despite its conflicts, Verdi has many allies in the Order. Harco and Magvillus both support the Covenant, recognizing Verdi's position as Domus Magnus of its House. Others respect the Covenant as they have business dealings with it.

Beyond the Roman Tribunal, Verdi is known far and wide, usually as a magical mecca. Verdi's strongest ties outside Italy are with the Covenant of Al Arama, in the Levant. A constant

flow of magic items and silver goes out to the Levant, with raw vis shipped back in return.

MAGICAL ATTRIBUTES

For centuries, Magi of Verdi have used their inventive skills to make their lives and studies more comfortable. At the bottom of Verdi's lake sits an iron anchor which was enchanted long ago with a spell to keep the water forever clean and fresh. Some of the lake's water flows through a stone basin to the east, which has been enchanted with a minor Ignem spell. Those who insist upon bathing, despite the dangers, find the basin's water at a constant, comfortable temperature. Strange tales are told of those who often bathed in the basin, tales of how the magic eventually warped them.

Imanitosi's tower is a great place of magic. Hundreds of magical enchantments are located within. One of the bricks in the tower was long ago enchanted with an impressive Auram spell, moderating interior temperature. On the ground floor's northern wall is a huge tapestry, showing all of Mythic Europe. When one touches the tapestry, holds an Arcane Connection to a person, and speaks a certain word, a representation of that person appears on the tapestry, moving as the subject does. Six pawns of Imágonem vis must be expended to follow a person's path over a 20-year period. When Verditius Magi come to Verdi to participate in the great contest, they usually make arrange-

ments to have their locations shown on the map, provided they use their own raw vis.

On the ground floor's eastern wall is a Hermes Portal which leads to Verdi's townhouse in Venice. It is through this gate that the Magi of Verdi acquire the supplies that they cannot create themselves.

Other magical devices are scattered throughout the tower and the Covenant's valley. Some of these items are big, some small, some in constant use and some long-forgotten. Almost all demonstrate the unique imagination possessed by so many Verditius minds.

Verdi does not use its magicks for luxury alone, though. As noted earlier, a powerful *Shrouded Glen* protects the entire Covenant. Even if that enchantment were somehow pierced, mechanical animals in the wood would warn of intruders, informing Groggs of interlopers' positions. Even Groggs are gifted with magic, be it a broach which weakens the will of potential attackers, or a cloak which allows a guard to escape capture. The *Warding Sword* is a very powerful artifact which is traditionally held by the head of the Covenant's turb. The actual blade and several gems in the pommel have all been enchanted, resulting in a powerful weapon.

Verdi's books on the Hermetic arts are excellent, especially in Creo, Intéllego and Vim. However, where Verdi's library really shines is in its collection of lab notes. For over 400 years, Magi have created things at Verdi and the notes of their efforts have been meticulously copied and preserved. If a Magus wishes to find notes on making a magic item, it is very likely they are present at Verdi. The only problem is that lab notes were often written by Verditius so absorbed by their work that the writings are incomprehensible.

A good *Aegis*, of the fifth magnitude, is constantly maintained at Verdi. In the library there is a book with an *Aegis* of the ninth magnitude. If Verdi's Magi ever thought they were in danger from magical attack, the spell would be cast at once.

The great Magical Aura that once surrounded Verdi has since faded, and most of Sardinia's native vis supplies long ago dried up. However, through the sale of magic items, Verdi still manages to bring in many rooks of vis every year. Nuraghi, curious structures found throughout Sardinia, also provide Verdi with raw vis. These Nuraghi are made of undressed stones, laid in cone shapes without mortar. Raw vis is usually found embedded in the structures' walls or floors. Unfortunately, Verdi has problems with other Magi sneaking on to the island to steal the vis from these structures. Lately it's been a constant struggle for Verdi to maintain control over this particular vis source.

MUNDANE RESOURCES

Verdi has as little contact with the mundane world as possible. When Magi do deal with mundanes, relations are never established on their native island of Sardinia, but in Venice via the Covenant's Hermes Portal. There Verdi quietly sells magic items to bring in silver. This sale is performed



through intermediaries. Those people represent Verdi's only real contacts to the mundane world.

The mundane library at Verdi is almost nonexistent. Scattered amongst the tomes of Hermetic Lore are a few books on the legends of peoples throughout Mythic Europe. These are kept only to point the way to any long-lost magic items.

OBLIGATIONS

One Season a year, all Magi of Verdi are required to make a magic item for the Covenant. The raw vis is provided, so that only a Magus' time is spent. These items, usually of lesser quality since they're made on demand, are sold to Al Arama and the mundanes of Venice. Verdi's Verditius usually spend the other Seasons of the year making magic items for themselves, though many of these are also sold, for personal rather than Covenant profit.

OUTLOOK

- Harco — A very useful Covenant, providing us with many services. We are able to sell many magic items to them, for many of them lack the Gift.

- Independents — Although they are not recognized by the Order, these wizards are valuable because they often purchase devices from us when they find the money. We should defend the independents if any militant group ever seeks to wipe them out.

- Literatus — Although they do not seek to steal our magic from us, they do seek laws which might weaken our power. They must be watched carefully, each of their laws meticulously weighed.

- Luctatio — Valuable allies, always ready to purchase magical swords and armor. In return, they've always helped us move against Magvillus, one of the great oppressors.

- Magvillus — They have surpassed the old powers given them by Guernicus and have become a great threat to the Tribunal. No longer do they simply guide and arbitrate, but they seek to control all.

- Postestas — Like Magvillus, they seek to become the great power within the Tribunal. However, it has often been valuable to ally with them, for their goals have usually been the same as ours.

- Rellantali — They are weak, all but crushed by us long ago. If they had anything else we wanted, we would take it from them. Now they are harmless.

- Sansaron — Isolated hedge wizards who want little to do with our Tribunal. They have always been ignored because they care so little about the politics of our Tribunal.

- Vardian's Tomb — Harmless Magi, not dangerous to us in the least. They're easily manipulated, helping us to bring about our own goals.

STORY IDEAS FOR VERDI

- The Verdi competitions which are to occur in 1199 and 1217 can be a great source for story ideas. Perhaps a young Verditius character brings her item to the competition, and finds herself caught up in a web of plots, designed to assure a certain Magus victory. Does the young Verditius go along with her elders, helping to steal or even destroy other magic items which may be in the way of victory, or does she reveal the conspiracy?

- Perhaps a boatload of Magi headed to the competition never arrives. All the Magi of the Roman Tribunal could be called into action, to find the missing Magi before word of the embarrassing incident escapes the Italian peninsula. The search could be extremely competitive as the Magi of different Covenants seek to discover their lost brethren, and thus gain respect and recognition.

- Many stories could stem from magic items that long-dead Magi of Verdi have left behind. Tales tell of Himinis the Mad, who left behind many cursed devices. Tales also tell of Ubertino of Verditius, who would have been a Jerbiton if not for his great aptitude for invention. The three swords he created — Faith, Love and Truth — were each designed to inspire an emotion in the human heart. There was also Anguis, rumored to have learned magicks from the great dragon Siguson, who is said to have incorporated his magic into some great items. In



turn, the Verditius Maren made great weapons for kings before the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal Interfered.

- A story could simply involve hearing of a magic item, doing research into it and eventually searching it out. Or a story could involve something more insidious. What political manipulations might result if characters stumble upon one of Ubertino's three great swords, and learn Verdi will do almost anything to claim the discovery?

Other Covenants

Aside from the larger, older Covenants of the Roman Tribunal, there are several smaller, younger ones. Some of these Covenants are not even officially recognized by the Tribunal, but are allowed to exist because recognized Magi are too preoccupied with their own plots. Otherwise they might crush the independents, to seize their power. Although smaller Covenants, even the recognized ones, have less power than their elders, they are no less dangerous. Most still wield the political and magical influence that allowed them to form in the first place.

LUCTATIO

Symbol: A spider web

Season: Spring

Year Founded: A.D. 1172

House Affiliation: Tytalus

Aura: Magic 2

Members: six; Erimas of Tytalus, Flaren of Flambeau, Mario of Tytalus, Notatio of Tytalus, Paul of Jerbiton and Turati of Tytalus

Number of Groggs: 10

Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: Creo 3, Intéllego 5, Muto 3, Perdo 4, Rego 4, Animal 0, Aquam 0, Auram 4, Córpoem 5, Herbam 3, Ignem 5, Imágonem 4, Mentem 5, Terram 2, Vim 6

Library Ability Scores: Magic Theory 3, Commune Lore 4, Hermes History 2, Church Lore 3, Church Knowledge 2, Hermes Law 2, Hermes Lore 5, Humanities 2

The Covenant of Luctatio, located in Lombardy (see *The Roman Tribunal* map), is oddly spread about. It maintains a small manor in the countryside of Milan, a townhouse in the Milan, a tower in Pavia and the usual townhouse in Venice. Although the Covenant is not as opulent as Harco, Luctatio is relatively well off. On occasion, the Covenant has hosted other Magi in the Venice townhouse, and those Magi have always gone away impressed.

The Tytalus of Luctatio are among the most competitive of their House, thriving on conflict in ways even other Tytalus consider extreme. It is was the local competition, both mercantile and magical, that drew this newly arrived group of Tytalus to the Roman Tribunal. Among other things, Luctatio is playing a game with the cities of Milan and Pavia. The Covenant is split into two groups, each influencing the destiny



of a chosen city. The Magus Erimas sits on the Council of Pavia, and is helped by Flaren and Notatio. In Milan, both Mario and Paul sit upon the Council. The Magus Turati stipulates the rules on how each city government can be manipulated, and decides when one side and city is defeating the other, be the contest in trade, land acquisition or war. Magvillus would be most distressed if its Quaesitoris learned of Luctatio's political game.

Within the Tribunal, Luctatio plays other Covenants against each other, gaining power as the intensity of conflicts rise between them; Luctatio almost always allies with the winning side. Helping other Covenants in their plots, Luctatio is popular in the Tribunal and respected as an ally by most. Only Magvillus is opposed to Luctatio, mainly because the Magi of Luctatio use popular dislike for Quaesitoris as a tool in their manipulations.

POSTESTAS

Symbol: A clenched fist over a wave

Season: Summer

Year Founded: A.D. 870

House Affiliation: Tremere

Aura: Magic 4

Members: five; Garvil, Davan, Karantia, Tiana and Tolas, all of Tremere

Number of Groggs: 15

Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: Creo 7, Intéllego 9, Muto 4, Perdo 9, Rego 7, Animál 4, Aquam 7, Auram 6, Córpoem 10, Herbam 3, Ignem 7, Imágonem 6, Mentem 9, Terram 5, Vim 10

Library Ability Scores: Magic Theory 6, Hermes History 7, Hermes Lore 8, Hermes Law 6, Occult Lore 4, Arabic Instruction 5

Located on the east coast of Italy, Postestas is a great fortress overlooking the Adriatic Sea (see *The Roman Tribunal* map). The Covenant is filled with luxuries such as stained glass, silk and gold, all gained from secret trade deals with the Levant.

The interior of Postestas is separated into two tiers. The outer tier, located slightly lower on the mountain, is the home of the Covenant's Groggs, covenfolk and visitors. A set of guarded stairs at the rear of the outer tier leads to a large courtyard, which marks the beginning of Postestas' inner tier. A circle of inlaid obsidian sits in the center of the courtyard. This circle is used for all *Certámen* within the Covenant. Surrounding the courtyard is a cathedral-like building which houses the Covenant's council room, and labs of resident Magi.

The members of Postestas plot to seize control of the Roman Tribunal. Over the years, many schemes and plans have put Postestas' Magi on good terms with other Covenants of the Tribunal; little do the others know the Covenant's true intentions. In fact, many Roman Magi owe Postestas favors for good deeds done in the past. Postestas hopes to turn the good will it has fostered to carefully engineer the overthrow of the Tribunal, putting Rome firmly in the hands of House Tremere. Until that happens, the conniving Magi wait.

SANSARON

Symbol: A mountain standing over a desert

Season: Summer

Year Founded: A.D. 951

House Affiliation: None

Aura: Magic 5

Members: four; Narisian Ex Miscellanea, Barontel Ex Miscellanea, Samnium of Bjornaer and Talon of Criamon

Number of Groggs: 13

Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: Creo 6, Intéllego 5, Muto 9, Perdo 12, Rego 10, Animál 6, Aquam 3, Auram 9, Córpoem 11, Herbam 2, Ignem 13, Imágonem 7, Mentem 7, Terram 10, Vim 12

Library Ability Scores: Magic Theory 4, Hermes History 3, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes Law 1, Occult Lore 6, Arabic Instruction 8, Carthaginian Magic 4, Fantastic Beast Lore 3, Humanities 4, Medicine 3, Enigmatic Wisdom 3

Sansaron is located in the ruins of Carthage, a city destroyed well before the birth of Christ. Specifically, the residents dwell in magically carved passages, located under the ruins of a temple to some old Carthaginian god. Few Magi come to Sansaron, and when they do they are ignored or treated with disdain.

The Covenant of Sansaron survives by selling magic items to the nearby mundanes of Tunis. Many of their sales violate the Treaty of the Roman Tribunal, but complaints have never been lodged against the Covenant. On the rare occasions that Magi of the Order do travel to North Africa, they attribute (or are convinced to attribute) any magical items held by mundanes to Arabic invention.

Sansaron is interesting on two counts. Its Magi have discovered scrolls and items dealing with ancient Carthaginian magic. The magic seems much more personalized than Hermetic magic, but its spells seem more powerful than Hermetic, surpassing some of the Hermetic bounds of magic! Unfortunately, Sansaron's findings are still incomplete, so none of the Magi have successfully cast a Carthaginian spell.

On these second count, some of Sansaron's Groggs secretly follow hedge wizards who live further inland. The Groggs and wizards are plotting revenge against the Order and plan to use Sansaron as a stepping stone. Diabolism is at the bottom of this plot, and could mean the end of the Roman Tribunal.

VARDIAN'S TOMB

Symbol: None

Season: Spring

Year Founded: A.D. 1014

House Affiliation: None

Aura: Magic 1, Dominion 3

Members: five; Fortunatus of Jerbiton, Luke of Jerbiton, Meles of Criamon, Rubaton Ex Miscellanea and Tarith Ex Miscellanea

Number of Groggs: 5

Armaments: Poor

Library Art Scores: Creo 3, Intéllego 5, Muto 3, Perdo 4, Rego 5, Animál 2, Aquam 2, Auram 2, Córpoem 8, Herbam 2, Ignem 5, Imágonem 3, Mentem 4, Terram 3, Vim 8

Library Ability Scores: Magic Theory 3, Hermes History 2, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes Law 1, Occult Lore 8, Roman Lore 4, Church Lore 3, Humanities 4, Legend Lore 4, Medicine 3

Beneath the lands upon which the city of Rome stands are many catacombs. These are narrow passages that wind among the tombs of the earliest Christians. In the times of the Roman Empire, many of these catacombs were used by oppressed Christians, hiding from the most violent of the purges. By the time of your *Ars Magica* Saga, many of these catacombs have been forgotten.

South of Rome, near the Tiber (see *The Roman Tribunal* map), one of these "forgotten" catacombs has been claimed by a group of mixed Magi. The meeting place was first founded in the early 10th century by a group of Jerbiton. The group appealed for recognized Covenant status but was denied by the Tribunal. Established Covenants did not want further competition for mundane trade, and saw a Covenant so close to Rome as nothing but a competitor. Recognized Roman Magi also feared that a Covenant close to Rome would eventually gain the favor of the Pope, and become powerful as a result, or worse

still, would offend the Papacy and bring God's wrath down upon the entire Order.

The Jerbiton Magi were undaunted, though. Their location in the catacombs was still relatively unknown, so they remained there, working their magic and interacting with nearby mundanes as if Covenant status had been granted. The Divine Aura of the catacombs was an interference in early magical works, but magical efforts developed a Magical Aura over time. To help foster this Aura, the Jerbiton Magi invited a group of Magi Ex Miscellanea to join them, hoping a wide range of magicks would nurture the Aura's growth. The new Magi helped bolster the Magic Aura, but later proved necromancers who had their own reasons for living among the dead.

Once the existence of Vardian's Tomb was discovered by other Magi of the Tribunal, there was some talk of destroying the Magi. However, no Covenant trusted another, fearing one would balk and attack the Covenants left undefended by absent Magi. Magi also feared another schism in the Order, and realized that a magical battle in Rome itself would draw the attention of the Papacy.

Since the time of the necromancers' arrival, Vardian's Tomb has been a fractured place. The necromancers and Jerbiton rarely see eye to eye on any issue, and both seek to have the others ousted from the "Covenant" and Tribunal. In many ways, the conflicts of Vardian's Tomb are a microcosm of the struggles of the Tribunal itself. As Vardian's Tomb slowly weakens, so does the Tribunal, and if neither body can resolve its differences, both may eventually perish.

FERITEL

Symbol: None

Season: Spring

Year Founded: A.D. 1117

House Affiliation: None

Aura: Divine 2, Magic 1

Members: three; Anson of Jerbiton, Herzak of Verditius and Ranitel of Jerbiton

Number of Grogs: 10

Armaments: Standard

Library Art Scores: Creo 5, Intéllego 4, Muto 3, Perdo 2, Rego 5, Animál 0, Aquam 0, Auram 1, Córpoem 6, Herbam 5, Ignem 4, Imágonem 2, Mentem 5, Terram 6, Vim 10

Library Ability Scores: Magic Theory 5, Hermes History 5, Hermes Lore 3, Hermes Law 3, Genoese Lore 6, Humanities 6, Medicine 5, Church Knowledge 4, Church Lore 4, Verditius Magic 4, Craft — Metal 3, Craft — Wood 3, Legend Lore 3

Like Vardian's Tomb, Feritel is an independent Covenant, one that has never been recognized by the Roman Tribunal. As such, it does not have legal claim to any magical resources, and Magi of Mercere are not required to make visits to the Covenant.

Feritel Magi would have liked to have formed an official Covenant, but politics of the Tribunal made that impossible. The Magi have learned to accept their situation. The Covenant has only been allowed to maintain its existence because it lies under the protection of mundane authorities, whom Magi of the Order would prefer not to offend. In the mundane world, Feritel is officially a subject commune of Genoa (see *The Roman Tribunal* map). The "Covenant's" land is scarcely larger than a fief, housing only a few hundred people, but the title was given to Feritel as a sign of respect. The Magi made their existence as wizards known to the highest of local nobles, and those men and women were able to convince the local council to grant Feritel recognized political status.

The Magi of Feritel live the life of nobility. When they can, they use their arts to help the people of Genoa. Occasionally, Genoa has called upon Feritel to engage in certain tasks, and the Magi have almost always been happy to oblige. Long ago, the Magi of Feritel made it clear what they legally can and cannot do for mundanes (trying to abide by the Code of Hermes even though it is not officially binding). So far mundanes have not made excessive demands upon the Magi (although desperate nobility could one day prove quite demanding, forcing Feritel's Magi to choose between hope of Tribunal recognition or destruction at the hands of mortal armies).

INDEPENDENT MAGI

There are several independent Magi in the Roman Tribunal. These Magi and wizards (some belong to magical traditions outside the Order of Hermes) generally belong to two different groups: naturalistic Magi, who live in scant forests and plentiful hill lands; and sociable Magi, who live among mundanes and lab workers, selling items to the nobility. Wizards working in Italy's wild lands often do so because their roots are there, either in the Cult of Mercury or in some other more obscure tradition. Wizards working in mortal lands often do so because they appreciate the rewards offered, or seek the protection of mundane steel.

By and large, these Magi and wizards keep their existence quiet, working secretly in the Roman Tribunal to avoid Hermetic prosecution (legends of Flambeau and his hunt for "heretics" still haunt sensitive ears). Even Magi trained in the Order, who now work independently, try to keep their efforts quiet. They realize how scarce raw vis supplies in the Roman Tribunal are, and realize that other Magi might kill to get vis, or might kill those caught (or even suspected of) stealing it.



MYTHIC PLACES

CHAPTER SIX



or centuries, the magic of the Roman Tribunal has been in gradual decline. Due to the long history of magic in Italy, and the ever-growing influence of the Divine, Magical and Faerie Auras have slowly

faded, raw vis sources have disappeared, and many other things, magical and mysterious, have simply passed into the Italian history books. This is not to say that magic is utterly gone from Italy. Even in the 13th century, new magical discoveries are made, although they're very rare. Deep in the Apennine Mountains, or hidden in the wilds of Sicily, a wandering Magus may still find mythic places.

These places may be introduced into your Saga by way of rumor, stories or legend. Perhaps a wandering minstrel may know of a certain mystical chapel, and alludes to it in a song. Perhaps a Magus, while doing other research, stumbles upon a piece of information leading to a strange site.

Although the mythic places in this Chapter are all located on *The Roman Tribunal* map, they should be used as you feel it appropriate. If one place doesn't fit the themes of your Saga, it should be ignored or replaced with a locale more thematically satisfying.

Also keep in mind that the following mythic places can be introduced to a story but need not be the center of that story. They may be encountered only briefly, and then returned to later in the same or another story. Indeed, some mythic places may become recurring settings in your Saga, as characters return again and again to enjoy the special magicks and beings of the place.

The Realm of Polyphemus

Long ago, before the glory of Rome, there was a war. It was an epic battle between the people of Greece and the citizens of Troy, and it was fought for the love of one woman. When the war was done, and the city of Troy destroyed, a great hero named Ulysses began the long journey home. It was 10 years before he finally returned. During his journeys, Ulysses came upon the eastern coast of Sicily. There he met Polyphemus, a great Cyclops.

The Legend of Polyphemus

"And we came to the land of the Cyclopes, a fierce, uncivilized people who never lift a hand to plant or plough but put their trust in Providence. All the crops they require spring up unsown and untilled, wheat and barley and the vines whose generous clusters give them wine when ripened for them by the timely rains. The Cyclopes have no assemblies for the making of laws, nor any settled customs, but live in hollow caverns in the mountain heights, where each man is lawgiver to his children and wives, and nobody cares a bit for his neighbors."

— Homer, *The Odyssey*

Polyphemus

Polyphemus is a huge humanoid creature, nearly 50 feet tall. He is covered by dark hair, fleas and louses, and wears dirty, soiled clothes made of rough wool. In the middle of Polyphemus' face is the ruins of his single eye. Occasionally, tears drip from the sundered orb.

Since the other Cyclopes left, Polyphemus has grown quiet and introspective. Trapped in a world of darkness and left without companionship, he is now desperate for any fellowship. Still, old fears live, so the mundanes never come near Polyphemus' lands. If approached, Polyphemus tries to befriend travelers. All too often, however, warriors and knights come to Polyphemus, hoping to slay him. Polyphemus defends himself against these folk, unleashing the rage inspired by his tortures.

Magic Might: 40

Vital Statistics: Size +5, Intelligence (oafish) -3, Perception (fumbling) -5, Strength (massive build) +12, Stamina (tremendous will) +10, Presence (foul) -3, Communication (bellowing) -2, Dexterity (clumsy) -2, Quickness (staggering) -3

Virtues and Flaws: Blind (effects on combat calculated below) -5

Personality Traits: Lonely +3, Regretful +4

Reputation: Cruel (legends) 6

Confidence: 1

Combat Totals:

Pummel Attack: First Strike +16, Attack +0, Damage +30*

Thrown Rock Attack: Rate 1, Attack -7, Damage +50*

* A parry is ineffective against these attacks

Body Levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5/-5, Incapacitated

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

Dodge Defense -10 (-4 Action), **Soak** +30 (36 Action), **Fatigue** +15

Encumbrance: 0

Abilities: Guile (state of hunger) 7, Legend Lore (Greek legend) 8, Pretend (helplessness) 5, Storytelling (Greek legends) 8, Sicily Lore (smells) 10

Powers:

The Curse of Poseidon, ReAq 50, 0 Points — Like all of the Cyclopes of Sicily, it is said that Polyphemus is a son of Poseidon. Whether Poseidon was a true god, an Old One (as the Seekers preach) or just a legend no one may say. However, it is clear that some power watches over Polyphemus. When Polyphemus lays a curse, which he only does if greatly angered or hurt, the ocean becomes the victim's enemy. The victim is beset by storms, whirlpools and even intelligent denizens of the depths. The curse can only be dispelled if the victim may somehow appease either Polyphemus or Poseidon himself.

Vis: 20 Córpoem, body

The Cyclops slew many of Ulysses' crew, but Ulysses was finally able to use his wits to overcome his opponent. With a huge, sharpened stick he was able to put out the beast's single eye and escaped. Polyphemus threw great boulders after Ulysses' ship, but Ulysses escape them all. Now three isles mark the last of Polyphemus' wrath.

In the 13th century, the inhabitants of Italy avoid the area to the southeast of Mount Etna, where the last of the Cyclopes is still said to dwell. Unseasonal fogs constantly shroud the area. The few foolish captains who have sailed into the region have never returned.

POLYPHEMUS' HOME

Hundreds of years ago, the Cyclopes of eastern Sicily left their land behind. Perhaps mankind was growing too near them, or perhaps they simply faded, as the magic of land did. When the other Cyclopes disappeared, one was still left behind, Polyphemus.

Approaching Polyphemus' lands, one is first struck by the devastation of the area. Wild grains grow rampantly and every tree within miles has been destroyed by Polyphemus, in anguish over his ancient injury. Inland, the geography grows

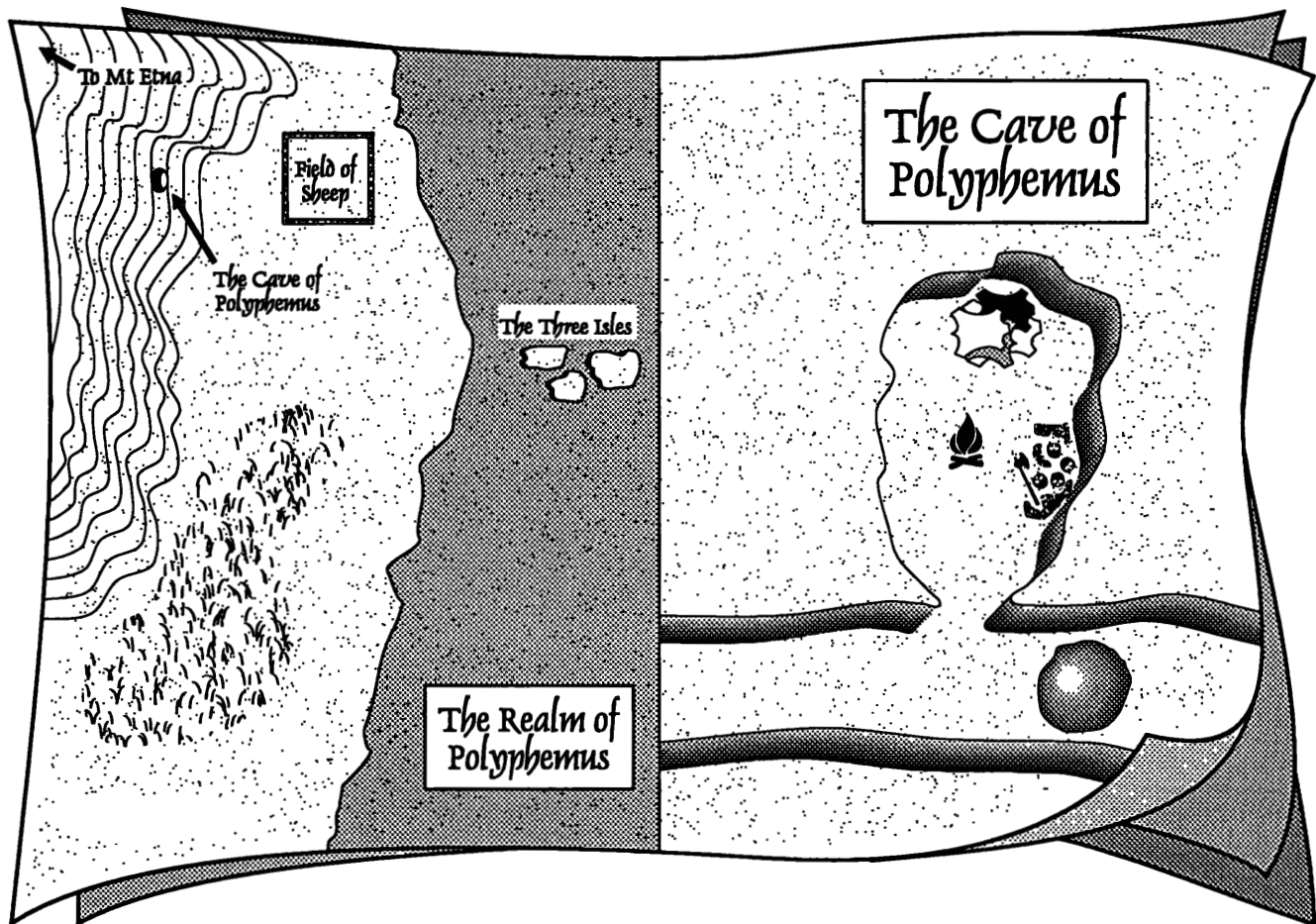
more hilly, and leads to a very steep cliff. At the top of this cliff is the cave of Polyphemus.

At the foot of the cliff is a herd of sheep fenced by walls of stone. Next to the entrance to the cave is a huge rock, movable only by mythical beasts and great spells. This is the door stone of Polyphemus. Within the cave a stench emanates from an ancient pile of refuse. A fire in the middle of the cave burns constantly. In the rear of the cave is Polyphemus' pile of sleeping furs. The furs are only marginally cleaner than the nearby refuse. Overall, the entire cave is dank, smoky, and foul. This is truly a terrible place to live, even for such a loathsome beast.

For the location of Polyphemus' cave, see the map of his lands.

STORY IDEAS

- Magi may stumble across a reference to Polyphemus that indicates his great knowledge of Sicily. If they are trying to research an item or creature said to be in Sicily, characters are wise to search out and question Polyphemus. Of course, if the Magi's source simply called Polyphemus "the Blind Seer," they may be in for quite a surprise.



- If Polyphemos is befriended, he might ask characters to help him find a new eye. Perhaps he knows of a creature from which an appropriate eye can be taken, such as a gryphon or a magical wolf. Alternatively, he might suggest a magical means to restore his vision. Verdi might have an appropriate device. If Polyphemos' sight is restored, he offers information on a nearby hoard.

- Polyphemos could have killed a mighty knight or an ancient Magus. Information could be found which tells of a great item or a holy artifact carried by the slain. A valiant Companion or Grog might try to retrieve this item from Polyphemos' possession.

- A whole cycle of adventures could center around the question of where the Cyclopes went when they left, centuries ago. If Polyphemos is reunited with his fellows, the riches heaped upon his saviors could be great.

The Shadow Senate

Long ago, when Rome was still young, the Republic was controlled by a Senate. The Senate was made up of the patriarchs of the city, who exerted as much control as any single dictator. But, as time passed, Rome became an Empire. As the emperors grew in power, the Senate slowly faded into the mists of history. Or so it seemed.

Ancient laws in Rome forbade burials within the city walls. But in the 3rd century B.C. that statute was broken. It was the time of the first Punic War, and it seemed that the new-found

Roman Republic would be crushed. So, six Senators came together and made a deal with an emissary of Hell (disguised as a messenger of the gods). If Rome were to fall, they agreed, they would be returned to the world. For a thousand years they would be allowed to dwell upon the earth, to lead Rome back to its former glory. The only cost was each of the Senators' souls, a small price for such a great promise.

After that pact was signed, the Senators passed the way of all men. Each was placed within a tomb, carefully concealed beneath the house of Agatuzzo, the leader of the coven. For centuries the bodies were watched over by Agatuzzo's ancestors. Then, in 476, the Empire finally collapsed. As the Devil had sworn, the six Senators were returned to this world. They were not returned as hearty young men, though, as anticipated, but as undead revenants, pale shadows of their former selves.

Since their revival, the six creatures have done their best to rule Rome from their tomb. In the 13th century, they have spies among all classes in the city. Several decisions of great import can be traced to the Shadow Senate, most recently the ascension of Pope Innocent III to the papacy. However, for the most part the Shadow Senate has not gained as much control as its members would like. Several of the Senators now grow desperate, afraid that their time will end and they will lapse back into eternal damnation before restoring Rome.

THE TOMB

The tomb of the Shadow Senate can now be entered through the house of Pietro, a rich merchant whose family has obeyed the Shadow Senate for many generations. When a tapestry in Pietro's bedroom is pulled aside, a large iron-shod door is revealed. The ancient key which opens the door is worn around Pietro's neck. Beyond the door is an old shaky ladder which leads down to the tomb.

The central room of the tomb is occupied by a large table. Seven chairs sit around the table. Six sit before the Senators' individual tombs. The seventh chair sits before the entrance to an unholy shrine. The seventh chair has only been occupied three times since the Senators rose in 476, occupied by demons brought forth through sacrifice. If the Senators are awake, not waiting in their tombs and sleeping dreamlessly, they are seated at the table.

The unholy shrine is largely empty. The only object within is a dark altar, made entirely of obsidian. Dried blood encrusts the altar and has splattered the walls. The Senators occasionally sacrifice creatures here. They engage in a ritual that each knows, and then kill a creature at a climatic moment. When the ritual is done, questions are asked and the answer forms in the blood. The larger the creature killed, the more clear the answer. Long ago, the Shadow Senators learned the best answers were realized when a human was killed, bringing forth a demonic informant.



The Revenants

Each of the six Senators has the same essential statistics. Thus, the following numbers may be used for all of them. This is not to say that all are the same. Agatuzzo, the leader, is proud and arrogant (Haughty +3), while Antonio has begun to worry about his final fate (Preoccupied +2). In life, Francisco jumped at the smallest shadows and still does (Cowardly +3), while Mario has always been the least intelligent of the six (Slow-Witted +5). Bernoni has begun to wonder if the Senate's leadership is the correct one (Loyal -2), and Giuseppe has ceased to care about Rome over the centuries (Bored +4).

Infernal Might: 20

Vital Statistics: Size 0, Intelligence (cunning) +1, Perception 0, Strength 0, Stamina (feel no pain) +5, Presence (decrepit) -4, Communication (gravelly voices) -1, Dexterity 0, Quickness 0

Virtues and Flaws: None

Reputation: None (yet)

Personality Traits: Cruel +1, Manipulative +3, Plotting +2

Confidence: 5

Combat Totals:

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Destroyed

Dodge Defense +0 (Action 6), **Soak** +5 (Action 11), **Fatigue** n/a

Abilities: Rome Lore (authority figures) 8

Powers:

Aura of Rightful Authority, ReMe 20, 0 Points — Dark magic has helped the Shadow Senators retain their former authority, despite the decay of their bodies. Whenever one gives an order, it is followed through unless an appropriate Personality Trait (like Stubborn) or Stamina stress roll of 6+ is made. A successful Magic Resistance roll also defies a command. If any resistance roll is Botched, the command is followed to the letter, without question, even if it means the enactor's death.

Vis: 5 Mentem each, skulls

The entire tomb is an area of Infernal power. It bears an Infernal Aura of two, except for the shrine's room, which has an Aura of three.

For the layout of the tomb, see the *Tomb of the Shadow Senate* map.

STORY IDEAS

- Through their Infernal rituals, the Shadow Senate may learn the characters' Covenant will eventually foil some of their carefully laid plans. The Senators therefore pit their Infernal agents against the Covenant. First they try to corrupt the characters, bringing them into the Senate's circle of power. If that fails, more destructive techniques are devised. In the end

the characters may still foil some great plan of the Senate, as the ritual had predicted, perhaps because the Senate assaulted the characters in the first place.

- The Shadow Senate could learn of some genuine threat to the City of Rome. Perhaps there's a new barbarian invasion or a heresy that could overtake the whole Church. Through intermediaries, Magi might be convinced to help stop this new threat. What might the rewards that the Shadow Senate offers be? What do characters do if they discover the true nature of their benefactors?

- Covenfolk disappear while in Rome, stolen by servants of the Shadow Senate. Are the Magi able to pierce the subtle layers of intrigue that surround the Senate to save their covenfolk before it is too late?

- Characters might run into some plot of an individual Senator, rather than a plot of the entire group. Perhaps Antonio seeks salvation, and needs some holy artifact to accomplish that end. Giuseppe could be causing random havoc in Rome, trying to find something to alleviate his tedium.

The Last Italian Faerie Forest

Once upon a time, Faerie forests covered the entirety of Italy. As time passed and civilization blossomed, the Faerie forests have slowly declined. In recent centuries, the disappearance of the forests has been perpetuated by Magi hoping to

capture some last vestige of magic from the land. In the 13th century there is only one great Faerie forest left in the Roman Tribunal, located mainly on Sicily, but also touching the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, as well as many places upon the mainland itself (see *The Roman Tribunal* map).

Italy's last Faerie forest is a great, rambling place. Although it touches many parts of southern Italy, its very borders seem to shift from year to year. Even if an expedition had the resources to map such a large area, the effort would fail. Only those with the blood of the Fay may traverse the forest without becoming confused by its changes. Within the forest, there are a number of spots of interest, some of which are noted below. Without faerie blood, but knowledge of faerie rituals (the magic of Merinita, as imparted by the +1 Faerie Magic Virtue), reliable routes to the forest's sites may be found. Otherwise, visitors are helpless in the hands of the Fay. There are many *regio* within the forest. According to rumor, there may even be an entrance to Arcadia itself.

THE THREE PROTECTORS

The main reason for the survival of the last Italian Faerie forest lies with its protectors. There are three forces that keep Magi and mundanes from destroying this unique wood. The first of these protectors is Silva Ambages, a Magus of Merinita. She is an independent Magus, recently arrived in Italy. With subtle spells of confusion and trickery, she is able to keep outsiders from harming the forest. Silva is also the healer of the forest, coming to the aid of those forest residents who have been harmed. She has even been known to help forest intruders, but only those who have proven good intentions for the wood.

Faeries comprise the second protective force within the forest. They are mainly members of the Seelie Court, led by one named Shen. Above all other things, Shen is a trickster, and trickery permeates his entire domain. This is not to say that he is not prepared to take serious action, but only when necessary. In less critical encounters, he and his followers like to play practical jokes upon interlopers — Steris of Verdi, the last Verditius to enter the forest, left braying like an ass. Anson of Sansaron was once trapped within the forest for five years; the illusionary magic of the faeries convinced him that he had returned home to his own Covenant. Satyrs, nymphs, fauns, elves, sprites and imps are some of the many denizens of the last Italian Faerie forest.

The last protectors of the forest are a group of seven werewolves. They call themselves the Silver Fangs, and unlike Silva and Shen they plan nothing but violence for forest interlopers. The werewolves realize Magi are destroying the forest's areas of magic, and that mundanes are constantly destroying the forest's nature, so pursue a very permanent solution to problems. Relations between the faeries and werewolves are a bit strained — the carefree attitude of the Seelie is quite disturbing to the werewolves — although each understands the other also protects the forest.

The leader of the werewolves is an old warrior. In mortal tongue, his name is Antonio. He has fought the incursions of



foreigners for many years and has grown very tired. When he passes on, he hopes the next pack leader will be as vehement in resisting incursions as he. Antonio has been blessed with the power to sense beings of corruption, such as demons and those tainted by diabolic pact.

SITES OF INTEREST

As mentioned above, there are many places of interest within the Faerie forest. These places tend to shift location. Perhaps to successfully find the half-glade, visitors have to dance naked around a fire and eat a certain type of leaf. To find the werewolves' glen, people might have to follow a very circuitous route, involving circling certain types of trees.

The Half-Glade

Within the Faerie forest there is a certain glade, in which is a half circle of nine trees. The trees are close together, and the half circle they form is nearly perfect in shape, marking the trees as magical growth. At daytime, if you walk around the outside of the half-ring, the rest of the circle magically appears after passing the last tree. By completing the circle, travelers find themselves elsewhere. They find themselves in another glade of trees, near another half circle, but in a far away Faerie place. During the spring, the forest's portal usually leads to France, and in the summer to Germany. Walking the half-circle in Autumn usually brings the traveler to Hibernia, and in winter to the far away Transylvanian Tribunal. Each of these journeys may be reversed by walking the other half-circle, during the same season. Of course, the forest's half-circle is not an entirely reliable form of travel. At various times, it has sent unfortunate travelers to lands very strange and very far away. Such is the way of the Fay.

The Werewolves' Glen

At the center of the Faerie forest is the home of the werewolves. It is here that the shapechangers engage in their strange rituals of earth worship. The werewolves' home is an extremely supernatural place, with a Faerie Aura rated five. The home takes the form of a great glen, devoid of trees, except for one at the center. That tree is a huge evergreen. It towers over the entire forest, but may be seen from nowhere but the glen. If the glen is ever attacked, the wolves defend it with their lives. The tree has 20 pawns of Herbam vis contained within it, but extracting them destroys the tree. The werewolves, not to mention the forest's faeries, would be outraged at the great tree's destruction.

The Dancing Place

There is a great circle within the Faerie forest, cleared entirely of shrubs and trees. Only grass grows here, and that grass is seemingly mystical, for it is as comfortable to lie on as the softest of beds. The circle is clearly a place of importance, for a Faerie Aura of four presides. Every spring equinox, the circle is filled with satyrs, nymphs and fauns, all of whom dance

from dusk to dawn to welcome in the new year. It is said that if a mortal finds a partner there on that night, and dances from dusk to dawn (Stamina + Athletics stress roll of 15+ needed; on a Botch the poor victim dies of exhaustion), that partner will answer one question as the sun rises. The answer to the question will be utterly truthful and the knowledge of the entire Faerie forest will be drawn upon for it.

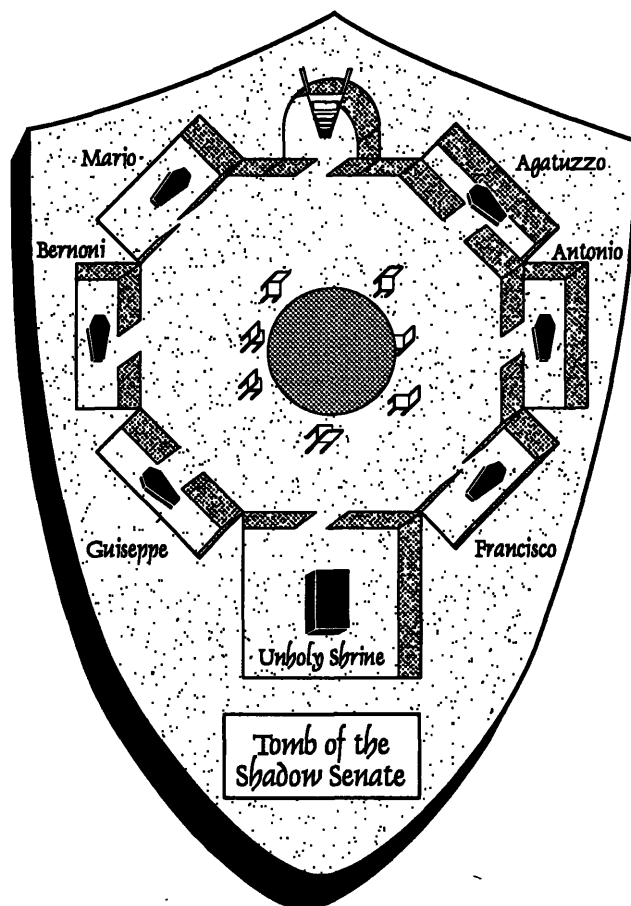
The Dark Places

There are several places of darkness within the Faerie forest. Ancient evils live within, fearful to even the faeries of the wood. By controlling the forest's Faerie *regio*, Shen is able to keep most of these foul places and creatures locked away from the rest of the forest, but the occasional beast does escape, terrorizing the forest until it is killed or flees.

In a fit of anger, Shen might exile characters into a dark place, or he might ask them to kill an old evil. Groves full of rotted trees, old dank caves and areas devoid of vegetation are some of the things that mark dark places. Ogres, demons, drakes and wyrms are some of the creatures that might be found within.

STORY IDEAS

• Although the land of Sicily is officially owned by Magvillus, no concentrated effort has ever been made to collect all its its. Thus, the island is the best place in the Roman Tribunal to



found a new Covenant. Magvillus could be convinced to give up rights to land in the Faerie forest in return for promises of vis, or if the new Covenant swears allegiance to Magvillus.

- A Grog could enter the outskirts of the Faerie forest and become lost in its changing landscape. A Covenant expedition might be formed to find the missing *custos*. What happens to the Grog while his friends are searching for him?

- Magi could travel to the forest looking for some rare herb needed to heal a sick person, or to finish a longevity potion. If the characters do not try to harm the wood, they might be allowed to take the herb, but they have to endure the pranks of Shen's faeries all the same.

- Some great force could threaten the Faerie forest. Perhaps a dragon has decided to make its center his home, or some enterprising peasants have begun to construct a Church, with painful bells, close to the forest. Silva Ambages could seek help from Magi of the Order to drive off the dragon or to "discourage" the mundanes.

- Hearing of the dancing place within the wood, Magi of a nearby Covenant may spend Seasons enchanting great spells of endurance. Then, a Grog could be sent to the forest to try and divine some enormous secret upon the night of the spring equinox.

Graveyard of the Arch-Magi

Perhaps a hundred years after the formation of the Order, when the founders' apprentices were finally coming into their own, the first meeting of the Arch-Magi was held. It was a meeting of great decisions, where much of the Order's future was plotted out. One of those who spoke at the meeting was the Cramon Crantel. He convinced the others that a graveyard should be built for the Arch-Magi, where each could be taken after passing from the world. That graveyard was to be a place of protection, so that when the souls of Magi traveled on, their bodies would be forever safe. It was also proposed as a place of respect, where the names of the great would always be known. To this day, the graveyard still stands, a place of final rest for the most powerful of the Order.

TRADITIONS OF THE GRAVEYARD

Whenever an Arch-Mage dies, his body is taken by the other Arch-Magi of the Order. After appropriate ceremonies of farewell are completed by the Magus' home Covenant, Arch-Magi come to collect the body. Sometimes, the late Arch-Mage's closest friends are invited to attend the ceremonies at the graveyard. These people must swear to preserve the secret

of the graveyard's location. If that vow is broken, the vast power of all the Order's Arch-Magi would be arrayed against the offender.

The graveyard of the Arch-Magi is protected by the Covenant of Magvillus. The leader of that Covenant, currently Arliandus, has always known of the graveyard. If there is ever a threat to it, Arliandus will dispatch his associate members to deal with the problem. If that fails, he could bring all of the power of House Quaesitor to bear against violators.

THE HIDDEN TOMB

A day north of Magvillus, hidden in the Apennines, is the graveyard of the Arch-Magi (see *The Roman Tribunal* map). The mountain is a very secluded one, approachable only by a narrow, winding path. Parts of that path are further obstructed by ancient Imágonem rituals, embodied within *Waiting Spells*. If any unknowing person is to try and ascend the path, he or she might, unless careful or powerful, rapidly plunge to his or her death.

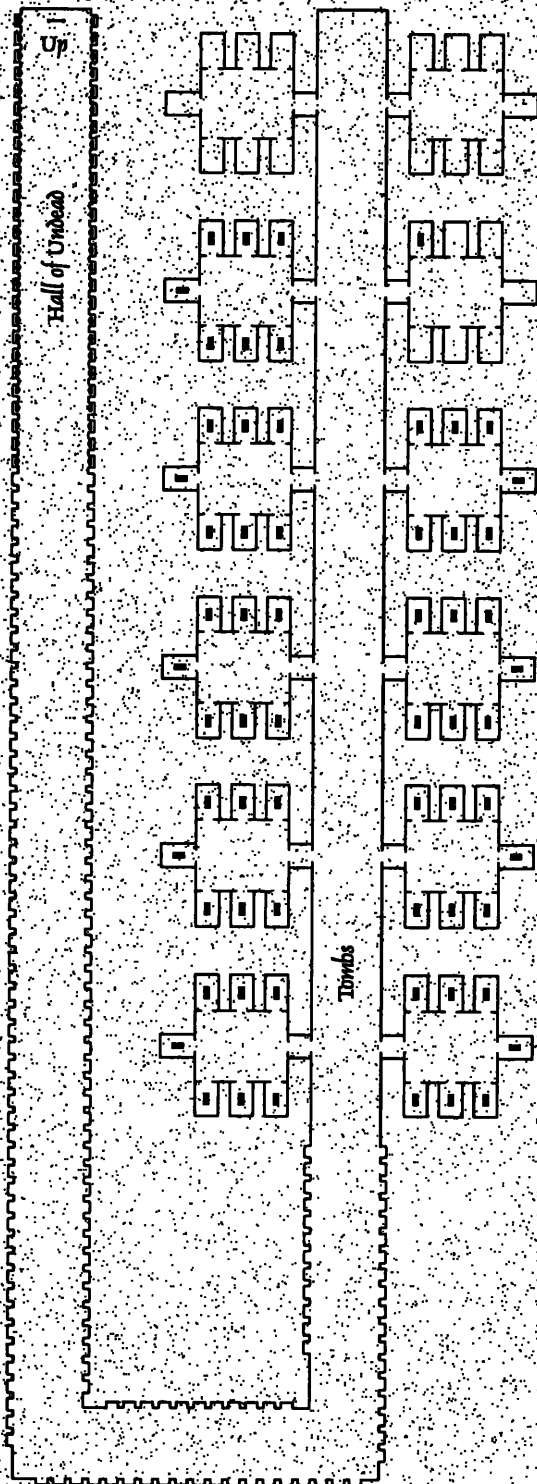
At the mountainous site of the graveyard is a Magical Aura rated six. A hole is visible from the hilltop, an iron ladder leading into the depths below. A ring of lead, with a radius of seven paces, surrounds the hole's entrance. Numerous spells are enchanted into this ring. *Ward Against the Beasts of Legend* (Rego Animál 40), *Circle of Beast Warding* (Rego Animál 20), *Ward Against Rain* (Rego Aquam 20), *Ward Against Faeries of the Mountains* (Rego Terram 40) and *Circular Ward Against Demons* (Rego Vim 40) are all invested ring, all with a constant Duration, keeping out creatures and the elements.

Magi are not as easily warded against as beasts, though, so a slightly more complex spell is needed to keep them from the graveyard. To deal with Magi, a spell has been created that causes the victim to be overcome by terror upon stepping into the ring (*The Ring of Terror*, Muto Mentem 35, constant Duration, Penetrates at +64). Aside from the Magic Resistance test, the victim also receives a Natural Resistance roll (as do all non-Magi); the victim must make an Intelligence + Brave stress roll. On a Botch, the terror is so great that the heart temporarily stops, causing 1d10+20 Damage. Unless a roll of 12+ is made, the victim flees in terror, not stopping until the sun next sets or rises. At the end of this period, the character loses all remaining Fatigue Levels, left at Unconscious. Even if the roll is successful, the victim is still quite shaken, suffering one extra Botch die for the remainder of the day.

If the target has the Valor Passion, its score may be used in place of Brave, and the roll is simple, not stress.

To enter the graveyard, an Arch-Mage usually casts *Suppressing the Wizard's Handiwork* (Rego Vim, at Level 35), to temporarily suppress the fear spell. (As the Arch-Magi all worked together to create the ward, and newly recognized Arch-Magi are indoctrinated into the spell's casting, all of their casting of *Suppressing* has effect on the ward.)

Grave Yard of the Arch Magi



Lore of the Order

"Of all the Magi in the Order, I find Arch-Magi to be the most interesting group. They meet in secret places, discussing the future of the Order. But, at the same time, they claim that they are not political in the least. Among their number, we find many Tytalus and Flambeau, some of the least thoughtful Houses. Yet great knowledge has come from the body. Some day I hope to determine whether the Arch-Magi truly control the Order or not. I fear what control by such a small group could lead to, but at the same time, I understand the possibilities, if only the Order were controlled by the right people."

— Tarus of Bonisagus, Politics of the Order

INSIDE THE GRAVEYARD

At the foot of the graveyard's ladder is a long tunnel leading into the tomb itself (for the layout of the graveyard, see the *Graveyard of the Arch-Magi* map). Along the sides of this tunnel are several hundred cavities. The first 50 or so contain skeletons and zombies (see *Ars Magica*, p. 316), each raised with the spell *The Walking Corpse* (Rego Corporem 25). These are the remnants of past violators of the tomb. If a certain constantly changing mantra, known only to Arch-Magi, is not chanted as a group advances down the hall, the undead attack when the violators are in their midst. Over a hundred cavities are still empty, waiting for new violators.

Past the cavities, passages begin to open to the right and left. Each leads into a small rectangular room with seven alcoves leading from each room, one opposite the door and three to each side. Each of these alcoves houses a sarcophagus, containing the remains of an Arch-Mage. So far, 64 Arch-Magi have been interred in the first 10 chambers of the graveyard. Each tomb contains a number of magic items as well as the bodies of Arch-Magi. Due to the tombs' number, it would be impossible to list all contents here.

Each tomb has an individual protector. For every tomb that is desecrated, the protector of that tomb haunts the desecrator, until all that was stolen is returned. Consider the victim to have the -2 Supernatural Flaw, Haunted.

STORY IDEAS

- When an Arch-Mage dies, his friends — the characters — are invited to bring his body to the Arch-Mage's graveyard. Unfortunately, the Arch-Mage had certain enemies who do not want his body to reach its final resting place.

- An enemy of Magvillus learns of the Arch-Magi's graveyard and wants to embarrass Magvillus. The characters are told of the place, duped into penetrating it, and maybe even helped to bypass some of its defenses. Unfortunately, the characters might not be told of some of the graveyard's defenses.

- Characters inadvertently end up with some item stolen from the Arch-Magi's graveyard. Unless they can dispose of the item, the characters are quickly drawn into a web of deceit and

treachery, in which Roman Quaesitoris try to recover the item and others try to lay claim to it.

The Resting Place of Mars

According to the Orders' Seekers, there once was a civilization of powerful beings named the Old Ones. They were creatures of enormous power, stronger than even the Order's greatest Magi. Millennia ago, the Old Ones' civilization was destroyed by one known as Tarhuti. Fleeing their shattered realm, the Old Ones came upon human lands and were worshipped as gods.

As centuries passed, the gods grew tired of the world and each sought out their own place to sleep the centuries away. In the 13th century, the Seekers are those who look for these people and their ancient lore. Never has one been located, but the Seekers still continue their search, each sure they will one day uncover the Old Ones, and take their ancient power.

In northern Italy there seems to be a place that is the center of war and fighting. Investigation reveals a strange burial ground beneath the spot. It's speculated that this could be the sleeping place of a great war deity, such as the Roman Mars.



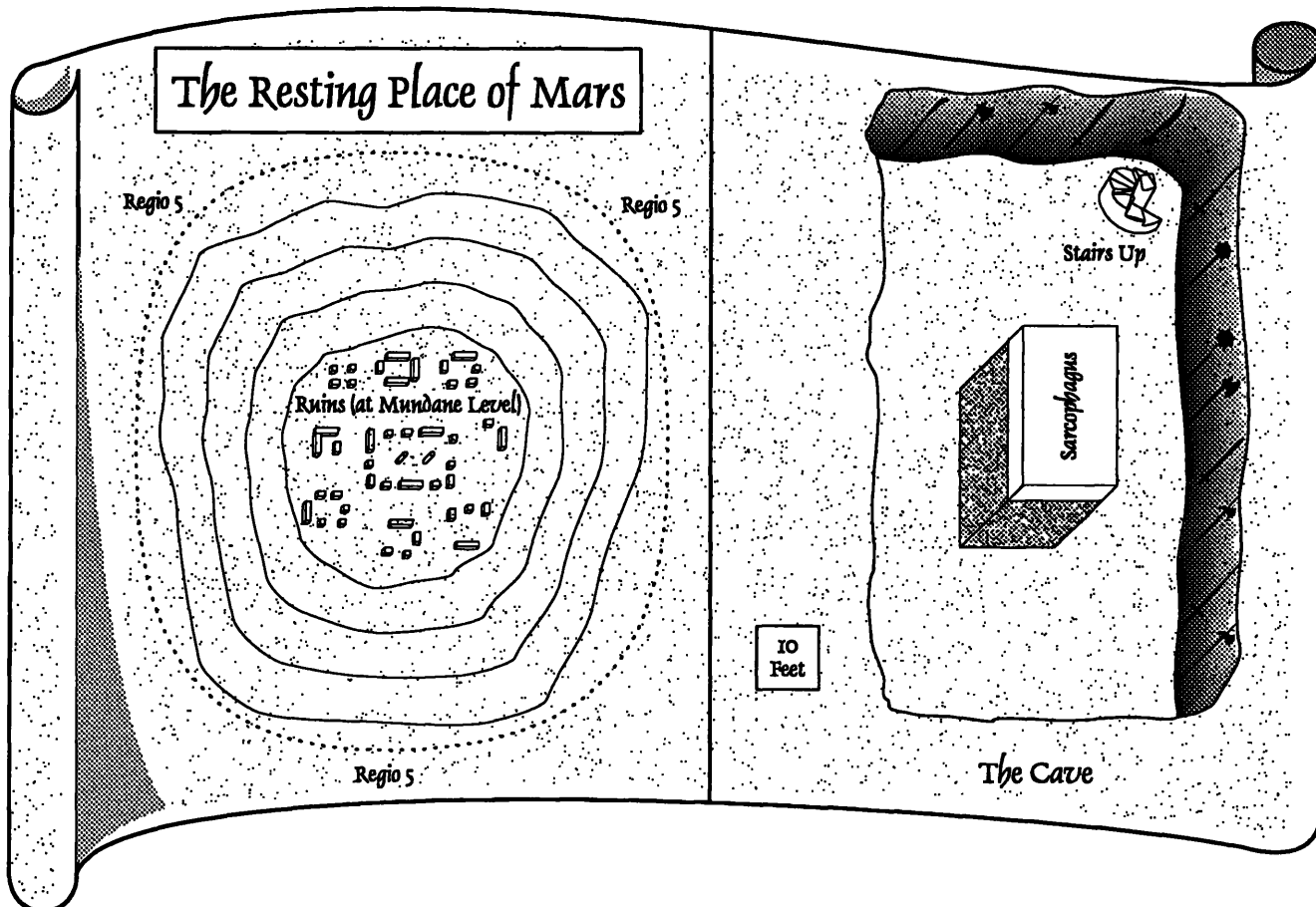
HISTORY

The Resting Place of Mars is located upon the plains of Lombardy, about 10 miles northwest of Milan (see *The Roman Tribunal* map). Traditionally, many armies have met on this spot. The ground is stained with the blood of thousands. When the Magi of Luctatio came to Lombardy, in 1162, they thought the history of the place a good one, so chose it as the site of their Covenant. The Magi were quite surprised when, several weeks after construction had begun, a huge army marched upon Milan. For a day the army stopped at the site of Luctatio and destroyed the Covenant's foundation, killing many workers and peasants. The great army then continued on toward its intended destination. The Magi of Luctatio thus decided that the tales of the land were dangerously true, so moved their Covenant slightly closer to Milan, away from the supposed resting place of the Old Ones.

THE MUNDANE REGIO

For the layout of the tomb's levels, see *The Resting Place of Mars* map.

On its mundane level, the Resting Place of Mars is a scattered set of ruins, just a few decades old. In few places does one block of stone still stand upon another, so complete was the



destruction of Luctatio. The ruins are at the top of a slight hill, which gradually slopes downward on all sides.

Even on the mundane level there is an undeniable aura of emotions about the hill. Within five miles, all "warlike" Personality Traits (such as Over-Confident, Brave, Stubborn, Arrogant, Violent and Bloodthirsty) are temporarily increased by one point. All "peaceful" Personality Traits (such as Friendly, Kind, Forgiving, Calm and Helpful) are all temporarily decreased by one. Within one mile of the hill's ruins,

these changes become +2 and -2, respectively. Those upon the hill have their warlike Traits increased by three points and their peaceful Traits decreased by three. (All of these modifiers also apply to Passions.) Beyond five miles, the effects of this emotional aura are more subdued, but it is very likely that the aura of the Resting Place of Mars has somehow caused the unrest that has plagued Lombardy for a millennium.

As with any other supernatural *regio*, a person may enter into the "upper" levels when investigating the mundane level. To do so, a character must roll 16+ upon moving up the hill's slope (see *Entering and Leaving Regio*, *Ars Magica*, p. 338), since the only upper level of the *regio* is Magical, ranked five. A character's highest warlike Personality Trait or Passion is added as a positive modifier to rolls to enter the *regio* level, but acts as a penalty to leave. Likewise, the character's highest peaceful Trait or Passion acts as a penalty to enter the fifth level, and acts as a bonus to leave. (These Traits and Passions are the character's unmodified ones, before the Aura's magical effect alters them.)

One may also slip into the higher *regio* by sitting on the hill and meditating upon the art of war and death. Several locals may know this ritual, having heard old stories of the Resting Place of Mars. Perhaps they are able to provide characters with some mantra or chant used to enter and leave the *regio* level. To enter the upper *regio* level in this way, a simple roll of the character's highest "warlike" Personality Trait (or Passion) + Meditation of 9+ must be made. Mantras or chants provided may apply +1 or +2 to this roll, at the Storyguide's discretion.

Lore from the Order

"The gods sleep on, and all who know the truth hope that they will sleep on until the end of time, for if they stirred from slumber and walked once more upon the earth, they could well destroy all of civilization, and likely the Order along with it. Always remember, despite how the Old Ones might appear, they are not human, but monstrous indeed."

"Today, it is said, the Old Ones sleep upon Mount Olympus, in the forest of Tertius Quid, and some say at Stonehenge. The dwellings of the gods do not exist in time as most things do, but rather return to time periodically as they will. Only if you visit those places at the right moment will you be able to enter the gods' palaces and gardens, and maybe meet with them, if you are lucky or accursed enough."

— Arch-Mage Infamitus, *The True Origins of the Magical Traditions*

THE MAGICAL REGIO(5)

As one moves into the Magical *regio* level, the ruins slowly fade until the hill is utterly free of any works of man. The grass is much taller, coming to a person's waist, as if no man ever marched across it. In the center of the hill, a great block appears, weighing perhaps a ton. On all four sides of the block, seven identical words are written. Unfortunately, those words are in some ancient language, utterly incomprehensible to even powerful *Intéllego* spells.

During the night of the new moon, the block of stone appears misty and insubstantial. When approached, a circular stone staircase can be seen beneath it, leading down into the earth. Travelers may walk straight through the stone, although a slight chill is felt when the block is passed through.

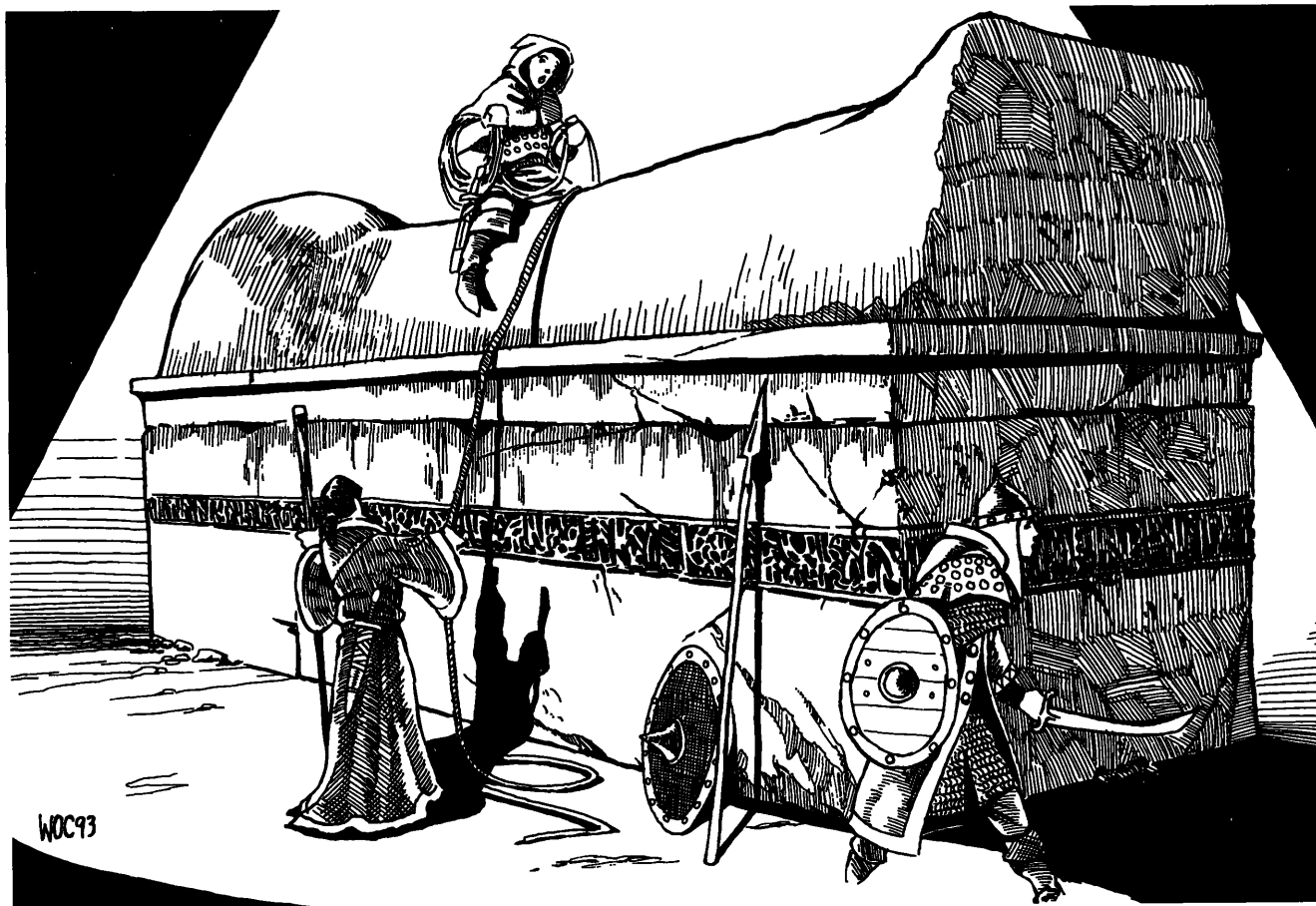
The staircase is a broad one, large enough for a creature twice the size of a human to descend. It circles downward for perhaps 30 feet before entering into a large room. It is a rough cavern, approximately rectangular, clearly constructed and not of natural make. The roof is nearly 20 feet high, while the cavern is 100 feet long and 60 feet wide.

In the center of the room is a huge sarcophagus, large enough for a person 50 feet tall. The sarcophagus is over 10 feet high. The lid upon it weighs several tons. If Magi are able to open the coffin, they find it empty. Any damage done to the coffin is fully repaired on the next night of the new moon.

All four walls of the tomb are lined with weapons. Every type imaginable is available. Above each wall of weapons are more words in the same language as that written on the block of stone, above. Each person may take but one weapon from the walls of the place. If any more are taken, the extras magically return to the wall as soon as the possessor turns away. Each weapon is of magnificent quality. Damage from them is increased by an additional three points, and First Strike and Attack scores are each increased by two. A weapon taken from the Resting Place of Mars also affects the Personality Traits of its possessor, modifying warlike ones by +1, and modifying peaceful ones by -1 (Passions are likewise effected).

Weapons taken from the tomb are not without their curse. Anyone who takes a weapon is attacked on the night of the next new moon by a ghostly swordsman. If the character defeats that being, she is never bothered by the watcher again. If a weapon of the Resting Place of Mars is ever passed to another, a ghostly swordsman approaches that person too, this time offering to take the weapon before attacking. If a character is ever defeated by a ghostly swordsman, the character's weapon mystically disappears.

Any lab work, concerning inventing, enchanting or learning spells of war and death, conducted within the tomb receives a +5 bonus. Characters might learn of this benefit through the writings of some ancient Magus, or through a sufficiently powerful *Intéllego* Vim spell (Level 20+). However, every Season spent working in the tomb either increases one of the Magus' warlike Personality Traits (or Passions), or decreases



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one of the Magus' peaceful Traits (or Passions) by one, permanently.

SOLUTIONS

There's no telling what secrets might lie behind the Resting Place of Mars. If it really is the tomb of an Old One, it might contain vast magic, and as a result might radically alter the direction of your Saga. You are invited to decide the truth of the place as best suits your storytelling tastes. Here are some possibilities:

- An Old One might once have slept in this place, but left long ago. The effects of time he spent here are evident. Clues could be found hinting at where the Old One might have gone.
- A higher level of *regio* might exist "above" the current one, a level that is extremely difficult to travel to. In that place, the sarcophagus might actually be occupied. Perhaps some great beast, who lived upon the plains of Lombardy well before the time of man, lies within, either dead or sleeping.
- The Resting Place place might be a trap set by the Dark, intended to bring even greater discontent and destruction to the north of Italy, so as to gather more souls.
- The questions of the Resting Place of Mars might never be answered, leaving it a simple but useful enigma upon the plains of Lombardy.



The Ghostly Swordsmen

The ghostly swordsmen appear as insubstantial people wearing full chain and carrying great swords (in combat they may be treated as substantial foes). Any who took a weapon from the Resting Place of Mars, on the next new moon, wakes to find a swordsman above him. The swordsman motions toward the character's armor and weapons, and waits until the character is adequately armed and armored. The swordsmen then initiates a fight, not stopping unless the stolen weapon is given to him, returned to the Resting Place of Mars, or until the victim is defeated (Incapacitated is sufficient). Unless the swordsman is defeated, or the weapon is returned, he appears again with every new moon. During any combat, no one else is able to see the swordsman or affect him in any way. If the swordsman is defeated, he slowly fades away into nothingness and never returns.

STORY IDEAS

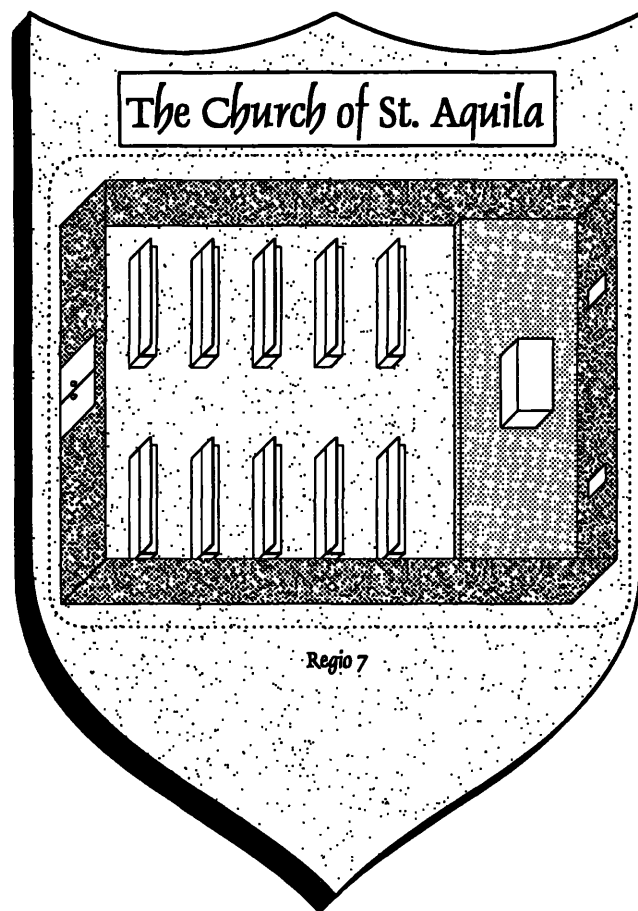
- A visitor to the Magi's Covenant might be found dead in his room on the night of the new moon, killed by a great sword. Characters might eventually discover that he was killed by a ghostly swordsman.
- The Magi of Luctatio could trick characters into exploring the Resting Place of Mars, advising them to each take one of the great weapons, but not giving any warning of the dire consequences that follow.
- Mundane nobles could learn about the Resting Place and try to plumb its secrets, or at least outfit a force with its weapons. If characters are involved in the plundering of the tomb, those same nobles might blame the deaths of soldiers on the characters.

The Church of Saint Aquila

The Church of Saint Aquila is a small church in Rome noted for the piety of its clergy. The church rests on the ancient foundations of the home of Saint Aquila, which was used as a church in the first century.

HISTORY

In the 1st century, the Jewish tentmaker Aquila and his wife were forced to leave Rome when Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from the city. The couple traveled to Corinth, where they were converted to Christianity by Saint Paul. They later returned to Rome, where their house was used as a church, and they were martyred.



About 200 years ago, the Church of Saint Aquila was built, after a young priest received visions while lodging near the old house of Aquila. Currently, only Angelo, the current priest, knows of the foundations on which the Church of Saint Aquila is built, as he too has received visions. (See *The Roman Tribunal* map for the location of the church.)

THE MUNDANE REGIO

For the layout of the church, see *The Church of St. Aquila* map.

On the eastern side of Rome, not far from the Porta Salaria, is the small Church of Saint Aquila. The church is in a sparsely populated part of the city, and is surrounded by small farms and vineyards. Away from the crowds and bustle of the western part of the city, and not possessing any noteworthy relics, Saint Aquila is very seldom visited by pilgrims.

The Church of Saint Aquila is a small, romanesque structure, with few windows, and a low barrel-vaulted ceiling. The

interior of the church is almost always dark, lit by only a few candles and dim light allowed by the church's tiny windows. Except during Mass, the church is very quiet.

Saint Aquila is a poor church, in poor repair. Angelo, the resident priest, is an old man well into his 70s, but still able to oversee the needs of the church. After 40 years of work at Saint Aquila, he has learned that silence is often the best means to serve visitors. Unless they make a nuisance of themselves, or are openly irreverent (which brings down Angelo's wrath), Angelo does not disturb those who visit the church.

THE DIVINE REGIO(7)

Visitors to Saint Aquila, who devote their time to silent prayer and contemplation, may cross over into the Divine *regio* that covers the entire church. Though the Divine *regio* is physically identical to the mundane level, it has a much different atmosphere. Those who enter the Divine *regio* experience a serenity found nowhere in the mundane world. They are surrounded by absolute peace and silence. The directions of their lives, and paths they may take toward salvation, are laid out for them. While within the Divine *regio*, visitors have no need of rest nor sustenance. They need only contemplation and prayer.

Those who enter the Divine *regio* by means other than prayer, or those who have rejected Christ, may have a different experience within the *regio* level. They may experience a deep sense of dread, and receive a notion of mortality and impending doom. These feelings and visions often have great effect upon those who receive them. Many have reconciled themselves with the Church, or have even become hermits after such experiences.

Of course, Angelo understands the Divine nature of his church, but does not brag about it. He greets those who enter the "upper" level, dividing his time between the two realms. For those on the mundane level of the *regio*, it might be disconcerting that penitent Christians, just nearby, suddenly disappear, and that others who entered just before characters are nowhere to be found.

STORY IDEAS

- When several Grog leave the Covenant for religious reasons, Magi might grow suspicious and investigate the church.
- Magi might be seeking some object rumored to be buried in the old house where Aquila once lived. Seeking it through the Divine *regio* might prove very unpleasant and possibly dangerous, tempting Divine wrath.



TEMPLATES

APPENDIX



In the *Ars Magica* rules, a number of generic Vocations are provided. They are designed to suit the setting of any Saga. Here, Vocations are given that are specific to the Roman Tribunal. They represent certain peoples and professions that are found in Italy. However, these Vocations can be used well beyond the peninsula. It is not hard to imagine a Necromancer from Vardian's Tomb or a Student from the University of Bologna visiting far away France or Germany.

Although some specifics about these Vocations, such as the languages that they speak, are provided, you may still customize them. Specialties can be provided, Personality Traits can be added, and certain Virtues and Flaws can be given definition. Of course, you can also make whatever changes you want in the items already listed for each Vocation. The Basic Character Creation section of the *Ars Magica* rules explains how to do just that.

Grog Vocations

GANG MEMBER

Intelligence -3 Presence -2
 Perception 0 Communication -2
 Strength +2 Dexterity +3
 Stamina +1 Quickness+1

AGE: 17

VIRTUES AND FLAWS: Gang Member +1, Loyalty +1, Tough +1, Bad Reputation -1, Disfigured -1, Enemies -1

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Brawl 3, Shortsword Attack 3, Dodge 3, Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Drinking 2, Forgery 1, Intimidation 3, Area Lore — northern Italy 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Arrogant 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Arrogant +3, Cruel +2, Hot-Tempered +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Shortsword, Full Leather

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

Growing up in a northern Italian city, you naturally fell into a gang. The cities have always been factionalized between parties, a condition which grows worse of late. Throughout your youth you had free run of the city, taking what you wanted. Recently you were offered employment by people identifying themselves as Magi. You didn't think twice before accepting their offer; you've never put much faith in the Church. Now you're one of the wizards' trusted warriors, ready to show them the right way to do things. And if you ever get in trouble, there are always your old friends to fall back on.



"Excuse me, do you know who you're dealing with?"

ITALIAN SAILOR

Intelligence -1 Presence -2
 Perception +2 Communication -2
 Strength +4 Dexterity -1
 Stamina +2 Quickness -1

AGE: 17

VIRTUES AND FLAWS: Stocky +1, Compulsion (bragging) -1

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak Arabic 1, Brawl 2, Mace Attack 3, Round Shield Parry 3, Athletics 2, Dodge 2, Swim 3, Scan 2, Guile 2, Area Lore — Italian seas 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave +2, Braggart +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Mace, Round Shield, Fur Cuirass

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

Your father was a fisherman; you've been on the sea since childhood. When you grew old enough, you decided to leave the peasant life behind. You headed to Venice and got a job aboard one of the city's merchant ships. Since that time life has been hard, but you've done well. Now you've moved on to a ship owned by Magi. It's not socially acceptable, like your previous positions, but the pay sure is a damned lot better.

"I never seen a Magus turn quite that shade of green, sir."

LOMBARD WARRIOR

Intelligence -2 Presence -1
 Perception -2 Communication -2
 Strength +3 Dexterity 0
 Stamina +4 Quickness 0

AGE: 18

VIRTUES AND FLAWS: Reckless +1, Tough +1, Bad Reputation -1, Hired Sword -1

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak German 3, Alertness 1, Dodge 2, Survival 1, Brawl 1, Drinking 2, Intimidation 1, Intrigue 1, War Maul Attack 4, War Maul Parry 3, Area Lore — Lombardy 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Cruel 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave +2, Reckless +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: War Maul, Ring Mail Hauberk

ENCUMBRANCE: 1

For centuries your ancestors have been warriors, fighting the constantly changing battles that have plagued the Italian peninsula. For a few years you acted as a mercenary in your native Lombardy. Now you've moved on, and are serving the Magi of a Covenant. You're not *custos* yet, but you're sure you will become so soon. The Magi are already impressed by your skills as a warrior.



"If you want a tough job done, I'll do it, sir. I'm not worried about them other soldiers getting the better of me. I swear, I could take two of them with one hand tied behind my back."

MESSENGER

Intelligence 0 Presence -2
 Perception -2 Communication +3
 Strength -3 Dexterity +1
 Stamina 0 Quickness +3

AGE: 17

VIRTUES AND FLAWS: Social Contacts (town guards) +1, Versatile Sleeper +1, Well-Known +1, Favors -1, Small Frame -2

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Brawl 1, Dagger Attack 2, Dodge 3, Athletics 4, Survival 2, Ride 2, Bargain 1, Diplomacy 2, Drinking 1, Etiquette 1, Folk Ken 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Honest Messenger 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave +1, Loyal +2, Honest +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Dagger

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

Like most Covenants in the Roman Tribunal, yours has interests spread across Italy. There's the Covenant itself, the townhouse in Venice and a huge number of other locations of interest. Messages are constantly delivered from one place to another, and that's where you come in. It isn't the most glamorous job but it's a safe and easy one. Perhaps one day the Covenant will recognize your loyalty and raise you to the status of *custos*.

"Yes, sir. You want the message in Venice two days ago? Yes, sir."

VENETIAN THIEF

Intelligence +2 Presence -2
 Perception 0 Communication -2
 Strength -2 Dexterity +3
 Stamina -1 Quickness +4

AGE: 16

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Light Sleeper +1, Lithe +1, Social Contacts (underworld) +1, Missing Ear -1, Over-Confident -2

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Brawl 1, Dagger Attack 2, Dodge 3, Disguise 1, Pick Locks 3, Stealth 2, Charm 3, Guile 2, Subterfuge 2, Area Lore — Venice 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Honest -2, Cruel +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Dagger, Leather Cuirass

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

You grew up on the streets of Venice, and from your earliest days were forced to steal to survive. It looked like things were getting better a few years ago, when you linked up with a large organization of thieves. There were weird stories about the organization being led by black sorcerers, but all you really cared about was food in your belly. Then there was last week's disaster. You really hadn't planned to kill anyone, but that fat merchant got in the way and was going to call the guard. Now things in Venice are much too hot; it's time to move on. Maybe the skills you've learned in your long, hard life will be useful to someone else.



"No, I don't know what happened to the meat meant for the Magi's dinner."

Companion Vocations

BOLOGNA SCHOLAR

Intelligence +4 Presence 0
 Perception 0 Communication +3
 Strength -2 Dexterity -4
 Stamina -2 Quickness 0

AGE: 30

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Arcane Lore +1, Educated +1, Training +2, Very Knowledgeable +3, Fragile Constitution -1, Poor Equipment -1, Soft Hearted -1, Clumsy -2, Over-Confident -2

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Speak Latin 3, Charisma 1, Charm 1, Debate 3, Diplomacy 2, Teaching 1, Self Bow Attack 2, Hermes History 3, Hermes Law 2, Magic Theory 1, Area Lore — Bologna 2, Area Lore — Milan 1, Area Lore — Rome 3, Area Lore — Venice 2, Faerie Lore 1, Fantastic Beast Lore 1, Legend Lore 1, Church Knowledge 3, Humanities 3, Law 3, Rhetoric 2, Scribe Latin 3, Theology 3

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave +2, Curious +3, Honest -1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Self Bow

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

You are a student at the University of Bologna and have been learning in that city since well before the University was officially recognized. During your time there you have come in contact with many of the Magi of Literatus. Sensing your natural curiosity, they have taught you of their Order of Hermes. Although you do not have their Gift for magic, you find magic quite interesting and are anxious to learn more. After many years of learning at the University, you've decided it's time to move on. Perhaps one of the Covenants of the Order will accept you as an autocrat or librarian. Then you could continue your education in a new place, surrounded by scholars of the magical arts.

"No, sir, you didn't bother me. I was just reading this book on the relationships between the four elements; how certain Hermetic scholars count wood as a fifth element, though a dead one. What do you think of the theory?"

COVENANT SHIP CAPTAIN

Intelligence 0 Presence -3
 Perception +2 Communication -4
 Strength +2 Dexterity +1
 Stamina +3 Quickness 0

AGE: 28

VIRTUES AND FLAWS: Common Sense +1, Exceptional Talent +1, Social Contacts (merchants) +1, Stocky +1, Tough +1, Reserves of Strength +2, Bad Reputation -1, Fury -3, Sense of Doom -3

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Battle Axe Attack 4, Battle Axe Parry 2, Brawl 2, Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Climb 1, Boating 2, Scan 3, Swim 2, Bargain 3, Drinking 2, Etiquette 1, Leadership 4, Direction Sense 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Smuggler 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Loyal +3, Greedy +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Battle Axe

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

Several Covenants in the Roman Tribunal have their own ships. They use them to transport the many goods they exchange with Italian and foreign cities. You are Captain of one of your Covenant's boats and have been for several years. You've seen many things transported by your vessel, from magical devices and rare creatures to mere mundane goods, such as food and spices. You learned long ago not to worry about what the Covenant transports, and not to ask questions about it. In your profession there's always opportunity to make money on the side. You never let personal gain interfere with your Covenant duties, but still manage to make extra money.



"I'm quite sure I can find some rare Egyptian crystals for you, for the right price of course."

ROMAN SCRIBE

Intelligence +1 Presence -2
 Perception +3 Communication +2
 Strength -2 Dexterity +1
 Stamina -2 Quickness -1

AGE: 24

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Educated +1, Student +1, Free Expression +1, Social Contacts (clergy) +1, Fast Learner +3, Dependant -1, Dutybound -1, Lame -2, Noncombatant -3

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Scribe Arabic 3, Scribe Latin 4, Bargain 1, Concentration 3, Diplomacy 1, Etiquette 3, Folk Ken 2, Craft Illuminations 3, Church Knowledge 3, Area Lore — Rome 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Curious +1, Friendly +2, Loyal +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

You are the second son of a scribe in Rome. For his entire life, your father has penned valuable documents and his craft has been passed on to you. Unfortunately, the time has come to leave home, for the business shall eventually go to your older brother, not you. You weren't too worried, though, for you knew your skills would help find you a good home. Copying magical documents for Magi wasn't exactly what you expected, but it's a good enough life.

"What a beautiful library!"

REBELLIOUS SON

Intelligence -1 Presence +1
 Perception -2 Communication +2
 Strength +2 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +2 Quickness -2

AGE: 22

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Educated +1, Inspirational +1, Social Contacts (nobles) +1, Rebel Passion +2, Superior Armaments +2, Black Sheep -1, Deep Sleeper -1, Delusion (not cast out from family) -1, Enemies -1, Fury (insults) -3

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Bastard Sword Attack 4, Kite Shield Parry 3, Athletics 2, Charm 3, Drinking 2, Etiquette 2, Intrigue 2, Leadership 3, Area Lore — Milan 2, Humanities 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATIONS: Rebel 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Arrogant +2, Crude +1, Loyal -1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Bastard Sword, Kite Shield, Chain Mail Hauberk

ENCUMBRANCE: 5

A member of an established northern family, you were groomed from youth to be one of your town's rulers. You never thought much of the position, so left the city behind. Although you insist otherwise, your family has turned its back on you. Lately you've been selling your talents as a warrior, for your family trained you well in those arts. It's been a good, exciting life, much better than the one that was planned for you.



"The commune? Pah! I would never return to that cesspool, even if my very own mother was before me, begging for my return."

VENETIAN SPY

Intelligence 0 Presence 0
 Perception +3 Communication 0
 Strength -4 Dexterity +2
 Stamina -4 Quickness +2

AGE: 20

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Light Touch +1, Greed Passion +1, Social Contacts (merchant) +1, Social Contacts (noble) +1, Strong-Willed +1, Lightning Reflexes +2, Bad Reputation -1, Favors -1, Small Frame -2, Noncombatant -3

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Dagger Attack 2, Dodge 2, Alertness 2, Scan 2, Search 2, Climb 2, Guile 1, Pretend 2, Subterfuge 2, Forgery 2, Legerdemain 2, Pick Locks 2, Stealth 2, Intrigue 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Untrustworthy 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave -2, Loyal +1, Curious +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Dagger

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

Venice is a city of intrigue. Scores of people are constantly sneaking around, hoping to discover rivals' secrets. It's a nasty job, living by deception, lies and back-stabbing, but someone has to profit from it. For several years you've been offering your services to the highest bidder. You've had to stay on your toes, lest other spies get the upper hand, but you've managed to do all right. People are so easy to manipulate that you've never had trouble getting what you want.

"And then, my lord, you won't believe what I saw the Magus Steris doing. He was in Verdi's townhouse when a beautiful young lady came by... It was quite a scandal, and, I am sure, not something Steris would want made public."

Magus Vocations

COMMUNE MERCENARY (TYTALUS)

Intelligence +2 Presence -2
 Perception +0 Communication -3
 Strength +2 Dexterity +1
 Stamina +2 Quickness -2

AGE: 26

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Gentle Gift +1, Knack (swords) +1, Mastered Spells +1, Magical Affinity (making magic weapons and armor) +2, Subtle Magic +2, Highly Skilled +3, Bad Reputation -1, Weak Writer -1, Incomprehensible -2, Lack of Control -2, Minor Magic Deficiency (Intéllego) -4

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 5, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Magic Theory 5, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 2, *Parma Magica* 2, Morning Star Attack 4, Knight Shield Parry 4, Magical Affinity — making magic weapons and armor 3, *Certamen* 1, Finesse 1, Penetration 1, Brawl 2, Alertness 2, Scan 2, Diplomacy 2, Drinking 1, Leadership 2, Area Lore — northern Italy) 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Icy-Hearted Mercenary 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave +2, Loyal -2, Calculating +2

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Morning Star, Knight's Shield, Ring Mail Hauberk

ENCUMBRANCE: 2

TECHNIQUES & FORMS: Creo 1, Intéllego 0, Muto 10, Rego 2, Perdo 0, Animál 3, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Córpoem 10, Herbam 0, Ignem 0, Imágonem 0, Mentem 0, Terram 5, Vim 5

SPELLS: *Eyes of the Cat* (Muto Córpoem 10), *Preternatural Growth and Shrinking* (Muto Córpoem 20), *Gift of the Bear's Fortitude* (Muto Córpoem 30), *Rise of the Feathery Body* (Rego Córpoem 10), *Endurance of the Berserkers* (Rego Córpoem 15), *Edge of the Razor* (Muto Terram 5), *Statue to Animal* (Muto Terram 25), *Fist of Shattering* (Perdo Terram 5), *Rusted Decay of Ten Score Years* (Perdo Terram 15), *Maintaining the Demanding Spell* (Rego Vim 15)

Your master taught you long ago that it was a mistake to use flashy magicks among mundanes. Thus, as an apprentice, you learned spells and enchantments that made you a better warrior. By enchanting your weapons and yourself before battle, you can easily slay mortal foes, and at the same time not reveal your magical powers. Using these arts you have been able to hire your services out to the Italian communes. The pay is good, for commune leaders understand your true worth, and you are able to pursue your studies with your profits.



"I warn you. I am the best soldier in all of Italy."

INDEPENDENT REBEL (TREMERE)

Intelligence +2 Presence +1
 Perception -1 Communication +2
 Strength -2 Dexterity -2
 Stamina +2 Quickness -2

AGE: 22

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Learn From Mistakes (*Certámen*) +1, Vengeance Passion +1, Knack (*Certámen*) +2, Self-Confident +3, Highly Skilled +3, Blatant Gift -1, Dark Secret -1, Infamous Master -1, No Sigil -1, Obsessed (Power) -1, Stingy Master -1, Minor Magic Deficiency (Creo) -4

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Magic Theory 5, Hermes Law 1, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 2, *Parma Magica* 3, *Certámen* 6, Finesse 1, Penetration 2, Guile 2, Intimidation 2, Intrigue 1, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 2

CONFIDENCE: 6

REPUTATION: Trouble Maker 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Brave -1, Liar +3, Backstabber +3

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

TECHNIQUES & FORMS: Creo 4, Intéllego 0, Muto 0, Perdo 0, Rego 7, Animál 6, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Córpoem 6, Herbam 0, Ignem 7, Imágonem 1, Mentem 6, Terram 0, Vim 0

SPELLS: *Circle of Beast Warding* (Rego Animál 20), *Despair of the Quivering Manacles* (Rego Córpoem 10), *Lifting the Dangling Puppet* (Rego Córpoem 20), *Pilum of Fire* (Creo Ignem 20), *Wizard's Sidestep* (Rego Imágonem 20), *Memory of the Distant Dream* (Creo Mentem 20), *Aura of Rightful Authority* (Rego Mentem 20)

When your master came to the Roman Tribunal long ago, he was full of hope, ready to create a new Covenant in one of the oldest Tribunals. His hopes were dashed by Italy's constant politicking. Stubborn, he remained in Italy, determined that one day he would have his vengeance upon the Tribunal. He never succeeded, but his legacy has been passed on to you. You have carefully studied the arts of manipulation and now are ready to go out into the world, to avenge your master and all the injustices done him. When you are done, this petty Tribunal will bow before you.



"*Certámen!*"

LITERATUS STUDENT (JERBITON)

Intelligence +3 Presence +2
 Perception -2 Communication +2
 Strength -2 Dexterity -3
 Stamina 0 Quickness -1

AGE: 28

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Book-Learner +1, Educated +1, The Gentle Gift +1, Very Knowledgeable +3, Magical Affinity (Intéllego) +4, Deep Sleeper -1, Clumsy -2, Noncombatant -2, Major Magic Deficiency (Perdo) -5

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Arabic 2, Scribe Greek 2, Scribe Latin 3, Magic Theory 5, Hermes Law 2, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 3, Magic Affinity — Intéllego 3, *Parma Magica* 2, Concentration 1, Finesse 1, Charisma 2, Charm 2, Debate 2, Diplomacy 2, Folk Ken 2, Teaching 1, Area Lore — Bologna 2, Church Knowledge 2, Humanities 2, Theology 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: None

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Curious +2, Good Natured +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

TECHNIQUES & FORMS: Creo 2, Intéllego 10, Muto 3, Perdo 2, Rego 2, Animál 2, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Córpoem 8, Herbam 1, Ignem 0, Imágonem 2, Mentem 8, Terram 0, Vim 1

SPELLS: *The Surgeon's Healing Touch* (Creo Córpoem 20), *The Inexorable Search* (Intéllego Córpoem 20), *Eyes of the Past* (Intéllego Imágonem 20), *Thoughts Within Babble* (Intéllego Mentem 25), *Peering into the Mortal Mind* (Intéllego Mentem 30), *Enchantment of Detachment* (Muto Mentem 15), *Aura of Rightful Authority* (Rego Mentem 20)

It was your good fortune to be an apprentice at Literatus, one of the most scholarly Covenants in the Order. Not only were you able to learn the deep secrets of magic, but many mundane secrets as well, at the nearby University of Bologna. Now you have been fully trained, completing your studies both at Literatus and the University, and you are ready to move on. Hopefully, in your new Covenant, you will be able to expand your learning even further.



"A man in Rome was selling the most beautiful illuminated text. I'm sure we could afford it, perhaps by fasting for a few days. It would be worth it."

NECROMANCER (EX MISCELLANEA)

Intelligence +4 Presence -3
 Perception +1 Communication -2
 Strength 0 Dexterity -1
 Stamina +2 Quickness -1

AGE: 24

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Cautious Sorcerer (ghosts and corpses) +1, Exceptional Talent +1, Extra Arts +1, Magical Affinity (ghosts and corpses) +1, Special Circumstances (someone dying nearby) +1, Ghostly Warder +3, Bad Reputation -1, The Blatant Gift -1, Haunted -2, Susceptibility to Divine Power -4

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Magic Theory 5, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 2, *Parma Magica* 3, Penetration 2, Second Sight 3, *Certámen* 1, Magical Affinity — ghosts and corpses 3, Area Lore — Rome 1, Occult Lore 2, Church Knowledge 1

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Necromancer 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Morbid +3, Uncaring +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: None

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

TECHNIQUES & FORMS: Creo 0, Intéllego 0, Muto 2, Perdo 0, Rego 10, Animál 3, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Córpoem 9, Herbam 0, Ignem 0, Imágonem 0, Mentem 8, Terram 0, Vim 5

SPELLS: *Charm Against Putrefaction* (Creo Córpoem 5), *Awaken the Slumbering Corpse* (Rego Córpoem 20), *Whispers Through the Black Gate* (Intéllego Córpoem 15), *The Walking Corpse* (Rego Córpoem 25), *Incantation of Summoning the Dead* (Rego Mentem 25), *Summon the Haunting Spirit* (Rego Mentem 25), *Coerce the Spirits of the Night* (Rego Mentem 35)

For 15 years you lived in the catacombs of Vardian's Tomb, where your master taught you the secret arts of Necromancy. Now you are ready to strike out on your own, to find your own Covenant so that you can continue your studies. In truth, you'll do anything to get away from the Tomb's damned Jerbiton and their constant bickering. Hopefully the Magi of your new Covenant will be able to understand your magic. If not, well that's their problem.



"I saw the most wonderful corpse being buried in that last town. Why don't we wait here a few days so I can dig it up? Really, I'm sure no one will notice, and if they do, we can deal with them."

MAGIC ITEM MERCHANT (VERDITIUS)

Intelligence +4 Presence -3
 Perception +2 Communication -2-
 Strength -2 Dexterity 0
 Stamina +1 Quickness 0

AGE: 27

VIRTUES & FLAWS: Inventive Genius +1, Personal Vis Source +1, Social Contacts (nobles) +1, Magic Affinity (Imágonem) +3, Wealth +4, Bad Reputation -1, The Blatant Gift -1, Obligation (making magic items) -1, Reclusive -1, Verditius Magic -1, Vis Obligation -1, Clumsy Magic -2, Wild Magic -2

ABILITIES: Speak Italian 4, Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Magic Theory 5, Hermes Lore 2, Hermes History 2, *Parma Magica* 2, Verditius Magic 4, Magical Affinity — Imágonem 4, Quarterstaff Attack 1, Quarterstaff Parry 2, Legend Lore 2

CONFIDENCE: 3

REPUTATION: Greedy 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Arrogant +1, Greedy +1

WEAPONS & ARMOR: Quarterstaff

ENCUMBRANCE: 0

TECHNIQUES & FORMS: Creo 10, Intéllego 4, Muto 5, Perdo 1, Rego 5, Animál 0, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Córporum 2, Herbam 0, Ignem 0, Imágonem 8, Mentem 0, Terram 0, Vim 5

SPELLS: *Phantasmal Animal* (Creo Imágonem 20), *Phantasm of the Human Form* (Creo Imágonem 25), *Notes of a Delightful Sound* (Muto Imágonem 10), *Image Phantom* (Muto Imágonem 20), *Invisibility of the Standing Wizard* (Perdo Imágonem 15), *Sense the Nature of Vis* (Intéllego Vim 10), *Scales of the Magical Weight* (Intéllego Vim 15), *Perceive the Magical Scent* (Intéllego Vim 20), *Gather the Essence of the Beast* (Muto Vim 15)

At the Covenant of Verdi, you learned that wealth was important. In the past years you've carefully cultivated a clientele willing to buy your magic items, and have amassed quite a sizeable fortune. It's so easy to amuse nobles with simple Imágonem magicks. Now you spend one Season out of every four, and small amounts of vis, enchanting simple items for simple mundanes. In return, you're able to sustain the standard of living you've grown so fond of.



"Four hundred pennies? My arcane skills are much more expensive than that, good sir."



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