

Ars Magica

Against the Dark

The Transylvanian Tribunal



by Ferguson, Love,
Ryan & Shirley

Against the Dark

Credits

AUTHORS: Timothy Ferguson, Richard Love, Matt Ryan, Mark Shirley
DEVELOPMENT, EDITING, & PROJECT MANAGEMENT: David Chart
LAYOUT & ART DIRECTION: Michelle Nephew
PROOFREADING & ART DIRECTION ASSISTANCE: Jessica Banks
ADDITIONAL PROOFREADING: Michelle Nephew
PUBLISHER: John Nephew
COVER ILLUSTRATION: Grey Thornberry
CARTOGRAPHY: Andrew P. Smith
INTERIOR ART: Alan Dyson, Jason Cole, Kelley Hensing, Christian St. Pierre
ADDITIONAL ART: *Dover Castles, Dover Dragons and Wizards, Medieval Life Illustrations, Treasury of Medieval Illustrations*
ARS MAGICA FIFTH EDITION TRADE DRESS: J. Scott Reeves
PUBLISHER'S SPECIAL THANKS: Jerry Corrick & the gang at the Source.

FIRST ROUND PLAYTESTERS: Mark Barltrop, Alex Coyne-Turner, Mark Lawford, David Staveley, Simon Turner; Jason Brennan, Justin Brennan, Elisha Campbell, Robert Major; Christian Jensen-Romer, Lloyd Graney, Tom Nowell, Kevin Sides, Luke Price; Donna Giltrap, Malcolm Harbrow, Aaron Hicks; Joan Bauza Soler, Antoni Morey i Pasqual, Melcior Parera Mas, Vincent Palmer Richardson, Guillem Gelabert Perello, Llorenç Nadal Sanso; Pelle Kofod, Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen, Ronni Fich, Sune Johannesson, Rasmus Andreasen, Rasmus Strandgaard Sørensen; Volker Bürkel, Björn Ole Mußmann, Andrew Smith

SECOND ROUND PLAYTESTERS: Christian Jensen-Romer, Thomas Nowell, Lloyd Graney, Andrew Oakley; Eirik Bull, Karl

Trygve Kalleberg, Dag-Erling Smørgrav, Karin Lagesen, Heikki Sørum, Torbjørn Stirlor; Donna Giltrap, Malcolm Harbrow, Aaron Hicks; Rasmus Strandgaard Sørensen, Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen, Pelle Kofod

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Timothy Ferguson is a librarian, and lives on the Gold Coast, Australia. He'd like to dedicate his part of this book to his wife Linda, and to thank her for repeated trips to local vampire-themed theater restaurants.

Richard Love spends many of his days sequestered in a laboratory. He knows for a fact that the world outside his laboratory is full of dark mountains, forests, lightning, thunder, and rain. Richard would like to thank his partner Paula for bravely slaying the terrifying mouse.

Matt Ryan lives in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York State. He enjoys hiking and camping the many state parks and forests in the area, and fishing the multitude of lakes and streams with his son, who has the better "catch and release" record.

Mark Shirley is a computational biologist living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. This is his fourth Tribunal book for **Ars Magica** Fifth Edition. He found the research on vampires particularly interesting, even though it raised some eyebrows among the university librarians who knew him to be a biologist. Mark would like to thank the usual suspects for their help and support.



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Chapter One

Introduction

The Transylvanian Tribunal is a fantastic setting for sagas. It is all that a reader expects. It is a land of haunted mountains, of dimly lit forests, of ruined castles and moonlit roads. Werewolves and vampires flourish, and folk magicians hunt them with silver and prayer and hawthorn and whips.

It is also a land beyond what the reader expects. Transylvania is unique. It is not like the Western kingdoms, which have so influenced the Order of Hermes. Mundane society is different here, and its differences favor the magi.

Nobles in the Tribunal do not owe fealty for their land or peasants, so magi may be nobles without swearing fealty, or breaking the Code. Magi may use their powers openly since magic is not illegal. Hungarian law allows magi to live by their own Code, with their own courts. The Order in Transylvania does not hide behind petty, puppet noblemen. The Order rules what it owns: no royal tax collector calls, no minor lord makes trivial threats.

The people of Transylvania are a mixture. In Hungary, it is unexceptional to meet merchants from the Low Countries and scholars from Persia; indeed, there are whole villages populated by both groups. Player characters in Transylvania, even simple ones like grogs, can be drawn from a tremendous variety of communities and professions. The interests of the magi weave through society, not limited by the Western need to avoid any possible offense to the powerful. This creates a plethora of story opportunities.

Transylvanian society is constantly under pressure, as it straddles the border between the East and West. The king of Hungary is the richest in Europe, but perhaps the most foolish. To make his country more Western in its armament, he has made his nobles far wealthier and more independent, and invited Crusaders to garrison part of his

kingdom. He is now finding it difficult to control either. The emperor of the Bulgars plays a deadly game with the other claimants to the throne of Constantinople. Lesser leaders see opportunities in the distractions of the great kings. Regional leaders, like the nobles of the Serbs and Slovaks, have begun to consolidate their power. Magi do not officially pick winners in these struggles, but a single spell, perfectly timed, is sometimes enough to win a battle, destroy a nobleman, and shake a kingdom.

The magi of Transylvania differ from Western magi also. They have been welded into a great machine of governance and war by House Tremere. Their life is peaceful but their obligations are far greater than in Western Tribunals. Transylvanian covenants, or what the magi here have instead of covenants, are interdependent. They specialize in a way not seen in the West.

A Note on History

The history of the many ethnic groups present in the Transylvanian Tribunal has been cobbled together from the folklores of the real world nationalities presented. No historian, holding any of the many competing views, would agree that our history is correct. Further, some readers may find the way we have mangled their national history offensive. We apologize for this.

The competing national histories of the Balkan states simply cannot be resolved, without offense, because so many of them contain material that is false. We choose not to judge which these are, and instead we have selected the pieces of folklore which best suit a game manual. This setting, therefore, includes groups who may not have been in any designated area historically, to allow

players broader scope for their character designs. Similarly, folklore with storytelling potential from nations which make no claim to a 13th-century presence in Transylvania, like the Roma and Turks, has occasionally been allowed to sneak into the work.

A Note on Tone

Transylvania is synonymous with horror for many readers. The horror stories set there are, however, not really set there at all. The Transylvania of horror stories is a tidy version of England, with German names. To sate readers who bought this book expecting horror, there is chapter about telling stories of fear. This is not, however, a book about the Transylvania of the Western imagination. It's about Transylvania as described by the people who lived there. It has horrific elements, but they are not the focus of this book.

A Note on Oppida

Transylvanian magi call the legal entities they are members of "covenants," but the physical places where they reside *oppida*, or "camps" (sing. *oppidum*). Many covenants outside Transylvania call the multiple places of residence within a single legal covenant its "chapter houses" but this term is of Jerbiton invention, and is based on a metaphorical similarity to the way monks meet in Western monastic dependencies.

Transylvanian oppida differ from chapter houses in two ways. Chapter houses are usually dependant on a "mother house." This sounds like the Hermetic feudalism of the Tytalus-dominated Normandy Tribunal, which from the Tremere perspective is so po-

litically inchoate that no further evidence is needed of its wrongheadedness. Oppida are independent.

The other difference is that members of an oppida don't all need to be members of the same covenant. The five covenants of this Tribunal are more like classes of citizenship than the covenants of the West. It's perfectly normal for a new settler, with the colonist covenant, to live in the same camp as a magus hired to make magical items for the House, who is a member of the crafter's covenant. The camp may be led by a Tremere, who has a different covenant again.

Further detail is given in Chapter 2.

Geographic Primer

The Transylvanian Tribunal includes the lands of the Carpathian Basin, the mountains that cradle them excluding the Alps, and some additional areas to the west and south. These added territories push the Tribunal's borders out the Adriatic and Black Seas. The Tribunal's southern border lacks any geological basis. The boundary is entirely political, based on the location of vis sources claimed by magi on either side.

Local folklore and further geographical details are given in the chapters for oppida in each of the Tribunal's regions.

Mountains

The greatest features of the Tribunal's topography are the mountains, the rivers, and the plains. The Carpathian Mountains form a great crescent, divided by many passes and valleys, which shields the mundane kingdom at the core of the Tribunal from Eastern invaders. A series of other mountain ranges, in the west and south of the Tribunal, complete the basin's edges. The mountains have few inhabitants, but the mines for silver, gold, and salt, which support the royal court and much of the country's economy, are hidden among them. Within the boundary of the mountains lies the Great Plain.

Plains

The Great Plain is a fertile but flood-prone area. In areas with sufficient elevation and drainage, grain crops and vineyards thrive. The soil in this Tribunal is, on average, far more fertile than that in other parts of Mythic Europe. Settlement on many parts of the plain is difficult, because there's little timber or stone to build with. The plain, in places, is a sea of grass, filled with folkloristic monsters and ancient cairn graves.

On most parts of the plain, flooding is common. In these areas, livestock grazing is the most common farming method. Among nobles, horse studs are a sign of status, and a source of wealth. Small parts of the plain are infertile, and come close to being desert. People who live in the cities tell many folktales about the plain – the great, empty sea of grass – because people travel through the plain all the time, but few travel to the mountains. The plain is divided, and periodically flooded, by the rivers.

THE DANUBE AND TISZA

The Danube is navigable through much of the Tribunal. It was, in ancient times, considered the physical embodiment of a goddess, and faeries from as far away as Ireland claim to be her children. The river and its many tributaries – Tisza, Alt, Sava, and Pruth – are great avenues for trade and travel. Most of these lesser rivers also have faerie embodiments: the two major rivers in Transylvania, the Olt and Maros are, for example, sisters.

Some Hungarian writers suggest that the rivers can be used to give travelers an idea of their degree of safety on the plain. The area to the west of the Danube is civilized and comparatively safe, where such threats as there are come from humans. The land between space between the Danube and the Tisza is still populated, but more sparsely, and characters here are more likely to encounter faeries. The lands to the east of the Tisza are a shield against eastern raiders, and nightmare creatures from the mountains. There is great wealth, but great danger there.



Klingsohr

In 1207, the Margrave of Thuringia held a contest to find the greatest bard in the world. The finest musicians came from across Europe, and were allowed to name their own prize. They agreed that mere gold was an insult to their calling, and that the winner should be given the title of "king of poetry," the homage of all other poets, and a crown of bay leaves. To mark the earnestness of this musical war, it was agreed that all who competed for the crown, but failed to win it, would be so disconsolate that it would be a mercy to have them put immediately to death.

Only two bards dared to present themselves for the battle. Henry of Oferdinged sang first, of love and its consolations, but he was bested by Wolfram von Eschen-

bach, who sang rousing songs of Crusader valor. Henry prepared for his death, but noted that it was a pity that the only bard he knew of finer than he had not attended. Wolfram was incensed, because this meant his victory was incomplete, and with the Margrave's permission, allowed Henry to search for this bard.

Henry knew that the people of Hungary seemed to learn songs by a strange osmosis. The music of the hidden bard echoes through the whispers of the leaves, is carried by the birds, and wafts through the storm clouds of Hungary. It settles in the mind without effort, and is learned almost without thought. Henry followed these hints and clues.

He found Klingsohr singing to an

empty field near Tisza. Klingsohr was utterly uninterested in wealth, and felt no need to be told he was a better poet than others. He eventually did agree to return to Wartburg, because he wanted to save Henry's life. Klingsohr sang of his deep love for the plains of Hungary, and Wolfram von Eschenbach gave him the crown of bay. Klingsohr asked that the other bards not be killed, for that was simply foolish, and then sang a prophecy concerning the future of the Margrave's family, which has been correct in every detail.

Klingsohr still lives somewhere in this area, wandering in peasant clothes, and singing Hungary's beauty to itself. He predicts the future to those who need it, or are kind.

The Coasts & Southern Mountain Ranges

The Tribunal has settlements outside the great basin of the Plain. These oppida are usually alien covenants that have joined the Tribunal. These serve as gateways to other Tribunals, and provide services that the Tremere and their allies find useful.

Sites For New Covenants

Players looking for sites for new covenants or oppida might consider the following:

Kal Valley and Lake Balaton

The Kal Valley is a secluded region in the west of the Tribunal. It is suited for sagas that want to have a base near the major cities of Hungary and Italy, while still being in the wilderness. In folklore, it is remarked as being perhaps the most boring place on Earth. Its name is a cliché for the back of nowhere, but this means troupes can put whatever they

like here, without disrupting those pieces of real history which they wish to keep.

It's also close to Lake Balaton. This watercourse is the gateway to the Tribunal from the west. The lake is never more than three meters deep, and is surrounded by fertile farmland. A settlement here is on major trade routes, and story hooks can literally walk by.

CAKOC

This town has some strange fascination for dragons. Saint George slew a black beast here, centuries ago, to destroy the local custom of feeding it maidens. In 1220, a green dragon lives in the mountains nearby. It does little harm beyond terrifying people and stealing their sheep, so it's not clear if it is Infernal in nature. It can speak, but doesn't often deign to talk to humans, beyond instructing the occasional shepherd to restrain his dog, lest it be eaten.

GYOGY-TO

Europe's largest thermal lake is in this area, and it supplies both Ignem and Aquam vis. It is not linked, insofar as is known, to Hell, as many of these places are. The site is just far enough off the main route to the Redcap settlement in Histria that it has no Redcap coaching house (or *mansio*, as they

are called in this Tribunal). There's some evidence of Roman and pre-Roman magical practice. This lake is next to Heviz (see page 36).

TOMB OF ATTILA

Somewhere along the length of this river, Attila, king of the Huns, ancestor of the Magyars and founder of Buda, is entombed. After his death, his servants diverted the water of the river Tisza with a canal, and buried him with great ceremony. His warriors all slashed themselves so that they bled, and rode circles about his corpse, reciting dirges. They then enclosed him in caskets of iron, silver, and gold, and killed the laborers who had played any part in his burial, so that the location of his corpse should pass from memory. His grave goods may include the Sword of Mars, a magical weapon which fell from the sky and gave him the power to scourge the world.

Sunken City

This is a Roman city that has fallen, mostly intact, into the Black Sea. It was connected, in ancient times, with astronomers and their Mysteries. It gives the player characters easy access to Greek cul-



ture and trade, to the Tribunal's heartland, and to the non-Hermetic lands of the East. Many of the islands in the Black Sea also have odd myths surrounding them. Players seeking this site on modern maps should look for Karvana.

ISLE OF ACHILLES

In the Black Sea, there is a small island on which Achilles, the hero of the Trojan

War, was buried. The temples to him have fallen now, but during Roman times, some unique mystical event took place here, and since it has been inhabited by the spirits of Achilles, Helen, and some of their retainers.

The spirits of the island forbid any woman to ever set foot upon its shores, and permit men to visit only during the day. Those who wish to visit for more than a single day must sleep on their ships. Some of the fishermen of the Black Sea know the island as a secure anchorage during storms, but few are

willing to trust their lives to the whims of the spirits ashore. Achilles murders any visitor of Trojan descent. Trojan princes founded Rome and settled as far away as Britain, so who can say if he has Trojan ancestors?

Tremere magi, and their companions, sometimes seek out Achilles to discuss warfare with him. His spirit is less angry and driven than it was during life. Others seek out his love, Queen Helen, to discern the locations of ancient cities and temples. Some researchers suggest that Achilles and Helen,

Wasn't Achilles Gay and Buried Somewhere Else?

The best known version of the story of Troy, the *Iliad*, certainly has him buried elsewhere. Philostratus, Maximus of Tyre, Pausanias, and, of course, all the local people, believe the story given here.

as the paragonic Man and Woman, are the core of a mystery cult, but House Tremere has no record of this.

SEVENTY-SEVENTH ISLAND

The 77th island of the Black Sea is plunged in darkness so thick a spoon can stand in it. In the middle of the island are three reeds, and trapped inside the center reed is a maiden, said to be the fairest on the Earth. The other two reeds contain her handmaids. They are guarded by a witch, who must die the instant the Reed Maiden is released. The darkness is so thick that only a mount reared on dragon milk, fed burning coals, and given fire to drink can penetrate it.

Languages in the Balkans

The South Slavonic language covers a family of languages which in the 13th century are poorly differentiated. The main groups are Bulgarian and Serbian, with the former having the most speakers. Bulgarian principally uses the Cyrillic alphabet, whereas the Serbian group (which includes Slovene, Bosnian, and Croatian) is mostly written with the Latin script. Church Slavonic is a dialect of South Slavonic used in the Orthodox Church in Slavic lands, and uses the Glagolitic alphabet.

Vlach is spoken by the Romanians, and it is a variant of the Vulgar Latin spoken in

the late Roman Empire. Speakers of Latin find some mutual compatibility between that language and Vlach. The Aromanian dialect is spoken in Illyria and northern Greece.

The dominant language in Hungary and Hungarian-occupied Transylvania is Magyar (pronounced "MORD-jor"), a tongue unrelated to any other in the region. Magyar has its own alphabet called *Rovasiras*, but since the start of the 11th century, it has officially been transcribed using the Latin script. Popular use of *Rovasiras* persists, particularly among the Szekely. The Transylvanian Saxons in Burzenland speak Low German, and various dialects of High German are common among the Teutonic Knights.

The Cumans speak Kipchak and the Pechenegs speak Oghuz, both Turkic languages that are also related to Oghur, the dead language of the ancient Bulgar people. Neither language has a native written form, and use instead the *Rovasiras* or Latin alphabets.

- South Slavonic (Bulgarian, Serbian, Church Slavonic)
- Vlach (Romanian, Aromanian)
- Oghur* (Bulgar)
- Oghuz (Turkish, Turkman, Azerbaijani, Pecheneg)
- Kipchak (Cuman, Kipchak)
- Magyar (Hungarian, Transylvanian)
- Low German (Saxon)

* Dead language

Even without knowing a specific language, a character who knows a language that is closely related to another language can still potentially understand a speaker:

LANGUAGES	PENALTY*
Same language, different dialects	-1
Vlach vs. Latin	-3
Kipchak vs. Oghur or Oghuz	-2
Low German vs. High German	-2
Low German vs. English	-3

*Penalty is to both speakers.

So, a native Bulgarian — South Slavonic (Bulgarian) 5 — has an effective score of 6 when talking to his countrymen, but can still converse with a Serbian with an effective score of 4. However, even if literate, he cannot read Serbian unless he is also familiar with the Latin script.

Names

The following names are appropriate to characters in the Transylvanian Tribunal. Where appropriate, English equivalents have been given. The Slavic letter "š" is pronounced as "sh," and "ž" or "zh" is pronounced like the "s" in "measure."

SLAVIC NAMES, MALE

Aleksandar, Andon, Andrej, Bartol, Bogdan, Boris, Borislav, Božidar, Branimir, Branislav, Branko, Dalibor, Darko, Dejan, Djordje (George), Dragan, Drago, Dražen, Dubravko, Dušan, Emil, Goran, Grigor (Gregory), Grozdan, Hristofor (Christopher), Ivan, Javor, Jovan (John), Kaloyan, Kiril (Cyril), Krešimir, Ladislav, Ljubomir, Matej (Matthew), Mikhail (Michael), Miloš, Miroslav, Mladen, Nemanja, Nenad, Obrad, Pavel (Paul), Petar (Peter), Radomir, Radoslav, Stanislav, Stjepan (Stephen), Stoyan, Todor (Theodore), Vasil (Basil), Vladan, Yavor, Yoan (John), Zoran

SLAVIC NAMES, FEMALE

Adrijana, Agata, Albena, Anastasiya, Anna, Bisera, Branislava, Branka, Cecilija, Danica, Doroteja (Dorothy), Dragana, Dragica, Dubravka, Ekaterina (Katherine), Elena, Elisaveta (Elizabeth), Eva, Grozda, Hristina (Christina), Irina, Jadranka, Jagoda, Jelena (Helen), Kalina, Magdalena, Marija, Nadežda, Polina, Radmila, Radomira, Rosa, Snežana, Suzana, Svjetlana, Tatiana, Tereza, Toma, Vesna, Višnja, Zhenya, Zora

HUNGARIAN NAMES, MALE

Adorján, Ágoston, Álmos, Ambrus, Andor, Árpád, Bálint, Bartal, Béla, Bertók, Csaba, Dezső, Dömötör, Edvárd, Elek, Endre (Andrew), Fábián, Ferenc, Gábor, Gergely, Géza, György, Ignác, Imre, István (Stephen), János, Jenő, Kálmán, Károly, Kornél, Lajos, László, Máté (Matthew), Mihály (Michael), Miklós, Nándor, Orbán, Rikárd, Sándor (Alexander), Tamás (Thomas), Tibor, Tódor, Vencel, Zoltán, Zsolt

HUNGARIAN NAMES, FEMALE

Adél, Ágnes, Ágota, Aliz, Amália, Anasztázia, Angyalka, Anikó, Anna, Aranka, Beáta, Blanka, Borbála, Csilla, Edina, Emese, Erzsébet, Gizella, Hajna, Ibolya, Ilona, Judit, Luca, Lujza, Margit, Natália, Ráhel, Rózsa, Sára, Szandra (Alexandra)

VLACH (ROMANIAN) NAMES, MALE

Alin, Andrei, Anghel, Cătălin, Claudiu, Corneliu, Cosmin, Decebal, Dorin, Doru, Emilian, Flaviu, Florin, Ghenadie, Haralamb, Horatiu, Horea, Iancu, Ion (John), Iuliu, Lucian, Lupul, Marku, Mihai, Mircea, Mugur, Neculai (Nicholas), Ovidiu, Petru, Răzvan, Sorin, Tibor, Valeriu, Viorel, Virgiliu

VLACH (ROMANIAN) NAMES, FEMALE

Adela, Adelina, Aurica, Brândusa, Camelia, Catalina, Crina, Diana, Doina, Emilia, Estera, Flavia, Ileana, Ionela, Ionut, Luminita, Magda, Mihaela, Mircea, Mirela, Nuta, Oana, Otilia, Sabina, Stefania, Tatiana, Uzana, Violeta, Viorica, Zaharia

CUMAN/PECHENEG NAMES, MALE

Adem, Alp, Altan, Asil, Aslan, Aydin, Bariş, Berk, Berkant, Berker, Bulut, Burak, Çağatay, Can, Coskun, Direnç, Ediz, Emin, Emir, Emre, Ender, Engin, Erdem, Eren, Erol, Firat, Göker, Hakan, Hikmet, İbrahim, İlhami, İlker, İlkin, Kadri, Koray, Kudret, Levent, Metin, Murat, Musa, Ömer, Onur,

Osman, Ozan, Özgür, Savas, Selim, Serhan, Serhat, Serkan, Soner, Temel, Tolga, Tunç, Turgay, Ufuk, Umut, Volkan, Yakup, Yavuz, Zeki

CUMAN/PECHENEG NAMES, FEMALE

Asli, Aygül, Aylin, Ayşe, Aysel, Aysu, Aysun, Basak, Belgin, Berna, Bilge, Burcu, Canan, Ceren, Deniz, Derya, Dilara, Dilek, Ebru, Ece, Eda, Ekin, Elif, Elmas, Emel, Emine, Esen, Esin, Fidan, Filiz, Gizem, Gonca, Gözde, Gül, Gülay, Gülbahar, Gülistan, Hande, Havva, Hazan, Ipek, Irmak, Kelebek, Kiraz, Meryem, Müge, Nergis, Nesrin, Nilüfer, Nuray, Özge, Özlem, Pembe, Pinar, Şebnem, Sevda, Sevgi, Simge, Tülay, Tutku, Yağmur, Yeter, Yıldız, Yonca, Zeynep

Chapter Two

Hermetic Culture

Transylvania is more than House Tremere's center of power: its magi believe the Tribunal is a practical demonstration of the validity of House Tremere's ethos. House Tremere believes that magi should work together to create a better world. This sounds idealistic, but the magi of Tremere are patient and pragmatic. This Tribunal is the best way of living they have implemented so far, but they haven't finished yet.

The Tremere believe that life in Mythic Europe is far harder for the average magus — even the average peasant — than it needs to be. Europe is awash with petty nobles and childish magi who gradually but continually are making things worse. It's possible that, by working together, magi can halt the pointless chaos that keeps plunging Europe back into war, famine, and poverty. There seems little likelihood of rapid change.

House Tremere, through centuries of struggle, believes it can redesign society so that it becomes a perfect vessel for human achievement. Eventually skill and glacial persistence might wear down the vapid, the

greedy, the insular, and the ignorant.

It will take many generations. It will demand heartbreaking sacrifices. It will require terrible acts.

In Transylvania, it has already begun.

House Tremere

House Tremere's policies and ethos directly affect the life of every magus living in Transylvania. This section reviews the parts of Transylvania society over which the House retains direct control.

Armed Force

House Tremere is the core of Order's militia during crises. The Code must be enforced to be effective. House Tremere is the most credible threat to the dominant cove-

nants in any of the regional Tribunals. Some magi see House Tremere as a guarantor of the stability of the Order.

The Tremere capability to threaten the dominant covenants of other Tribunals makes some of these covenants hostile. The House does not station its members in the Tribunals where its presence is unwelcome. There are few Tremere in the Greater Alps, Normandy, Theban, and Novgorod Tribunals. This creates a concentration of force in Transylvania, which makes neighboring Tribunals cautious.

Logistics

The House is only able to respond to crisis if it has the supplies necessary, and the transportation required to deploy them. The many resources used by Tremere magi in peacetime, detailed in *House of Hermes: True Lineages*, are elements of the Tremere logistical system that are surplus to prudent insurance.



Military Saga & Story Seeds

House Tremere is always looking for allies, and this lets player characters become involved in House Tremere's military skirmishes. The House seeks allies because it can't commit its resources everywhere, because in distant Tribunals there's no easy way for it to garrison territory, and because it sees its military allies as political assets. They are people used to the Tremere mindset and way of operating, who have tasted success with Tremere support. Allies also have unusual abilities, which extend the options of Tremere field commanders.

SAGA SEED: THE FIRES OF WINTER

The player characters encounter increasingly powerful demons as their saga progresses. After several encounters, the player characters go on the offensive and capture a diabolist, who they discover is tied to a Winter covenant in their Tribunal. The characters present their information to the Quaesitores, and an emergency

Tribunal is held. The Winter covenant is Renounced and a Wizards' March declared.

The player characters are approached by the Quaesitores with a problem: none of the major covenants in their Tribunal wants to take the lead in prosecuting the March. Perhaps the Winter covenant's location is too remote and well-defended, or perhaps the Tribunal is fractious and its members feel that a weakened leader would fall prey to the others. The Quaesitores ask the player character covenant to act as coordinator for the March, since it has clashed with the Winter covenant before, and has deeper motivation than the other covenants. They will, of course, be due the resources of the Winter covenant, when it is brought to heel.

House Tremere offers assistance to the player characters. They can provide vis and magic items, if that's all the player characters require. Alternatively, the Tremere can provide combatants. If they do this, House Tremere demands the leadership of the campaign, and uses the player characters as scouts and auxiliaries.

STORY SEED: DISASTER RELIEF

House Tremere's skill at organization and logistics can be used in peacetime, for disaster relief. In this story seed, a plague, flood, or famine has descended on a large swath of Mythic Europe. The endangered section includes the player characters' covenant. The Tremere are initially not willing to intervene, because it may cause trouble with the nobility and their resources can probably be better used elsewhere. Characters who frame their argument for intervention using elements of the Tremere ethos — about making the world a better place, where disasters can be countered by skill and cooperation — can convince the Tremere. Aid may take the form of physical goods or magic items, which the player characters can use to end the crisis, or may take the form of skilled assistants, whom the player characters command. The player characters then investigate and remedy the cause of the disaster.

Logistical Saga & Story Seeds

House Tremere's transportation and supply network can provide hooks for stories, when it fails or extends, and can provide ways to get characters to stories, if they are distant or in inhospitable environments.

STORY SEED: RESCUE

House Tremere has marvelous devices which allow travel not merely through inaccessible woodlands and across the sea, but through the air, under the earth, or submerged in the oceans. A basic problem for House Tremere is that a percentage of all journeys into hostile environments go wrong. Contact is lost with the voyagers, and rescuers need to be sent. For this, Tremere magi prefer outsiders. They know that the members of their House tend to study magic along similar lines, and assume that whatever has caused the sailing ship, tunneller, airship, or submersible to lose contact is not best handled with Rego or Mentem magic, which the crew must have had available.

SAGA SEED: FOR WANT OF A NAIL

A plague of violent faeries beset another Tribunal. Three covenants fall to the raiders who, scattered survivor accounts seem to indicate, can ignore the Aegis of the Hearth. While the most potent magi in the Order gather at Durenmar to consider what response, if any, is suitable, House Tremere summons its allies and any young magi who owe it favors. The House plans to prepare a base for heavy deployment, in case the Tribunal votes for retribution. The player characters aid the Tremere in creating secret, warded places throughout the deployment zone, which can act as rest and resupply points for warrior magi. They also supervise shipments of war material, which the faeries are sometimes skilled enough strategists to anticipate and intercept.

While doing this, the player characters seek the few survivors of the attacks, to gain eyewitnesses of the enemy's methods. If this is used to start a saga, these survivors

could be the player characters. The Tremere learn that the new faeries can ignore the Aegis of the Hearth if invited in by someone given a token at the yearly ritual, and if they gain such a token, they can invite others in themselves. From this, the player characters can develop new security measures, like Aegis tokens that are implanted in the skin and disintegrate if removed.

When the war begins, the player characters keep channelling useful supplies to the combat forces, their success in stories being directly mirrored by the success of the magi fighting the faeries. If the player characters suffer a serious setback, then faerie raiders break through the combat forces and into the army's rear zone. The player characters need to hold the faeries off until the combat forces can reform and relieve them or, better, use the stores of logistical material to crush the faeries between the logistical team and the combat forces. The saga ends when the player characters discover the source of the new faeries, and destroy them, or recruit them for their own purposes.

The Difference Between House Tremere and the Transylvanian Tribunal

House Tremere does not directly control every aspect of life in this Tribunal, although its influence is ubiquitous. The House directly controls the resources which it requires to feel secure. That is, it controls directly the things it feels it needs to respond to

prepare for emergencies and rebuild afterward. It uses its allies and the Tribunal's primary officer, the Praeco, to control those resources which are vital for the progress of Transylvanian society, but which can be reconstructed after an emergency passes.

mere, who in turn directs the Praeco to recruit suitable magi for the task. The Praeco prefers to offer the role to the apprentices of allies of the House, and may gather them from several Tribunals.

Tribunal Overview

The Tremere view the Order as fragile but useful, so they support it. They believe the Order to be, for now, the best tool available to prevent magi in other Tribunals from slaughtering each other, making pacts with Satan, or declaring themselves gods. These aberrations of good sense, they believe, happen regularly when magicians are left to decide their own fates. The Order allows sufficient peace for the Tremere to build strength and evangelize.

House Tremere dominates the Transylvanian Tribunal, but does not need to corrupt it. The Tremere method of block voting ensures that its members can get what they want, entirely legally and democratically, within the Order's structures and traditions. House Tremere sees the Tribunal as a valuable tool for the maintenance of the society that it has constructed. House Tremere wants the Tribunal, as a legal institution, to flourish.

Story Seed: The Book of Places To Avoid

The Earnest Sons precisely note the location of places that resist the presence of its assessment teams, and the nature of the obstacle faced. Over centuries, these reports have been compiled into a great book. This is perhaps the largest list of places it is considered unwise to go in all of Mythic Europe. The book fascinates magi who would like to make a reputation as killers of magical beasts and tamers of wild fa-

eries. These candidates send details of what sort of thing they'd like to face in combat, or what kind of problem they wish to solve, and the vexillation scours its records for a suitably challenging site. This sort of combat tourism isn't officially sanctioned by the House or Tribunal, but has become a rite of passage for some young magi, and is popular with those seeking magical components from particular spirits.

Player characters can access these resources directly if they are members of the House, or can convince a Tremere magus to aid them. House Tremere is always interested in having promising young magi owe favors.

carriers; they disseminate news, art, and propaganda on behalf of the House. House Tremere would like there to be far more Redcaps in the Order than there are at present, which is a source of historical tension between the two Houses. For story seeds relating to Redcaps, see the later chapter on Histria, which describes the Mercere House for this Tribunal.

Communications

House Tremere is strongest when its many members act in concert. This requires an excellent communications network. It is obvious to the House that any attacker would attempt to disrupt its communications. In response, the House has developed multiple, independent communication networks, backed by a series of contingencies for lost contact.

REDCAPS

Non-secret communications within the Tribunal are sent by Redcap. The Tremere consider Redcaps especially useful because they carry the ideas that reinforce the Transylvanian culture. They are also guides in war, since they are familiar with the mystical terrain of Europe. Redcaps are not just mail

Capacity Building

The House wants the resources of the Tribunal's lands to be fully and efficiently utilized. There is a vexillation of magi and Redcaps who are primarily responsible for this. The group was instigated by Tremere himself, under the name the Earnest Sons of the Grid and Chain.

The Earnest Sons' scouting teams lack the killing power required to tame the dangers of the Transylvanian wilderness. Their initial assessments are fed back to the groups' leaders, who send more powerful magi to secure areas, or seek the aid of nearby oppida. The group also identifies areas suitable for the foundation of new oppida. They pass these recommendations to the Prima of Tre-

The Praeco

The Praeco is the theoretical leader of the Tribunal, although the Prima of Tremere actually makes policy for Transylvania's governance. Praeco-hood in Transylvania is not earned by age; it is assigned by a democratic vote. This allows the magi of Tremere pick whoever they like. The Praeco of Transylvania is a servant of House Tremere, but still has far wider authority than his equivalents in other Tribunals. A magus does not become Praeco in Transylvania without the approval of the Prima of Tremere, and does not stay Praeco if he angers her. The current Praeco is Archmagus Albertus of Lycaneon.

The Transylvanian Praeco is an experiment in ceding power from the House to the wider population of the Tribunal, but

it's a very careful experiment, done in slow and reversible stages. House Tremere's leaders hope that, eventually, enough magi will think as House Tremere does that it will be possible to invest the Praeco with real power. Much as the Romans eventually offered citizenship to the urban classes of the entire empire, so, one day, the Order's Praecones will be worthy of respect and empowerment.

OPPIDA AND AEDILES

Magi of the various Transylvanian covenants live intermixed in settlements, which in this Tribunal are called oppida. The membership of an oppidum is more fluid than the membership of a Western covenant. Many magi change oppida as their personal projects conclude or the interests of House Tremere change. Some oppida are static, but many change location as their tasks are completed.

The Tribunal has made a series of binding rulings concerning oppida. Every maga must, in some sense, belong to one. Every maga is required, in a broad sense, to be aware of the activities of all other members of her oppidum. No oppidum may have fewer than two members. Every oppidum must have a *cives*, described later, as a member. No oppidum may have members exclusively from one House.

The final two rulings effectively mean every oppidum must have at least one Tremere member and one non-Tremere member. This odd member, appointed to prevent corruption in House Tremere, and treason in the non-Tremere oppida, is called an *aedile*. Aediles have no particular duties, but they have a right to emergency audience with the Praeco and chief Quaesitor. The disappearance of, or declaration of War upon, an aedile is considered serious by the Quaesitores. In oppida with even numbers of *cives* and non-*cives*, there are two aediles.

Legislature

The Transylvanian Tribunal, as a lawgiving body, has many roles. The process of voting at Tribunal on contentious issues is similar to all other Tribunals, as described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*. In Transylvania, Tribunal meetings are quick and short, and

parties attempt to reach consensus. Attendance is high, but this is because Tribunals offer opportunities to socialize and make agreements outside the formal meeting, most of which is reading foregone conclusions into the Peripheral Code. Criminal matters are usually dealt with separately, as part of the "emergency" Tribunals, described in the Judiciary section, later.

Regulating Magical Settlement & Residency

In Transylvanian, the Praeco, as representative of the Tribunal, enters a written agreement with each resident magus, which grants him his place in Transylvanian society. Each agreement must be witnessed by a Quaesitor, and they are formally entered into the Peripheral Code at Tribunal meetings. This agreement is called the magus' "privilege." There are five broad styles of privilege, although individuals may have slightly different rights and duties, depending on the negotiations which preceded the signing. Further differences may be added as punishments or rewards. Each privilege permits membership of at least one of the five covenants.

After the Sundering, the Transylvanian Tribunal's expansion was checked by a Grand Tribunal ruling, limiting it to five named covenants. In the intervening centuries, all of these covenants have moved location or changed

their style of membership, but legally they persist. Magi do not generally live at the main site of the covenant of which they are a member. Most live in various other settlements, called oppida, as noted earlier. The magi of Tremere do not wish to revisit the rulings punishing their House for the Sundering, because that would worry other magi needlessly. Other magi do not wish to agitate for change because there's no advantage in success.

ASCLEPIUS AND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE COLONIAE

This covenant was initially a settlement of Dacian sorcerers, on the site now inhabited by Coeris. Its original membership has now been completely absorbed by House Tremere. Its modern members are young magi from other Tribunals, who have come to settle the Tribunal. The leadership of Asclepius is an honorary position, and is awarded annually by acclamation of the covenant's members.

The *coloniae*, or settlers, are young magi from other Tribunals permitted to develop underutilized sections of the Tribunal, under tight agreements.

Coloniae may expect:

- Aid in war or disaster.
- Free use of resources negotiated in their privilege.
- A proportion of new resources discovered, as negotiated.

Triumph of Asclepius

Following the Sundering, Tremere held the Tribunal together by offering concessions to the leaders of the other covenants. Each of the covenants also made various binding contracts with the others, to make secession unprofitable. These resources are still dispensed, although they are now collected and distributed by the Tribunal. The leadership of this covenant, and the resources granted to the leader as part of Tremere's concession, are called the Triumph of Asclepius.

Each year, the members of this covenant elect a leader. The Primus invites the leader to Coeris, and then grants him or her the annual payment promised by Tremere after the Sundering. This includes 16

pawns of vis, three pounds of pure gold, six requested books copied from a certain library, a fine dinner, and several other minor tokens of esteem. In exchange, he owes several minor duties to the leaders of the other three covenants. These tasks are usually nothing onerous, nothing so horrible that a person would decline the Triumph if it was offered again, but enough to use up two seasons in various stories.

Magi of Tremere, Mercere, or Guernicus, by tradition, belong to the covenant now led by their House, but they have often been selected as leader of Asclepius. All covenants allow this dual membership. Similarly, the Tribunal permits the Triumph to be awarded to non-residents.

Coloniae may not:

- Select their aedile.
- Act in scandalous ways.
- Seek office in the Tribunal, saving aedilehood.
- Use the title "archmagus."
- Take apprentices without permission.
- Invite other magi to visit the Tribunal, excepting Quaesitores, Redcaps, and hoplites.
- Wear shoes at Tribunal meetings. Originally this meant they had to attend meetings in bare feet, but custom now allows them sandals and slippers.
- Wear anything that looks like a Decoration to which they are not entitled.
- Eat any aphrodisiac during Tribunal meetings, including but not limited to shellfish, carrots, truffles, and pepper.

COERIS AND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CIVES

Coeris was Tremere's home, and is ruled by his direct successor, the Prima of Tremere. It was originally on the site of the oppidum of Lycaneon, but after the Sundering it was moved to its current location, which at that time held the Covenant of Asclepius. All members of House Tremere are automatically members of this covenant, although they may resign and resume membership at whim. This is necessary since some foreign covenants demand Tremere magi belong to only one covenant.

Magi with the *cives* privilege are offered membership of the covenant as well. A *cives*, or citizen, is usually a Tremere magus living as a Tremere magus should. Some magi of other Houses are granted the status of *cives* as a sign of esteem by the Tribunal, which effectively means the House.

Citizens are permitted to:

- Access House Tremere's methods of assistance, as per *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*.
- Be represented at Decennial meetings of House Tremere by a Tremere magus of their choice.
- Stand for any office in the Tribunal, including Praeco.
- Raise apprentices within the Tribunal.
- Relocate from camp to camp as desired, if non-Tremere.
- If numerically dominant in an oppidum,

select the aedile. This effectively must be a non-Tremere, because the aedile needs to come from the non-dominant group.

- Dress in black or grey at Tribunal meetings.

Citizens are required to:

- Live as a Tremere should, if Tremere.
- Live in a way that Tremere persistently admire, if non-Tremere. This includes cooperating with the House, performing useful work, mustering for war, paying taxes, and acting in an unobjectionable way.
- Not wear Decorations to which they are not entitled.

DOMOSTRON AND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE SOCII

This covenant was founded by Tremere's Hermetic allies. Its initial site was later destroyed by raiders from Thebes. Its current members are almost all of the Tribunal's Quaesitores, Merceres, and hoplites. Its legal leader is the senior Quaesitor of the Tribunal, but it doesn't generally meet as a covenant.

All of Domostron's members have the *Socii* privilege. The *socii* ("allies") are non-Tremere magi treated in many respects as if they were. All Redcaps, Quaestiores, and dedicated hoplites are automatically *socii*, if they are not *civitates*.

Socii may:

- Be supported in their tasks by dedicated resources and by extraordinary taxes in times of crisis.
- Expect military protection and aid.
- Stand for any office in the Tribunal, except Praeco.
- Raise an apprentice within the Tribunal.
- Relocate from camp to camp as required by their duties.
- If numerically dominant in an oppidum, select a list of at least three worthy candidates for aedile, from which the Praeco must choose. If there are fewer than three possible candidates, the Praeco may select whomever he likes.
- Wear designs that look like Decorations.

Socii are required to:

- Fulfill their duties, or renegotiate their covenant. Dedicated hoplites who cease

in their role as lictors, for example, lose this status.

- Avoid doing things which would make the average magus believe a declaration of Wizard's War against them is reasonable, as determined by the Praeco.
- Seek permission before founding oppida.
- Provide aediles, on a temporary basis, when others cannot be found.
- Wear prominently their badges of office while at Tribunal.

DIODORUS AND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOSPITES

This covenant initially housed the followers of Muj, a faerie magician whose followers now form an odd little sect of House Tremere and are members of Coeris. Its current members are all magi living in the Transylvanian Tribunal as *hospites*. *Hospites* (sing. *hospes*) means "guests," and most of them live at Lycaneon.

The *hospites* elect their own leader, subject to the approval of the Praeco, every seven years. This role has far more honor than power, but it does get an annual concession similar to the one described earlier for the Triumph of Asclepius. The payment is far smaller, and is often divided with the leader's supporters, but the responsibilities can be completed in a week of meetings at Tribunal, or fobbed off to younger magi paid with copying rights, gold, or *vis*.

These are magi hired to practice particular skills on behalf of House Tremere. They have few rights, but are paid well for their services.

Hospites may:

- Receive fair payment for their work, as negotiated.
- Use such resources as are allotted to their tasks.
- Expect protection if Wizard's War is declared on them.
- Ignore many of the taxes placed on other magi.
- Expect not to be asked to join the Wizards' Marches.

Hospites are usually required to seek permission before:

- Seeking office in Tribunal.
- Taking a new apprentice.
- Binding a new familiar.

- Creating a new talisman.
- Founding oppida.
- Changing oppidum.
- Voting for a particular person as their oppidum's aedile.
- Wearing things which look like Decorations.

A hospes may have such permissions ratified in her initial covenant, but this affects the payment she receives, as a greater proportion of her time is spent on private projects.

PANNONIA AND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE FOEDERATI

Pannonia was founded as a fortified Tremere House covenant near what was then the border among the Transylvanian, the Greater Alps, and the Roman Tribunals. The aura of Pannonia's site was destroyed by the foundation of a powerful monastery at the springs of the river which the covenant used for water. The magi of Pannonia were the first to disperse into oppida, or "camps." Their magical resources are now primarily collected by the magi of the oppida of Histria.

Some covenants in the neighboring Tribunals, exhausted by political infighting or Wizard's War, have sought sanctu-



ary by joining the Transylvanian Tribunal. Transylvania cannot accept new covenants, so all members of these covenants became members of the Covenant of Pannonia. The magi of these covenants usually negotiate an agreement in which they are permitted to continue their local customs, even if they are offensive to Tremere magi, provided they do not breach the Code or damage the society of the Tribunal. Magi from such covenants are called *foederati*, (sing. *foederatus*) or "confederates."

When only one group of outsiders are Pannonians, it operates much like a foreign covenant, although the Praeco of Transylvania has the right to deny any changes to the Pannonian written covenant, or return it to its original state. The Pannonian Covenant and the Peripheral Code are designed so that if there are ever no suitable outsiders, several magi from other covenants automatically become Pannonians, but retain their membership of, and privileges of, their earlier covenant. This ensures Pannonia's legal continuance.

Pannonia is currently led by the Orphic cult dwelling in the Tribunal's south. The leader of Pannonia does not, unfortunately for him, receive the concessions of Tremere given to the other covenant leaders. Centuries ago the members of Pannonia sold almost all of these rights away to the leader of the Transylvanian Merceres.

Foederati have individually negotiated agreements, but usually they include the right to:

- Expect military protection and aid.
- Retain exclusive use of the resources held at the time of confederation, even if they move to a different oppidum.
- Retain specific customs, detailed in their privilege, despite Tribunal rulings against such customs. Such customs may be limited to their oppidum, however.
- Train apprentices.
- Expect their eldest apprentice to be accepted as a foederate, under conditions comparable to those of the magus.

Decorations

Decorations are ornamental jewelry pinned to, or patterns embroidered into, the robes of magi who have performed services which the Tribunal wishes to particularly note. Some magi wear their decorations daily, while many think that ostentatious and wear them only for Tribunal meetings. The expression and placement of the decoration varies at the whim of the wearer, although Tremere magi prefer subtle designs. Decorations are not repeated. If a magus performs the actions required to earn a decoration twice, it is not awarded a second time. Characters with a lesser decoration replace it if they do something notable enough to earn a higher decoration.

Laurel: This decoration is offered to a magus who leads the Tribunal in a campaign against foes who could destroy

the Order. No one currently wears this decoration.

Myrtle: This decoration is given to the general of a campaign against a foe who could not have destroyed the Order, but required more than one magical battle to subdue. Several magi have this decoration.

Oak: This decoration is given to a general who masterminds, but does not fight in the field for the significant battles of, a Myrtle Campaign.

Grass: This decoration is given to magi who save other magi from death. It was originally presented to those who defended key covenants against the Diedne, and has a cultural link with sieges.

Parsley: This decoration is awarded for landing the mortal blow upon a magus expelled from the Order by the Tribunal.

Manorial Covenants are a Sign of Weakness and Poverty

House Tremere believes that the way magi live in many other Tribunals is inefficient. Covenants, in the foreign sense, are generally manorial states. Resources, manufacturing, and defense are provided for each covenant, by each covenant. True specialization is rare, and dreary rep-

etition of mediocre facilities is common. This is due to the capriciousness of the senior magi in other Tribunals, who prefer free but stunted lives to cooperating with each other. In Transylvania, specialized magical settlements work together in a single economy.

- Wear designs that look like Decorations, if these designs are part of their tradition before joining the Tribunal.
- Change oppida as often as they wish, but they must notify the Tribunal they are doing so.
- Seek any office in the Tribunal, although the democratic nature of the

Tribunal means that this is merely a matter of form.

Foederati are usually required to seek permission before:

- Ceasing whatever duties are written into their covenant. That is, the Tribunal usu-

ally accepts foederati on the basis they have something to offer; this is detailed precisely in the covenant. These duties can only be changed with the permission of both the Tribunal (as represented by the Praeco) and the signatory magus; they cannot be changed simply by vote of Tribunal.

- Using the title "archmagus."
- Founding new oppida.
- Inviting other magi to visit the Tribunal (for example, to copy books or trade).
- Trading vis with outsiders (although the socii of the Tribunal are not considered outsiders).
- Selling magic items to outsiders (although the socii of the Tribunal are not considered outsiders).
- If numerically dominant in the oppidum, selecting a particular person as their oppidum's aedile.

Legalities of Residency

The agreement between a magus and the Tribunal cannot overwhelm a magus' rights under the Code. Technically, the Grand Tribunal could rule that, despite a magus accepting a privilege, he is not bound to forsake rights which are granted him by the Code, such as the right to train an apprentice. This has not occurred for several reasons:

- No magus has ever taken this issue to the Grand Tribunal. The Grand Tribunal limits the number of topics which can be debated, and its members tend to be potentates of other Tribunals. That a magus has signed a deal and then wants to go back on it, without negotiating with the Tremere, has never seemed significant enough to the participants to be discussed.
- Many Tribunals have rules of residency, or proscribe particular behavior for members of different covenants. A challenge to the Transylvanian system that also threatened the residency regulations in other Tribunals could not succeed.
- Very few magi formally challenge the residency rules. In part, this is because they know what they are letting themselves in for when they first become residents, and so magi who bristle at the very thought of regulation do not

settle here. The Praeco is also willing to reach private agreements with magi, to prevent cases reaching judgment.

- Many of the border oppida joined Transylvania to escape political difficulties in their original Tribunal. The residency rules may be inconvenient, but at least Coeris doesn't raid their vis sources. Some foederati offered the status of cives decline, so as not to lose the special dispensations offered in their covenant.
- Senior magi in other Houses and Tribunals tacitly support the Transylvanian system. Currently, every Tremere oppidum has at least one outsider who has a legal duty to reveal corrupt practices. If the Transylvanian residency system were overturned, House Tremere might cast all of these magi out. A resentful, insular House Tremere, with few informal channels of communication and no foreign observers, is not in the interests of the other Houses.
- Membership of the Transylvanian system is voluntary. A magus can leave the Tribunal at any time. If he was hired for a particular task, he may need to give back some or all of his payment, but beyond this there's no penalty. Magi who leave the Tribunal and take powerful magical items, large quantities of

vis, or other treasures with them are legally pursued by the Tremere. Other regional Tribunals have come to various conclusions concerning the legality of the privileges.

- Some magi feel that offering a restrictive privilege is, itself, illegal. The magus has no obligation to do what is described in his privilege, and since the resources were offered to him as part of the commission of a crime, their return cannot be demanded.
- Some magi believe that the privilege is a faulty contract, and only the faulty clauses are struck out. This tends to mean a magus must complete the other tasks promised, but gets to keep his entire payment.
- Some magi believe that the privilege is not a true contract, so the results of the labor of the magus return to him, and the resources offered for that labor must be returned to the Tribunal, or such mutual compensation as is just.
- Some magi believe that the privileges are binding contracts. If you hire a magus to make a longevity charm next season, and he instead trains his apprentice, he owes you your fee back, plus compensation for your trouble. Magi who break privilege similarly owe the original resources given, plus compensation.

Public Financier Story Seeds

COLLECTING STIPENDS

The oppida of the Tribunal are expected to help the Praeco to collect stipends on behalf of the Quaesitores and Redcaps. Usually this isn't either difficult or time-consuming, but magical and faerie sites attract strange creatures, and securing the stipend can require be challenging. These small, self-contained stories make great filler for when only part of a troupe is available, and they decide they don't want to push the main story forward until the next game session.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

For many years, magi have been discussing how useful it would be to have a Mercere's Portal link the oppidum of Old Histria with its chapter house in Venice, in the Roman Tribunal. The Tribunal finally decides upon this, and the Praeco is charged with the completion of this task. This may affect the player characters in many ways.

The player characters may:

- Need to find extra vis to pay a special levy to the Praeco.
- Be drafted as guards for the Redcaps carrying levy vis.
- Aid an allied colona, which is unable to meet the levy.
- Accompany the Praeco's messenger, with a promissory note, to Harco.
- Accompany the chief Redcap of Old Histria to Harco, to argue with his housemates about the importance of the project.
- Accompany the invested arch from Harco to Old Histria.

FORGED PROMISSORY NOTE

Forging promissory notes is a crime in Transylvania. It's considered a form of fraud that intends to deprive a magus of his magical power, by taking vis he rightfully owns. While cleaning out the laboratory of a magus who has passed into Final Twilight, the characters discover a rather foolish forgery of a valuable promissory note. Someone has instilled the face value of the note into its fabric. This is silly, because if

the vis in the note is used, the parchment is destroyed, thus voiding the additional vis due to be paid upon its presentation to the Praeco for redemption.

The note, though, isn't a forgery. It's genuine. As the magus was trying to extract the vis of a faerie prince, it moved its anchor to the promissory note (see *Realms of Power: Faerie* for more on anchors and external vis). This allowed the faerie to survive the extraction process, although it is now trapped, unconscious, in the note. A side effect of this is that any character holding the note can see a faint glow around raw vis. This effect has a Penetration of 0.

The trapped prince is slowly and subconsciously attempting to rebuild his body. Characters may discern this with an Intelligence + Faerie Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 12, once they notice the effect the note's presence is having on the environment. Wooden objects on which the note rests become brittle, and trails of sawdust lead to the note. Nearby milk or beer, if left uncovered, vanish. Small faeries may try to steal or consume the note, rescuing the prince, or stealing his role.

Public Financier

The Praeco collects and distribute taxes for a range of projects that the Tribunal has approved. The projects assigned to the Praeco by the Tribunal vary after each meeting, and so the taxes she is permitted to levy are also adjusted. Civitates, socii, coloniae and some foederati are required to give reasonable aid to the Praeco's projects. At minimum, a large vis source has been set aside for the use of Praeco. This income was originally intended to provide for the maintenance of the wards of the Tribunal site, but the Quaesitores now fulfill this duty.

Stipends

The Praeco also collects the stipends given to the Redcaps and Quaesitores, and distributes them. The resources used to provide stipends are described in the Peripheral Code. Collections are made under

the auspices of the Praeco, and Redcaps under her direction make the deliveries. This legal separation allows the Tremere to monitor how much vis the Redcaps and Quaesitores are claiming without spying. It also allows the Quaesitores to state that the stipends are not a vast annual bribe from House Tremere.

Promissory Notes

The Praeco's current method of funding her activities, through reserved vis sources and specific taxes, sits alongside an older system that is still used for diplomacy and trade. Before the Praeco was granted taxing powers, she funded her projects from reserved vis sources, but was permitted to take loans against that income, issuing letters promising payment. Promissory notes are still issued, and some ancient notes are still traded, having never been redeemed, because they act as a high-value currency.

Judiciary

An effective system of law is vital to the members of this Tribunal. The roles of Praeco, Quaesitor, and Hoplite are treated with respect and given extra powers and duties in Transylvania. Where the law is weak, as in some Western Tribunals, magi need to huddle in castles that defend their greatest resources from raiders. Transylvanian magi refuse to live fearful, stunted lives.

Quaesitores

The Quaestiores have little to complain of in this Tribunal. The Code is followed consistently, even if the interpretation is heterodox and the concentration of Tremere votes makes true democracy rare. Powers some Quaesitors have been seeking in other Tribunals, to levy taxes and demand aid against renounced wizards, have been granted them here. In this Tribunal, the senior magi do not

Judiciary Story Seeds

ANNUAL TRIBUNALS

The annual "emergency" Tribunals aren't treated with the great pomp of the seven-year Tribunals, but attendance can still be profitable for an oppidum, so most send a representative to the Tribunal site. This can be as simple as hiring a Redcap to act as a purchasing and sales agent. Since deals can be made pending approval by an oppidum's magi, younger and less experienced magi are often sent as sales agents to these Tribunals, allowing more senior magi to engage in politics or socializing.

The annual Tribunals are also great sources of stories for non-magi. These are an opportunity for the servants of different magi to socialize with others who share their strange social role. Fleeting romances are common, as are incautious bets, sporting contests, and inebriated gossip.

More detail about the Tribunal site is in the Seuthopolis section.

MEDIATORS

Two wizards, a hospes and a colona, are at odds over an exceptional apprentice each claims to have first taken on. The hospes, a Verditius magus, vows that he took the child in, and has been raising him since he was five. The colona, who is a skilled Flambeau maga, claims that she discovered the child when it was barely a year old, and at that time taught it the Latin word for "bread." She has since had a priest in its community teaching it occasional Latin phrases. This is irregular, but might just meet the Code's requirement that the child receive training.

The player characters accompany the Praeco's mediator to interview each ma-

gus. Their duty is to determine for the mediator why each magus is so insistent that this particular child be their apprentice. This will give her leverage during negotiations. The characters can determine this by questioning servants.

They discover that each magus hopes the other does not know that the child's bedclothes become saturated with Corpus vis if he sleeps in them for a year. This makes him valuable to either magus not only as an heir, but as a commodity. The Flambeau maga believes her claim is the superior, and has demanded an apology from the Verditius, who is too proud to give it. The Verditius magus estimates the child to be worth 48 pawns of Corpus vis over the next 12 years, and sees no reason why he should budge an inch on his claim.

INTERCEPTION

An illusionist and a shapechanger from the Rhine Tribunal have fought a series of skirmishes as part of their War. Due to a botch by the illusionist, they are now convinced they are many miles to the northwest. They have accidentally strayed into territory considered part of the Transylvanian Tribunal. One has slaughtered some faeries for vis, and the other has harvested a vis source belonging to a Transylvanian oppidum, so this cannot be ignored. The player characters are asked by the Praeco to attempt to contact the two duelists and warn them to move northwest, or face the wrath of the Tribunal. The two duelists, however, think that this is a trick on the part of their rival.

Can the characters convince, calm, or involuntarily transport the warring magi, or will they need to call in the hoplites?

view the Quaesitores as inconvenient barriers to their plans, but as valuable supporters of society. Tremere magi prefer Transitionalist Quaesitors, because they do not see the Order or the Code as strong institutions.

ANNUAL EMERGENCY TRIBUNALS

Quaesitores are permitted to call emergency Tribunals to deal with legal matters in all Tribunals, but only in Transylvania do they

call them annually. A group of advocates from House Tremere hold proxies for all their Transylvanian housemates at these Tribunals, so the final vote always suits House Tremere. The purpose of these Tribunals, from the perspective of House Tremere, is to keep their allies comfortable with the Transylvanian system. Concessions are often made that would not be in other Tribunals, where the person with the most votes gets exactly what he wants.

Some Quaesitores have, in the broadest sense, never approved of the Order's system

of trial by jury. A crime should not be forgiven because the political connections of the magus protect him from the enforcement of the Code. The Code is, however, a practical document: magi are only guilty if the people who will have to perform the lynching agree upon that guilt. In this respect, Transylvania is no worse than anywhere else. House Guernicus could, if sufficiently annoyed, ask that a Grand Tribunal reopen a case concluded by the Transylvanian Tribunal. The problem for the Quaesitores, though, is that unless an overt breach of the Code occurs, Tremere block voting is perfectly legal.

Wizard's War

It is the distinct preference of the majority of magi in Transylvania that wizards fight wizards only during Marches approved by a vote at an emergency Tribunal. Transylvanian magi retain their right, under the Code of Hermes, to capriciously declare War. The Tremere, and the Quaesitores, would prefer they never invoke that right.

In Transylvania, personal Wizard's Wars are extremely rare. Mediation, by the Quaesitores or representatives of the Prima of Tremere, is the most common method of dispute resolution. Those who cannot agree perform certamen. It is rare for this to escalate to Wizard's War without further escalation to Wizard's March. The magi of Tremere and their allies prefer to reserve lethal force for their own use.

CERTAMEN IS A DIRECT PROXY FOR WAR

Certamen is used in this Tribunal as a direct proxy for Wizard's War. A challenge to certamen is an announcement that if the challenger were less civilized, he would now attempt to kill his rival. A certamen victor has won the right to be treated as if he could have killed his enemy, but chose not to. A defeated magus is required to act as if he is alive because of the generosity of the victor. As a sign of this, a Transylvanian magus victorious in certamen is permitted to physically strike his opponent in the face once.

Transylvanian magi take this convention, that the loss of certamen is death leavened by mercy, seriously. They believe trivializing

certamen, as an institution, leads to Wars, like those regularly fought in some other Tribunals.

CERTAMEN FOR LOVE

The vast majority of certamen duels are fought "for love," that is, they are used as sporting contests, or to decide matters of less than mortal importance. So that this does not demean certamen and make it less viable as a substitute for War, duelists for love engage in a series of elaborate rituals, and respect a series of prohibitions.

Duelists for love must clearly state, before at least two witnesses whom the Tribunal could question:

- That the challenge is for love.
- The stake for which they are fighting, if any.
- A victory condition, if other than to yield. Other common conditions are first sound blow, first wound, and unconsciousness.
- Their forgiveness of each other, in advance, for any injury which may befall in the duel.
- Their capitulation, if defeated.

Duelists for love may not:

- Land a physical blow as a mark of victory.
- Use vis during the duel.
- Gamble in a demeaning way.
- Accept as stake any wager which affects the duties of an officer of Tribunal.
- Fight while naked or drunk.
- Cast spells or use items to affect the duel's outcome, or permit observers to do the same.
- Combine sexual intercourse with certamen.
- Challenge a duelist weakened by a previous duel.

Negotiations with Outsiders

The Tribunal's representatives, often appointed by the Praeco, act as diplomats on behalf of the inhabitants of the Tribunal. Magi who live in Transylvania, who are not senior Tremere, are required to limit their interaction with outsiders in a few key areas.

Story Seed: Smuggling Animals

The Tribunal forbids the unlicensed export of magical animals. These are highly sought in vis-poor Tribunals, which lack a wide range of creatures suitable as familiars. The player characters, off on another story, stumble upon evidence that a magus is penning magical animals for smuggling.

How do they investigate this? Why is the magus not simply selling the animals to the Redcaps, and having them sell to outsiders? Using Redcaps as middlemen is perfectly legal, but it's also meticulously recorded. What secret use do these animals have?

Diplomacy

Many oppida are forbidden to enter treaties with foreign covenants or Tribunals. Various commercial engagements can be developed with foreign covenants, but they must either be read into the Peripheral Code, or approved by the Praeco and witnessed by a Quaesitor.

Recruitment

Magi may not import Gifted children into the Tribunal, or invite magi as settlers. They may, however, request that the Praeco invite a particular magus to settle, and may request a particular Gifted child be bought into the Tribunal. This allows the Tremere to limit the population of the Tribunal.

Vis & Magic Item Sales

Most Transylvanian magi are forbidden to sell vis or magic items to outsiders. The exceptions are the Praeco, the Primus of Tremere, the socii, and their delegates. The Tribunal has appointed the camp of Old Histria, which is dominated by socii, as the site of record for all sales of vis and magical items in the Tribunal. Magi selling goods do not necessarily need to ship them to Histria, but can instead exchange matching letters, which are notarized by a Quaesitor.

This system allows the representatives of the Praeco to act as alternative buyers on any items which are considered of interest to the Tribunal. Note that this has few negative effects for sellers, as it can force the price of their goods higher. It does disadvantage buyers of rare items, but buyers of generic vis can receive a list of speculative promissory

notes lodged with the master of vis trading at Old Histria, which allows them to conveniently compare prices.

The system barring vis sales also limits the sale of many types of magical animal. House Tremere has used magical animals in its doctrine of war for centuries and is continually seeking new breeding stock. This legal restriction allows them to act as preferred buyer for exports, or co-bidder for imported animals.

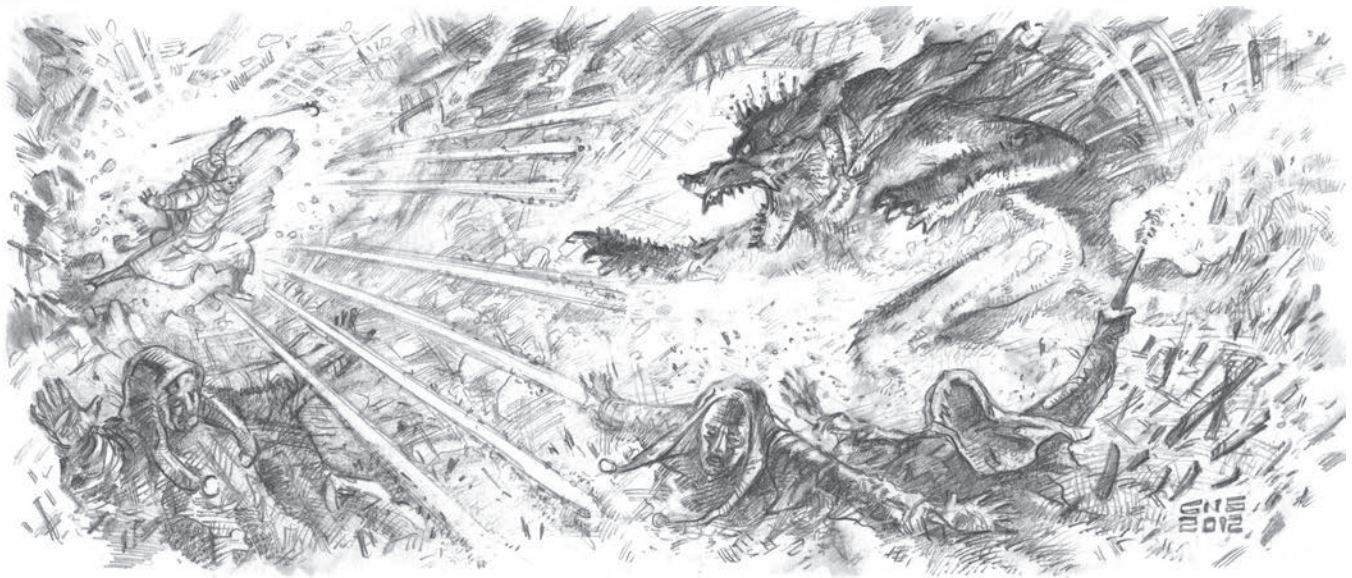


The Oppidum of Coeris

Coeris is House Tremere's main place for storing the tools to complete its designs. It's also, by tradition, the seat of power of the Primus of Tremere. This means that if the Primus decides something is urgent, and requires first call on the resources of the House, she can access them immediately.

History

The site of Coeris was used in ancient times by Dacian magicians. The remoteness of the region, called Maramures, prevented the Romanization or Christianization of the area, allowing a variant of



Dacian magic to continue until the arrival of the Tremere. Tremere slew the faerie god, burned its heart, and drank the ashes in wine. The faerie's priests either accepted his message of secularization or thought this was the correct ordeal for their high priest, and became his followers. Hermetic Coeris was initially built as a respite center for injured Tremere magi.

Following the Sundering, Tremere no longer trusted the security of his domus magna, and so moved his headquarters, keeping the name, from where Lycaneon now is to current Coeris. Tremere's successor, Albanus, used an-

ger directed at Tremere's legacy to solidify the House under his leadership. This allowed the successive Primi of Tremere to redefine the role of Coeris. This prevented Coeris from looking like the older parts of Lycaneon, Tremere's first "throne from which to rule the world."

Setting and Description

Coeris overlooks a river that flows through the valleys of Maramures. This is a region of low, picturesque mountains and

deep, difficult valleys, which provide excellent defense against conventional armies. The elevation of this region means that winters are very cold, and summers almost Mediterranean. The area around Coeris is still heavily forested, with oak and silver birch, but all the trees within a mile of the oppidum itself have been removed.

The oppidum was built on a series of terraces carved into a mountain using magic. The mountain's interior has been thoroughly exploited to provide custom-designed rooms for many purposes. The external buildings have a geometric look that is stark, yet strangely elegant. They are obviously the work of many crafters, working over centuries, yet nothing seems tacked on.

Coeris has many layers of magical defenses. Many of these were built by a magus named Hermanus after the Schism War. His obsession with security eventually alienated his Housemates, and when he was cast out, even further defenses were added, in case he should turn against the House. More information about Hermanus is found in *Legends of Hermes*.

Deep beneath Coeris lies a cave, called the Altar of the Standards. Within it is a cleft in the earth, claimed to be the path taken by Orpheus into the underworld. It is called the Gate of Eurydice by the magi of House Tremere. Surrounding it are memorial niches, commemorating all the Tremere who have ever died. The sigils of most rest in their recesses, including that of Tremere himself.

What is the Gate of Eurydice?

There are many caves claimed to be that of Orpheus, and the Tremere magi make no particular claim that theirs is the true one. If asked, the Tremere answer, "The magi who lived here before the Founder arrived thought it was the Path to Hades used by Orpheus, but we do not celebrate the Orphic mysteries and have no proof they were right." This line means they do not need to describe in any detail what the Gate really does. It is a permanent, open connection to the Magic Realm. It connects to an insula called The City Below by Tremere magi. The City Below is a place to which the people of Coeris will retreat if the covenant becomes indefensible. It's almost an afterlife, but perhaps one the House could return from, after time passes and its enemies

cease to be wary.

In your campaign, you might prefer an alternative explanation. The Gate might:

- Be a Portal to a distant, magically protected cemetery, deep in Africa or Asia.
- Go to a fortress deep in Faerie, designed as a final refugee during the Sundering.
- Lead to a special prison constructed for Diedne magi who, since humans do not age in the Magic Realm, are still alive.
- Open to the garden of a pleasant manor house in which a cheerful old man, named Tremere, lives surrounded by the ghosts of his family, growing roses, playing ball with his wolf, and wondering if his brother will visit today.

The walls of Coeris are a glowing white, from centuries of limewashing. Many of the roofs are made of slates of rhodochrosite, a mineral found in the cave complexes of this region. It is made up of red, white, and pink bands.

Culture and Traditions

Coeris is designed to allow the Prima to do what she considers necessary. House Tremere is designed to ensure that Primae consider useful things necessary. Coeris is the point where the theoretical power of the House is transformed into strategy. Its culture and traditions all revolve, eventually, back to its role as the center of an ambitious and militant House.

Dragonesti

A large town called Dragonesti is one and a half miles to the east. The residents of Dragonesti are free, but the town acknowledges that it lives on the land belonging to the wizards. The town's stone walls, paved streets, sewerage system, and wells were created with magic. Dragonesti provides food and craftsmen to Coeris, but the taxes here are lighter than elsewhere in Hungary.

The residents of Dragonesti are skep-

tical of outsiders, including priests, but are Christian. Dragonesti and Coeris both have a magnificent church built by ritual magic. These are the residue of an experiment to see if they would fall down when consecrated. This would have allowed House Tremere to weaponize consecration and use it on the mystic towers so popular in the Order. The experiment failed. The priests for these buildings are appointed by the Bishop of Transylvania.

POLITICS

House Tremere's values are enforced internally, not just because the Tremere believe

they are right, but because it makes Hermetic politics easier. Other magi know what House Tremere's members stand for. They also know that a publicly notarized deal with

Hard Power Story Seeds

Stories based on the coercive force of the House use elements of hard power as the thing the characters must rescue, or the reward for a story well played.

WAR

The fundamental hard power story is a war story. House Tremere feels that the only way it can get what it wants is to kill, or at least demonstrate its willingness to kill, a powerful rival. As an example, there is a powerful Autumn covenant in another Tribunal that is threatening war against a weaker Spring one. House Tremere could, if it wished, support either side with military force, but should it? By what standard does it pick the winning side, and how much aid should it give its ally, and what peace terms should it counsel its ally to accept?

WAR PLANNING

House Tremere's younger members are often given, as an intellectual exercise, the task of compiling an invasion plan for a covenant in their Tribunal. These plans are then compared to an official plan kept in Coeris, which is updated if the young magus has developed any useful insights. These plans have names that are color-coded: the plan for taking Stonehenge and Loch Leagan is called the Red Contingency, and all of

the covenant plans are a variant (ruby, garnet, carnelian, and so on.) The Normandy contingency plan is Blue, the Alpine plan White, and so on. Most interestingly, Transylvania (Black Contingency) includes a method for invading Coeris (Night Contingency). This is kept secure, and likely has false information seeded through it.

FORGING ALLIANCES

In this style of story, the characters are sent to broker a complicated deal which allows the covenant and the House to assist each other. As an example of this, House Tremere has started making friends with mid-strength covenants near powerful covenants over which members of House Tytalus have political influence. House Tremere believes that these are likely flashpoints for future trouble, because House Tytalus members deliberately provoke chaos. The characters are sent to such a covenant and need to make an agreement which gives differing scenarios, and varied levels of support in each, in exchange for a series of actions by the covenant's residents.

THREATS TO DETER, COERCE AND PROTECT

In these stories, characters need to find the weak spot in a potential foe, and then

find a way of using that weakness to control the foe's actions. These weak spots are often represented with character Flaws or covenant Hooks. Playing through stories where the player characters take advantage of the Flaws of others makes players think more carefully about the Flaws and Hooks they select.

AID

House Tremere uses loans of vis, books, servants, and magic items to assist weak covenants, and create allies. The characters, in this story, are assigned an educative test by a more senior Tremere. They are told that they have a certain aid budget, and told to do the most good for the House by assigning it to covenants in the Tribunal or, if close to a Tribunal boundary, their region. Characters are considered to have done well if they forge useful political and personal alliances with the aid. If the assistance moves new allies from Spring to Summer, or revives a covenant slipping into Winter, this is considered particularly commendable. Characters may need to choose between giving small amounts of aid to every covenant who wants it, and choosing a single covenant for most of their budget. The first is likely to annoy no one, but do little good unless the aid is very specifically targeted by character actions in stories. The latter is likely to effectively strengthen the ally, but may disappoint all of the other covenants who sought aid.

the Tremere will be fully executed. Tremere magi can make deals with outsiders that require a certain level of trust. Outsiders know that a Tremere magus who fails to meet his agreements will be censured by his House, and some provision made for his debts. Unlike other Houses, when a Tremere magus does the wrong thing, other Tremere magi feel a personal slight.

Some politically-motivated magi believe that power is based on resources. If you have more vis, for example, you have more power. From this, they conclude that the way to exercise power is by altering the resources of others. For them, politics occurs as a series of deals, in which there are only threats or bribes, given and received. A covenant or House is powerful if it has a large membership who work together to control a rich territory and to project military force. This maximizes their capacity to threaten or bribe.

The Tremere believed this until the Sundering. Tremere reached a position of resource dominance, and yet he still failed to conquer Europe. This is because resources are shorthand for power, not power itself. Power is about influencing what people do. The translation of resources into control of actions of outsiders is a special art, at which the modern House excels. It has two elements, coercion and co-option.

Coercion

Coercion is the style of politics that the rest of the Order understands best, and which detractors of the Tremere claim they favor. Coercive politics has two main facets: forcing others to do what you command them to do through threats, and convincing others to do what you want them to do through bribes.

Co-option

The alternative to bribing or threatening is co-option. This occurs when other magi do what House Tremere wants because they themselves want to do it. House Tremere co-opts when it can, acting either as leader on an issue, or supporting those magi who are working toward a co-interest.

A problem for House Tremere is that co-option only works when you are admired. There are some Tribunals where Tremere's attempt to dominate the Order has not been

forgiven, and it is difficult for the House to develop a positive reputation and leadership role. On the other side of the balance, the Sundering was 372 years ago. Most magi feel it has no relevance to their daily life, but House Tremere tries to lead the Order by spreading its ethos, and arguing its case on individual issues.

Players trying to use their characters as leaders on issues should familiarize themselves with the key tools used by House Tremere.

Advocacy: House Tremere likes arguing its point of view. This has two effects. First, it reinforces the idea that this is how magi solve things: by arguing them out and voting democratically, which favors the Tremere. The second is that the people arguing an issue get to frame that issue—the first to discuss something even gets to pick the terms used in the discussion.

Aiding Emulants: The Tremere approve of, and assist, efforts in other Houses to organize.

Always Keeping Deals: Tremere magi are seen as credible leaders only if they do what they say they will do.

Defining "Normal": House Tremere keeps pushing elements of Hermetic culture into the shape it wants, then suggesting to others that these shapes are natural and normal.

Direct Acculturation: Neighboring covenants are permitted to join the Transylvanian Tribunal, provided they agree to live by some of its laws. This policy is called "the voluntary empire" for historical reasons.

Expressing a System of Values: Characters dealing with the Tremere know what to expect.

Information: The House spreads its ideas through literature (which is why so many of its servants are literate), and through theater and art (which is why it sponsors Redcaps who tour with plays).

Latin: House Tremere advocates the use of Latin as the language of the Order. In part, it does this to marginalize its Theban rivals, who insist on speaking Greek. A single language also makes propaganda easier to distribute.

Non-Hermetic Actors: House Tremere is happy to use faeries, senior churchmen, noblemen, magical spirits, and exotic wizards as advocates of its policies or as allies.

Openness: The Tremere are perfectly willing to tell others what they want, why, and what they are willing to do to get it. Everyone knows they think they should rule the world. Compared to that, there's little need for concealment on most political issues. They are similarly open with mundane noblemen.

Prosperity: The Tremere aid each other, and their allies, in part to show that their system creates wealth.

HOUSE CULTURE

Tremere culture focuses on the maintenance of a filial community. Many details of House Tremere culture are discussed in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*

Apprentices

An apprentice must spend at least some time in Transylvania, to understand the value of what the House is building. Similarly, an apprentice must spend at least some time in the frontier Tribunals, watching other magi live without the benefits of consensus and organization. The parents of an apprentice likely has duties which prevent her from simply transferring between Tribunals, so it is common for apprentices to spend at least a year being trained by someone other than their master.

House Tremere takes this process of exchange seriously, and magi plan for it in advance. For example, two magi may deliberately take apprentices in the same year, arranging to swap them after a certain time, and then swap back. The years a foreign apprentice spends in Transylvania are deliberately a collegial, affirming experience, to cement loyalty to the House. While in Transylvania, a young magus will stay for at least one season in Coeris, and regularly meet the leaders of the House. The year a Transylvanian spends elsewhere emphasizes the joys of frontier life: the exploring, fighting, and political scheming, to whet the appetites of those temperamentally suited to foreign service.

Rotations and Decennials

Members of the House are encouraged to return to Transylvania regularly. At mini-

Soft Power Story Seeds

Stories about soft power are particularly suited for characters whose Abilities and Arts are aimed at convincing others, rather than killing them. The troupe may to select a Reputation score for House Tremere which a character acting on the House's behalf may use. As soft power stories are completed, this reputation may rise; foolish actions lower it. The use of hard power may also cause the House's reputation to fall, if it is considered unjustified by other magi.

ADVOCACY

A Verditiis magus has once again sold a powerful magic item to a nobleman using a mundane proxy, and it has once again led to tensions with the Arab sorcerers, when the device was used in the Near East. The character is tasked with speaking at Tribunal against this Verditiis. House Tremere has no expectation that the player character will speak so eloquently that the loophole in the Code that allows such sales will be closed. What the player character needs to do instead is frame the issue, to get magi in the Tribunal to connect the words "reckless" and "magic item sales." Once enough magi come to accept that there's something slightly wrong about magic item sales, either one of them will see it raised at the Grand Tribunal, or the Tremere will be able to muster their votes when the time comes to review the Code.

AIDING EMULANTS

House Flambeau is becoming more hierarchical over time. The Tremere do not see an organized House Flambeau as a threat; it solves many more problems that it causes. It allows negotiation with a single body, rather than assembling coalitions of

Flambeau magi on each issue. The player characters are loaned to House Flambeau to serve as adversaries in war games, while that House shakes out the problem of logistics and small unit tactics caused by its narrow range of magical specialization. The player characters gain greater kudos if they think to dress themselves as Tytalus magi for the exercise.

ALWAYS KEEPING DEALS

A Tremere magus has broken a contract in a Tribunal not generally friendly toward the House. The Prima sends the player characters to speak to him, and with the people to whom he was contracted. Can the characters find a way to satisfy the wronged magi, so that this does not become a formal claim at Tribunal? The player characters have been selected because they are the best people to finish the task the Tremere has failed to complete.

DEFINING NORMAL

A Transylvanian Redcap has attempted to compete in one of the sporting competitions held in the Normandy Tribunal, but her entry has been refused because she is not formally a member of the House. Can the player characters convince the Normandy Redcaps to make an exception for her, or even to expand the House in the Normandy, in the Transylvanian way?

DIRECT ACCULTURATION

The southernmost covenant in the Novgorod Tribunal has, for some time, been asking for aid from the other covenants there, but has not been receiving

as much help as it needs to remain viable. The player characters are sent as emissaries with aid, and then as advisors. Is it better for the House for this covenant to remain in Novgorod, supporting House Tremere in a generally hostile Tribunal, or should the covenant become an oppidum of Transylvania? Would this cause border tension, or can that be soothed with skilled diplomacy?

INFORMATION

The author of a wildly popular series of lays about an apprentice who grows up to fight the druids in the Schism War has passed away while on an expedition. The final book of the series has not been written, and the House feels that the series should be completed. The players characters are asked to find the author's skull, which will allow her ghost to be summoned. Most ghosts cannot learn, so she is unlikely to be able to think through the twists in the unfinished plot herself, but she could act as a consultant to a living "ghost writer."

NON-HERMETIC ACTORS

A major point of policy on which House Jerbiton and House Tremere agree are that it would be very convenient the Church to declare that Hermetic magic is morally neutral. There are a few senior churchmen who favor the Order, but can they be welded together into a faction at the Papal court, or do their national ties and other philosophical differences prevent them being an effective force? What can the player characters do, in the region under close observation by senior prelates, to convince them that the Order is not a tool of the Devil?

mum, every Tremere magus should spend at least a season every ten years in Transylvania, unless kept abroad by pressing duties. Many senior Tremere gather every decade for a planning meeting, called a Decennial, at Coeris. They often take young Tremere magi with them, as assistants and advisors. In the absence of the councilors, magi of middle age form teams to keep the projects of the House stable. This forces the exarch to distribute information about his plans to his subordinates.

Characters whose duties have kept them away from Transylvania for some time are encouraged to return for lengthy stays. This has three useful effects. It allows a magus to recenter, so he does not "go native." It allows the magus' replacement to look at the House's challenges and resources with fresh eyes and new skills. It also allows the magus to meet the new leaders of the House, if the Primus has changed, or if there have been movements in her council of closest assistants.

Players wanting a rotation for their character should discuss it with the troupe. They may simply play a companion for a year. With the troupe's permission, the player may create a replacement to play while their primary magus is in Transylvania. The easiest way to do this is just to reskin the primary magus (create a new character who looks and sounds different, but has the same underlying numbers). If the primary magus is killed in a later story, the replacement character may be substituted.

Decennial Story Seeds

The movement of magi leading up to a Decennial provides some storytelling opportunities.

RECONNAISSANCE FOR THE ADVISER

The character is being taken to Decennial as an adviser to an exarch on a pressing problem (for example, piracy, a new breed of faerie with military applications, a new plague, a novel device, or an archaeological dig which may aid Original Research). The character and his allies must, therefore, have fresh information to present to their sponsor and the House. This is gathered during a story.

WATCHING THE STORE

While the exarch is away, the player character and her allies need to keep the

House's plots bubbling. When something goes wrong, she needs to fix things, preferably before her exarch gets back. A skilled character might also find new ways of using personal resources that the exarch has previously neglected to mention.

DECENNIAL

The Decennial is approaching and Poena wants to build a coalition of support around her strategies in the Levant. To do this, she needs her envoys, the player characters, to contact the councilors most opposed to her plans, and gauge their opinion of where the House should be heading for the next decade. The views of these magi are irreconcilable on some issues, but she needs to carefully find something useful that each councilor wants to do, so that no coalition of resistance to her plans can form.

dozens of projects, without having a single heart-catching policy like her predecessor. This means her flagship policy can never fail, bringing her leadership into question.

Poena needs more pieces for her schemes, preferably pieces not shaped like those she already possesses. Player characters from outside House Tremere are particularly useful to her, provided they can be trusted to act predictably. She has the key to the greatest stockpiles of treasure in Europe. She probably knows precisely what the player characters want, or where to get it, or both.

ANGIOLA OF TREMERE

Age: 25

Personality Traits: Cheerful +3, Assertive +2. Specializes in Muto Imaginem, with some Creo and Mentem.

Privilege: Cives

Young, blonde, and sarcastic, Angiola is a Gently Gifted maga used by Poena as her spokeswoman to those affected by the Gift. She was trained as an Assessor, and has access to powerful illusions which make her seem older and male, because each of these things adds to her credibility in Mythic Europe's society. When she casts magic, things around her become crisper.

Angiola is the maga most likely to appear if the characters have dismally failed a task among the mortals, and need rescuing. She's in charge of tidying up problems between magi and mundanes in this Tribunal. If the characters make any pretense of being noblemen, she regularly checks in with them. She acts as chief aide to Janus of Tremere.

DOMINIC OF TYTALUS, AEDILE OF COERIS

Age: 90

Personality Traits: Fascinated by complex things +4, Patient +3. Prefers weather magic, skilled necromancer

Privilege: Hospes

Dominic is the Tytalus who challenges himself to understand and predict the gambits of all other Tytalus magi, and warn House Tremere about them. Dominic sees himself as

Magi

Coeris currently houses 20 magi, all of whom are members of House Tremere, with the exceptions of Archmagus Dominic of Tytalus and Issac of Merinita. Five of these magi are in Coeris for a year, either to acculturate their apprentices or as part of a rotation. Two more are young Tremere magi being "seasoned," performing missions for the House while awaiting more permanent placement in a covenant in another Tribunal. The remaining 13 form the core of House Tremere's policy-creating body.

PRIMUS POENA OF TREMERE

Age: 86

Personality Traits: Precise +4, Meticulous +2, Specializes in Intellego, Muto, Imaginem and Mentem magic.

Privilege: Cives

Slight of frame and stern of feature, her hair silver, Poena is arguably the most politically powerful magus in Mythic Europe. Her memory is flawless. She recalls every item in

the *Book of Legacies*. She knows the name of every magus in the House, and roughly what she or he is tasked to do. She has situational reports from her exarchs and spies. She can click all of these pieces together into intricate and interesting combinations.

Poena's strange ability to find associations among resources makes her a different Primus from many of her predecessors. Many of them preferred to govern the House by announcing a handful of — preferably captivating — projects as top priorities, and pouring resources into those. A few others preferred to just let councilors do whatever they liked, and pursue projects using the remaining, young Tremere. Poena governs her whole House, but she does it subtly.

She is aided by her exarchs, legate, councilors, and three secretaries. Poena's secretaries are magi of middle age, responsible for operations, contingencies, and emergencies. Each assists Poena by making sure that her policies are carried out, and information about the House's progress flows back to her.

House Tremere's councilors are generally performing duties they either enjoy or know are vital. They almost universally feel that they have Poena's personal support to do useful things, materially represented with House aid. Poena spreads her interest across

challenging his entire House to an incredibly serious game. He believes that House Tytalus underestimates House Tremere badly, and that this is sure to lead to trouble if unchecked.

Dominic is very tall, and wears a devilish beard. His clothes are always black, including his skullcap. He knows this makes him look like he's trying too hard to intimidate people. That's the look he wants. His sigil is the sound of thunder which he, privately, thinks is so gauche as to be funny.

In House Tytalus' culture, Tremere magi are seen as buffoons: the perfect targets for the sort of bullying japes that their cruel founder played on his weakling brother. Young Tytalus magi count it as a day of honor when they first best a Tremere magus. House Tremere avoids the Normandy Tribunal, because, Tytalus magi believe, they cannot compete in challenges of the intellect.

Dominic knows that on one occasion, the Corruption, House Tremere did decide that House Tytalus needed a lesson. They crushed his House, complete with demonic minions, like an egg. Ignoring this, Tytalus magi deliberately provoke, then mock, Tremere magi. Dominic is concerned that the iron pragmatism protecting his House from petulant retaliation may corrode. He is also concerned that the current weakness in the Theban Tribunal leaves House Tremere with spare magi, who could be tasked to deal with niggling problems, like the behavior of House Tytalus.

Dominic is a great ally for player characters to have. He has the ear of the Prima, and is at the center of things in Coeris, but he's not a Tremere magus. He always needs favors, because there's always a Tytalus magus trying to do something weird to someone undeserving. He can repay them from his vast number of contacts, tremendous store of devious advice, and his talent for necromantic mayhem.

The Book of Legacies

This vast white tome contains a list of every item, magic or mundane, controlled by the House. There are only 12 copies of the book, and many of those are kept in Coeris. A copy is held by the exarchs of foreign Tribunals, by the Primus, by her designated successor, and by the leader of Lycaneon covenant. The existence of the book is, itself, kept secret.

The Tremere have layered defenses on each copy of the book, to prevent them from falling into the hands of enemies who might profit from such a detailed knowledge of the resources available to the House. The book's case is designed to destroy the pages within if certain passwords are not said, or if it is touched on certain surfaces. It also destroys its contents if it cannot confirm, using Mentem spells, that the person touching it is a loyal Tremere magus. This means that the user's Parma needs to be down, which leaves them vulnerable to some of the other Mentem spells crafted into the defenses of the book.

The *Book of Legacies* is supplemented by

a second book, called the *Book of Placements*, which records where every item is. It records this, however, by reference only to an item's number in the *Book of Legacies* and a number given to each magus, covenant, and oppidum. This means that if the *Book of Placements* is ever stolen, its contents are meaningless, even with magical aids to decryption. Some of the nosier members of House Mercere have intercepted parts of the *Book of Placements*, and understand what it is, and from this they infer that something like the *Book of Legacies* must exist, to act as a key for the messages.

House Tremere has noticed that their administration of the *Book of Placements* is a lot easier if every Tremere magus has a unique identifier. In other Tribunals, the magus' name and covenant suffices. In this Tribunal, with its fluid residency, an alternative tradition has developed. No two Tremere magi are permitted to have the same name in this Tribunal. A maga moving to this Tribunal may need to perform certamen to defend her name in the most literal of senses.

HORATIUS OF TREMERE

Age: 61

Personality Traits: Organized +4, Wants to cut a deal +3. Prefers Creo, Rego, Imaginem, and Terram.

Privilege: Cives

Horatius has the prestigious role of secretary for operations, meaning he takes care of things planned in the most recent Decennial. With some earlier Primi, this secretary wielded vast power, as the Primus set policy and the secretary carried it out. Horatius

has less influence than some previous secretaries, because his Prima is so interested in resource allocations. He does, however, still make sure things are running smoothly, and reports anomalies.

He is young for such a senior role, and a little corpulent for a Tremere magus. He and Poena often operated together before she became Prima. He was one of the supporters who helped her arrange her succession. He's also the brother of her husband. He holds his own sigil and is by training a Signaler. His sigil is comforting warmth.

Horatius rarely leaves Coeris, but player characters from other places may still interact with him. As the manager of House business for Tremere, he's the magus they will send letters to when proposing deals. He's more accessible than Poena, and can tap into many of the House's resources. He's also the person who can most easily arrange a face-to-face meeting with the Prima. Horatius has an aide, Juturnus of Tremere, who acts as a troubleshooter.

Horatius does not currently seek the Primushood, and is unlikely to win it on his own in the near future. If the House divided, he'd make a great compromise Primus. If Horatius

The Blessings of the Dead

Within the vast storehouse of material recorded in the Book of Legacies are the talismans of Tremere magi who have passed away. Since talismans are constructed without the usual material constraints of magic item creation, but persist after their makers die, these are some of the most potent magic items in Mythic Europe. Many older Tremere, not par-

ticularly interested in laboratory work in their younger years, are assigned time and resources, as Twilight approaches, to ensure they leave behind a powerful talisman. These items are called the Blessings of the Dead, and are treated reverentially by the Tremere. It is an honor to carry the talisman of a great heroine of the House, particularly if she was an ancestor.

were to become Primus, he would seed the north and east coasts of the Black Sea with oppida. Horatius views the Black Sea as a possible Hermetic lake. The rapid communications and logistical support made possible by the Black Sea are, in his opinion, valuable, and should be brought into the body of the Order.

JANUS OF TREMERE

Age: 91

Personality Traits: Chaste +3, Secretive +2, Proud +1. Prefers *Creo*, *Intellego*, *Rego*, and *Mentem*. His strong specialization in *Mentem* is well known in his House, which limits his effectiveness in *Certamen*. He's a spiritual necromancer.

Privilege: *Cives*

Janus is the secretary for contingencies: things that may occur, and that the House must be ready for. He ensures the maintenance of the House's logistical stockpile, and sometimes requests that members of the House, or of Transylvanian oppida, be trained in odd skills, to ensure the House has

the right talents available if one of his low-probability events occurs. Janus is aided by Angiola of Tremere. His sigil is ribbons of scarlet light.

Janus was raised in the Rhineland. He's muscular and handsome, but he suffers from a sort of lycanthropy that can be suppressed with magic and affects only his shape, not his mind. He finds this embarrassing, so he does not discuss it with others. He will never attempt to become Primus, because his secret would emerge. His condition is sexually transmissible, so he is aloof with attractive women. He served the previous Primus as secretary for operations.

Janus interacts with the player characters if he thinks that what they are doing might have the remote chance of causing a crisis. He doesn't stop the player characters, but puts counterweights in place, so that if their actions do rebound on the House, at least it has some warning. His habit of spying on characters and tinkering at the edges of their sphere of influence is less sinister than it often appears. Characters may also contact him for advice, because he's spent years making plans to deal with unlikely events.

House Tremere may also ask the characters to learn odd skills. Some time after this occurs, Janus may seek the characters' assistance with an odd situation for which their skills are perfect. This is, of course, because he foresaw the situation, and prepared the characters to deal with it. He has a talent for spycraft and the *Visions* flaw, so his preparations, although good, cannot be precise. When Janus asks characters to go on a mission, then it's to resolve a situation where several very unlikely circumstances coincided to create a crisis. Resolving these situations can be problematic, because it's difficult to establish a single cause for the failure, a single person to be blamed for it, or an easy remedy.

ISAAC OF MERINITA

Age: Physically 40, but has spent years in Faerie.

Personality Traits: Manic Depressive +3. Prefers gloomy faerie magic.

Privilege: *Cives*

Isaac is Coeris's resident specialist on faeries. He has been left, if not insane, then deeply disturbed by his experiences with the dark faeries of this Tribunal. His askew view of the world makes him a useful advisor to Tatiana, the Secretary for Emergencies. His hatred for and encyclopedic knowledge of vampiric faeries also makes him useful. His sigil is the smell of burning pinecones, but he claims this was not always so, a matter of some interest to researchers.

Isaac looks frail, but his faerie blood makes him athletic and agile despite his appearance. He has large scars on his wrists, ankles, neck, and inner thighs that look like madmen have chewed and torn his flesh. These scars cannot be healed with Hermetic magic, which may be a faerie curse, or could be damage to his Essential Nature caused by faerie tortures. His personality swings from happy to brooding without warning.

JUTURNUS OF TREMERE

Age: 45

Personality Traits: Cocksure +3, Eloquent +2. Prefers *Rego*, some *Perdo* and *Intellego*, Animal and *Terram*.



Juturnus is sent to clarify faults in the operations of the House. That is, when something goes wrong and Horatius can't figure out why, he sends Juturnus to assess things and then fix them. Cocky, skillful, and decisively violent, Juturnus doesn't act a lot like a bureaucratic Tremere, and has perhaps risen too quickly to his position. His sigil is that small objects near him rearrange themselves into geometric shapes.

Juturnus is black, and has the athletic build common to Tremere magi. A few decades ago, one of the Primi encouraged the Redcaps to find gifted Arabic and African children for his sodales to raise. He believed this would enable them to work in Arabic lands less conspicuously than magi of Hungarian stock. Nothing substantial came of this, but it does add some randomness to the race of the House's members. Like many of these children, he was trained as an Assessor (a sort of spy) initially, although he has more eclectic training now.

TATIANA OF TREMERE

Age: 85

Personality Traits: Ruthless +3, Calm +2, Prefers Creo, Muto, Herbam and Corpus.

Privilege: Cives

Tatiana is the secretary for emergencies. It's her job to come up with solutions when the House is blindsided by events. She's also in charge of making sure the House knows that problems are looming, so she's Poena's spymistress. She is aided by Isaac of Merinita. She finds his knack for surviving anything, even if not entirely intact, useful. Tatiana's family are Szeklers, although she has had no contact with them since she was made an apprentice. She becomes briefly invisible when she casts spells, much to her annoyance.

Characters are most likely to meet Tatiana when something truly awful is about to happen. She appears, commandeers their aid and resources, and then sends them into terrible situations. Her job is to buy time for the House and Order to react, and magi who don't assist her when she asks are, in some circles, forever tarnished by the disgrace of it.

Keepers of the Silence of the Temple

Tatiana is privately a member of the Keepers of the Silence of the Temple. This small, secretive and unofficial societates takes its name from a historical incident. In 356 BC, a young man set fire to the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, and then readily confessed his crime, because, he said, it would make him famous

throughout the ages. He was put to death, and all mention of his name forbidden. Tatiana and her colleagues believe that, on a far too regular basis, Tytalus magi deliberately do profoundly stupid things for fame. Her organization is dedicated to destroying first the person, then the memory, of these vandals.

Plot Hooks

Characters who live at Coeris can be involved in stories on a Europe-wide scale.

Allies in Foreign Tribunals

Normandy Tribunal has always been a problem for House Tremere, because it is full of Tytalus magi. As a counterweight, House Tremere has been aiding one of the Autumn covenants, called Oleron. The Oleronese are politically belligerent, and have set up a small covenant as bait for Tytalus raiders, without discussing this with House Tremere. When the Tytalus magi take the bait and attack the covenant, this draws Oleron into a clash with some powerful Tytalus magi. They assume that House Tremere will aid them. The player characters are dispatched to deal with this issue: how much aid do they want to give, and how publicly do they want to give it? How can they make the conflict stop, at advantageous terms, before it spirals into widespread war?

Culture

The unique way that Transylvanian magi live provides opportunities for storytelling.

CHESS

Many magi are fascinated by chess and play by post. The Prima Poena wishes to regularize the Order's great competition for chess players. She wishes to hold it

at the Transylvanian Tribunal site in two years' time. She wants participants to bid with the other attendees for the right to host the next competition. Poena is doing this to add to the prestige of the House, to expose senior magi from other Tribunals to the Transylvanian culture, and to open a non-violent arena for the Tremere to demonstrate their prowess.

The tournament needs to run smoothly, and the player characters are made responsible for this. This includes preventing sabotage, finding things for magi not currently involved in matches to do, and finding ways to showcase the Transylvanian Hermetic culture.

THE LAUREATE

House Tremere's chief poet is elderly and wishes to retire in the next year. His role, in the House's policy, is to create memorable works which influence the Reputation of the House. The player characters are asked to find his replacement.

Mortals

House Tremere is particularly interested in the protection of its non-magical agents.

ASSASSINATION

There is a king in another Tribunal who is seeking ways to pressure magi into paying taxes, and has already intimated to his senior nobles that he would like to cast down all these wizards, and divide their land between his supporters and the Church. The Order has strict rules against disturbing the nobility, but House Tremere

Monica Ierne of Tremere, Archmaga and Legata

Moinca of Ireland is a skilled combat maga who took the role of legata, field commander of the House, two years ago, when Poena became Prima. As legata, Monica is Poena's heir. She is expected, should Poena die or become indisposed, to act as Prima for the time it takes to call together an emergency meeting of the Council. Monica has her own sigil, and that of Tatiana, described later.

Monica is dark-haired and pale, but has a slightly muscular, athletic look which is unusual in mundane noblewomen. Her sigil is a type of stone, flint. She was raised in Blackthorn Covenant, which dominates much of England. She was, from her earliest training, designated as one of the House's heavy combat magi. She specialises in *Creo*, *Rego*, *Terram*, and *Corpus* magic.

Player characters may interact with Monica whenever the House decides to field a military force. She is not always in charge; often, she will appoint another officer to act on her behalf. She may also seek their assistance with her duties. For example, she may ask player characters to assay areas around their covenant, if outside the Tribunal, to determine their suitability as battlefields and staging grounds. She is particularly interested in descriptions of battles with hedge magi, demons, faeries, or monsters of unclear origin. Monica may send letters, asking for precise details of the player characters' conflicts.

Monica has no desire to be Prima and would only take the role to evict someone she considered truly odious. If she became Prima, she would push for changes to allow the Primushood to be determined by duel of champions. After this was successful, she would resign to someone more suited to

governance. Monica accepts that her focus on combat magic has made her unable to claim the Primushood.

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

Size: 0

Age: 90 (55)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 6 (10)

Confidence Score: 3 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift, Affinity with *Terram*, Clear Thinker, Leadworker*, Minor Magical Focus (certamen), True Friend, Deficient Technique (Muto).

* Described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*. Allows Monica to make small dolls or tablets out of lead that provide arcane connections to the dead or animals which recognize their own names. Also allows her to fix arcane connections without spending vis or taking time from other studies. She has hundreds of these tiny dolls.

Personality Traits: Loves reading about combat +3, Loyalty (wolf) +3, Enjoys sailing +2

Reputations: Combat maga 5 (Hermetic)

Combat:

Club: Init +1, Attack +5, Defense +6, Damage +3

Brawl: Init 0, Attack +1, Defense +2, Damage 0

Soak: +5 (Sta + bronze cord)

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Hibernian Tribunal 2 (western coast), Area Lore: Transylva-

nian Tribunal 3 (oppida), Artes Liberales 1 (writing), Athletics 2 (marching), Awareness 3 (faeries), Bargain 2 (magi), Brawl 1 (self-defense), Charm 1 (magi), Craft: Flintworking 3 (blades), Code of Hermes 2 (Transylvanian Tribunal), Concentration 4 (*Terram*), Etiquette 2 (magi), Finesse 6 (*Terram*), Folk Ken 2 (Transylvania), Hermes Lore 3 (specializations of magi), Irish 5 (peasants), Latin 6 (magi), Leadership 3 (magi), Magic Theory 4 (*Terram*), Organization Lore: House Tremere 4 (resources), Parma Magica 9 (faeries), Penetration 8 (*Terram*), Survival 2 (Transylvania), Swim 1 (endurance),
Arts: Cr 12, In 6, Mu 6, Pe 6, Re 24; An 10, Aq 0, Au 12, Co 6, He 0, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 0, Te 30, Vi 0

Equipment: Monica wears a thigh case filled with spikes of flint, which she uses when no better ammunition is available for use with *Wielding the Invisible Sling*. Some of these flints are soaked in arsenic and then coated in beeswax. The case is itself a magic item, containing, among other things, an enchantment which prevents arsenic from touching the wearer. Cutting yourself is an obvious botch for this spell.

She also carries a flint wand, which is her talisman, and various magic items from the House stores. The most powerful of these is a dragon banner, the handle of which was the staff on an archmagus.

Encumbrance: 0

Spells Known:

Command the Harnessed Beast (ReAn 30/+36), **ArM5**, page 120.

Ward Against Rain (ReAq 10/+26), **ArM5**, page 128.

think he is an Infernalist. They see deposing this king as a sort of proactive self-defense. The player characters are sent to see if they can cause a faction of his nobles to break ranks and support a pretender to the throne. If this fails, they need to consider if an assassination is possible, and how it can be performed to the greatest advantage of the House.

This includes preparing a defense in case the ungrateful magi of this Tribunal attempt to charge them with interference. Can they tempt the king to attack them

personally, so that he can be killed as part of a right to imminent self-defense? Should they trick him into a declaration of war on the Order of Hermes, so that "the enemies of the Order are my enemies" can be used? Will they have to settle for making their efforts untraceable?

NON-COMBATANT EVACUATION

A mortal war is about to flow through an area that contains a lot of people of par-

ticular value to one of the other Houses. The player characters are tasked with the evacuation, in as subtle manner as possible, of as many of these people, and their chattels, as possible.

RECOVERY TEAM

A mortal ally of the House has been convicted of witchcraft in another Tribunal and is to be executed. The local Tremere do not feel they can do anything without caus-

Monica Ierne of Tremere, Archmage and Legata, cont'd

Circling Winds of Protection (CrAu 20/+31), Mastery 1 (fast casting), **ArM5**, page 125.

Incantation of Lighting (CrAu 35/+32), Mastery 1 (fast casting), **ArM5**, page 126.

Whispering Winds (InAu 15/+18), **ArM5**, page 127.

Broom of the Winds (ReAu 15/+42), **ArM5**, page 125.

Gathering the Stormy Might (ReAu 40/+42), **ArM5**, page 129. Useful to follow *Sudden Well*.

Chirurgeon's Healing Touch (CrCo 20/+14), **ArM5**, page 129.

Restoration of the Defiled Body (CrCo 25/+20), **ArM5**, page 156.

The Leap of Homecoming (ReCo 35/+33), Mastery 1 (fast casting), **ArM5**, page 135.

Heat of the Searing Forge (Crlg 10/+15), **ArM5**, page 140.

Pilum of Fire (Crlg 20/+18), Mastery 1 (fast casting), **ArM5**, page 140.

Aura of Rightful Authority (ReMe 20/+24), **ArM5**, page 151.

Scent of Peaceful Slumber (ReMe 20/+26), **ArM5**, page 152.

Wall of Protecting Stone (CrTe 25/+47) Mastery 1 (fast casting), **ArM5**, page 153.

Necessary Monolith (CrTe 35/+46)

Sense the Feet That Tread the Earth (InTe 30/+59), **ArM5**, page 154.

Stone Tell of the Mind that Sits (InTe 30/+59), **ArM5**, page 153.

Stone to Falling Dust (PeTe 20/+35) Mastery 2 (fast casting, Penetration), **ArM5**, page 155.

Wielding the Invisible Sling (ReTe 10/+61) Mastery 3 (fast casting, Multiple, Penetration), **ArM5**, page 155.

Unseen Porter (ReTe 10/+60), **ArM5**, page 156.

Earth's Carbuncle (Re(Mu)Te 15/+15), **ArM5**, page 156.

Hands of the Grasping Earth (ReTe 15/+60), **ArM5**, page 156.

Crest of the Earth Wave (ReTe 20/+58), **ArM5**, page 156.

Abrading Stones (ReTe 25/+58)

Earth Shock (ReTe 30/+60), **ArM5**, page 156. A great spell to follow *Sudden Well*, *Creeping Chasm*, or similar.

Earth Split Asunder (ReTe 30/+60), **ArM5**, page 156.

Creeping Chasm (ReTe 35/+58), **ArM5**, page 156.

Sudden Well (ReTe 35/+60)

The Field of Millstones (ReTe 40/+60)

Diverting the River (ReTe 50/+58)

Gathering the Essence of the Beast (ReVi 15/+26), **ArM5**, page 162.

Circular Ward Against Demons (ReVi 20/+14), **ArM5**, page 162.

Watching Ward (ReVi 25/+26), **ArM5**, page 162.

use this spell to divert rivers with the aid of her *Necessary Monolith* spell, which dams the original watercourse. She can also create defensive circles, up to a mile and three quarters across, with each casting of the spell. The channel is not stable, and begins to collapse over the next few days, but if has been used to divert a river, the scouring action of the water may keep it clear.

(Base 3, +2 voice, +1 Diameter, +1 part, +7 size)

THE FIELD OF MILLSTONES

ReTe 40

R: Voice, D: Diameter, T: Part
As *Abrading Stones*, but affects everything in a circle 200 paces across.

(Base 4, +2 Voice, +1 Part, +4 size, +1 Diameter)

NECESSARY MONOLITH

CrTe 35

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Individual

This spell creates a wall 50 paces long, 20 paces high, and 10 paces thick. Monica uses this spell to dam rivers, so that her *Diverting the River* spell has sufficient water to be effective.

(Base 3, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +4 size)

SUDDEN WELL

PeTe 30

R: Voice, D: Mom, T: Part

This spell creates a shaft 10 feet square and 100 feet deep. The shaft is not reinforced, so it collapses swiftly after it is created.

(Base 3, +2 Voice, +1 Part, +4 size)

ABRADING STONES

ReTe 25

R: Voice, D: Diameter, T: Part

This spell lifts all loose rocks and pebbles in a 15-pace radius about the target, and grinds them against the victim. Damage is +5 per round.

(Base 4, +2 Voice, +1 Diameter, +1 Part, +1 size)

DIVERTING THE RIVER

ReTe 50

R: Voice, D: Diameter, T: Part

This spell creates a chasm 30 feet wide, 30 to 40 feet deep, and 10,000 paces long (which is just over 5.5 miles). Monica can

ing an incident that the Quaesitores will take a dim view of. The player characters are sent as a recovery team, but they are told to make the rescue look deniable. The man has already been convicted of using forbidden magic, so making it look like he escaped with faerie or diabolic aid is not, of itself, a problem. They then need to bring the ally back to Hungary, where witchcraft, legally speaking, does not exist.

Politics

Hermetic politics is played slightly differently as the representative of a militant House, expected to enforce order.

BORDER WAR

After the destruction of House Diedne, many of that House's vis sources were claimed by Houses Tylalus and Flambeau. The exact division of these spoils has never been for-

malized, mostly because House Tylalus's members like having to compete for them on a regular basis. In one of the more recent clashes over these resources, a Flambeau magus died. This was probably an accident.

The Flambeau Primus believes that the accident was a foreseeable consequence of the Tylalus tactics. Its possibility was disregarded because it was unlikely and their tactics were just so clever. House Tylalus is now treating the legal case surrounding the magus' death as yet another game, which they win if the magus responsible escapes conviction.

House Flambeau's members are passionate people, and House Guernicus is concerned that raiding, or even general war, may result. A Trianoman negotiator is being sent, with security provided by the player characters. They are to assist him to soothe the situation, or at least turn it to House Tremere's advantage.

THE MAGIC ITEM TAX

The Houses of Verditus and Bonisagus are co-sponsoring a Grand Tribunal resolution to tax all covenants a pawn of vis a year. This is to be given to a research team to perfect a new type of magical device. House Tremere is in favor of establishing the right of the Grand Tribunal to tax magi for the benefit of the Order. The player characters, as Poena's envoys, must deal with some obvious concerns.

It seems to Poena that House Bonisagus and Verditus get all the vis, but leave the collection and enforcement, with its costs and dangers, to House Guernicus and its militant allies. How will the vis be collected, what will the penalty for non-payment be, and how will that be enforced?

She is also concerned that the project itself is less worthy than others the vis could be spent on. Is it better to establish taxation as a principle, then make what it is spent on useful, or demand it be useful to begin with?

The device should be tailored to each campaign, but does something which can also be done by interested parties in the Order. Examples include:

- A distillery that creates a pawn of vis each year, but costs a hundred pawns to create. It pays for itself in the very long term, but alchemists might be able to do this more quickly (see *The Mysteries: Revised Edition*).
- A tiny mobile device that finds Gifted children and gathers Arcane Connections from them, like hair samples. Redcaps might be able to do this faster.
- An invisible floating globe that traps magical animals suitable for familiars. Some magi already breed and train magical animals.
- A small machine that detects vis sources, and collects Arcane Connections to their locations. Some Redcaps, Bjornae, and Merinita magi already perform this function.

A NEW RED SPELL

House Tremere wants to campaign at Grand Tribunal to have a spell, called the Ashes of Victory, declared forbidden. It's a complicated ritual, but when successful, it burns down the crops of a village while its people sleep. Then, it destroys the crops of every village to which refugees flee, once they sleep. Other elements of the Order think this spell particularly useful, because they can cast it on one of their own people and use it to sabotage the supply lines of mortal armies, or particularly clever, in that its contagious nature is the first expression of a breakthrough. Can the player characters negotiate with the holdouts to make sure this vote succeeds at Grand Tribunal?

A PORTRAIT OF DIEDNE?

A team of Redcaps helping a magus move from one oppidum to another has drawn the House's attention to a statue their client owns. It is part of a set that displays the likeness of each founder, and is carefully relabelled "Pralix," but does not match any other portrayal of her. They believe that it is

Silexa, a Familiar Wolf

Silexa is not one of the native white wolves, being of Irish extraction, but she has great seniority in the strange community of wolves that depends on House Tremere.

Magic Might: 10 (Animal)

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

* Lacks the ability to speak.

Size: -1

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal; Essential Virtue (Minor), Improved Characteristics (x2), Ferocity (when hungry), Long-Winded, Sharp Ears, True Friend, Wilderness Sense, Infamous, Magical Creature

Magic Qualities: Personal Power (Hands of the Magical Animal), 2 x Improved Damage, 2 x Improved Defense, 2 x Improved Fatigue, Improved Initiate, 2 x Improved Soak

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Loyal (Monica) +3, Wolf +3* Cautious +2

* This trait is part of Silexa's essential nature, and so cannot be affected by Hermetic magic. It makes her loyal to her pack, and immune to spells which try to make her act in a humanish way.

Reputations: Honorable 4 (Hermetic wolves)

Combat:

Teeth: Init +5, Attack +11, Defense +13, Damage +6

Soak: +11

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-4), -3 (5-8), -5 (9-12), Incapacitated (13-16)

Abilities: Area Lore: Transylvanian Tribunal 3, Athletics 5 (distance running), Awareness 3 (smell), Brawl 5 (teeth), Hunt 4 (track by smell), Latin 5 (listening), Leadership 3 (wolves), Survival 3 (winter), Swim 3 (rivers), Wilderness Sense (Transylvania) 5.

Powers:

Hands of the Magical Animal: 0 points, Init 0, Animal.

Allows the wolf to carry objects as if she had hands and a Strength of 5. She must concentrate to do anything but carry an object. ((Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 constant, Personal Power (15 levels, -2 Might cost) *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 39)

Vis: 2 pawns, Animal, heart.

Appearance: A wolf with a pelt the color of flint.

Bond Cords: Gold +2, Silver +1, Bronze +3

Bond Powers:

2 Shared senses (Sight), 0 points, Init 0, Corpus or Animal, as per *ArM5*, page 105

Ever-present Familiar, 0 points, Init 0, Animal.

Allows Monica to call Silexa to her side, provided the wolf is within seven leagues. Silexa often recovers Arcane Connections to places, to allow Monica to use Leap of Homecoming. (Base 30, +3 24 uses per day)

Mental communication as per *ArM5*, page 105, complex variant.

Talisman: Flint Wand

Monica's wand is a cylinder of flint with bronze bands. It has the following attunements, not all of which are used in the enchantments currently placed within it:

- +9 Causing Paralysis
- +4 Control things at a distance
- +4 Destroy things at a distance
- +3 Ignem
- +3 Project Missile
- +6 Protection from faeries
- +2 Repel things at a distance
- +3 Terram

EARTH SPLIT ASUNDER

ReTe 35
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Voice, **D:** Conc, **T:** Part
 As per *The Earth Split Asunder* (ArM5, page 156). Item maintains concentration.
 (Effect: Base 3, +2 Voice, +1 Conc, +1 Part, +2 size, +1 fancy effect. Modifications +5, 24 uses per day, +5 maintains concentration)

ENDURANCE OF THE BERSERKERS

ReCo 30
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind
 As *Endurance of the Berserkers* (ArM5, page 134), but with Touch range. Item maintains concentration.
 (Effect: Base 10, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, Modifications +5, 24 uses per day, +5 maintains concentration)

THE INVISIBLE SIEGE ENGINE

ReTe 15
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Ind

As *Wielding the Invisible Sling* (ArM5, page 155-156), but permits the flinging of objects up to three feet across.

(Effect: Base 4, +2 Voice; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day)

A SECOND ITERATION OF THE INVISIBLE SIEGE ENGINE

ReTe 15
Pen +40, 24/day
R: Voice, **D:** Mom, **T:** Ind
 The same spell as earlier, reinvested once Monica became more powerful.
 (Effect: Base 4, +2 Voice; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day, +20 Penetration).

OBJECT OF INCREASED SIZE

MuTe 20
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Ind
 As per the spell of the same name (ArM5, page 154).
 (Effect: Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day)

OBLITERATION OF THE METALLIC BARRIER

PeTe 25
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Sun, **T:** Ind
 As per the spell of the same name (ArM5, page 155). Often used to follow *Wall of Protecting Stone*.
 (Effect: Base 5, +1 Touch, +1 size, +1 Rego to fling the objects away; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day)

SENSE THE FEET THAT TREAD THE EARTH

InTe 40
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Part
 As per the spell of the same name (ArM5, page 154). The talisman maintains concentration.
 (Effect: Base 4, +1 Conc, +1 Touch, +1 Part, +3 size; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day, +5 maintains concentration)

STONE TELL OF THE MIND THAT SITS

InTe 40
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind
 As per the spell of the same name (ArM5, page 154). The talisman maintains concentration.
 (Effect: Base 20, +1 Touch, +1 Conc; Modifications +5 24 uses per day, +5 maintains concentration)

WINGS OF THE SOARING WIND

Cr(Re)Au 40
Pen +0, 24/day
R: Touch, **D:** Conc, **T:** Ind
 As per the spell of the same name (ArM5, page 126). The talisman maintains concentration.
 (Effect: Base 5, +1 Touch, +1 Conc, +2 highly unnatural, +1 requisite; Modifications +5, 24 uses per day, +5 maintains concentration)

of Diedne, and that, as a complicating factor, it is one of the works of art that the Founder Tremere looted from a Jerbiton House covenant that fell under his power during the violent period just before the Sundering.

The characters are sent to deal with the matter. Their goals are to prevent embarrassment to the gossips from House Mercere, to procure the item from its owner, and to decide what to do with it. If they give it back to House Jerbiton publicly, then they may be forced to destroy it, by ancient laws for-

bidding the display of the House symbol of Diedne. Perhaps they can trade it back privately, for political concessions?

HOUSEKEEPING LETTER

Poena sends an annual letter to every member of House Tremere, and the Primi of all other Houses, describing the current state of the House, her opinion of current political issues, and House Tremere's goals for the

year ahead. This is basically a propaganda letter and is read with some interest, but also with the understanding that significant correspondence is private. A mathematician in House Bonisagus claims he has developed a technique of analysis which, when used on Poena's letters, divulges short and cryptic instructions.

Poena notes that this isn't actually true: she has no reason to communicate in this bizarre way. She sends the player characters to interview this magus, to see who has put him

up to this. One possible resolution is that the magus is sincere, but he has not noticed that his technique generates the same vague and sinister orders when used on any piece of text, including the Code of Hermes. If the player characters discover and demonstrate this, it conclusively removes a potential shadow from the House's reputation.

SUBMERSIBLE

The House owns some uncrewed, magically powered submersibles which are used for spying. One has been attacked by a magical creature, and is currently wedged in its lair. The player characters are tasked with assessing ways to recover it. The complicating factor is that its presence in the waters outside a covenant that is unfriendly to House Tremere clearly violates the Code.

Security

The House's widespread interests make it vulnerable to local disruptions.

THE KILLER ON THE ROAD

A serial killer has murdered three people, whose link seems to be that they are close friends of the mortal children of Tremere councilors. Is it a demon, a faerie, a magus, or a spirit? What does it want, and who will it attack next?

MAGIC FLOWERS

There's a type of vis drawn from a faerie flower called amaranth, which causes pleasant hallucinations in magi, but also leads to addiction and Warping. Amaranth is de-

stroyed wherever it is found in Transylvania, but the characters have just discovered a massive amaranth source. Do they keep the vis, and use it for non-drug related purposes? Do they harvest it as a drug? Do they use their new stash to infiltrate the Amaranth supply chains that run through House Mercere and Merinita?

Successions

The House's method of succession, by appointment and dueling, is straightforward and quick, but that doesn't stop magi from trying to influence the outcome.

PRIMA

Poena discovers that she has an illness that will make her progressively weaker, and may impair her judgment. Without alarming other members of the House, she sends player characters as envoys to measure up her possible replacements, before selecting and training one for a decisive certamen battle at the next Decennial. If her strength fails more swiftly than this, the characters may hide her condition, so that her rivals without the House are kept at their useful tasks, or betray her, so that a stronger leader immediately takes her place.

PRIMUS PAST

The previous Primus of House Tremere is theoretically in charge of the Burning Acorns Vexillation, which hunts Diedne survivors. This allows him to basically go wherever he wants and follow his personal interests, as a balm to prevent him conspiring against his replacements. The House has lost contact with the past Primus during a trip into

the depths of the Novgorod Tribunal, and his memories of the House's structure and Coeris' security are valuable strategic assets. The player characters are dispatched to ensure his safety.

PRIMUS FUTURE

Poena suddenly dies of natural causes, and this makes Monica Prima pro tempore. The player characters are sent to summon each of the councilors, and to gauge their interest in the Primacy, their policies, and level of support. Monica is unlikely to attempt to become Prima herself, but she's not going to just leave the succession to chance.

Alternatively, while the consiliari are being summoned, Monica is Prima. This gives her time to wrap up some of Poena's plans, and rush through one or two of her own initiatives. Characters who have been loyal servants of Poena might be rewarded, in Monica's brief Primahood, with the chance to pitch some of their most outrageous and unlikely schemes to a sympathetic leader.

EXARCH

An exarch in another Tribunal has had a conversation about how, if he had his choice, he'd just kill the local bishop and put the Christians to the sword, to sort out this whole Dominion problem. This was overheard and has circulated as gossip through the Redcap network. Later, the bishop is murdered. The Quaesitores say it was done by a mortal political rival, but there is a scandal regardless. Poena needs to remove the exarch and select a replacement. The more difficult task for the player characters is reconciling the disgraced magus with his loss of status, and finding a way for him to become an asset to the House again.

The Hungarians (Magyars)

In 1220, Hungary dominates the north of the Tribunal. Even those areas which are not formally part of Hungary often have nobles of Hungarian descent, and communities of Hungarians in larger towns.

Political Structure

The current king of Hungary, Andrew (Andrais), has embarked upon a scheme of social change, the "new institutions," to strengthen his kingdom. Devolution of power and wealth to his nobles is meant to make Hungary more formidable in war. The reforms are, however, incomplete, and may be ill-advised.

Traditional Political Structure

Hungary's royal lands are divided into a series of *megye*, or counties. Each is led by an *ispán*, or count, appointed by the king. There are 72 counties, and most counts rule more than one. They are represented in each extra county by a deputy, called a curial count. Counts support themselves with rent from peasants, plus a third of the taxes, tolls, and fines of the county. Counts are considered equal in status to a bishop.

Each county surrounds a "castle." The term, in this sense, usually refers to a fortified town. Hungarian fortified towns are defended by a ditch, embankment, other earthworks, and a wooden wall. Private castles are illegal, although there are a few exceptions. Stone castles are very rare, the

three obvious exceptions being those from which the king rules. Many castles are named after their first governor.

Frontier counts are called *marchio*, in Latin. A march has a defensive system of earthworks and logs that block routes into the realm. Beyond this is a large frontier zone that is left unsettled. It is defended by light mounted archers (Szelkers or Pechengs) and a group of castle folk called "guards" (*speculatores*).

The fringes of Hungary do not have counties. Transylvania is ruled by a line of *voivodes* (princes) appointed by the King of Hungary, each holding the role only for a few years. Croatia is ruled by an appointed governor, whose title is *ban*. Slovenia may also have a ban. Dalmatia's cities rule themselves under an agreement with the Crown.

New Institutions

King Andrew has created a new class of nobles, his barons, who are considered superior to counts. There are 20 barons, each holding at least one county, who are selected from the highborn nobility. Andrew can dismiss a baron from an office, but generally only by giving them an alternative and lucrative role.

Among the barons, certain titles give higher status, although several different titles may give the same status. In order, they are:

- The palatine, the judge royal (two justiciars), the ban of Croatia, and the voivode of Transylvania.
- The head of the queen's household, and the master of the royal chamber.
- The master of the horse, the master of the table, and the master of the cup bearers.
- All other barons.

Andrew has also given vast royal territories to his barons. Those who favor his cause say that this allows his nobles sufficient wealth to arm themselves and their retinues in the manner of Western knights. His detractors say that it is to buy loyalty, and to pay the massive debts he accepted when he raised the largest crusading army ever, for the Fifth Crusade. Nobles in Hungary do not give military service or taxes for their lands, so his actions are more extreme than equivalent disbursements of land by nobles in French- or German-speaking areas.

Andrew has also arguably damaged the county system in two other ways. Foreign settlements, such as those granted to the Saxons, are outside the jurisdiction of counts, which erodes revenue. In the last decade, King Andrew has created many "royal servants," free men who are arguably outside the control of the counts. This has created tension between the old nobility and the newly free.

Social Structure

Hungarian society is similar to that found in other Tribunals, with a few unique features. Hungarians are restrained, polite, and formal. They are very pedantic about their precedence, which is set at birth. Hungarians give their surnames, then their first names, a unique feature for Europeans. They do not discuss money, but are open to all other forms of conversation, even on taboo subjects like heresy.

Serfs and Free Men

Serfs are property and may be bought and sold. Serfs may be ordered to do work,

unlimited in nature or extent, and cannot represent themselves in court. If you kill a serf, you owe his master for material loss, and must do penance, but owe no penalty to his family. Serfs technically own nothing, but many are allowed to own things, and live like prosperous serfs of other lands.

Most "free" men are in bondage: that is, they are required to fight or do work for their lords, and may not leave their lord. The work free men do is limited by custom or law, unlike that of a serf. Few free men are able to do entirely as they wish. Such freedom is called "golden freedom" and is enjoyed only by the gentry and foreigners. Even among the bonded free men there are two classes, the wealthy and poor. Wealthy free men pay larger fines. For example, manumitting the serf of another person is illegal. The fine is 50 steers if the liberator is rich, and 12 if poor. Membership of these two classes is by birth, not real wealth.

A free man has the right to do many things, for which a serf would have to ask permission, or may be forbidden by custom from doing. A free man may attend court as an accuser or witness so long as he owns at least a plough,

so he can pay a fine for perjury. A blood price of 110 steers is due at the death of a free man: 50 for the kin, 50 for the king, and 10 for the mediators. Free men pay an annual tax of eight pence each. On the other hand, a free person who has sex with a serf becomes a serf.

On a noble's allod, free men are all but unknown — his household servants are serfs, almost by definition. The exception is the king. Half of the peasants on his personal lands are free, but bonded to agriculture or craft. Just fewer than 20 percent are free but bonded to warfare. Around a third are half-free, as described later.

CASTLE FOLK

Castle folk are the hereditary servants of a castle and its count. They are free, and pay the annual taxes of the free, but are bound to serve at their castle. They live on castle land, which they do not own, but cannot be deprived of it so long as they pay rent for their "lodging," usually in food and service.

One in eight castle folk are peasant warriors, whose duty it is to fight. They are

not noble, and cannot become noble. They are not true "castle warriors" in the sense described later. They have land, but it can be taken by the count or king if he wishes. Their task is hereditary.

CASTLE WARRIORS

Each count has a band of free warriors as the core of his banner. They may not leave his castle's service, or they are treated as fugitive serfs. All are landed, and their land is passed hereditarily. Even the king cannot take their land, provided they give service. They pay no taxes. They differ from nobles in that they can be compelled to fight continuously, whereas true nobles pick which battles they attend. The leader of this group is the count, or one of his officers. Some castle warriors eventually become petty nobles.

HALF-FREE

There are two main groups of half-free, the *udvornici* and the *conditionarii*.



Hungarian Social Classes as Virtues and Flaws

Serfs, *udvornici*, most free men, and castle folk use the Peasant Free Virtue.

Conditionarii are usually Peasants, although some must practice the Ability which is referred to in their condition, and these are best designed as Craftsmen.

Castle folk who act as soldiers use the Peasant Free Virtue, but should also select the Warrior Minor Virtue.

Hospites usually have the Peasant, Craftsman, or Merchant Free Virtues. Those who are in the royal service are often Educated.

Companions who are castle warriors have an Oath of Fealty to the king, and therefore to his local representative, the count. All are at least Warriors, and some are Knights. Player character grogs cannot generally be castle warriors, because they cannot have Story Flaws; a character with this sort of divided loyalty would draw too much story attention to count as a grog.

A free man who does not own land, but fights as a horseman in the service of a lord, should take the Knight Virtue and the Oath of Fealty Flaw.

Nobility in Hungary is not based on land ownership. Some nobles are simply Wealthy Peasants. A noble who maintains himself only with the aid of rich family members should take Gentleman. A noble

who can maintain himself as a mounted warrior only with constant currying of favor or raiding is a Poor Landed Noble. A Landed Noble, lacking other Virtues or Flaws, spends two seasons a year on maintaining his lifestyle, with a spare 10 pounds a year for largesse. He may call up ten peasant soldiers (doubled for defensive war) and three other professional horsemen, who will fight for him. A Wealthy Landed Noble has three seasons and 20 pounds per year to spend as he likes. He may call up fifty peasant soldiers (doubled if defensive) and nine professional horsemen. Note that no Oath of Fealty is required of nobles in Hungary. Hungarian nobles tend to have less expensive armor than western nobles.

Lords who can call up more men than this are Greater Nobles. Players should discuss their characters with their troupes before designing greater nobles. Counts must take the Oath of Fealty Flaw.

Bishops are both Priests and Greater Nobles.

Troupes who find that the Oath of Fealty Flaw is preventing the player from taking an alternative and equally interesting Flaw may agree that the Oath will not be used to hook the character into stories, and so another choice may be made.

which they may live by their own laws and customs. Hospites have golden freedom, and they may leave their land if they wish. All Transylvania Saxons, Khwarezmians in the royal service, and Szeklers, for example, are free men.

Petty Nobles

A landowner is noble in Hungary, regardless of how small his property is. Land comes to a family in a number of ways: ancient ownership; land grants from the king, the Church, or a nobleman; or invasion of surrounding lands. Inheritance in Hungary is by equal division among sons and grandsons of the property of the deceased. This makes even large estates implode into tiny fragments over generations. The usual way of preventing this is for a nobleman to give his land to a favored relative before he dies, cutting off tiny slivers to give to his other children so they retain their noble status. The royal house does not evenly divide its lands, which allows it to retain its strength.

All land in Hungary not owned by the Church or loaned by the King to one of his officers is allodial. That is, it is owned by the nobleman, not held as fief from the king. A noble has no duty to fight on the king's behalf in order to retain his own land. Many of the lesser members of this group own their land, but perform hereditary duties for it.

Many of the greater nobles are counts. As royal officers, they have a duty to fight on the king's behalf using the resources of their

The *udvornici* are "royal serfs." That is, they are serfs on the extensive royal lands. They live like castle folk and are governed by a subcaste called "the free of the *udvornici*." These men do military service as warriors, at the rate of one per ten *udvornici*. The *udvornici* have tasks they must perform, but these are limited by custom, like those of free men, despite the *udvornici* not being free.

The *conditionarii* are peasants who have a duty, at a village level, to provide a good or service to the king. These duties are very specific. One village provides all of the royal cooks, another all the door keepers, another all the coopers, another all the jesters, and so on through dozens of professions. Some groups instead provide goods to the court. One group is required to pay in beaver furs, another marten furs, another honey, another blocks of iron, and so on. *Conditionarii* are half-free, because their duties, like a free man's, are limited by the custom of their tax conditions.

Hospites

Hospites are "guests" who, in exchange for taxes or services, are allowed land on

Nobility: A Clarification

There are moves afoot in Hungary to define the role and status of the nobleman. If your saga follows history, these will crystallize in the Golden Bull in 1222, which ties nobility to landholding. In 1220, however, various Hungarians believe that people are noble by whichever one of the following best describes the holder of the belief:

- Holding office from the Crown.
- Owning land.
- Being of noble blood.
- Doing what a noble does, via military

service.

- Doing what a noble does, via excellent manners.

A player character can claim to be noble if she has any of these attributes, but other nobles will not necessarily agree that they share status. Note that the victorious premise in this tussle, that the landed are noble, means that many magi are noble, or can become so with trivial effort. This does not require an Oath of Fealty, and so does not breach the Code.

King Bela's Finances

King Bela, the grandfather of the current king, prepared a list of his finances when attempting to arrange a marriage to a foreign princess in the late 12th century. He claimed income of 166,000 marks (110,666 pounds) a year, plus services. He may have been exaggerating for effect, but this is 50 percent higher than the income of the king of France, and double that of the king of England. Bela was ridiculously wealthy, and his income was in silver, not in service or agricultural products.

Assuming Andrew's income is similar:

- 36 percent of his income (60,000 marks a year) comes from coinage. The money of account in Hungary is the penza, and a penza is equal to 40 pence. Various weights and purities of coin are in circulation. Mark ingots are slightly more common than coins. A mark is divided into fertones (one-quarter of a mark) and pondera (one-forty-eighth of a mark). Coins are re-minted yearly, and a tariff of one coin in three goes to the king. All mines in Hungary belong to the king. Panning for gold is common in Transylvania, and one-tenth of all gold found is owed to the king.
- 18 percent is from tolls for ferries and markets. The main trade routes are to Kiev, Constantinople, and Regens-
- 15 percent is the portion of the tax of the 72 counties due the king.
- 10 percent of royal revenue is from a salt monopoly. Salt is mined in Transylvania in many places, and then carried by boat up the Mures to Szeged or overland to Sälacea. It is shipped in cubes, and the unit of measure is the *tumen*, which is 10,000 cubes. The king makes his annual payments to the monasteries founded by the royal family in salt, and the salt cube is used as currency in many areas.
- 9 percent is from a tax on the Saxons of Transylvania.
- 6 percent is from an annual gift from the counts.
- 6 percent is from a tax on Slavonians.

burg via Vienna. Eztergorm sits at the junction of these three routes, and is on the obligatory itinerary for foreign merchants of most goods. The main imports are luxuries for the king and his court. One of the main exports is horses. These are lighter breeds, although heavier bloodlines are in development. Every noble who can afford it has a horse stud, as a matter of personal honor. Other exports include cattle, copper, silver, and gold. Slave exports stopped around 20 years ago, likely as part of the king's drive to populate the fringes of the country.

county. They are under no obligation, however, to rouse their personal servants.

High-Born Nobility

The gentry of Hungary are drawn from 108 families that claim to be descended from a pagan chieftain (not necessarily Hungarian) in the initial invasion. The members of this group may use "from the kindred of X" as a title. The greater a family's poverty, the more they insist they are noble using this method, since they have no other way of demonstrating their status. Kindred use the same symbol on their coat of arms, an idea borrowed last century from the king. They are not political entities, and hold no property in common except perhaps a burial abbey.

Greater Nobles

The greater nobility of Hungary are descended, in the most part, from royal servants. Royal servants may be native or foreign. They are raised from bondship to nobility, given a little land, and become men of the king's household. In return for excellent service, they are given increasingly large sections of land and, with it, great economic power.

The King

The king's allodial land is the vastest in the kingdom. It is a mixture of territorial blocks and villages. Each section centers on a *curtis* (royal manor). Much of it is "forest," in the legal sense of land reserved for the royal

use. The forest is tended by villages of *custodes silvarum*, a type of conditionarii, and these are lead by a procurator. The court progresses around the three largest cities in Hungary, as described in a later section.

The Three Court Cities

The royal court proceeds around three cities and this triangle is the core of the Hungarian state.

Esztergorm

Esztergorm is the capital of Hungary, and its largest city. The city is ancient, and was a camp for the Romans, Attila the Hun, and the first king of the invading Hungarians. The Castle Hill (or *Várhegy*) lies close to the river, allowing fortification and the control of river traffic for taxation.

The royal palace lies on the northern edge of the hill. One of the predecessors of the current castle was the birthplace of Saint Stephen, so he is expected to watch over his descendants with particular attention while they dwell here. The current palace was built a few decades ago by Western masons, and is considered a marvel. The court uses it to impress magnates from overseas. When foreign kings visit Hungary, for example when traveling to the Holy Land by overland routes, they are always received here.

The center of the hill is topped with a basilica dedicated to Saint Adalbert, who first baptized the royal family of Hungary. This is the throne of the Archbishop of Esztergorm, who is the leader of the Hungarian Church. The Archbishop reserves the right to crown the King of Hungary. The Hungarian Church is, theoretically, firmly allied to the King, but in reality, the Church is highly critical of the King's laxity with Muslims, pagans, and Jews. The proximity of the royal forces to the throne of the archbishop reduces public tension.

The city lies between the hill and river. It has around 11,000 inhabitants, many of whom are foreigners. This large international presence comes from two main sources. The king

often hires foreigners to bring skills useful to the court into Hungary, and these servants live in the city to be near their employment. Second, the laws of the kingdom require all foreign merchants to offer their wares for sale at Esztergorn, so that they can be conveniently purchased by the court. Some of these merchants settle in the city, to act as agents and suppliers for their countrymen.

Székesfehérvár

This city is surrounded by marshland, which made it defensible in ancient times. When the Hungarians invaded, their king saw the military potential of the place and

fortified it. Saint Stephen built a basilica here and appointed a bishop. Since that time, it has grown as a center for ecclesiastical learning, with many monasteries, churches, and

the largest cathedral school in the kingdom.

Székesfehérvár is not the capital, but it is the city that the royal family uses for many ceremonial functions. The king is always

The Estate of the Wizards

For as long as records have been kept, there has been a large, elegant building, similar to a Roman villa but three stories high, in the royal capital. Its residents say it was once outside the town, but that the city has expanded around it, leaving a moat of formal gardens. The Estate of the Wizards is a *mansio*, a place where magi can stay that is maintained by House Mercere. The local nobility know that if they

have complaints against magi, they can be lodged here. In cases where the right of justice is disputed, the king's judges and the servants of the magi can contest jurisdiction here. That magi usually interact with mundanes through servants is a traditional right, protected by the Holy Crown of Hungary. Similar *mansios* are scattered around the Tribunal: some public, many private.

Story Seeds for the Royal Mint

Esztergorn contains Hungary's only mint, and the reminting of coins is one of the main sources of royal income. Enforcement of standards is taken far more seriously in Hungary than in other countries, where the right to mint is sold to noblemen. Coins are regularly reminted, and the king's staff is very skilled at detecting forged coins. Magi who do not take sufficient care when making coins with created silver are more likely to be caught in this Tribunal than in any other.

Attacking the king's revenue by making metals without passing on the equivalent of mining taxes, or minting coins at all, is a very serious breach of the king's rights, sufficient for him to raise an army and attempt to crush an oppidum. Characters who breach the Code in this way can expect little support from the Order.

BUYING THE COUNTY OF THE MINT

The king's debts following the Fifth Crusade are so great that he decides to farm out a monopoly on the right to mint coins in Hungary, by annually auctioning the office of Count of the Mint (*comes camere*). The only way to pay upfront for such a right is to call off debts the king already owes you, to pay in land, to be a nobleman, or to form a consortium of wealthy individuals. Groups favoring each of these approaches

form. Player characters, openly or sheltering behind any of these ruses, could buy the right to mint coins in Hungary.

Buying rights offered in fair and public sale is within the Code. Characters who are in charge of the mint also have the duty to find counterfeiters, and to enforce the taxes on miners. Counts of the Mint who keep the king's staff may clash with the Archbishop of Esztergorn, because the minters are all Muslims. Magi who use magical methods to stamp coins, and make a show of dispensing with the services of the *kaliz* (as Hungarians call all minters, because they are all Khwarezmians) may favorably impress the Church.

If the characters do an excellent job of managing the currency, Hungarian silver trades at a premium in foreign ports. This makes their money literally worth more simply because it has their stamps upon it.

If the player characters do not win the rights of the mint, it will instead fall to a syndicate funded by Venetian bankers. Local members of House Mercere catch rumors that their own *domus magnus*, as well as some of the other covenants active in Italy, are behind the syndicate. Can House Tremere let this sort of interference in Transylvania pass, or will they arrange a syndicate for the next auction?

Later, the king splits this monopoly into regional rights, so that he can get money from all of the interested syndicates, not just the richest. Mints are es-

tablished at Csanad, Szerem, Buda, and Zagreb. The rights to sell salt and charge tolls are also farmed out on a regional basis. Characters not previously interested may be drawn into minting, mining, or trade, by the lower price and relative lack of competitive chicanery.

FAERIE FORGER

A problem here is that a lot of faeries make coins, and sometimes mark them with prominent landmarks or the symbols of powerful mortals. A faerie has started spreading coins marked with the sigils of magi, or the mark of their oppidum. How do the players track down not just the faerie, but the coins he has created?

MISSING MINTER

One of the king's inspectors of coins has disappeared. The king's minister thinks the man has been taken so that the tests used to uncover forgeries can be extracted from him through torture. The Redcaps become aware of the missing man, and pass the word around the Tribunal. Some oppida want to return the coin inspector to gain favor with the king, others want to gain information he has. Some want to make coins, others want to check rumors that the minters have magical items, or techniques, which allow them to perform their duties.



crowned, and preferably buried, in Székesfehérvár. Important pilgrimages start here. When the nobles gather for a diet (like a parliament), it generally occurs here. Although the king's treasure is stored in Esztergom, those pieces which have ceremonial functions are usually kept in Székesfehérvár. The most important of these is the Holy Crown.

Veszprém

The smallest of the three cities, the castle here predates the Hungarian invasion. Saint Stephen founded the first bishopric in Hungary here. The town was a favorite of Stephen's queen.

The bishop here has the traditional right

to crown the queen-consorts of Hungary. This was most recently reaffirmed after a different bishop crowned the current queen-consort. This caused a serious breach in the Hungarian Church that eventually had to be smoothed over by Papal intervention. The bishopric of Veszprém is, in part, poorer than other, similarly ancient foundations because the nearby Monastery of Pannonhalma is even older.

The Bishops of Veszprém, weakest and poorest of their class, are usually closely allied to the Order. From the perspective of the magi, they serve as a useful counterbalance to the Archbishop of Esztergom.

Veszprém houses a college where royal diplomats are trained for international service. The artes liberales are taught here, together with law. The library of the college is one of the finest in Hungary.

Village Life

The average village has 30 to 40 households. The houses are scattered about, not confined to streets. Most Hungarians only use their houses for bad weather accommodation, and have tents near their houses that they use in preference. Huts are timber-framed, lack windows or chimneys, and have

The Holy Crown of Hungary

The traditions of the Holy Crown lie at the center of royal legitimacy in Hungary. The Hungarians were originally a central Asian people, and so their ideas concerning legitimacy are strange from the perspective of Western Europeans. The Doctrine of the Holy Crown was first explained by Saint Stephen, although it has been developed by other thinkers since that time.

- The Holy Crown is a living being, and it connects God to Man. It rules Hungary on behalf of the Virgin Mary, to whom King Stephen gave the country as a gift.
- The territory of the kingdom is the body of the Holy Crown. Nobles, including the king, have the right to possess land, but they cannot sell it, or

mortgage it, without the permission of the Crown, as given by the king.

- All Hungarians are equal under the Crown: the people of the nation are collectively sovereign. Serfs are a later exception to this.
- The king rules on behalf of the nation, so he can be legitimately resisted if he is breaking the laws of the Crown. The king cannot change the traditional laws of the Crown, even though these have not been formally written.

The king (or any other noble) may be resisted if he:

- Tries to alienate any of the land of the Crown by giving, selling, or mortgaging it to foreigners.

- Fiddles with the ownership of lands he does not personally hold.
- Imposes novel methods of justice.
- Ignores the traditional rights of Hungarians.
- Ignores the rights of foreigners.
- Subverts traditional methods of land administration.
- Fails in defense of the Christian religion.

Transylvanian magi have occasionally observed some strange effects due to this system. The Holy Crown, acting as regent for the Virgin Mary, makes it a moral duty for them to resist bad and corrupt nobles. If they do, sometimes miracles aid them. In addition, their right to be tried for crimes under the Code of Hermes is guaranteed by the Crown, a Divine being, not the king.

reed thatch roofs. They are recessed a foot into the earth.

Famine is almost unknown in Hungary, which is so unusual the Quaesitores have checked for Hermetic tampering with crops. Wheat is plentiful and cheap in this Tribunal. The other main crop is barley. Other grains are rare, but rye is grown in some areas, and millet and oats are grown as fodder. Vineyards have been planted throughout the country, even in completely unsuitable areas, to supply wine for mass as part of the Christianizing process.

In traditional Hungarian agriculture, a farmer does not own particular pieces of land. There is so much land that he just plants as much as he can manage, and when it is exhausted, he plants somewhere else. Only the most fertile land is planted, and this is why marginal grains are rare. Most villages have large areas of pasture and woodland at their disposal. Querns are used by individual households to turn grain into flour, rather than mills owned by lords.

Villages move as land becomes exhausted. In 1092 a Church council demanded that once a village had a church, it could not move far from it. Only one village in ten has a church, however, and even villages with churches are only tethered to a circle of a few miles about the church. Where the population is densest, the field system is changing over to the open field style found in much of the rest of Europe. Walloon and Saxon settlements look Western, and bring the techniques of urbanization to Hungary.

Animal husbandry hasn't dominated agriculture in Hungary for a couple of centuries, but it still holds a central place in Hungarian culture. There are huge pasturages owned by nobles all across the country. Cattle and sheep are the commonest stock, followed by pigs which are fed on mast. Peasant animals are penned in winter. Peasants are permitted to fish, and sturgeons reach as far up the Danube river as Pozsony and Tokaj. Peasants are allowed to hunt — indeed, in some areas they are required to, because hospites often pay an annual tax in marten pelts, honey, mead, or wax. Bears, wolves, wisents, and aurochs are all found in the Tribunal, and are not reserved for noblemen, as in some other kingdoms.

Witches Don't Exist (So Magi Are Not Witches)

In the 11th century, King Coloman the Learned passed a law which said simply this: witches do not exist, therefore no trials for witchcraft may be held. The Quaesitores investigated this, as circumspectly as they were able, but were not able to find a Hermetic magus responsible for Coloman's action. King Coloman's law persists: witchcraft is not a crime in Hungary.

What the Order does is not considered "witchcraft." It's treated, in a legal sense, as an ethnic custom, predating the foundation of Hungary. From the perspective of the Crown, magi retain their "customs" and have the right to live by their own laws, and appoint their own judges. The Crown has a similar duty to Saxon peasants, Dutch merchants, the Crusading Orders, the Szelkers, the Pechengs, and various other groups.

Magi see to their own law. When they commit offenses in areas where someone else also has a right of law — for example, if a magus kills a Saxon peasant — then, theoretically, the king's representatives mediate between the relevant judges to decide jurisdiction. Practically, the courts in Hungary operate the same way as courts in other countries: they don't take cases where they can't identify, or can't capture, the defendant. This means that magi are only held to outsider law if they offend the powerful, which is a breach of the Code, allowing magi to deal pre-emptively with their own.

The greater nobles of the Tribunal know that magi exist, and that they have their own law. They know they can appeal to the judges of the magicians by approaching their ambassadors, Redcaps who dwell in expensive but discreet mansiones in some of the cities. The nobles do not, however, precisely differentiate between folk magicians and magi. The Order finds it easier to deal with minor magicians than expose more of its secrets to the nobility.

As a result, the Tribunal polices lesser magicians. Most hedge magicians in this Tribunal know they need to be discreet, or only victimize those unable to interest the Tribunal in their problems. Hedge magicians in desperate trouble with someone else who has the right to dispense justice can claim the right to be tried under the Ancient Custom. This rarely occurs because the punishments in the Code are stricter than those in all other forms of Hungarian law.

The Order does not dare to fail in its duty to police its own. The right to do so is guaranteed not by the King, but by the Crown, and the Crown of Hungary is a quasi-angelic presence whose body is co-terminous with the kingdom. The Crown is no more interventionist than its mistress, the Virgin Mary, but compared to the petty mortal kings of Stonehenge or Iberia, it is far more able to bring magi to task if they fail to deliver justice.

The Church

Saint Stephen, the father of Hungary, introduced Roman Christianity as a tool for centralizing power. He used it to eradicate paganism, which is extinct in the country with the exception of the Cumans. He also used Christianity to destroy tribalism, which he replaced with the county system. Several counties make a diocese, and each diocese has a bishop. Each bishop answers either to the Archbishop of Esztergorn — who is the senior and crowns the kings of Hungary — or the Archbishop of Kalocsa. Each of these is, theoretically, a close ally of the King.

Finance

The Church is a major landholder in Hungary. The largest holdings belong to the two archbishoprics, and to the bishoprics of Pecs and Ordea (which keeps the Divine Dexter, the mummified hand of Saint Stephen) The richest and most powerful cathedral chapter is at Székesfehérvár, which keeps the Holy Crown (which is alive, and Divine) and looks after the buried kings of Hungary. Its provost is like a count, with archdeacons administering each county on his behalf. The largest and richest monastery in Hungary is at Pannonhalma, which had 2200 households under its governance in

The Founders of the Fectores

Radomir was a young, idealistic, and especially bright member of House Tremere. Although he was no initiate himself, he had made a particular study of a necromancer cult called the Disciples of the Worm (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 129) whom he believed were descendents of the Dacian necromancers who had supported Tremere. His interest in ghosts and the walking dead proved a perfect foil to Murat's in-depth knowledge of vampire lore.

Murat of Terezin was already quite experienced before he approached Coeris, and had gathered many scraps of hunter lore, discovering that the Arts need not

be restricted to vampires. Murat of Terezin was secretly a dhampir himself, and became a vampire upon his death. The vampire survived long enough to become a *kukudbi* (a human infiltrator, see "Vampires That Take Human Form" in Chapter 8: Creatures), and now lives distant from Laniena with his fourth mortal wife. The vampire is the father of over twenty children, all of whom are dhampirs. Only Murat the Younger is aware of the elder Murat's status, and he permits him to exist knowing that the vampire provides a steady supply of Faerie-Blooded hunters, and thus far, at least one Gifted child.



The Oppidum of Laniena

Originally part of the Scholomance, Laniena soon developed into a separate oppidum and relocated to its current location. The principle business of Laniena ("slaughterhouse") is the training of the Fectores. These are an experiment by House Tremere, a cadre of hunters of supernatural threats who wield potent non-Hermetic magic derived from the native magical traditions of the Balkans. So far, this experiment has been deemed a success.

Story Seed: Sordid Family Business

A character could be one of Murat of Terezin's children, only finding out later in life that she has a dark legacy and is fated to kill her own father. Alternatively, if

Lexander (see later) discovers that Murat the Younger permitted a vampire to live, this news could bring down the wrath of House Tremere on the oppidum.

1200. It is Benedictine in its rule, and acts as a motherhouse for many other monasteries.

The Church tithe in Hungary is less onerous than in other lands, because of the large lands the Church holds, and the low population of Hungary compared to the Western European kingdoms. The tithe is always collected on grain and wine, and in some places it is collected on other farming or mining products. Tithes are increasingly paid in coin, a recent, but almost complete, innovation. Romanians, being Orthodox, do not pay a tithe, but pay a sheep tax called the fiftieth instead.

Law

The systematic foundation of churches has been royal policy since Saint Stephen's time. Every ten villages must have a church. It must be built and maintained by the villagers, and supplied with two manses, two serfs, a mare, a horse, six oxen, two cows, and thirty small animals. Books for the church are provided by the bishop of the area. The vestments of the priests and altar cloths are

provided by the king, or his local representative. Failure to build, maintain, or provide for a church is a serious offense, punished by royal officers.

Many of the laws defining punishment for failure to live in a manner appropriate to a Christian date from Saint Stephen's time. These are more severely enforced in Hungary than is found in much of the rest of Mythic Europe. Talking in church, for example, is punished by public whipping and head shaving. Church lands are treated as royal protectorates, and encroachment on or damage to them is punished severely. There are some exceptions to this stridency, all useful to Hermetic magi.

The Church in Hungary is very confident in its power, and so sees little need for draconian measures to prevent conversion to other faiths. Pagan activities are so rare in Hungary that the Church has reduced the penalty for them to simple fasting. Large groups of Jews and 30 villages of Sunni Turks work in the royal service, particularly in trade, coinage, and the treasury. The proscriptions from the Lateran Council, that Muslims can't handle Christian money and that Jews need to wear distinctive clothes, are not enforced.

History

In its history, House Tremere has been plagued by vampires. The biggest threat has been infiltration following the death of a dhampir magus, which has become enough of a problem that House Tremere now forbids its members to take a dhampir as an apprentice. The last incursion was about a hundred years ago when the vampire of a deceased magus sought out dhampirs, had them trained, then killed them to make them into vampires.

It was at this time that a famous vampire hunter called Murat of Terezin came to Coeris. He teamed up with Radomir of Tremere and, between them, they rid the House of every last vampire. Murat himself killed the chief of the nest. Radomir and Murat petitioned the Tribunal to form an oppidum devoted to training hunters, and after Murat joined House Ex Miscellanea, the Praeco agreed.

Murat's ace in the hole was an ancient store of initiatory scripts recorded by a Gnostic scholar who had covertly ob-

served a taltós clan for many months. Years of experimentation followed before Murat of Terezin and Radomir had discovered a means by which a Gifted individual could be Opened to the Hunters' Arts (see Chapter 9: Hedge Traditions). Radomir called these individuals the *interfectores*, or the slayers, but this quickly became abbreviated to *Fectores*.

Setting and Description

The buildings composing Laniena's oppidum lie immediately outside the entrance to the largest of the Aggtelek caves in northern Hungary. A few sturdily built houses abut a high semi-circular wall guarding the entrance to Baradla Cave. A thick hedge of black hawthorn has been cultured to surround the homes of the magi and their covenfolk. This complex is a training ground for the *Fectores*, and it has an arena, several workshops for metalsmithing and carpentry, and its own surgeon and apothecary's laboratory.

The Aggtelek Caves

All of the Aggtelek Caves are sites of startling beauty, and many of them have a Magic aura. Baradla, as the biggest and most spectacular, has the most powerful aura of 5. Like its fellows, Baradla is filled with fantastic stalactites and stalagmites, columns, rock flows, and other such formations. Many of these features are tinged with red, green, or violet, and in places it seems like the rock has melted like tallow in the sun. Both *Imaginem* and *Muto vis* can be collected in Baradla Cave.

Dobsinska Cave, further north, has just one apparent entrance, called *studena diera* ("cold hole") by the locals, since the

cave is always filled with ice, even in the hottest of summers. Few dare to traverse the vertical descent through the *studena diera*, for fear of an icy death in its wintry depths. Laniena gathers *Ignem vis* here.

Ochtinska Cave is one of the smallest of the caves, and yet one of the most interesting. Within the cave grow the "flowers of iron:" white clusters of rocky spines and needles that grow from the ceiling and walls like urchins. Not only are they *Rego vis*, but they are also Lesser Enchantment *vis* (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 120) that confers a personal *Ward Against Faeries of the Earth* of Level 10, with a Penetration of 10.

Baradla Cave is over sixteen miles long, and is a maze of twisting passages, blind ends, and obscured chambers, some of which are believed to link up to other caves in the region. Only Lexander has investigated the caves in any great detail, and even he has not been everywhere. All entrances

he has discovered have been protected with powerful warding enchantments, for Lexander's favorite training method is to release a supernatural creature such as a vampire or werewolf into the cave, and then send his pupils in to hunt it down through decidedly hostile terrain.

Fectores Versus Hermetic Fectores

Laniena arranges the training of *Fectores* in non-Hermetic magic, despite the fact that they all have the capacity to learn Hermetic magic. To some, this seems like a waste. However, many of the Gifted individuals they find or are sent are not suited to apprenticeship. Most are not of a scholarly bent, and have no desire to spend fifteen years of their lives bent over books and learning laboratory secrets. The *Fectores* are warriors against the hostile forces that assail mankind. Most of them come from backgrounds that do not adapt easily to the life of a Hermetic apprentice — they are peasants, soldiers, or faerie-blooded dhampirs who are driven to the role of a hunter by feelings of obligation toward the community. Fifteen years of study just delays them from doing what they really want to do: hunt down and kill foes.

Two of every three Gifted individuals sent to or discovered by the oppidum are trained as *Fectores* before being admitted into the Order as Gifted Companions within House Ex Miscellanea (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 107). The remaining third are taken as Hermetic apprentices

by Murat Ex Miscellanea and trained as Hermetic *Fectores*. Laniena is under strict instructions from House Tremere not to give Hermetic training to any dhampirs, although they may become Gifted Companions within the Order like any other *Fector*. Murat's Initiation scripts can Open the Hunter's Arts for Gifted characters, or teach new Foe Arts, but he has no scripts for the individual Practice Arts, so he cannot train unGifted characters as *Fectores*.

Not all *Fectores* trained at Laniena end up in the Order of Hermes. Some prove to be untrustworthy or indiscreet during their training, and consequently never take the Oath of Hermes or learn the *Parma Magica*. These *Fectores* often find themselves in the front line against dangerous foes, and have an even shorter life expectancy than usual.

THE LEGALITY OF LANIENA'S MISSION

Some magi are of the opinion that training Gifted children as *Fectores* is equivalent to being a delinquent master,

since they are not being allowed to be all they could be, by being denied Hermetic magic. Laniena maintains they are within the law since the trainees are not members of the Order, and therefore not protected by the Code. As soon as training is complete, they are offered a place within the Order's aegis, as demanded by the "Join or Die" provision of the Code.

Ultimately, it is the opinion of the Tribunal (that is, House Tremere) that matters, and current policy is for Laniena to continue to train *Fectores*, considering them to be a valuable resource. Three *Fectores* can be trained in the time that it typically takes to train a Hermetic apprentice, allowing their numbers to swell despite the tradition's notoriously short life expectancy. In a war against supernatural or magic-wielding foes, House Tremere will be ready with *Fectores* on the front line. Laniena is aware that it exists only on the sufferance of the Tribunal. Should they displease House Tremere, it would be simple for them to be charged with the High Crime of depriving a magus of his magical power.

Culture and Traditions

Laniena's purpose is to train Fectores, a type of non-Hermetic magician skilled in the Hunter's Arts (see Chapter 9: Hedge Traditions). Fectores usually become members of House Ex Miscellanea, although the Fectores are loyal to House Tremere rather than the Order of Hermes as a whole. While the stated reason is to maintain the security of the Order, others cannot help questioning the real purpose behind the Fectores. Gifted children who show great promise may become Hermetic Fectores instead, magi Ex Miscellanea who wield both the Hermetic Arts and the Hunters' Arts.

FECTOR CHARACTERS

A Fector character takes the place of a player's magus character. They have both The Gift and the free Fector Social Status Virtue; the latter is akin to Hermetic Magus, and represents the fact that the character has been Opened to the Hunters' Arts.

A Fector has all three Practice Arts of Scry, Ban, and Slay, and can choose three Foe Arts. The character is Opened to these hedge Arts (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 7) using his master's Intelligence + Scry total. Currently, the Fectores only know the Foe Arts of Vampire, Werewolf, Ghost, Night-walker, and Witch, but are working to integrate other Foes. A Fector also has the Second Sight Virtue at no cost. They are usually apprenticed to a Fector around adolescence, and training takes five years. During this time, the Fector receives 120 experience points that can be spent on the Hunters' Arts or on Abilities. A Fector can take Martial and Arcane Abilities at Character Creation, as well as Latin, but a Virtue is required to take any other Academic Abilities.

The Fectores, unlike many other hedge traditions, do not have Magical Defenses except for those granted by the Ban Art. However, Fectores who are members of the Order (that is, most of them) can be taught the Parma Magica.

HERMETIC FECTORES

Murat of Terezin was the first of a new *societas* within House Ex Miscellanea. He

trained three apprentices, the youngest of whom — also called Murat — is one of the magi of Laniena. Hermetic Fectores are just like other magi Ex Miscellanea. They choose one of the three Practice Arts as their free Major non-Hermetic Virtue, along with its free Foe Art. Their free Minor Hermetic Virtue is a Minor Magical Focus in harming a particular supernatural creature; this usually matches the Foe Art that they possess. Their Major Hermetic Flaw is Weak Spontaneous Magic; the methodical preparation typical of a hunter comes at the expense of flexibility.

Magi

Laniena is currently occupied by just two magi, although anyone interested in the Hunters' Arts is welcome to join. Lexander and Murat the Younger are the filii of the oppidum's founders, but unlike their parentes, they are at constant loggerheads.

LEXANDER OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 63 (apparent age 41)
Personality Traits: Argumentative +3, Brave +2, Harsh Task Master +2
Privilege: Civic

Lexander considers the mission of Laniena to be to train warriors on behalf of House Tremere. He is interested in adapting the Hunters' Arts to cover the range of supernatural foes that the Order might face in the future, but lacks the capacity and technical ability to do this himself, so is constantly badgering Murat the Younger to do so. More than once he has mentioned the possibility of developing "Hermetic magus" as a Foe, as a means to hunting down Marched magi. However, Murat the Younger will not allow Lexander access to his pater's Initiation scripts, effectively meaning that all recruitment must go through him.

Lexander drills the Fectores constantly, making sure they are prepared for both physical and magical opposition. He regularly captures monstrous creatures and releases them into the caverns. He then sends in his current pupils to face them, often at great risk to their lives. Lexander is an expert in

Rego magics, particularly coupled with the Forms of Vim, Corpus, and Animal.

MURAT THE YOUNGER, MAGUS EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 52 (apparent age 42)
Personality Traits: Thirsty for Knowledge +3, Passive-Aggressive +2, Friendly +1
Privilege: Hospes

Murat the Younger was trained by Murat of Terezin, the founder of the Fectores, and took his name upon passing his Apprentice's Gauntlet. He is especially interested in the regional variations of hunters, and often travels from the oppidum to follow up on rumors of a new manner to face vampires or to ward against witches. Murat concentrates on teaching the Ban Art to his pupils to give them a fighting chance of surviving Lexander's training. This serves only to frustrate Lexander further.

Murat the Younger is a hospes, although his personal privilege permits him to take apprentices without seeking approval from the Praeco, to encourage him to train as many apprentices as he can contribute to the Tremere war machine.

Covenfolk

Laniena employs several elite warriors who are trained to fight under the command of a Fector, whether Hermetic or non-Hermetic.

BENDIS

Bendis is the most capable of the oppidum's non-Hermetic Fectores. Named after the mother-goddess of the ancient Thracians, Bendis is both warrior and hedge magician. She typically wears leather armor, and carries a bow armed with vampire-slaying arrows. She is a strong leader, and has a hand-picked band of cohorts trained in both weapons and lore.

Chapter Four

The Bulgarians

In 1220, the Second Bulgarian Empire under Tsar Ivan Asen II rules most of the Balkans, from the Black Sea to the Morava River, and includes Wallachia north of the Danube. The capitol is at Tarnovo, and the empire also includes the great cities of Niš, Sredets, Silistra, and the ports of Varna and Nesebar. Tsar Ivan is an aggressive ruler determined to restore his ravaged empire to its former glory, and if your saga follows history, in the next ten years, he extends his dominance over Thrace, Macedonia, and Epiros, and encroaches on Serbian territory in the west, adding Belgrade and Vukovar to the Empire.

Geography of Bulgaria

Bulgaria has always been important with respect to trade routes. On land, Bulgaria links the Bosphorus with Central Europe, either via the Danube and Romania or else the ancient route through Adrianople, Plovdiv (Philippopolis), Sredets, Niš, and Belgrade.

The Danube

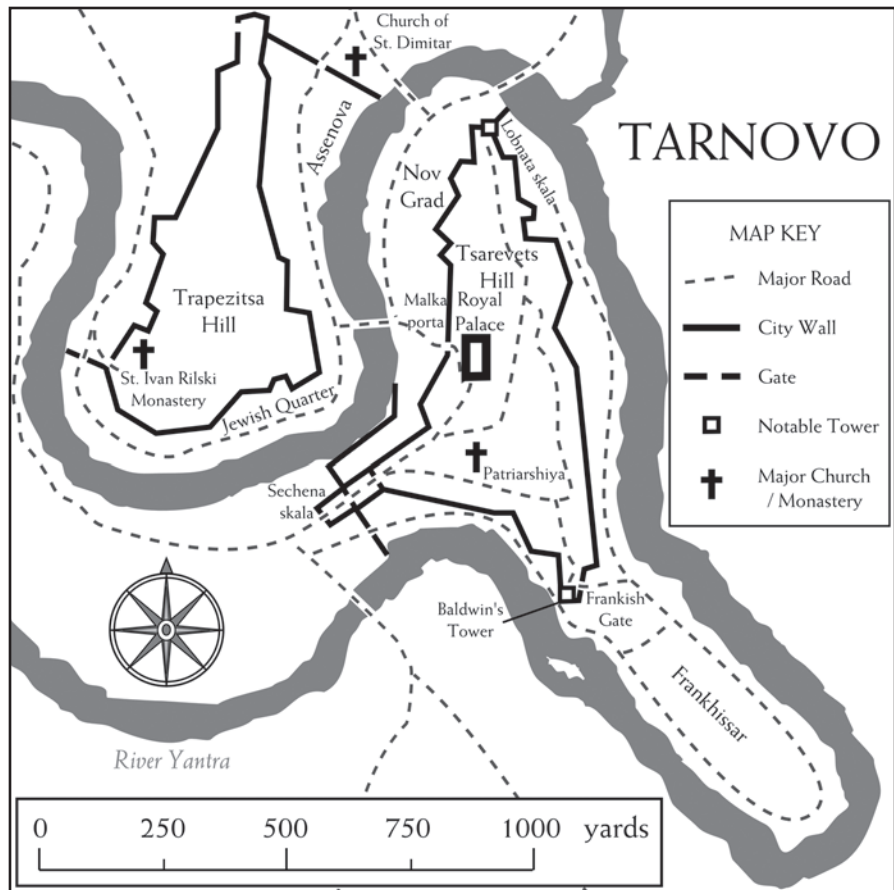
The Danube River flows through the enormously fertile northern region of Bulgaria, and is the breadbasket of the empire. The Danube delta forms an enormous wilderness of swamps and marshes extending over about one thousand square miles, largely covered with tall reeds. The Dobrudja Plain to the south of the delta is characterized by sandy steppes and low mountains rich in copper; although prone to droughts, the Dobrudja is remarkably fertile when irrigated.



TARNOVO

The capital city of the Second Bulgarian Empire is located on a loop of the Yantra River, a tributary of the mighty Danube. The city is built on two hills divided by the Yantra. On the right bank of the river is Trapezitsa Hill; on the left bank is Tsarevets Hill. Both hills are surrounded on three sides by the Yantra, and between the hills on the banks of the river is *Nov Grad* (New Town). Each hill has a fortified settlement, and the river provides natural protection, running through a gorge between the two massifs that is often 300 feet below the city walls. On top of Tsarevets Hill, a curtain wall 30 feet tall and 10 feet thick surrounds a roughly triangular settlement. This wall has three gates: the *Sechena skala* (main gate) is protected by a drawbridge, the *Malka porta* (small gate) has a covered tower and faces Trapezitsa, and the Frankish Gate in the south east enters into the *Frankbissar* (Frankish quarter), where foreign merchants are housed. The Tsar's palace has a second fortress wall around it. The highest point of Tsarevets is occupied by the *Patriarshiya*, the Church of the Patriarch of the Bulgarian Church. Tsarevets contains a dozen other churches, many of them funded by Tsar Ivan II Asen. At the far north of Tsarevets is *Lobnata skala* (Execution Rock), where traitors to the crown are pushed to their deaths in the river below.

The second hill, Trapezitsa, is also surrounded by a curtain wall which follows the edge of the hill, although this wall is less formidable than that of Tsarevets. The principle gate is on the south side of the hill, and leads to a road cut into the rock and across a bridge over the Yantra, passing through the New Town before meeting up with the *Malka porta* of Tsarevets. Within the walls



of Trapezitsa is the monastery of Saint Ivan Rilski, which holds the relics of the patron saint of Bulgaria (see later). On the north slope of Trapezitsa is the Church of Saint Dimitar (Demetrius) of Thessaloniki, where the Asens proclaimed their rebellion against the Byzantine Dominion and the formation of the Second Bulgarian Empire (see Bulgarian History, later).

The Nov Grad and the neighborhood of Assenova on the right bank are home to the

artisans and craftsmen of Tarnovo, whereas it is principally the noblemen who maintain residences on top of either hill.

The Stara Planina

The Old Mountains (*Stara Planina*) dominate the heartland of Bulgaria. Called Haemus by the Ancients, the narrow range stretches nearly 400 miles westward from the Black Sea. These mountains are covered in meadows, offering lush grass to flocks of sheep and herds of cows. Below the pasture is a forest zone dominated by beeches, and below that the foothills are well-suited to arable farming. The mountains form a climatic barrier, sheltering the Thracian Plain to the south from the worst of the cold winters suffered by Romania.

IVAN RILSKI'S CAVE

Saint Ivan Rilski (John of Rila) was a hermit, healer, and mystic who died in 946. He

The Galleries of Tarnovo

In Roman times, the great city of Nikopolis ad Istrum was situated about 12 miles north of Tarnovo. When it was sacked by the Huns in 447, legend tells that the Roman inhabitants fled to a settlement built on Trapezitsa Hill with the fabulous wealth of Nikopolis. They built galleries deep into the hill, and hid the treasure within, guarded by many dangerous traps and pitfalls. Treasure hunters have been

searching for the Roman hoard ever since.

Visitors to Tarnovo are approached by a resident who is looking for brave men to explore a tunnel he has discovered under his house. He knows he cannot ask locals for help, because they are all afraid of the traps and supposed curse that protects the treasure. However, foreigners will not know of these, and he hopes to trick them out of the gold once they have found it.

spent twelve years living in a cave, followed by three years in a hollowed out oak tree, and seven years on a high rock above the cave. His fame spread during his life, and disciples came from far and wide, forming a monastic community that persists to this day. The cave, tree, and rock bear a Divine aura of 4, separate from the Dominion aura of 3 possessed by the monastery. Saint Ivan is the patron of Bulgaria, and his body — miraculously uncorrupted since his death — is currently in Tarnovo.

THE SEVEN LAKES

Lying in the Rila Mountains to the south of Sredets, the Seven Lakes are a series of interconnected lakes, with the highest at over 8,200 feet and the lowest at 6,900 feet. Through some quirk of the faerie magic of this region, the water does not simply flow from the highest to the lowest, but in an entirely illogical sequence. The area has a Faerie aura of 3, and each lake has a Faerie regio of aura 6. Each lake is home to a *vila* (of the water maiden variety, see Chapter 8: Creatures) named after the lakes, which are (from highest to lowest): Salzata ("The Tear"), Okoto ("The Eye"), Babreka ("The Kidney"), Bliznaka ("The Twin"), Trilistnika ("The Trefoil"), Ribnoto Ezero ("The Fish Lake"), and Dolnoto Ezero ("The Lower Lake"). The seven vilas are rival sisters, and offer those who bathe in their waters a faerie gift if they will spend a year and a day in their underwater homes. However, the vila is bound to kill their guest on the last day of his stay.

The Plains

South of the Stara Planina are two great plains, the Sredets Plain to the west, and the Thracian Plain to the east, separated by the Gates of Trajan. The wide Sredets Plain is dominated by the peak of Mount Vitosha, the northernmost of the Rila Mountains. The Thracian Plain is best known for its horses and its grapes.

SREDETS

One of the main cities of the First Bulgarian Empire, Sredets is famous as a center for

Baldwin's Tower

Baldwin's Tower overlooks the Frankish-issar, and was built to house Emperor Baldwin of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, who was captured in battle by Tsar Kaloyan in 1205. Baldwin was initially treated as a valuable hostage and treated well, but the Frankish nobleman sealed his own fate by trying to seduce Kaloyan's Cuman wife (or, according to some, the Bulgarian empress accused Baldwin of rape after he spurned her). Baldwin was walled up in the tower and the screams were heard over the Frankish quarter for months until they abruptly ceased one night. The tsar

announced Baldwin's death to the pope.

Some say that the tsar had his enemy decapitated and his skull made into a drinking cup. They claim to have seen the headless corpse of the emperor around the tower, denied a Christian burial and seeking revenge on the Asen line. However, there are others who claim that Emperor Baldwin is still alive, held captive by the current tsar for some unknown purpose. Based on these rumors, at least one group of foreigners has attempted to gain entrance into the tower and free their leader, but the tower remains resolutely impregnable.

Story Seed: The Trials of Saint Ivan Rilski

The brothers of Saint Ivan Rilski's monastery are highly influential in Bulgarian politics, since they are perceived to speak for the people's patron saint. When the player characters need some help with the local *bolyeri* (noblemen), they might turn to the monks for a favor. Before they will help, the monks demand they seek the favor of the saint by spending twelve days in the cave, three days in the oak tree, and seven days on a high rock. During this three-week ordeal, the characters are tested by the saint for their purity of purpose. If they pass, the characters may acquire the monastery as an ally. A similar procedure might act as Initiation into a Holy Tradition dedicated to the saint.

SAINT IVAN RILSKI, PATRON OF BULGARIA

Divine Might: 50

Areas of Veneration: Bulgarians, inhabitants of Sredets and Tarnovo, monks, hermits

Feast: October 19th

Attributes: Holy Cross and a scroll or open book showing Cyrillic characters

Powers (see *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 88–89): Apparition, Expel Demons, The Faithful Made Whole, Grant of Serenity, Strike Dumb

Strike Dumb, 1 point, Init +8, Corpus: The target of this power is rendered entirely mute. This situation persists until the saint chooses to lift the curse.

Story Seed: One Groom for Seven Sisters

It is possible to gather all seven gifts from the seven vilas, although dangerous to say the least. Each sister provides the means to escape the death offered by one of her sisters. Local wisdom suggests that Babreka is the best lake in which to start, as its vila grants the ability to pierce faerie illusions, which is useful to foil the death offered by Dolnoto, who is the most skilled in manipulating glamour. Reportedly, Dolnoto's gift of a lesser immunity to poison is useful in foiling the death offered

by one of the other sisters, who typically poisons her guests. Each gift is equivalent to a Minor Virtue, and is accompanied by a Faerie Charm. A clever magus or sufficiently motivated mundane could discover the order in which water flows between the seven lakes, thus revealing the order that the sisters must be visited. It is said that a man who can claim all seven gifts becomes the lord of the seven sisters, and they are forced to pay him homage and follow his commands.

The Boyana Master

Vasily is a Maestro (*Art & Academe*, page 133), and his frescoes quite literally make men weep with their beauty. The Boyana Master has already attracted the attention of an angelic patron. Unfortunately, the priest of Boyana has become the target of a demon's interest, thanks to his own native pride in the work being completed in his church. The congregation of Boy-

ana have become pawns in the battle for souls between the angel and the demon. It may be that Vasily himself recognizes the spiritual turmoil and asks for help from the characters, but like most Maestros, he is somewhat oblivious of anything other than his art. Instead, the characters might be asked by the angel or manipulated by the demon into finishing off their rival.

artisan craftsmen, particularly goldsmiths. The Church of Saint Sofia was built during the Byzantine occupation of Bulgaria in the sixth century, and it has recently become the seat of a bishop of the Bulgarian Church. As a result, people have started to refer to Sredets by the name of the diocese — Sofia.

Sredets is home to the Boyana Church, a remarkable edifice and testament to the artistry of the city's craftsmen. The interior of the church is decorated with frescoes, many of which are still being completed by Vasily, the "Boyana Master." He has completed the dome, with depictions of Christ, the Evangelists, the major feast days, the Passions, and ten warrior saints. He is now working on a depiction of the life of Saint Nicholas in 18 panels in the church's narthex.

STAROSEL

Starosel is a tomb temple sacred to Bendis, the Thracian earth-goddess. It is encircled with a wall of massive hewn rocks carved with representations of the sun. The tomb itself is in a mound, the entrance to which has a grand stone staircase leading to a large landing. The entrance to the cave-like tomb is framed in dressed stone. Inside there are two chambers, a simple antechamber and a magnificent domed sanctum, the vaulted ceiling of which is painted with a colorful frieze.

THE MADARA HORSEMAN

The Madara Plateau rises suddenly from the Thracian Plain in an almost vertical cliff over 300 feet high. 75 feet from the ground is a massive carving of a horseman. He is thrusting his spear into the body of a lion

beneath the horse's feet, while an eagle flies ahead of him, and a dog follows on behind. The plateau itself has long been a place sacred to the Bulgar shamans, and the Horseman represents one of their gods. The whole plateau has a Faerie aura of 3, which rises to 5 in immediate proximity to the Horseman. With the correct faerie rite, the Madara Horseman can be brought to life. His horse, dog, and eagle are part of his glamour, and come alive with him. The lion is a separate faerie entity that comes alive at the same time as the Horseman, and while he is alive, he must fight and defeat the lion. The Madara Horseman is a fierce defender of the local populace whom he has sworn to protect, and he immediately responds to what he believes to be the biggest threat to his chosen people. Neither the Lion or Horseman can be permanently killed; the local legends are so strong that other faeries in the region simply assume their glamour, allowing them to be summoned once again.

At the foot of the plateau is a path winding up to a large cave, which is a natural amphitheater beneath a huge overhang of rock.

Story Seed: Starosel

Starosel would be an excellent site to locate an oppidum — it has a strong Magic aura of 6, and has a ready-made and excellently defensible structure. Both Terram and Herbam vis can be collected within a few yards from the tomb temple. However, Starosel is guarded by a magical spirit who is the genius loci of this place, and is strongly resistant to change. The spirit manifests as a vaguely defined female figure formed from black soil and red clay, and has extensive powers over elemental earth. It can call upon the local plants to assist it

The cave is draped in greenery, and is the source of a small spring. The ancient Bulgars worshiped the three nymphs of the waters at this site.

The Southern Mountains

The Rhodopes Massif are a maze of ridges and valleys offering summer pasture above forests of pine and fir. To the north and west are the Pirin and Rila mountain ranges, which almost join up with the Stara Planina at the Gates of Trajan.

Bulgarian History

Bulgaria is a land shaped by invasion. From the time of Augustus (63 BC-14 AD) it was an integral part of the Roman Empire, occupied by Thracians. The Goths invaded Thrace in 250, and again in 376, slaying Emperor Valens in a great battle near Adrianopolis and settling the region. The Goth settlers adopted the Christian faith of the Thracians, and Bulgaria was an important center of Christianity right up to the invasion of the Slavs during the reign of Emperor Justinian (527-565). The Slavs poured over the entire Balkan peninsula as far as the Adriatic and the shores of the Aegean, and a large proportion of the native population were slaughtered, led away

in defending the tomb temple from those who would despoil it. Characters who wish to claim this site to live here must somehow overcome or permanently pacify this spirit; those who visit solely to collect vis may be able to come to some temporary arrangement in return for defending the temple grounds. The spirit may or may not be the entity once worshiped as Bendis, but its Magical nature suggests not. If this is the case, characters might be inclined to discover what disaster befell Bendis before they settle here.

into captivity, or else assimilated into the invaders' culture. The ancient Thracians, admixed with the remaining Roman settlers, formed the Vlach people who persist in Illyria and Romania.

The confederation of the Seven Tribes of the Slavs ruled the Balkans for about a century. They were a strong and vigorous race whose dominance over other nations was halted only by their dislike for hierarchy, preferring their democratic clan system to a single nation under a common ruler. The Slavs were a pagan people, worshipping Perun, Svarog, Dazhbog, Khors, and Veles, along with a host of subsidiary deities.

The well-organized and massive immigrations of Khan Asparukh and his Bulgar followers, from north to south of the Danube between 679 and 681, heralded the formation of the First Bulgarian Empire, a mighty Slavo-Bulgar state that persisted until 1018. The Bulgars introduced to the chaotic Slavic world the notion of an imperial destiny backed by a rigid military and social hierarchy answerable to a single chief, the Sublime Khan. Despite its strong start, the First Bulgarian Empire was riven with internal strife and wars with the Byzantine Empire to the south. Krum the Conqueror was one of the empire's most famous (and most feared) leaders, adding Hungary and Transylvania to the empire in 803, and defeating two Byzantine Emperors in battle and besieging Constantinople before his sudden and mysterious death in 814. Christianity was accepted in Bulgaria some 70 years later under Khan Boris, who took the baptismal name of Michael.

The Mysterious Asens

Ivan Asen I was the first ruler of the Second Bulgarian Empire, followed by his brothers and nephews. However, their origins are shrouded in mystery; no one questions their right to rule, but none know from what authority it derives. Asen and his brothers came from nowhere to lead the rebellion against the Byzantines on behalf of the Bulgarian people, and

many assume that they are of Bulgarian origin. However, some suggest a Vlach or even Cuman origin, and the fact that their history is obscure is troublesome to some sectors of society, not least the Order of Hermes. Their mysterious — and apparently heritable — ability to sway the opinions of the masses is something to be feared...or exploited.

Boris' son Symeon was the first to call himself "tsar" (emperor) rather than "khan," and was also the creator of the autonomous Bulgarian Church in 926.

The First Bulgarian Empire finally succumbed to Byzantine rule in 1018, and only ended it in 1185 despite a series of rebellions. The 11th century brought further invasions: first the Pecheneg nomads from the east, then the Magyar from the north, followed immediately by the Tatar Uzdes from Russia. Three brothers — Teodor Petar, Ivan Asen, and Kaloyan — eventually led the Bulgarians to freedom from the Byzantines. Kaloyan, who reigned from 1197 to 1207, restored the Bulgarian Empire, and his nephew Ivan Asen now rules as tsar. Kaloyan's marriage to a Cuman bride brought the Bulgarian tsars a strong alliance with the nomad tribe, but one which has to be ritually renewed every summer. Ivan Asen II has occupied the throne for only two years, but already shows promise, starting with his marriage to the daughter of the King of Hungary.

Bulgarian Society and Culture

Bulgarians are sturdy and compact in build, often with dark hair and tanned complexions. The men favor baggy trews tucked into high boots and the women wear colorful skirts; both sexes wear embroidered shirts and waistcoats or bodices. Considered less volatile and flamboyant than their Serbian neighbors, Bulgarians are industrious, tolerant, and hospitable, but are dogged fighters in pursuing a just cause.

The Bulgarians are ruled by a *tsar*, who claims the title of "Emperor and Autocrat of all Bulgarians and Vlachs," implying sovereignty of the people rather than the lands. He rules through the *bolyeri* (noblemen, sing. *bolyar*) who are divided into 100 noble families, both *bolyeri veliki* (great bolyars) and *bolyeri mali* (minor bolyars). The great bolyars, along with the Patriarch of the Bulgarian Church, constitute the Bolyar Council, or *Sinklit*, which advises the tsar on matters of policy. Administratively, the empire is divided into *horas*, ruled by a *kefaliya*, a title equivalent to duke. Each *kefaliya* has one or more vassal *katepanas* (equivalent to count) who rule *katepanikons*.

Story Seed: The Madara Horseman

A local bolyar, with whom the characters have had previous contact, begs them for shelter from a terrible spell cast upon him by a faerie wizard. He is being hunted by the Madara Horseman, who will not let up until the bolyar is dead. The involvement of a wizard might be sufficient incentive to meddle with mundanes in this instance. The truth of the matter is that the bolyar himself paid the wizard to summon the Horseman hoping to set it against his enemies. However, the Horseman had been listening to the whispered prayers of his people, and saw the bolyar's ambition and pride as the biggest threat in the region.

The wizard's only real crime is to know that this was likely to happen, but not warn the unpopular bolyar of the consequences. Having discovered this, the characters must decide whether to help the bolyar, or allow nature to take its course. In the latter case, there is a chance that the lion who opposes the Horseman might interfere with what some would consider justice.

The Madara Horseman should have a Faerie Might of at least 20, although this could be more depending on the needs of the people and the success of the rite which awakens him. The Lion should have a Faerie Might to match that of the Horseman.

The Bulgarian Church

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church traces its descent from Saints Cyril and Methodius, who were welcomed to Bulgaria by Boris I in 886. When Bulgaria and Constantinople signed a peace treaty in 927, the patriarch

of Constantinople recognized the independent status of the Bulgarian Church, which soon established its own patriarch. However, when Bulgaria came under Byzantine domination in 1018, the church was deprived of its autocephalous status and reduced to an archbishopric (at Ohrid), and the upper echelons were populated with Greek clergy.

One of the first tasks of the Asen dynasty in the Second Bulgarian Empire was the restoration of the autocephalous Bulgarian Church, and they established a new archbishopric at Tarnovo, the capital of the new empire. The Patriarch of Constantinople remained resolutely against the independence of the Bulgarian Church, and the Asens turned toward the Church in Rome to gain political purchase against the obdurate patriarch. In 1203, Pope Innocent III proclaimed the Archbishop of Tarnovo the "Primate and Archbishop of all Bulgaria and Wallachia"; aligning the Bulgarian Church with the Roman Catholic Church, although Ohrid remains an Eastern Orthodox diocese. It is thought that Tsar Ivan Asen II and the Archbishop of Tarnovo are still attempting union with the Orthodox Church, but only on their own terms.

The Bogomils

Bogomilism is a dualistic religion that came to prominence in the tenth century. The word "Bogomil" means "dear to God" in Bulgarian, and despite attempts to exterminate the sect by both state and church, the religion not only persists, but has achieved some Europe-wide notoriety. The Bogomils teach that God had two sons, Satanael and Michael. The elder Satanael rebelled against God and created the lower heavens and the earth. He also created mankind, but had to appeal to God to supply the souls. Satanael made a covenant with Adam, permitting him to till the soil as long as he and his descendents paid homage to Satanael. Eventually, Michael was sent forth in the shape of a man, and was called Jesus. He broke both the covenant and the hold that Satanael had over mankind, and for this, the elder brother engineered the crucifixion and built the institutions of the Christian Church to control man through a new covenant. The Bogomils therefore hold that everything which is socially created does not come from God but rather Satan, and they refuse

to pay taxes, work as serfs, or enlist in armies. They do not worship in churches, but instead gather in homes to offer praise to God.

Each Bogomil community has its *viarashiti* ("believers"), who eschew all pleasures of the flesh, including wealth, meat and wine, and procreation in the hope of achieving spiritual perfection and becoming a Christ (or *Chiust*). However, the Bogomil congregation also consists of the *slushateli* ("listeners"), who need not live the strict life of the elect, but who can graduate to this rank in time. Community leaders and teachers are called *savarsbeni* ("perfects"). Bogomilism does not discriminate by sex. They hold the four Gospels as sacred texts, along with various epistles, and the Psalms of David and the books of the Old Testament prophets. Bogomils reject the importance of sacraments and symbols of faith. The Bogomils are lead by the *Protos* ("Notable"), and there are four main *obshitini* (or fraternities) — the Romana, the Macedonian Dragometsia, the Serbian Meliniqua, and the Bulgarian fraternities. Each of these fraternities is lead by a *dedets* (a sort of bishop), who is assisted by the *starets* ("elders").

The Bogomils see themselves as the champions of the poor against feudal oppression, and against the monopoly of wealth and learning held by the Church. They seek to subvert the royal and Church authorities through both passive resistance and the spreading of philosophical anarchy right up to militant action. It is an evangelical faith, and its members travel far and wide to bring its doctrines to others, along with miraculous healing and the driving out of demons. These missionaries have given rise to similar movements in distant lands, not least of which are the Cathars in Provence.

Bogomilism is a non-Christian Divine religion. When Bogomils gather to pray, they usually generate a Dominion aura (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 11), and it is usually granted a Calm temper (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 39) by the starets. However, the Dominion aura of the Bogomils is in schism with that of the Orthodox Church, and usually fades in between services. Bogomil dedets and starets have the Wise One Social Status Virtue; the former usually have the Temporal Influence Virtue as well. Bogomil missionaries are often members of a Holy Tradition or Mythic Companions — use the template for the Cathar Perfecti (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, page 94), but exchange Transcendence for either Intervention or Adjuration.



The Oppidum of Evredika

Evredika is an oppidum found scattered throughout the Rhodopes Mountains, guarding several sites associated with the legend of Orpheus. The oppidum is named after the Bulgarian name of Eurydice, the doomed lover of the legendary Orpheus.

History

The southern Rhodopes Mountains have been an important cultic center for the worship of Orpheus since classical times. The two great deities of Thrace were Orpheus and Zagreus (Dionysus, to the Greeks), and both were extensively worshiped in the Rhodopes.

When the Cult of Orpheus (*Houses of Hermes: Societates*, page 120) joined the Order of Hermes, their two most important sacred sites on Lesbos (see *The Sundered Eagle*, Chapter 6) and in the Rhodopes became part of the Hermetic landscape. Evredika was formally instituted as an oppidum in 1001, although it had existed as an informal religious cult for many decades prior to this.

Setting and Description

The sancta of Evredika's magi are scattered throughout the Rhodopes Mountains, each one living alone and rarely visiting the other magi. They occupy an assortment of caves, sturdy houses, and well-hidden stone towers. The members of Evredika meet once a year in a green meadow near Gela (see later), a spot surrounded by mountains, when the *silivriak* is in blossom.

GELA

This small village in the central Rhodopes Mountains is the legendary birthplace of Orpheus. The Cult of Orpheus maintain a sanctum here, which is usually occupied by a magus with the Gentle Gift. In return for an annual grant of vis from the oppidum (amounting to a Personal Vis Source), the magus in residence is obliged to teach music and performance to those who ask. Consequently, Gela has developed a reputation for its musicians, and attracts pupils — both magical and mundane — from all across the region.

THE DEVIL'S THROAT

The sanctum maintained at *Diavolsko Garlo* ("The Devil's Throat") is by tradition the home of the oppidum's aedile, a member of House Tremere. This spectacular cave, where a massive waterfall plunges deep into the bowels of the earth, is reputed to be the entrance to Hades used by Orpheus in his attempt to retrieve Eurydice from among the dead, although there are other claims to this site. At the bottom of the cave, the water gathers into a dark, still lake, on the shores of which, amid the roar of the waterfall, is the sanctum of the aedile. There is a Magic aura of 4 here. In ancient times, the bodies of Thracian kings were cast down the waterfall to hasten their journey to the afterlife.

The Cult of Orpheus holds no great reverence for this site, recognizing the descent of Orpheus into the Underworld to be a spiritual rather than physical journey. However, the oppidum maintain a sanctum here out of historical interest in the site, and for the Corpus vis that is occasionally washed up on the shores of the underground lake in the form of fragments of ancient skeletons.

PERPERIKON

This magical site consists of a stone city atop the summit of a hill in the eastern Rhodopes. The ancient city, once an important site of worship of Zagreus, has been abandoned by mundanes for several centuries, although a small town has grown up at the base of the hill, which refers to their ancient neighbor as the "City of Ghosts." Evredika's

Why Not Thebes?

Evredika seems better suited to the Theban Tribunal than the Transylvanian Tribunal, but when overtures have been made, they received a hostile reception from Theban Jerbiton magi. They look down on the musical nature of the Cult of Orpheus as "peasant reels" devoid of beauty. Furthermore, most Jerbiton magi are offended by the pagan nature of the Cult. Evredika's magi would rather be ignored by House Tremere than scorned by House Jerbiton.

The Silvoriak

Formed from the blood of Orpheus when he was slain by the Maenads, the silvoriak — otherwise known as the Orpheus flower — has delicate pink bell-shaped blossoms. It can be thoroughly dried, even scorched in a fire, and yet will still grow afresh each year. The first flowers of the year are a source of Imaginem vis for the oppidum. The flowers that contain vis are Plants of Virtue that can be Enriched (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 124) by composing a poem every day for 90 days, and reciting those poems to the plant. The plant is then crushed, and three strings of a traditional lyre are anointed with the juice. The lyre grants its player the Enchanting Music Ability with a score of 3, although it can only affect those who are bereaved of a loved one. This Ability cannot be increased with experience, and replaces any score in the Enchanting Music Ability that the player might have. Once a string breaks (such as on a botch when played) it loses its magic forever, decreasing the score in Enchanting Music by one per string.

Story Seed: Territorial Dispute

The Rhodopes Mountains where Evredika maintains its sancta are far to the south and east of the Theban covenant of Gigas. However, Gigas is House Tremere's poorly disguised cat's paw in the Theban Tribunal (see *The Sundered Eagle*, Chapter 5), and have been told not to contest the resources claimed by Evredika. When a hunting party, lead by a nobleman with a "pet" white wolf, takes vis from all of Evredika's sources, Gigas seems to be the most likely perpetrator. Assuming their protestations of innocence are true, who is trying to set Gigas up, and why?

covenfolk dwell among the ruins, although this is not commonly known by the locals and may be the source of some of the ghost stories that surround the city.

The central feature of Perperikon is an oval hall, in the center of which is a round altar on a stone platform. This is the famed oracular temple of Zagreus-Dionysus, in which Alexander the Great learned that he was destined to conquer Asia. A tradition of minor hedge wizards still practice augury here in the ancient fashion, pouring wine over the altar and causing it to catch fire, divining the future from the height and character of the flames. Perperikon has a Magic aura of 3.

Nearby is a cave shaped like a woman's womb; at its far end is a carved rock altar. At midday, as the sun reaches its highest point,

a shaft of light is admitted through a carved hole in the ceiling to project the shape of a phallus onto the cave's floor. In January and February, the sun is low enough in the sky to project the phallus onto the altar itself, and the Rock Womb becomes flooded with a powerful Magic aura aligned with fertility. Barren women have been known to seek congress with strangers within the cave in order to conceive. The offspring of such couplings often bear magical blood. Those seeking the forgotten Fertility Magics (*Ancient Magic*, page 54) would do well to study here for sources of Insight. For example, magically observing the entire gestation of a child conceived under the auspices of the cave might offer an insight into aligning children to Supernatural Virtues or Abilities.





BOZHIDAR EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 54 (apparent age 38)
 Personality Traits: Easily Enraptured +3,
 Tolerant +1, Brave -2.
 Privilege: Foederatus

Bozhidar is the incumbent music teacher at Gela, and usually has two or three pupils at any one time. He has the Study Bonus Virtue, and has grown powerful in the Art of Imaginem thanks to his pupils' efforts. However, he now needs to find better and better musicians from which to learn.

Bozhidar is a handsome man with curly dark hair and an indulgent smile. He is developing a thickened waist since moving to Gela, thanks to the gifts of honeyed treats the single women constantly bring him.

YEKATERINA OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 48 (apparent age 32)
 Personality Traits: Tenacious +2, Morbid +1, Passionate -2.
 Privilege: Cives

Yekatarina is the latest in a series of aediles to Evredika. Oeagrus usually manages to alienate "the Tremere overseer" (as he calls them) sufficiently that they request redeployment after a decade or so. He considers Yekaterina a double insult by the House, due to his well-known antipathy for women. Despite these adversities, Yekaterina is (for the moment) determined to stay. From the relative isolation of her sanctuary in the Devil's Throat, she has been able to expand her knowledge of necromancy.

Yekaterina is slim and blond, and typically wears a mask made from a skull that she has begun to make into her talisman.

Covenfolk

In the ancient Orphic tradition, women are excluded from sites of cultic importance, and must remain in the unhallowed buildings occupied by the oppidum. The priests of Zagreus-Dionysis at Perperikon are initiates of Divination & Augury (*The Mysteries Revised Edition*, page 58), using principally the pyromancy method.

Culture and Traditions

Evredika is first and foremost an oppidum of magi from the Cult of Orpheus, a societas within House Ex Miscellanea. House Tremere is usually careful to choose an aedile who is sensitive to the practices of the Cult of Orpheus, and usually one who has some appreciation for music.

Magi

All Evredika's magi except Yekaterina have a foederatus privilege. There are six magi here, five of whom are members of the Cult of Orpheus.

OEAGRUS EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 109 (apparent age 68)
 Personality Traits: Devout +3, Misogynist +3, Domineering +2.
 Privilege: Foederatus

Oeagrus is the senior member of the Cult of Orpheus in the Transylvanian Tribunal, and likes to consider himself the leader of the whole tradition, although this is a fantasy that has no basis in fact. Unlike many of the Cult, Oeagrus is openly a pagan worshiper of Orpheus, and his vocal allegiance has won him no favors within House Tremere. His most important possession is the mummified arm of Orpheus, who was torn apart by the Maenads. Oeagrus seeks a way to recreate Orpheus by grafting the dismembered god's body parts onto his own. He suspects that the Cult on Lesbos possesses Orpheus's head, and that they are deliberately hiding this from him. Needless to say, Oeagrus is quite mad. Some — mostly members of the Cult — interpret his madness as a sign of divinity, whereas everyone else considers him simply insane.

Oeagrus is rarely seen by anyone outside the oppidum. He typically wears nothing but a loincloth. He cares little for his physical appearance, and his hair is wild and his beard tangled with twigs.



The Oppidum of Seuthopolis

Seuthopolis is a fortified town in the southern extremities of the Tribunal. It is a hoplite base, placed on the border between Transylvania and Thebes. Its magi try, with some success, to prevent tensions between the two Tribunals from erupting into cross-border raiding. It also oversees the Tribunal meeting site for the Transylvania.

History

Seuthopolis was the capital of the Thracian tribes at the time of the Roman invasion. The Thracians were ruled by a priest king dedicated to chthonic gods. After the Roman conquest, these cult activities were suppressed. They were revived by a small sect of Verditius magi, who formed a covenant in the Theban Tribunal.

The Covenant of the Four Divinities was always populated by precisely two senior Verditius magi and two junior magi, one of whom was sometimes not a Verditius. The number has a mystical significance in the Cabeiri cult. Following a period of friction, the covenant's members sought sanctuary as foederati of the Transylvanian Tribunal.

In the centuries since, the oppidum has lost its cultic character and become the base for this Tribunal's Quaesitores and hoplites. House Guernicus has forbidden its members from worshipping the chthonic gods of the ancient Thracians. Three members of the House have, at various times, been removed from office for irrationality, and their membership of the cult seems the likely link. Initiates of their Mysteries gain hubris (like Verditius magi; see *House of Hermes: Mystery Cults* for details) and the attendant tendency to vendettas.

Setting and Description

Seuthopolis is, superficially, a fortified town, following the plan of many similar small towns in Bulgaria. It does not pay homage to any nobleman, and is publicly ruled by a council of five elderly men who represent the carpenters, shepherds, weavers, and potters of the area, with a leader selected from the group of four, then immediately replaced by his guild. It has a charter it claims goes back to the Emperor Diocletian, which is a cunning forgery.

Local nobles know that no one has ever conquered Seuthopolis. Those who try die in horrible, miraculous ways. The Quaesitores point out that no local nobleman has been transformed into a puddle of boiling gold since they have been in charge of the oppidum. They are more subtle than the Verditius before them were. The folklore, however, persists.

Beneath the town lie the caverns of the ancient Thracian cult. These have a Magic aura of 5, with a few exceptions, such as the Crypt of the Martyred Virgin, which is Divine. The magi use some of this underground space for their laboratories and libraries. The magi and their servants live scattered about the town, in houses much like those of wealthy merchants.

THE VALLEY OF THE THRACIAN KINGS

Four years ago, a Tremere necromancer, then serving as a hoplite, discovered the burial site of the kings of Ancient Thrace. It's very close to Seuthopolis, their ancient capital. House Tremere's necromancers were

overjoyed at the news. House Verditius has also expressed interest in an excavation, since the Thracians worshipped smithing gods. Benilda, the leader of this oppidum, recalls an ancient aphorism about never trusting happy necromancers, and is currently blocking access to the site. Eventually, however, House Tremere will get its way, and she's hoping to either conduct a preliminary investigation before this occurs, or shape the excavation's purpose and personnel.

SHIPKA PASS REGIO AND TRIBUNAL SITE

The Shipka Pass is the best route through the mountains in Bulgaria. It was the site of a skirmish between the Founder Tremere and a group of Theban magi in the early years of the Order. Near the battle site is a regio. Some magi believe it already existed, and was used by Tremere to plan an ambush. Others say it was formed by a Twilight incident that occurred due to the stress of the battle. For many years afterwards, the regio served as a site for meditation between, and the signing of treaties by, House Tremere and the Theban covenants.

House Guernicus has accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the Tribunal site from the Praeco of Transylvania. House Guernicus was, at the same time, asked to convene annual Tribunals for the swifter delivery of justice, and more rapid acceptance of trained apprentices. The Quaesitores selected the Shipka Pass regio as the Tribunal site. It is conveniently close to Seuthopolis and already had some facilities constructed with it.

The facilities in the regio have been expanded somewhat, but attendance at Transyl-

Saga Seed: The Valley of the Thracian Kings

Characters sent to excavate the valley of the Thracian kings face many interesting challenges. Stories include:

- Keeping excavation hidden from mundanes.
- Dealing with intricately trapped tombs.
- Pacifying guardian spirits, left by the magician-kings of the Thracians, but set free by the "grave robbers."
- Assessing the magical items recovered from the grave goods of the kings.
- Determining if Original Research can be aided by the recovered items.
- Discovering more about the Cabeiri, the gods of the Thracians, and the powers they granted their servants.
- Trips to the Magical or Faerie Realms to seek the Cabeiri, or more research to discover Initiations into their Mystery Cult.

vanian Tribunals, held every seven years, is mostly social, rather than political, so the Tribunal hall need not be large. Groups of magi are encouraged to create fabulous temporary structures on the terraced sides of valley, within the regio. These serve as accommodation, storefronts, and entertainment venues. The first some magi hear of new *coloniae* is when they raise a tent on the Western Promenade, the road that winds along the terraces to the west of the Tribunal hall. Covenants from other Tribunals often send representatives, particularly if they export interesting items. These cluster on the Eastern Promenade.

Newly arrived magi from other Tribunals are cautioned to bring a comfortable pair of boots to Tribunal meetings. Promenading — walking with friends and commenting on the many delights to be experienced at Tribunal — is considered a great pleasure. Many magi promenade several times, to share the experience with members of different groups: their Housemates and fellow *oppidum* residents, for example. The ends of the Promenades, at the regio's limit at either end of the valley, are marked with two huge sculptures of the winged feet of Hermes. The Redcaps run footraces between these statues, either along the valley floor or along the Promenades, which some competitors take very seriously.

Between the two Promenades is the Hall of the Tribunal. The Hall is basically a vast roof, held up by columns in a vaguely Greek style. The vast majority of the columns are unadorned, but a few have been carved in commemoration of magi who have performed great deeds for the Order. Beneath the magically illuminated and beautifully adorned ceiling there is a designated seat for every magus in the Tribunal, but it is so spacious that an additional hundred magi could be added with no difficulty. These seats form a series of horseshoes about a dais, which holds the Throne of the Praeco. The Throne is carved from oak, and many myths surround its origin.

Culture and Traditions

It's an axiom of Transylvanian law enforcement that in other Tribunals, crime happens between covenants, while in this Tribunal, crime happens within *oppida*. The Quaesitores of this Tribunal have grappled

for centuries with ways of investigating crimes between magi who live together. This has spurred Transylvania's Quaesitores in radically new directions, and made them mainstays of the Transitionalist movement within their House.

LICTORS

Magi who have agreed to serve as hoplites for a prolonged period are referred to in some Tribunals as *lictors*. Lictors have a duty to protect Quaesitores and follow their instructions. In this Tribunal, lictors have a right to expect reasonable aid from any *cives*, *soci*, *foederatus*, or *colona*. The amount of aid considered reasonable is determined, after the fact, by the Tribunal, and varies according to the magnitude and imminence of the problem they are facing.

Lictors wear a sash of office, the color of which varies by covenant in other Tribunals. Since all lictors in Transylvania are of the same covenant, they all wear a red and silver sash on formal occasions. The sash is held with a silver brooch, which is called an *astraea* in this Tribunal. This is usually a magic item.

In this Tribunal, the sash brooches of lictors all have the same general shape. Each is at least three inches long, and is shaped like a pair of wings, fanning out to either side of a forked lighting bolt. Every badge also includes a unique variation, so that they can be told apart. For example, the badge of the senior lictor, Saturnino of Criamon, has this symbol etched into an oval six inches long and has a series of gemstones in the shape of the constellation Virgo on the surface. Carrying a facsimile of a lictorial badge is a serious crime.

RED AND BLACK LIBRARIES

Benilda is the keeper of the Red and Black Libraries, two controversial tools of law enforcement. The Red Library began with the Red Book. This was originally a compilation of the sigils of Diedne magi, made after the Schism War, so that if any members of the Renounced House tried to re-enter the Order, their distinct magical signatures could be recognized. The Red Book expanded over time to include the sigils of all Renounced magi. The Red Book, by itself, is not a source

of controversy, but Benilda and her predecessors have taken this a step further, a step her opponents believe is dangerous.

The Red Library contains copies of many spells that are notorious for being developed to commit Hermetic crimes. It has, for example, the only known copy of *The Sleep of the Muses*, a *Perdo Mentem* effect which makes magi temporarily forget how to cast spells. It has been confirmed to hold copies of *The Curse of the Unportended Plague*, which destroys cities, and *The Trivialization of the Forgetful*, which plants a command in a magus' mind so that he drops his *Parma Magica* when given a verbal command. Benilda justifies having these spells because they are evidence of past crimes, from which young Quaesitores can learn.

Most troubling of all, there are rumors that the Red Library contains magic items which cast many of the Red Spells. It is said that these were seized during Quaesitorial investigations, but not destroyed. If House Guernicus does have magic items that cast Red Spells, they might justify them on the basis that they are not illegal to own, and sometimes they are legal to use. The Code only protects other magi of the Order of Hermes; these spells can be cast with impunity on hedge magicians, members of the Order of Odin or the Order of Solomon, or Renounced magi.

The Black Library contains copies of each of the very few books that the Order has decreed it is a crime to own. It was created after the Corruption of House Tyталus. Tasgilla, the corrupted Prima of Tyталus, worked infernal influences into spells and instructions on magic theory, which were then distributed to other members of the Order. The Quaesitores and their allies destroyed these books after the cleansing of the House. A few exemplars were kept, so that if new copies were discovered, the investigators would have something to compare them to. Some members of the Order believe that these seeds of corruption should be destroyed.

The Red and Black Libraries are stored in a vault consecrated by the bones of a virgin martyr, with a Divine Aura of 3. Around this are layers of mystical defences. Even magi who accept the need for the Red and Black Libraries question housing them together. The Quaesitores respond that the storage facility was incredibly expensive, and not readily replicated.

MUNDANE CULTURE

The mundanes of this area have bowed repeatedly to the Byzantine and Bulgarians crowns, as the border shifts in accordance with the respective fortunes of the two states. Currently, and for the foreseeable future given the weakness of the Latin Empire, Seuthopolis is under theoretical Bulgarian suzerainty. Its people are a mixture of Greeks, Bulgars, and mountain Slavs who sought inaccessible places as a way to avoid the wars of the other two.

This settlement's people are perhaps the least affected by Hermetic service of any of the oppida. They do not conform to the Tremere ideal found in many other oppida: loyalty, literacy, militancy, meritocracy. They are not seeded with ex-Redcaps. Seuthopolis is old-fashioned in the sense that it, like many Western covenants, is staffed by people who have fled the mundane world, seeking, if not a better life, then at least a different one. The Quaesitors find this gives their community a useful set of skills, including some that are a little shady, which they can utilize in their work.

Magi

There are eight Guernicus magi at the oppidum, assisted by six lictors. Benilda, the leader of the oppidum, is most interested in research, crafting magic items, and matters of Hermetic law. By preference, she sends Vigila to deal with "domestic matters," investigations of crimes within oppida, Scipio to deal with mediation between oppida, and Caledonia to deal out punishments or "investigate forcefully." Each is usually supported by a pair of lictors and a younger Guernicus, giving Benilda three distinct teams with different skills. As a matter of security, only two teams are ever deployed at once.

The section that follows describes the four senior Guernicus magi and the lictors of the enforcement team. The lictorial members of the mediation and domestic investigation teams change regularly, with most lictors only serving for three years. Terencia and Saturnino are more durable members of the lictorial service. The undescribed hoplites are usually members of House Tremere, but recently the Prima has redeployed some

of the Tremere from this oppidum to Lycanon. This creates space for player characters at the oppidum.

BENILDA OF GUERNICUS

Age: 78

Personality traits: Assertive +3, Stubborn +2. Specializes in investigation.

Privilege: Soci

Benilda is the chief Quaesitor of the Transylvanian Tribunal. She is one of the leaders of the Transitionalist Movement within House Guernicus. She believes that the Tremere may be correct: the way magi live will change in future. This will pose great challenges to those charged with meting out justice. Benilda is a legal innovator, who hopes to prepare her House for the challenges ahead.

This view does not make her popular with the Traditional faction of House Guernicus. They see her style of Transitionalism as collaboration with House Tremere to corrupt the Code. There is very little they can do to her, however — she has the support of House Tremere. Without the military aid of House Tremere, the Quaesitores might find it difficult to force Autumn covenants, in some other Tribunals, to abide by the Code.

The current Prima of Guernicus has tried to make peace between the Traditional and Transitional factions by noting that their battles will be won not through intramural debate, but on the floors of various Tribunal meetings. Benilda thinks that abandoning internal conciliation was weak and silly. She accepts, however, that her rivals have been told by their leader to abandon conciliation and fight public battles, Tribunal by Tribunal, case by case. Given that she has no choice, and that the future of the Order is at stake, Benilda is willing to play political games just as savage as any of her Traditional sodales.

Benilda is the Quaesitor characters are most likely to see when they require assistance with the administrative elements of the Tribunal's culture. She is the Quaesitor who presides at Tribunals and, while there, witnesses oaths and binds contracts into the Peripheral Code. She is also the person before whom they accuse others of crimes, to trigger investigations.

CALEDONIA OF GUERNICUS

Age: 65

Personality Traits: Determined +3, Interested in Faeries +2. Specializes in magical self-defense.

Privilege: Soci

Caledonia is an older maga, and is the Quaesitor sent to investigate dangerous situations. As her name suggests, she was raised in the Loch Leagan Tribunal. She has an odd kind of faerie blood, The Blood of the Washerwoman of the Ford, which grants her visions of her own possible death, and those of her enemies. Caledonia's investigative spells are poor, but she's an unpredictable and skilled opponent in Wizard's War.

Characters are most likely to meet Caledonia while she is on an investigation. They are probably required to give her all reasonable assistance as she pursues her duties, depending on their covenant with the Tribunal. Caledonia often asks for accommodation and supplies, but she may also borrow companions and grogs who possess useful local knowledge or other skills needed by her investigative team. She also attends all Wizards' Marches. Caledonia tries to cultivate friendships with Merinita magi, which was considered an unwise display of bias in Scotland, but doesn't matter in Transylvania.

SATURNINO OF CRIAMON, MARSHAL OF TRANSYLVANIA

Age: Unknown

Personality Traits: Determined to do "evil" by doing the sorts of things other people think are good +5, Likes being spooky and enigmatic +3. Specializes in surprising enemies, and mystical swordplay.

Privilege: Hospes

This magus is a member of the Path of Strife. This group of extremists within House Criamon (described more fully in *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*) believe that they should do evil things, so that the rest of their Housemates can remain morally untainted. Unlike other Criamon, they are perfectly willing to get engrossed in the world, and thereby be made morally unclean. They seek moral degradation out, so that others don't have to. Saturnino is one of the most

senior members of this sect.

Saturnino is dedicated to doing "evil." His House's division of good and evil is so unusual from the perspective of other magi that much of the time he seems a perfectly normal magus, far more ordinary than other Criamon magi. Eating meat, for example, is evil. Having a wife is evil. He does both. It is only when characters realize that he sees no moral difference between eating a bacon pie and incinerating a child, and that he's perfectly willing to do either if necessary, that his alien mentality becomes obvious.

Saturnino knows the difference between right and wrong, and when it's necessary he selflessly chooses "wrong." In this he is completely remorseless, regardless of how great a wrong he is perpetrating. There are, fortunately, some things he will not do. He will not perform random, chaotic acts of vileness; "necessary" acts of evil are done so that others do not need to perform them. He will not become a diabolist, because demons are expressions of personal weakness. He will not betray his sect or his wife, because those betrayals would be "right" and he has sworn to take the other path.

House Guernicus employs Saturnino as its chief hoplite for the Tribunal, and leader of Wizards' Marches. He has a talent for killing other magi and, within his strange way of explaining things, he's dependable. Saturnino serves as a hoplite because it lets him dirty his hands on behalf of others. He serves in Transylvania because he thinks that collecting the Red and Black Libraries was a profound mistake, and because he wonders if the strange faeries of this Tribunal are an effect of Criamon stealing the World Tree.

Player characters can meet Saturnino in many different kinds of story. Beneath the teachings of his Path, he is a Criamon magus, and so is just as likely as they to turn up with odd riddles, strange quests, and missions to magical sites. He's just more likely to have bloodstains up to his elbows at the time.

SCPIO OF GUERNICUS

Age: 44

Personality Traits: Likes untangling problems +3, Sociable +2. Specializes in communication and Mentem magic.

Privilege: Soci

Scipio's talent is as a mediator. Mediation is a popular alternative to cases at Tribunal in Transylvania. The usual Tribunal process involves each side of an issue putting forward its case, and the remaining magi voting democratically for a winner. This doesn't suit either those opposing House Tremere, who always lose, or House Tremere itself, which wins but only by alienating useful people. Mediation, with Scipio as go-between, allows a character to come to a settlement with an individual magus, or with an oppidum, without forcing House Tremere to pick sides.

Scipio is a middle-aged magus. He would like to serve the House in another Tribunal where, without the benefit of his skills, real violence might erupt. This, to him, seems like the best use of his talents. His superiors agree that, eventually, he's likely to be very useful in more turbulent Tribunals. They'd prefer he continued perfecting his talents, because he isn't ready yet for a Tribunal when even tiny mistakes might have serious consequences.

Scipio is the most approachable of the four Quaesitors in the Tribunal. His style is non-confrontational, and his task is basically getting magi to forgive each other's slights, so he's not as black-letter about the law as his superiors. He can be sought for legal advice. He is also able, sometimes, to reduce the tensions between the player characters and non-player characters that they have angered, although he may need the player characters to make concessions.

TERENCIA OF TREMERE, LICTOR, AEDILE

Age: 21

Personality Traits: Humble due to inexperience +2, Ambitious +1. Specializes in scouting.

Privilege: Cives

Terencia is trained as a military scout; her magic allows her to swiftly travel through areas and assess dangers. She has been assigned to Caledonia's team because her Guernicus lacks many of the investigative spells required by her role. Terencia is not as militarily potent as other lictors, but Caledonia is far more dangerous than the average Quaesitor, and her co-lictor Saturnino is one of the most fearsome fighters in the Order.

Terencia is a young maga, and feels a rotation with the Quaesitores will aid her if she

later seeks a place in the foreign Tribunals. Terencia is a Rego Corpus specialist, but like many of her Housemates, she has developed some skill in Terram. She is seeking the appropriate vessel for her talisman, but wants it to be something that she wins as part of a famous case which she aids Caledonia to solve.

Terencia knows she needs to build up contacts with other young magi if she is going to be an effective member of her House when she is older. This makes her very approachable. She has valuable skills that can help player characters combat the threats they face. She also really wants some friends her own age. She enjoys her duties, and wants to improve her skills, but sometimes it feels like she never has time for herself.

VIGILIA OF GUERNICUS

Age: 76

Personality Traits: Annoyed by people +3, Hates Redcaps +2. Specializes in spying on magi.

Privilege: Soci

Vigilia is an old and bitter maga, no longer surprised by the tremendous effort magi will make to hurt each other. She has spells that are focused on finding out what magi have done, without breaching the Code. She is always supported by two hoplites with enough power to cut her out of a camp that's in on a plot, because she once lost both legs in an ambush by a couple of dark Merinita magi. She grew them back with Corpus vis, but watching two suspects eat her feet has taught her caution.

Vigilia is the only active Quaesitor in this Tribunal to have been censured for breach of the Code, by inadvertent spying on another magus while using Forceless casting. She was not cast out from the Order because her accuser asked the Tribunal to show leniency. This indiscretion means she can no longer be assigned investigations concerning the Histrian oppida, because she cannot be seen as a neutral witness.

Characters, rightly, are unlikely to trust Vigilia — she's on her way to becoming a problem for her House. Before she gets there, she has a talent for understanding and subverting magical defences that player character may find useful. She is the Quaesitor called to determine if a magus has died in his lab. She is also the magus called to assess ancient magical sites.

Story Seeds: The False Kabeiros

One of the potent faeries of the area has decided to rekindle the Cabeiri cult, and it does this by suggesting that it is Kabeiros, the leader of the ancient Cabeiri, the guide to kings, the giver of justice. This role is designed to particularly appeal to the servants of Quaesitores. The faerie appears in the form of a tall man of brass, with a huge crab claw instead of a left hand. This claw is used instead of tongs when the creature is smithing metal, but is also used to punish the unjust.

The degrees of initiation in this cult are called Interrogator, Invader, Observer, and Liberator. The cult is non-hierarchical, but Kabeiros is its leader. He can withdraw the Eyes of Theseus Virtue from any character not showing him sufficient loyalty and respect. Initially, he acts as its mystagogue. Kabeiros has a Presence of 3, and a Cult Lore Pretense (like an Ability) of 6. As his humans develop greater Mystery Cult Lores, Kabeiros will be able to duplicate them, and his skill as a mystagogue will increase. A skilled Merinita magus may be able to assist him in this. Kabeiros would like his cult to teach Second Sight, but he hasn't managed to steal that ability from a human, and so cannot teach it yet.

Each of the cult Virtues is Minor. The Initiation Scripts assume that the mystagogue provides combined scores of 9 to the Initiation total (as per *Mysteries: Revised Edition*, pages 13–14.) All Initiations occur at the Valley of the Thracian kings, on a holy day (+3), although the precise day varies by Virtue. All members of the Cult are required to take a mystically enforced Vow, to deliver impartial and swift justice. This is a Minor Ordeal which reduces the Target Level of the Initiation Total slightly.

PIERCING GAZE

This Virtue is described in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, on page 47. It makes intimidation easier, and those attempting to mislead the initiate feel uncomfortable.

(Minor Virtue (18) – Minor Ordeal (3) = Mystagogue (9) + Special time and place (3) + Quest (finding justice in a particularly heinous crime. (3))

INVASIVE EYES

A character with Invasive Eyes can tell a person's state of mind just by looking at them. This has several useful effects.

The initiate can pick out suspicious people in crowds, by the way they move. A character with Invasive Eyes cannot usually explain what it is about a person that makes them suspicious, just that the person feels out of place. This use of the Virtue does not require a dice roll; it provides an automatically successful Awareness roll in suitable situations.

The effect is more powerful if the initiate makes eye contact with the person being read. A character with invasive eyes can sense the discomfort of a lying character with a secret subjected to Piercing Gaze. In conjunction with questioning under Piercing Gaze, the initiate can gain insights into the personality and motivation of the target. This does not force the interviewee to tell their secrets, but it does allow the initiate to know when, and how emphatically, the interviewee is lying.

This is not true mind reading: thoughts are not transferred. Invasive Eyes are not blocked by Magic Resistance, since it's an observational, rather than magical, process. It provides no information on most supernatural beings, and a tiny proportion of humans with some mental illnesses give out bland and reassuring signals, regardless of their mental state. Some other mentally ill people send out random signals. This makes their condition obvious but has no value for interviewing suspects.

(Minor Virtue (18) – Minor Ordeal (2) = Mystagogue (9) + Special time and place (3) + Quest (finding justice in a particularly heinous crime. (3) + Sacrifice of wealth (A life-sized statute of a bull in bronze, sprinkled with the ashes of a criminal executed after detection by the initiate, and dedicated to Kabeiros. (1)).

BRIGHT EYES

An initiate of this degree can see in darkness, even complete darkness, as easily as in sunlight. The character's eyes adjust automatically to differing light levels.

(Minor Virtue (18) – Minor Ordeal (1) = Mystagogue (9) + Special time and place (3) + Quest (finding justice in a particularly heinous crime. (3) + Sacrifice of wealth and time (A small golden statute of a bull, filled with the humor drained from the eyes of at least three criminals executed after detection by the initiate, enchanted so that the humor never dries out (or, for non-magi, prayed over devoutly for an entire year), and dedicated to Kabeiros. (2)).

EYES OF THESEUS

When the initiate concentrates, this Virtue creates an illusionary string, which leads away from the initiate to any object in the room that has the power to cause a known human to express vitality. Vitality, which faeries crave, is expressed in heightened states of emotion, or when phases of life come to an end. This means that the string will often lead to objects which are linked to the secrets of nearby people. These secrets do not necessarily have anything to do with the crime the initiate is investigating, however.

(Minor Virtue 18 = Mystagogue (9) + Special time and place (3) + Sacrifice of talisman (or something of equal value to a non-magus) +6: A clew is a ball of string. Theseus used a ball of string to lead him out of the labyrinth of Knossos. Initiates to this degree are expected to have clews as their talismans. Kabeiros has not yet developed a way to translate this bit of glamour for non-magi.)

VENGEFUL ASMODEUS

Faeries rarely have original ideas and cannot usually train humans in abilities, unless they have stolen those abilities from somewhere else. Skilled Infernal researchers studying the Black Library may discover where Kabeiros stole his idea and abilities from. Many centuries ago a small group of servants at a Quaesitorial House covenant were found to be worshipping Asmodeus as the patron of the sin of invading privacy. Asmodeus is a powerful demon, and if he discovers that his ideas have been recycled by this cult, he may harass its members.



The Oppidum of Tablinum

Tablinum is an oppidum located on the coast of the Black Sea among the dunes and wetlands of the Danube delta. Tablinum's purpose is to store information, including records, spell texts, and artifacts. It is a kind of Tribunal museum and storehouse. Little of the oppidum exists in the mundane world, merely a few grogs of Slavic descent, living in a small village with a palisade, who spend their days fishing in small boats surrounded by vast scavenging flocks of white pelicans

and graceful egrets.

The only thing that distinguishes the site is a magnitude 8 *Aegis of the Hearth* surrounding the village palisade, and a magical bell that can be rung to attract the attention of the magi of Tablinum. Curiously, the bell does not make a sound—the sound can only be heard in the regiones of Tablinum.

History

Tablinum was founded in 878 (that is, in the years following The Sundering), and located at the site because of the large number of regiones that lie superimposed upon each other here. As the Tribunal was limited to five covenants, by the terms of The Sundering, Tablinum had no real official status or officially recognized permanent residents. It was just a place where magi stored artifacts. However, when the concept of oppida became widespread, Tablinum reinvented itself as an oppidum with permanent resident curators.

The curator of Tablinum is an office appointed by a vote in the Tribunal. The curator must have the privilege of cives, and must be considered a master at the time of his appointment. The curator's badge of office is a chain of stones. The curator usually serves for life (or until apparent Final Twilight), although two have resigned while in office.

Setting and Description

The oppidum of Tablinum is quite different from the typical residences of magi.

EXHIBITION HALLS

Tablinum is divided into dozens of exhibition halls, each occupying a separate regio. Most of the regiones are superficially identical, consisting of several stone buildings connected to each other with enclosed wooden walkways. The buildings hold large vaulted halls, hung with convoluted brass chandeliers, and threaded by small, dark passages lined with stacked scroll cases. Despite this similarity, the precise number and configuration of the buildings varies from regio to regio.

Most of the regiones at Tablinum are normally inaccessible. A character can sense the presence of the regiones with appropriate effects (see *ArM5*, page 189), but in this case, this is not sufficient information to allow the character to cross the regio border. There are also no special paths that can be walked, or sequences of actions, to allow entry to the regiones.

However, Nestor, the curator, has fixed Arcane Connections to most (if not all) of the regiones. The great advantage of this is that it means that different (possibly dangerous) exhibits can be safely stored in each regio, and by controlling access to the Arcane Connections, the curator can control who has access to the various exhibits. The Arcane Connections are used to target *Leap of Homecoming* and similar effects to allow travel to the different regiones.

Quite how this fortunate superposition of numerous inaccessible regiones arose is unclear. Tablinum's records merely note its foundation in 878, and apparently the regiones and the corresponding Arcane Con-



nections to them were present by 900 at the latest (when they are first mentioned in *The Chronicle*; see later). One explanation is that it was originally possible to enter all of the regiones by following a ritual path through a labyrinth or similar mechanism. It is said the original founders of Tablinum followed this path collecting and fixing Arcane Connections to each of the regio levels, and destroying the labyrinth as they progressed. The founders of Tablinum thus ensured that possession of the requisite Arcane Connections would be the only way to travel into the regiones.

STUDYING FROM EXHIBITS

Except where noted otherwise the exhibits at Tablinum may be studied as realia. *Covenants* presents Rules for realia on page 102; the most relevant are repeated here.

Realia are collections of objects that embody a particular Art (or Ability). Characters may study from realia exactly like any other study source, and a character may study from a realia multiple times. The number of times that a character may study from a particular realia is equal to its Source Quality.

If several characters study simultaneously from the same exhibit, the Source Quality is reduced, effectively, the collection of objects is split between the studying characters. If two characters study the effective Source Quality of the realia is reduced by 1; up to four characters studying reduce the Source Quality by 2; up to eight characters reduce the Source Quality by 3, and so forth. If the character studies from a fragment of a realia in this way, the season still counts against the total number of times that the character may study from the complete collection.

OUTSIDE THE EXHIBITS

Little exists outside the oppidum buildings and in many regio levels the buildings have no external openings. If a character does manage to leave the exhibition halls he finds that the outside light is thick and red like a late summer evening (or maybe early morning). However, no sun can be seen in the darkening sky. The buildings are surrounded by large featureless dunes,

Curators of Tablinum

878-900 **Akilina**. The First Curator, she is said to have discovered the site for Tablinum in the mid-800s. Akilina appointed Potitus (her apprentice) as her successor, resigned, and disappeared in 917. She is presumed dead but, as recently as 1137, magi studying at Tablinum have reported meeting her (or someone claiming to be her) in the labyrinth of regiones.

900-948 **Potitus**. The first Curator to officially live at Tablinum. Potitus opened Tablinum for study; previously the site was a closed storehouse.

946-1007 **Tiberia**. Appointed by Potitus and briefly sharing the office of Curator with him. Tiberia was a Tremere general, and she was killed during the Schism War.

1007-1018 **Anatolus**. The first Curator to be appointed by the Tribunal, rather than his predecessor. Anatolus was also a Tremere general. He is noted for the use of exotic battle magic, supposedly sourced from Tablinum. Killed during Wizard's War.

1018-1020 *No Curator*.

1020-1027 **Silus**. Accused of infernalism and Marched.

1027-1080 **Justius**. Reportedly dismantled a number of exhibits dealing with the infernal and exorcised demons from many regio levels.

1080-1102 **Scribonius**. Author of the first "complete" catalogue of exhibits. Resigned as Curator and left House Tremere to join House Jerbiton in the Theban Tribunal. Died 1137.

1102-1170 **Calpurnius**. Vastly expanded the Faerie collection.

1170- **Nestor**. Noted for research on regiones.

Leap of Homecoming and Regiones

Leap of Homecoming, and similar Rego Corpus spells, instantly transport the caster to a location to which he has an Arcane Connection to. In general, nothing prevents the caster from crossing a regio boundary in this manner. On the other hand, *some* regiones cannot be entered or left via Rego Corpus effects. Some magi have theories about why this is so, but there seems to be no reliable way to predict how a regio will interact with Rego Corpus magic.

Unless otherwise noted the regiones at Tablinum can be entered and left with Rego Corpus magic (assuming that the caster has suitable Arcane Connections).

Exhibit Source Quality

The Source Quality of an exhibit depends on the number of items in the exhibit. Defining the exact Source Quality of each exhibit is left to the needs of your troupe's saga. Each exhibit may have a different Source Quality, and you may like to use the following guidelines:

- Unparalleled:** Source Quality 11+
- Comprehensive:** Source Quality 8-10
- Cursory:** Source Quality 5-7

beyond which, to the east, can be seen the undulating surface of the Black Sea. The temperature is warm and the taste of the sea is carried to the oppidum by a salty breeze. Over centuries, the sea's breath has left a pale foam-flecked crust on the eastern faces of the stone buildings.

A character who tries to travel into the sand dunes finds that he can neither ap-

proach the water, nor walk along the coast, nor walk further inland. All paths through the dunes lead back to the grey stone buildings. There are rumors of other stone buildings (possibly ruined) hidden in the dunes, but if they exist at all, these other buildings are very difficult to find and/or only exist in some regio levels.



Story Seed: Collection

The magi are contracted by Nestor to gather objects for exhibits. Nestor offers two sorts of contracts: contracts for objects from a particular place (Arcadia, Durenmar, Pompeii, etc.); and contracts for objects for a particular exhibit. The second contract is rare, merely because experience has shown that the first type tends to produce more new and unique objects. Nestor can offer either *vis* or access to the restricted exhibits as payment. He can offer objects from the

exhibits as payment, but only if there are duplicates of the object. Grog and companion characters can be offered contracts as collectors, too; for them, the usual payment is wealth.

Of course, the current owners of potential exhibits (who may well be magi) will likely consider "collection" theft.

If the magi are Tremere, they might be assigned to the vexillation *Convectoris-Tablinum*, which is tasked with adding to the exhibit collection.

Magi

Four magi currently live at Tablinum.

NESTOR, CURATOR OF TABLINUM

Age: 93 (Apparent age 48)

Personality Traits: Reclusive +3, Paranoid +3
Privilege: Cives

Nestor of House Tremere is a tall, skeletally thin man, who dresses in a monk's habit dyed a bright yellow. His fast stride is angular and bent, and his elbows and knees protrude from beneath his robes at insect angles. This curious gait is accentuated by his alarming tendency to disappear, only to reappear a fraction of a second later, half a pace away. Nestor's temporal convulsions, a sort of teleportation tic, are his casting sigil, terrifically exacerbated by his Twilight experiences.

Nestor has been the curator of the museum at Tablinum for 50 years. He pretends to live aloof, isolated from the politics of the Tribunal, and for many years this was the blissful truth. However, in the last decade, Nestor has become concerned at his isolation at the museum, and fears that other members of House Tremere are plotting against him. Quite what this mysterious plot is Nestor has not yet discovered. On the other hand, Nestor is aware that lack of evidence of a specific plot suggests he may have, in fact, gone mad. Of course, the possibility that the plot is real means he is unprepared to discuss his fears of either plots or madness to anyone. And it's always possible that Nestor may be both mad *and* the target of other magi's

plots — they're not mutually exclusive.

Nestor owns several sets of Arcane Connections to the regiones of the museum exhibits. The Arcane Connections take the form of stone bead necklaces that have been inherited through the generations of curators. Each bead is a Fixed Arcane Connection to the halls of a different museum region, and Nestor usually only carries the necklace leading to the most commonly accessed regiones. The remaining necklaces he keeps hidden.

Nestor is particularly interested in what he has calculated to be the apparent movement of regiones relative to each other, and he has created a sort of orrery illustrating the movement (see Laboratory insert). Although he will not broach the subject himself, if another magus happens to mention similar interests, Nestor will be keen to learn and compare notes.

DEMETRIUS, AEDILE OF TABLINUM

Age: 32 (Apparent age 32)

Personality Traits: (Too) Friendly +6, Nervous +2
Privilege: Hospites

Demetrius is of House Bonisagus and trained in the Theban Tribunal; he is Tablinum's aedile. He is young, eager to learn, and fluent in Latin, Greek, and Arabic. Demetrius was born (and named Basem) in the Saracen lands, and his Blatant Gift led to him being ostracized by his village. When discovered by a Bonisagus Seeker passing through the region, Demetrius was living like an animal in the wastes near his village. He had spent

more than a year scuttling over the dry rocks, always within earshot of village life, always within earshot of laughter, always within the aroma of cooking spices, but never able to join in. The nights of the month of Ramadan had been the worst part of his exile. Driven away from the cool night-time feasts with his cousins and brothers and parents and uncles and aunts, the village midden heap had been his table.

Demetrius now understands The Gift He gave him, and holds no grudges toward his birth family for their fear and ignorance. However, scarred by abandonment, he is strongly predisposed to enthusiastically fawn over newfound friends. Demetrius is aware of his foibles, and does his best to behave less like a nervous puppy. However, it is typically only after he has made some dreadfully desperate plea or offer that he realizes what a fool he appears.

Demetrius' casting sigil is a faint popping sound. It is as if, whenever he casts a spell, something small departs from the world. The sound is practically inaudible for low magnitude spells, but increases in volume with the magnitude of the spell.

Demetrius spends many hours working on updating the existing catalogues, which he notes are shamefully inaccurate. He plans to send copies of his completed catalogues to the other Tribunals, as he believes that sharing information throughout The Order is an important part of Bonisagus' vision. Demetrius suspects that the other magi at Tablinum do not share this noble sentiment.

THEODORA AND THEODORE

Age: 58 (Theodora, Apparent age 28; Theodore, Apparent age 60)

Personality Traits: (Theodora) Wild +3, Loud +3; (Theodore) Aloof +3, Sober +2
Privilege: (Theodora) Cives, (Theodore) Cives.

The twins Theodora and Theodore of House Tremere are the apprentices of Nestor. They arrived at the museum as screaming babies, and he kept them secret and safe, with two nannies, in a hidden regio until they were old enough for their Gifts to be Opened and claimed as apprentices.

There is a strong family resemblance, and due to their apparent ages, Theodore

appears to be Theodora's father (or grandfather). However, this similarity is obscured slightly, as the twins do not behave and dress similarly. Theodora is loud, with long tangled hair and revolting personal hygiene. She is prone to screaming, spitting, and hurling objects when she does not get her own way. On the other hand, she quickly forgets insults and is tolerant of the animal inside everyone.

In contrast, Theodore is very quiet. He speaks little, except to his two nannies. The nannies are now elderly women in their seventies — one nearly blind, the other bedridden — who still live together in the nursery regio, quietly filling the empty spaces with senile clucking. Theodore certainly never raises his voice, and he keeps his laboratory, clothes and person immaculate and spotless. However, Theodore has some very odd ideas. He once confided in Nestor that many of the exhibits should be destroyed. He has long believed that body hair harbors disease, and he magically keeps his entire body hairless. Theodore even eschewed the longevity ritual for many years, not imbibing his potion until his fiftieth year; it is possible that this was just an obscure attempt to taunt Theodora, who vainly drank her potion in her early twenties, and then almost immediately regretted her consequent sterility. Recently, Theodore told Demetrius that The Order had outlived its purpose.

The Open Exhibits

All Tremere characters have right of access to any of the open exhibits. Characters from other covenants are usually granted access by the curator. The exception is any character who damages, steals, or otherwise interferes with the exhibits. Vandals (even Tremere) are expelled from the oppidum and never allowed access again. At least, that is the theory — characters may rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the curator, particularly for minor offenses.

Most characters use the exhibits to study (see insert) and while several characters can study from a single exhibit, this reduces the effective Source Quality of the exhibit. This means that certamen (for love) is often used to solve disputes over study access to an exhibit. If a character wants to study from an

exhibit, roll a stress die against an Ease Factor of 3. If the roll is successful, then no other character wants to use the exhibit that season. If the roll fails, then one other character wants to use the exhibit. If the roll is a botch, then many characters want to use the exhibit that season. Roll a further (simple) die. The number on this die is the number of other characters wanting to use the same exhibit.

THE ART EXHIBITS

There are 15 of these exhibits, one for each Hermetic Art. Each Art Exhibit is in a different regio level, and they each contain numerous objects that embody aspects of the Art. For example, the spaces of the morbid Corpus exhibit are stacked with skeletons and preserved organs; the Aquam exhibit contains dozens of sample flasks containing liquids both foul and pure; and the halls of the Animal exhibit echo with the screeching of exotic creatures (fed by grog keepers and trapped within *Circles of Beast Warding*, ArM5, page 120).

Each Art Exhibit contains hundreds of objects and is considered a realia about its Art. The presence of the realia also means that the exhibit counts as a suitable environment for characters with the Study Requirement (or Study Bonus) to freely study (or receive their bonus), up until they reach an Art Score of 15.

The Art Exhibit regiones all have a Magic aura of 5.

THE ARCANUM EXHIBIT

This exhibit contains hundreds of objects that embody Finesse, Magic Theory, Parma Magica, and Penetration. For example, there are delicately drawn maps of the celestial sphere, which indicate the influence of horoscopes on Magic Resistance; intricate exemplars of glassware assemblies; and a sequence of magical shells, arcane eggs with slippery surfaces covered in runes that writhe and change (controlling the twisting runes demonstrates Finesse).

The Arcanum Exhibit is considered to be four separate realia, one each on Finesse, Magic Theory, Parma Magica, and Penetration. Characters can study each of the separate realia without interfering in the study of the other characters.

The Arcanum Exhibit has a Magic aura of 6.

THE SCRIPTORIUM

The Scriptorium is not a true exhibit. Instead, in this regio are living quarters for a number of guest magi and servants. Most magi who travel to Tablinum to study live in small living quarters, which are themselves in the exhibit they are studying. However, servants and companions accompanying the magi can be accommodated here.

The Scriptorium also has a permanent staff of six scribes. They work in a hall that smells faintly of burnt tallow, the silence only

Maintaining the Exhibit Halls

Exhibits composed mostly of books and other texts need little maintenance, but other exhibits require periodic checking of wards, special preserving spells, or even feeding (as with the Animal exhibits). The curator, and the other permanent magi, ensure that any such maintenance is conducted, assisted in this task by the servants who live in The Scriptorium. Supervising maintenance occupies one magus full-time, although much of the actual work is performed by about a dozen grogs housed in the Scriptorium. Nestor is the curator but, currently, the four magi who live at Tablinum share the maintenance responsibilities. This occupies each magus for a season per year.

EVERBRIGHT CHANDELIER

CrIlg 24

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

The chandeliers in the exhibits are enchanted items that continuously create bright light.

The light appears to emanate from lit candles, but there is no actual flame. Thus, there is no danger of the chandeliers igniting flammable exhibits.

(Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +4 constant effect)

broken by the scratching of quills on vellum. These scribes are usually hunched over their writing desks making copies of *The Chronicle* (see later). However, up to two scribes can be hired by visiting magi to copy books. The scribes each have a Profession: Scribe Ability Score of 6, and a Magic Theory Ability Score of 1, which is sufficient to allow them to copy books about Hermetic Arts without corruption. It costs 2 pawns of vis to hire a scribe for a season, and the commissioning magus must provide (or pay for) writing material too. A Tremere magus may requisition a scribe without needing to pay; however, doing this for two consecutive seasons is frowned upon. Any character may make use of a free writing desk without paying.

The Scriptorium includes one guest lab-

oratory, and has a Magic aura of 4. There is a small door in one corner of the scribe hall which connects the Scriptorium regio with the Spell Hall regio.

THE SPELL HALL

This exhibit hall contains hundreds of neatly filed scroll cases that contain archive copies of Laboratory Texts. There are further writing tables in this hall too.

Any Tremere character can freely copy spells (or other Lab Texts) from here, and magi of other covenants may copy texts if they donate an original Lab Text (in a form that is usable by other magi) in return. Generally, donating a Lab Text allows the character

to copy a number of other texts equal to the magnitude of the donated spell. So, donating a magnitude 3 Creo Herbam Lab Text allows the character to copy three other Lab Texts. Alternatively, a magus may donate a number of pawns of vis equal to the total magnitude of the Lab Texts he wants to copy. It is usually cheaper to pay for access via donation of a spell, and that is, of course, the aim.

Note that the Spell Hall does not contain a Laboratory, and Lab Texts may not be removed from the exhibit hall. A character may only copy the texts; he may not invent spells or item effects directly from the Lab Texts. Despite the general prohibition on removing Lab Texts from the Spell Hall, the permanent residents of Tablinum do actually frequently take the Lab Texts to their laboratories.

The Laboratories at Tablinum

NESTOR'S LABORATORY

The laboratory of Nestor, the curator, is actually in another otherwise empty regio level. He also occupies a faux Laboratory constructed in the Curator's Sanctum regio, but he only pretends to work beyond that locked sanctum door. These characteristics are for his true Laboratory, which is magnificently appointed, and has been used by the curators for hundreds of years. A central feature is an enormous, odd, brass orrery.

Nestor purports to have discovered that although spells like *Leap of Homecoming* appear to transport the target instantly, there is a tiny but measurable delay between departure and arrival. The length of this transition time changes not according to the physical distance traveled, but according to what regio the journey begins and terminates in, and this time changes from journey to journey between the same regiones. The spheres at the ends of the arms of the orrery represent not planets but regiones. The jittery clockwork of the orrery maps out what Nestor has calculated to be the apparent relative motion of the regiones, but Nestor has not yet determined a practical use for his discovery.

Of course, Nestor may also be mistaken — the movement of regiones he thinks he observes may be either something else entirely, or merely an error.

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Feature (orrery; +2 Aesthetics, +1 Vim, +2 Rego), Palatial (+1 Vim); Extensive Stores, Specimens (+1 Vim); Missing Sanctum Marker, Regio; Impregnable, Predecessor

Characteristics: Size +3, Refinement +3, General Quality +1, Upkeep +4, Safety +1, Warping +2, Health +2, Aesthetics +4

Specializations: Experimentation +1, Teaching +2, Rego +2, Vim +3

DEMETRIUS' LABORATORY

Demetrius is a dedicated, almost obsessive, collector, and when not working in his laboratory, he is often walking the exhibit halls, slate in hand, adding to the catalogue of collections. New additions to the exhibits are often kept in a small studio outside Demetrius's laboratory until he and Nestor have decided where they should be permanently displayed. Demetrius also keeps a small collection of specimens in his laboratory that correspond to whatever project he is currently working on (currently Aquam). Due to the large number of easily available specimens, it only takes a few days for Demetrius to change the Form that the specimen collection is associated with. Unfortunately, all these specimens take up a lot of space in the laboratory, which actually tends to negate their utility.

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Feature (desk; +2 Aesthetics, +3 Texts); Specimens (+1 Aquam); Studio (+2 Aesthetics); Cramped (+1 Texts)

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement +3, General Quality -1, Upkeep 0, Safety 1, Warping 0, Health 0, Aesthetics +4

Specializations: Texts +4, Aquam +1

THEODORA'S LABORATORY

Theodora has an extravagant, theatrical, almost reckless edge to her magic, and this is true of her laboratory too. The laboratory's central feature is a large continually boiling cauldron, to which Theodora is always adding new ingredients, seemingly at random. This, she confidently claims, makes her magic "better," and there must surely be some insight behind her insanity, as frequently her laboratory produces works that seem beyond her capacities. One of her most useful sets of ingredients is a collection of faerie rocks.

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Feature (cauldron; +2 Aesthetics, +3 Experimentation); Faerie Ingredients (+1 Terram), Dirty, Disorganized, Chaotic

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement +2, General Quality +1, Upkeep -1, Safety -1, Warping +2, Health -1, Aesthetics -1

Specializations: Experimentation +6, Muto +2, Perdo +1, Terram +1

All spells in the ArM5 book are available in the Spell Hall. Spells in other *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* supplements are usually available, but the availability of individual spells is at the discretion of the troupe. Original spells are not usually available. The majority of spells in the Spell Hall are in a form that does not include idiosyncratic notation, and so can be used by other magi without translation.

The Spell Hall has a Magic aura of 4.

THE CHRONICLE

This exhibit hall contains dozens of neatly written and lushly illustrated volumes of *The Transylvania Chronicle*.

The Chronicle is purportedly a complete record of events that have occurred in the Tribunal. However, skeptics note that *The Chronicle* is relatively silent on events leading up to the Schism War, and there is little information about the foundation of House Tremere. On the other hand, regardless of whether it is exhaustive, *The Chronicle* is the pre-eminent source of Peripheral Code rulings and Hermetic history in the Tribunal.

In terms of game mechanics, *The Chronicle* is treated as an encyclopedia (see *Art and Academe*, page 26). There are two volumes for each decade, and every 50 years of records (set of ten volumes) is considered as an Order of Hermes Lore (Transylvania) tractatus and a Code of Hermes tractatus (both tractatus are of Source Quality 6).

tus are of Source Quality 6).

A character may also look up a fact in *The Chronicle*. Looking up a fact takes about an hour (or perhaps longer for detailed information), following which an Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore (or Code of Hermes) + stress die roll against an Ease Factor is made. The troupe must determine the Ease Factor depending on the obscurity of the fact. The character receives a +1 bonus to the roll for every complete 50 years of *The Chronicle* to which he has access. A character with access to the complete Chronicle, which dates back to the foundation of the Order in 767, therefore receives a +9 bonus. The bonus for extra volumes only applies if the character is researching something that spans several volumes. For example, to discover how many

The Laboratories at Tablinum, cont'd

THEODORE'S LABORATORY

Theodore keeps his laboratory clean and well-organized. He is reluctant to allow anyone to enter his laboratory, especially his sister who keeps her laboratory in a disgusting state. Theodore employees several grog guards, on a continuously rotating shift, who ensure that no one disturbs his work. A shallow pool of pure water occupies the center of the laboratory, and Theodore spends many hours contemplating its stillness. The laboratory is very simply appointed, but Theodore's laboratory equipment is of a very fine quality, crafted by dwarf artificers and purchased at great expense.

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Feature (pool, +2 Aesthetics, +3 Intellego); Superior Heating; Flawless Equipment, Grand Entranceway, Guard, Highly Organized, Spotless; Undecorated

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement +3, General Quality +3, Upkeep +2, Safety +3, Warping 0, Health +2, Aesthetics +6

Specializations: Vis Extraction +1; Creo +1, Intellego +2, Ignem +1

THE VIM DISTILLERY

This laboratory is not occupied by any one magus, but is instead shared by the

magi of Tablinum. The laboratory is especially designed for the extraction of Vim vis from the aura, and whenever a magus wishes to perform this task, he uses this laboratory instead of his own. The features of the laboratory include an enormous still for concentrating vis and a balance for carefully weighing the vis.

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Feature (vis still; +2 Aesthetics, +3 Vis Extraction), Lesser Feature (vis balance; +1 Aesthetics, +1 Vis Extraction); Missing Ingredients (halve Intellego Lab Totals), Missing Ingredients (halve Muto Lab Totals), Missing Ingredients (halve Perdo Lab Totals), Missing Ingredients (halve Rego Lab Totals), Missing Sanctum Marker, Superior Equipment; Cramped; Greater Focus (vis still; -2 General Quality, +4 Vis Extraction)

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement 0, General Quality 0, Upkeep -3, Safety -1, Warping 0, Health 0, Aesthetics +1

Specializations: Vis Extraction +10

THE EMPTY LABORATORY

This laboratory is unoccupied and has been stripped of most of its equipment and supplies. It is haunted by the ghost of a previous occupant, a magus who was assassinated in the Laboratory during Wizard's

War, and in one wall is an open window that looks out into an empty void — which is rumored to be the space between the regio levels (or maybe just another regio level). Unbeknownst to the current magi of Tablinum, the void window can be utilized as a vis source. Periodically, a frost forms on the sill of the window which can be harvested as Mentem vis before it melts (2 pawns per season). The ghost knows of the vis source.

Virtues and Flaws: Vis Source; Empty; Undecorated, Abyss, Haunted

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement 0, General Quality 0, Upkeep -1, Safety -3, Warping +2, Health -1, Aesthetics -3

Specializations: Perdo +1, Mentem +3

THE GUEST LABORATORY IN THE SCRIPTORIUM

This spartan laboratory is available for the use of guests. It contains a gallery that allows the visitor to be observed in his work.

Virtues and Flaws: Gallery; No Stores, Undecorated

Characteristics: Size 0, Refinement 0, General Quality 0, Upkeep -1, Safety -1, Warping 0, Health 0, Aesthetics 0

Specializations: Teaching +1

Story Seed: Church Rites

While the magi are studying at Tablinum, a delegation arrives from the Church. The Latin Church has recently (since 1204) taken control of large portions of Constantinople (south of Tablinum), and church scholars have found, among the records of the Greek Church,

mention of Tablinum's hoard of relics. A papal legate has been sent to Tablinum to discover whether Tablinum and the relic hoard really exist, and if so, to relocate the relics to Rome. Nestor approaches the visiting magi for help in dealing with the church delegation.

Story Seed: Limitless Temptation

Curiously, the labyrinth of The Dungeon exhibit contains the largest number of objects of any of the exhibits. This fact is not immediately clear, as the convoluted twists and turns of the exhibit disguise its true extent. However, any character that spends a season studying the exhibit becomes aware that the exhibit is much larger than the catalogues would suggest.

Two possible explanations for this discrepancy are:

- Infernalists are secretly using the infernal exhibit as a place to safely cache occult paraphernalia associated with their hellish cult. The cultists have their own Arcane Connections to the exhibit hall, which they use to secretly enter via *Leap of Homecoming* equivalent effects.
- Hell has infiltrated the exhibit. Some of the objects on display are possessed by demons who are secretly summoning more demons into the exhibit hall.

apprentices a magus has Gauntleted, access to volumes that predate the magus himself are unlikely to be of value.

The complete *Chronicle* consists of 90 volumes in 1220, and there are three copies of each volume in the exhibit hall. The curator permits up to one copy of each volume to be removed from the exhibit hall at a time. Any character can freely study *The Chronicle*. The exhibit hall has a Magic aura of 3.

THE CHAPEL

A soft light hazily illuminates the silent halls of this exhibit. The light emanates from the cavernous hall's heights, where glowing crosses are suspended instead of chandeliers. As it falls, the light slowly drifts over intricate mosaics: bloody, obsessive, and awesome depictions of the life of Jesus. Finally, the light is lost with the holy dead in the numerous alcoves and quiet corners of the exhibit. In these secret spaces, the light gently caresses the gold and gem-encrusted reliquaries that hold treasured fragments of the dismembered saints.

The Chapel is the Divine exhibit, and it may be studied as a realia in Divine Lore.

There are dozens, maybe hundreds, of holy relics among the exhibits, and even rumors of an (off-catalogue) fragment of true cross, but note that not *all* of the exhibits are necessarily relics. Rules for relics are given in **ArM5** (pages 188–189), with more complete rules in *Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition* (pages 43–46).

The Chapel has a Divine aura of 6. This Divine aura (presumably engendered by the large concentration of holy relics in the exhibit) probably swamps an underlying Magic aura in this regio. However, the exhibits have been here so long that the original aura is no longer known.

THE CURATOR'S SANCTUM

This exhibit hall contains the living quarters, sanctums, and laboratories of the magi who permanently live at Tablinum. Access to this regio level is nominally open, but the usual Hermetic laws apply to entering the areas actually marked as sanctums. Of the six laboratories in this regio, currently four are occupied (see insert).

The Curator's Sanctum has a magic aura of 5.

The Restricted Exhibits

These exhibit regiones definitely exist, and the curator of Tablinum is certainly prepared to discuss their contents, but access to the actual exhibits is restricted. Usually Tremere are granted access if they have good reason. Requests from magi who belong to other covenants are sometimes granted, depending upon the circumstances; fees are sometimes charged.

THE MIRRORED HALL

The centerpiece of this exhibit is a great hall hung with hundreds of enchanted polished metal mirrors. Each mirror has a circular frame made of iron that is enchanted with wards that each keep a faerie imprisoned in the reflection. This exhibit is a realia in Faerie Lore.

The Mirrored Hall has a Magic aura of 6.

THE DUNGEON

This exhibit hall is filled with dark winding passages. The secret spaces, dead-ends, and cold crossroads of this maze are filled with horrific displays of cruelty and suffering. Behind each corner waits a new terror: a cruel blood-stained knife, a meaningless set of phrases carefully printed over and over again in dozens of different hands upon the flayed flesh of an innocent child, or the ritually mutilated sex organs of a chapter of corrupt cathedral canons.

This terrible exhibit is a realia of Infernal Lore. This exhibit is controversial within the Order, with many magi believing that it should be destroyed.

The Dungeon has an Infernal aura of 3.

THE EMPTY HALLS

There are many, many empty regiones that contain only vacant halls, standing among the sand dunes. There are tales of unfortunate characters marooned in a few of these regiones — either deliberately imprisoned there, or accidentally trapped. Most of the Empty Halls have Magic auras of 3 or 4.

The Hidden Exhibits

The hidden exhibits are regiones whose existence is merely speculated upon by the majority of the Tribunal. Some magi do claim to have visited the hidden exhibits, but such magi might be either liars or madmen. Whether any of these exhibits exist is a matter for your saga. It is possible that some of these exhibits may have existed in the past but have long since been dismantled.

If they do exist, then access to the hidden regiones is certainly a closely guarded privilege. Possibly even the curator does not have access. The relevant Arcane Connections may be instead controlled by a cabal, Mystery Cult, or even lost altogether.

The Founder's Exhibit

Apparently this exhibit contains realia related to the lives, original traditions, and demise of the Founders of The Order of Hermes. Some even claim that the bodies of several Founders are exhibited in the halls of this regio.

The Lower Dungeon

The Lower Dungeon is said to be a complex web of wards that imprison hundreds of demons. Should this exhibit actually exist, the magi responsible for maintaining it surely run the risk of being prosecuted for infernalism.

The Refuge

This is not an exhibit. Instead, it is said to be a network of regiones that contain well-stocked laboratories and living quarters. These, according to rumor, have been prepared for House Tremere to flee to in the case that catastrophe befalls the House, the Tribunal, or even the entirety of Mythic Europe. The Tremere could isolate themselves in these hidden regiones, and the House could secretly continue through the centuries while plague, war, or possibly even Armageddon itself tore at the world outside. There may be a small seed of truth to The Refuge, as certainly there are hidden laboratories at Tablinum (the curator, Nestor, uses one, for example). However, whether the hidden laboratories are mere small, petty secrets or a part of a grand strategy is unclear. In any case, the rumors are strong enough that if, in your saga, some calamity does befall the Tribunal (such as a Mongol invasion) then desperate magi are likely to arrive at Tablinum seeking refuge.

The Schism Exhibit

This exhibit is said to contain a complete record of the events of the Schism War. In particular the exhibit is said to contain a book called *Expurgatio*. This book is purportedly a catalogue of all the evidence against the Diedne collected by House Tremere in the decades prior to the Schism War. If it exists, this exhibit probably also contains the artifacts and Lab Texts that are mentioned in

Expurgatio. This exhibit would be extremely interesting to descendants of House Diedne, who wished to rehabilitate their House or merely to learn Diedne's lost mysteries.

There is plenty of other open information available about the Schism War. *The Chronicle* contains a history of the war, for example. However, history is written by the victorious rather than the virtuous. Many magi thus suspect the public record of being Tremere propaganda. The Schism Exhibit, if it is real, is said to be "the truth."

The Seeker's Forum

This exhibit is rumored to contain realia that relate to other powerful, extinct (and not so extinct) magical traditions which have been recovered by Tremere throughout Mythic Europe. Should it exist, The Seeker's Forum would be a valuable source of insights into ancient magical traditions (see *Ancient Magic*), as well as other traditions in Mythic Europe (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, *Rival Magic*, and the various Tribunal books for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*).

The Warehouse of Ares

This exhibit purportedly contains a vast array of magical weapons. Many of the exhibits are said to have been created by both sides during, and immediately prior to, the Schism War. The Warehouse is said to be a Tremere contingency against the day The Order is once more split by warfare.

Chapter Five

The Slavs

The Slavs are an ethnic group of people living in central and eastern Mythic Europe, primarily between the Baltic and Black Seas. During the sixth and seventh century the Slavs migrated south into the Pannonian Plain, the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube Basin, and the Balkan Peninsula. History does not record why they left, where exactly they came from, or even who they really were. Ptolemy described them as two Lithuanian tribes, the Stavani and the Soubenoi, but does not specifically locate their original homeland. Four hundred years later Byzantine scribes mention three tribes — the Venethi, Antes, and Sclaveni — also originating from an undefined northern locale. In the 13th century there are too many named Slavic tribes for an educated scribe to record, and the tribes are all generally referred to as Slavs. Individual tribes naturally use their personal tribal name, but since few Slavic tribes hold political power, this is only of interest to them.

Overview

Though many and individually fierce, the Slavs as a whole never developed into a cohesive, permanent political power. A small number of Slavic groups have become political powers: the Serbs, the Bošnjani (Bosniaks), and the Croats. Other Slavic groups remain vassals of the Hungarian and Bulgarian kings, happily paying tribute and co-existing with the neighboring Vlachs, Greeks, Magyars, Petchenegs, and other races. The paradoxical nature of the Slavs allows them to assimilate other cultures easily while at the same time maintaining essential traditions that retain a Slavic identity.

The Slavs' lasting strength and longevity lie in their mobility and strong family connections. The basic social unit is the patriarchal extended family, called a *zadruga*, the members of which live together in a cluster of sunken-floored log cabins. Primarily

herdsmen and farmers, a family can relocate rather quickly, which is especially useful when living in an undefended blockhouse. When danger looms the entire clan can be gone by morning, packing its few possessions and herding its livestock through the night. Larger clans are led by a chieftain who in turn pays tribute to a more powerful overlord, usually in both money and military assistance.

Most Slav settlements do not have defenses, but a few north of the Danube River are surrounded by a raised, earthen wall topped with a wooden palisade. The chieftain, his military retainers, and his most immediate extended kin live inside, but several families not as tightly connected live outside the walls. Several "wolf-pits" — concealed holes dug into the ground — offer additional protection. The settlement's agricultural fields surround the wall and are in turn encompassed by the community's common pasturelands. Both types of settlement are

Story Seed: The Székely Anchorite

Slavic legends, especially those of the Serbs and Croats, say that the leader of the mass migration that first moved the tribes from the lands north of the Carpathian Mountains was a mystical hermit, a *táltós* of unsurpassed power. Rising above the petty squabbles of local chieftains, this man united his people and led them south to a promised land. During times of strife communities return to this myth, saying that someday a *táltós* will appear who will deliver them from their sufferings, overpower their cruel overlords, and bring a time of peace and prosperity. This myth is more popular in tribes that have not risen to positions of political power, and is most often heard in communities living in the

isolated forest glens and river valleys of the Transylvanian plateau and upper Danube River valley.

The Székely or Szekler people are a subgroup of the Hungarian Magyars, an offshoot of the Slavic Avar tribe. Not considered pure-bred Magyars and thought inferior, they have been relocated to the easternmost border of the Kingdom of Hungary and ordered to protect the kingdom from wandering Cuman and Mongolian raiders. They co-exist with their Vlach and Saxon neighbors, but not always peacefully. By reputation they are the finest and fiercest warriors in the Tribunal. Magyars by blood, they also have a tradition of *táltós* — shape-changing shamans who

would lead their warriors into battle.

Recently the legend of a hermit who will lead his people to prominence has resurfaced, and the Székely who once peacefully guarded the frontier have turned aggressively against their neighbors. While not a large-scale revolt yet, the Szekler people are forming a nascent political identity, following the preaching of a mysterious man who has recently appeared in their villages. Nearby Vlachs say a Magyar *táltós* has reclaimed the power of his ancient tradition, has assembled other lesser *táltós* to his call, and is forming an empire. If this is true, it would add another volatile power to the political landscape, a situation that House Tremere should surely investigate.



rarely in strategic places; rather they are built near rivers or lakes where fresh water can be easily obtained. A few are hidden in the thick forests that carpet areas of the Tribunal, but the vast majority of settlements sit in plain view along the various river courses that thread through the plains.

Physically, a Slav is of average height with a round-shaped head and muscular limbs, most being blond, brown-haired, or black-haired. The Slavs further south have slightly darker skin due to intermarriage over the centuries, while those north of the Carpathian Mountains have fairer skin. A Slav male wears a long-sleeved linen or wool tunic that falls to his knees, belted with a leather belt and covering a pair of tight breeches. Only the wealthy wear leather boots, with the majority of Slavs wearing wicker shoes. A colored wool cloak is often worn, and those with means sometimes wear a leather cloak. Seasonal changes bring heavier clothes, and fur-lined hats and mittens are common winter apparel. Women wear a single-piece, patterned dress with loose sleeves, which covers them from neck to ankles, and which is then topped by a wrap-around apron. Men, wom-

en, and children carry a small knife on their belts used for working and eating, and many people also carry whetstones and firesteel and flint in pouches on their belts. Married Slav women always wear a decorative head-dress — a leather brow-strap with a decorated fold that covers their plaited hair. Only girls and unmarried women allow their hair to remain visible, and even then it is usually braided and bound atop their heads.

The Slav warrior is not as well equipped as his non-Slav neighbor, unless he has already assimilated that neighbor's culture through generations of coexistence, as the Serbs have generally assimilated Byzantine methods of warfare, commerce, and society. Spears and small wooden shields are common and armor and helmets are not used. Few Slavs are professional military men, perhaps only those closest to the chieftain. In times of trouble the members of a settlement can raise a considerable force to defend their homes, but the large invasions of Slavic warriors running bare-chested towards the enemy are long gone.

Two of their more notable traditions are the Slav's hospitality and cremation prac-

tices. Offering a stranger a meal is a core cultural value and no Slav will refuse a visitor a place at his table. His diet is similar to his neighbor's; most meals consist mainly of vegetables: onions, peas, lentils, cucumbers, walnuts, peaches, cherries, and apples. Bread and porridge are common, usually made from millet, but wheat, rye, and barley are also grown, and brewed beer is always plentiful. Meat is only available for the wealthy, who have the leisure time to hunt wild game.

Slavs do not bury their dead, an anomaly among the peoples of Mythic Europe, and prefer cremation. The corpse is surrounded by grave goods, weapons, jewelry, and other symbols of social rank, and burned on a pyre. The clergy condemns cremation and insists that a proper Christian burial is essential for the immortal soul of the deceased and the spiritual health of the flock. Slavs dwelling in larger settlements, those living closer to prosperous towns, and those with higher social status are abandoning the ancient tradition, but cremation is still widespread.

In 1220, the major Slavic groups in the Transylvanian Tribunal are the Serbs, Croats, and Bošnjans. Many Bulgarian

The Weapons of the Slavic God

Folk legends say that Perun had several fantastic weapons that he regularly employed against the dragon Veles. His most common weapon was his firestone arrow, a stone arrow that when thrown would change into a lightning bolt. Throughout the Pirin Mountain range travelers can find "Perun's stones" or fulgurites — natural hollow glass tubes formed when lightning strikes the mountain soil. Two to three inches in diameter and up to several feet long, most of these stones contain a pawn or two of Auram vis. Longer specimens called "Perun's arrows" have been found that are spell-like vis, and if hurled will actually turn into

a lightning bolt before striking the target. Unlike Perun's stones, Perun's arrows are always found in magic auras.

PERUN'S ARROW

CrAu 25

R: Per, D: Mom, T: Ind

This thee-foot-long fulgurite tube changes into a lightning bolt when hurled and delivers +30 damage to a target if a successful Attack roll is made. Treat the fulgurite as a javelin (Thrown Weapon) with an Initiative of -1 and an Attack modifier of +1.

(Base 5, +4 unnatural)

The most powerful weapon associated with Perun is his golden apples. According to legend, Perun would throw a golden apple high into the sky, where it would change into a multitude of lightning bolts that would descend and wreck untold destruction. One Serbian legend claims that a single apple killed more than 600 people. There are several Tremere who would dearly love to include a Perun's apple in the House's arsenal. To date, no such apple has been discovered.

people have Slavic roots mixed in their ethnicities. Smaller Slavic groups include the Krashovani living near the Timok River in Serbia, the Šokci living in the Pannonian Plains along the Sava River, the Gorani living south of Serbia in the northern areas of the Despotate of Epiros, the Montenegrins living in the province of Zeta in southern Serbia, and the Székely living in the eastern Carpathian Mountains.

The Old Ways

In 1220, all of the tribes of Slavs have converted to Christianity, a relatively easy process because the Slavs already believed in a supreme god, one who ruled his diverse pantheon with much more power than the minor deities. To the Slav peasant, Christianity was an addition to his old beliefs rather than a replacement of them. Instead of calling his supreme god Perun — or Rod, Svavrog, Svantevit, or Triglav as other tribes did — he called it "God" and left it at that. Many 13th-century Slavs are thoroughly Christian and at the same time still hold many pagan beliefs. Local priests call this *dvoeverie* , or "double faith," and note that it is more prevalent north of the Danube River.

Perun is the name of the supreme god that most of the Slavic tribes followed. The "Thunderer" or "Lightning Bolt," Perun is the ruler of the heavens and the living world, protector of the World Tree. He is forever locked in battle with Veles, a dragon deity

associated with the underworld, trickery, and magic. Until the end of time, Veles will steal Perun's cattle, forcing the sky-god to track down and slay the dragon, which will fall to the underworld for a span of time before resurfacing and continuing the epic struggle. There are still Slavs who believe that every lightning storm is an echo of a recent battle between the immortals, one of their many skirmishes.

The old ways are not just fireside tales told for the entertainment of children. Many Slavs still follow the ancient traditions and even make pilgrimages to holy sites important to the old religion. Many of these sites have been overtaken by the Order of Hermes, though. One of the most important sites, the island of Rügen, is now home to the domus magna of House Bjornaer. Because these sites frequently have Magic auras, instead of Faerie auras like the sites of other pagan gods, Hermetic theorists believe that Perun and Veles may have been titans instead of pagan gods, and so affiliated with the Magic realm instead of the Faerie realm.

If Perun and Veles are beings of the Magic realm, then perhaps lost magic traditions can be found by exploring these sites or investigating those who exclusively follow the old religion. According to written sources, holy sites are sacred clearings found in forests or atop remote mountains. The clearing is surrounded by a wooden fence and protected by werewolves. Some of the sacred glens have statues of Perun: a wooden or stone figure with multiple heads.

The Serbs

The original Slavic settlers of Serbia entered the Balkan Peninsula in the sixth and seventh centuries, as part of the great Slav migration that swept from the north. Scholars are unsure if they were originally a distinct tribe or an offshoot of a larger tribe. One of the oldest Serbian legends tells of a great anchorite leader who brought the tribe from their homeland at the request of Emperor Heraclius, who asked the Serbs to serve as mercenaries in the Roman army. Refused entry into the more fertile areas of Roman Dacia by the whimsical emperor, the Serbs eventually settled in the geographically diverse lands they still inhabit in the 13th century.

Like other Slavs, the Serbs are organized around the extended family unit, the *župa*. Several clans are organized into a district, called a *župa*, which is lead by a chieftain (*župan*). The rugged terrain between the Drina and Ibar Rivers — the Serbs' first foothold in the Balkans — allowed the Serbs to coalesce into principalities, with the *župans* growing in power well beyond other Slavic chieftain roles. The *župan* of the *župa* of Raška, situated near the border of the growing Serbian and Bulgarian states, assembled enough political clout to become the *archižupan* (grand chieftain), leading to a series of family dynasties that would rule Serbia. Savvy alliances with the larger neighboring powers, Bulgaria and Byzantium, kept Serbia intact, as the *archižupan* played one

against the other to retain his hold over the area. Similar events happened in Bosnia and Croatia, so that by the 13th century each is viewed as an individual country, although both have subservient connections to their more powerful neighbors.

Geography

Serbia sits along the western edge of the Transylvanian Tribunal, at the junction of the Balkan Peninsula and Eastern Mythic Europe. The original occupants settled in an area bordered by the Sava and Danube Rivers on the north, the Morava River on the east, and the Adriatic coast on the south west. The northwestern territories developed into Croatia and Bosnia, two ethnically similar principalities, which lie on the western half of Serbia's northern border, across from the Drina River. The eastern half of the north borders the Kingdom of Hungary, and the eastern edge of Serbia abuts the Kingdom of Hungary and extends south to the Adriatic Sea.

Serbia is a land of mountains, rugged hills, and plains, crisscrossed with numerous rivers. The Balkan Mountains lie to the south, the Carpathians to the east, and the Alps to the west, with all three mountain chains extending their foothills into Serbia. The coast is separated from the interior by the Dinaric Alps, which run parallel to the Adriatic Sea. The climate to the west of this mountain chain is similar to other Mediterranean countries, whereas the Serbian interior is similar to the Hungarian climate. Communities can be found everywhere but are most numerous along the rivers, thriving on the arable land of the fertile river basins and living along the lines of communication and trade used by the Serbian people.

RAS

The capitol of Serbia is Ras in the center of Raška Land, the župaija controlled by the imperial Nemanja family. Ras was taken from the Byzantine Empire by Serbian troops during the Hungarian-Byzantine war of 1127–9, during which the Serbians fought against the Byzantine emperor. Burned to the ground and rebuilt, there is little left of the original

structure. A new stone wall surrounds the city, which is perched atop a gorge overlooking the major east-west and north-south land routes, offering an advantageous central point from which to rule the kingdom. Merchants prefer the recently formed trading enclave of Novi Pazar, "new bazaar" in the Serbian language, which sits below Ras and is located on the crossroads of the trade routes. Though not as large or prestigious as the Hungarian or Bulgarian capitol, Ras and Novi Pazar form the cultural, political, and religious center of the Serbian kingdom.

Though considered to be the royal market, Novi Pazar is not protected by Ras, whose fortified walls sit hundreds of feet above the market town. The king's will is certainly enforced, but sellers and buyers face fewer restrictions in Novi Pazar than in other towns, and the less-regulated market allows for a diversity of goods and people. Still a hinterland with few foreign visitors, Novi Pazar serves as a gathering place where information can be gained, rumors traded, and stories told. It is a favorite place for Hermetic magi to clandestinely meet agents and companions.

STUDENICA MONASTERY

15 miles north of Ras at the headwaters of the Raška River sit the white marble walls of Studenica, the royally endowed center of the Church of Serbia and residence of Serbia's archbishop, Sava Nemanja (see later). Within the enclosed walls are two churches — the Church of the Virgin and the Church of the King — both started and finished by Sava's father, Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the current royal line. A combination of eastern and western architecture, the churches are universally held as beautiful examples of both western Roman (Italian) and eastern Roman (Byzantine) building styles. Beautiful frescos decorate the interior of the Church of the Virgin, including one which depicts Stefan Nemanja, accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary, displaying a miniature model of the church to Jesus Christ. The four portal frescoes are recently finished and possess magical powers similar to those possible by skilled mythic artists (*Art & Academe*, pages 133–5). For example, the blue background of the Crucifixion portrayal changes color to match the sky: blue during

the day, golden at sunset, and black at night. Although minor when compared to the great magic of powerful magi, these simple effects delight the frescos' viewers.

St. Stefan was canonized in 1200, less than a year after his death, and his relics were translated from Mt. Athos, famous for its many Orthodox monasteries (see *The Sundered Eagle: The Theban Tribunal*), to Studenica in 1206. Since then, holy oil has flowed from the tomb containing the saint's relics, so the local population has dubbed the saint "the Myrrh-flowing." This miracle happens every day, lasting just long enough to fill a small vial with oil, and all day on the saint's feast day (February 13). A vial of St. Stefan's oil has miraculous properties and anointing a person with a vial bestows the effects of a saint's miracle upon the recipient. To determine the effect of the oil select a miracle from the list of suggested saint's miracles found in *Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 88, picking one of the powers that costs 1 point of Divine Might to invoke.

With a Divine Might of 50, St. Stefan is a very active saint and very involved with his family and his church. The Studenica is the most holy site in Serbia and has a Divine aura of 8.

DUBROVNIK

Resting on the coast of the Adriatic Sea, picturesque Dubrovnik is typical of Serbia's coastal cities with its Mediterranean climate and economy based on maritime trade. Unlike the wooden palisades and earthen ramparts that protect the cities of northern Serbia, Dubrovnik's fortifications are stone, a remnant of its former relationship to Byzantium. Its walls are a marvel of contemporary architecture — a complex series of double walls, circular and square towers, and attached fortresses. Called Ragusa by its Italian neighbors, Dubrovnik was a contender with the merchant empires of Venice, Genoa, and Amalfi. Its prosperity was its downfall, and Dubrovnik was captured by the Republic of Venice in 1205. In 1220 the city still pays tribute to Venice and serves as a military naval base for Venetian galleys.

Animosity exists between the Dubrovnik natives and the Venetian force occupying Ragusa. Even the city's name is contentious. While some citizens look to the Nemanja fam-

Story Seed: Saving the Hermetic Envoys

Perhaps one of the reasons for Serbia's recent good fortunes is the regular presence of two *custos* ambassadors from Kezdő Válasz in Stefan's court. Reporting to Essedarius and Leona and acting with the permission of the Tribunal, the pair informs the king of possible Tremere reactions to any actions the sovereign might take. While not advisors, they merely bring the Order of Hermes to the noble's attention, highlighting House Tremere's vast influence in the Tribunal. Never a threat and never an ally, the ambassadors remind the king that the magi cannot meddle in royal affairs. However, over dinner, they casually mention the happenings in Hungary and Bulgaria, the continuing tensions between the Latins and the Greeks, the latest incursions of giants and vampires, and the unsettling rumblings from dragons who have been quiet for decades.

By using the ambassadors, Essedarius and Leona separate themselves from the king, adhering to the prohibition against magi intervening in mundane affairs. The ambassadors keep careful records of their activities and conversations and make regular reports to Kezdő Válasz. The records are then taken to Coeris, where they are stored. Younger Tremere magi are often entrusted with this delivery, and Essedarius may ask a pair of magi to meet the ambassadors and receive the regular reports.

Unfortunately the pair has recently been accused of thievery, adultery, or some other nefarious crime and awaits execution in King Stefan's dungeon. Their reports are missing, taken by the king. Naturally the ambassadors are innocent. The player character must prove it by finding the true culprits, discovering what the motivation behind the false plot is, and saving the ambassadors.

ily for succor, others look eastwards, thinking that Dubrovnik's fortunes fared best when it was part of the Byzantine Empire. Tension has not yet built to the breaking point, nor has violence erupted as it did in coastal Zadar (see later), but it is one of the mundane hotspots that House Tremere watches.

The Dynasty of the Sacred Roots

The most famous *archižupans* of the Serbs are the Nemanja family, who still hold power in 1220. A noble prince with humble beginnings, Stefan Nemanja rose to power in the late 12th century, as a vassal to Byzantium and aiding the emperor in his war against the Kingdom of Hungary in 1164. Three years later Nemanja rebelled against his former liege and defeated a Byzantine force at the Battle of Pantino. Hoping to separate himself completely from Byzantine rule, Nemanja allied with the Republic of Venice, the Kingdom of Hungary, and princes from the Holy Roman Empire in 1171, but the campaign collapsed due to internecine Serbian fighting, Venetian mutiny, and plague. Later in the year Emperor Manuel Komnenos invaded Raška and besieged its capitol city of Ras. Nemanja was defeated and taken in chains to Constantinople.

But through an odd turn of events, the emperor and *archižupan* became friends. Nemanja returned to Ras a *strategos* (duke) of the emperor, recognized as the only legitimate ruler of the Serbian people. Nemanja spent the rest of his reign solidifying his rule over his people, retiring from sovereignty in 1195 and handing the responsibility of rulership to his son. He died in 1199, and since his death holy oil has flowed from his tomb. A longtime supporter of Eastern Orthodoxy, building both churches and monasteries

and aggressively pursuing the Bogomil heresy, Nemanja was canonized by the Eastern Church in 1200, and his tomb is at the Studenica monastery in central Serbia.

Nemanja had three sons: Stefan Vukan, Stefan the First-Crowned (Stefan II, his successor), and Rastko (Sava). Nemanja broke tradition by abdicating to his second son instead of his eldest; Vukan's disappointment lead to a civil war in 1204, the same year that Constantinople was besieged by the Latins. Stefan II was eventually able to defeat his brother but the effort cost him and he was unable to assume any of the former Byzantine lands lost when the city fell. Instead of gaining any new territories, he concentrated on Serbian principalities and succeeded in binding them together into a single Serb kingdom. Seeking imperial recognition, Stefan II asked the pope to crown him, hoping to rise as an equal to the Hungarian and Bulgarian kings. He received his desire in 1217, when a papal legate crowned him as "king and autocrat of all Serbian and coastal lands."

Stefan II's brother, Sava, is arguably more important to the Serbs than his ruling brother. Retreating from the political troubles of his family, Sava joined the community of monks on Mount Athos. Returning to Studenica Monastery in Serbia in 1208, Sava began to organize the Serbian Orthodox Church. In 1219 Sava petitioned the Patriarch of the Greek Church to make the church of Serbia autocephalous, meaning that it is self-ordained and can make its

Story Seed: The King's Sons

Stefan II's first wife was Eudocia Angelina, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Angelus, and his second is Ana Dandolo, daughter of the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo. The mother of five of Stefan II's children, Eudocia was accused of adultery by her husband and chased from Serbia in 1200. In 1220 Stefan II and Eudocia's eldest sons, Radoslav and Vladislav, are 28 and 26 years old. Both are taking their leisure in the principality of Zachlunia, located on the Adriatic coast. The young men spend their days hunting, fishing, and wandering the countryside.

Serbian folktales often place a prince as the protagonist. Consequently, Serbian

faeries think that Radoslav and Vladislav make ideal targets from which to gain vitality, and they have included the pair in many faerie adventures. It doesn't help that the princes favor the gentle slopes of the mountain of Hum in northern Zachlunia as their hunting grounds. Because the princes are more interested in hunting than faeries, they generally do not know how to get out of their various predicaments. A few magi of the Tribunal know about this situation and try to assist when they can, although they take pains not to molest the faeries too much and keep their "mundane interference" to a minimum. Assisting the princes anonymously is a favored tactic.

own decisions in appointing bishops and archbishops. At the same time, the patriarch consecrated Sava as the Serbian church's archbishop. Besides his ecclesiastical position, Sava is also famous for writing the *Nomocanon*, a thick collection of ecclesiastical law used by all of the Slavic churches. Sava is blessed by God and has the Holy Method Invocations and the Holy Powers Adjuration, Blessing, and Wonders (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, pages 46–56).

In 1220, Serbia is a strong kingdom, both politically and religiously. With the Nemanja brothers controlling both the church and state, they are able to keep the various principalities cohesively joined. By playing neighbor against neighbor by making and breaking various alliances, Serbia remains a political figure even though its wealth and military strength are a mere shadow of the Kingdoms of Hungary and Bulgaria.

The Christian Schism

The split between Eastern and Western Christianity runs through the Kingdom of Serbia, creating an almost tangible line between those subservient to the pope and those subservient to the patriarch. Croatia, to the west, owes allegiance to the pope and follows the customs of the Roman Church. Bosnia is a buffer zone, with the Bosnia Church following its own doctrines (see later). Serbia itself is ostensibly Roman. When Stefan II was crowned king by the papal legate, most of the dioceses in Serbian officially adopted the rites of the Western Church. Some refused. The Bay of Kotor and Ston, two coastal cities that have long supported the Greek Church, continue to practice Eastern Orthodoxy.

Because of this mix, the Serbs have an unusually high tolerance for religious diversity. The split between the Roman and Greek Church is not the great divide that foreigners expect. Many have a foot in both camps; Stefan II was crowned king through the Roman Church yet Serbia's religious autonomy was granted by the Greek Church. In the early 13th century, Serbia has not yet had to deal with the imposed conflicts. Every priest in Serbia is supposed to speak Latin and be able to perform the rites of the Western Church, but many cannot. The issue is not

Story Seed: The Impending Crusade

Incited by the Bosnia Church's refusal to deal with the country's Patarians, Pope Honorius II has sent a papal legate to the King of Hungary to exhort Andrew II to attack the heretics. The king is making obvious moves to take matters into his own hands. Warriors are assembling throughout the Tribunal and clerics are preaching against the Patarians. Rumors that the king will launch a crusade to burn out the heretics are easily believed as Hungarian knights congregate. Crusades are like catapults, and can often miss their intended targets while still raining destruction on innocent bystanders.

House Tremere stands undecided as to how to deal with this apparently inevitable crusade. Their Oath of Hermes prevents them from interfering with mundanes, yet they are fully aware that a crusade could permanently alter the political landscape of the Tribunal. Most members of the House still remember the calamity of the Fourth Crusade and the neighboring Theban Tribunal is still reeling from its aftermath. While it seems

unlikely that the King of Hungary's crusade could escalate to those proportions, no one expected the fall of Constantinople either.

To further complicate matters, several of the decision-making Tremere magi know mundanes from both sides of the conflict, and have had past exchanges with Hungarians, Bosnians, and Patarians. If the House decides to intervene, how will they do so? Can they disperse the storm even as the dark clouds gather? Recalling that minor incidents can often ignite a tense situation into a raging conflagration, the House is especially observant of even little interactions along the border.

Historically, nothing happened for a dozen years, until Pope Gregory IX convinced the Duke of Croatia to take up the cross and invade Bosnia in 1237. Declared an official crusade, it spilled outside its religious motivations and degenerated into a war between Bosnia and Hungary. It ended in 1240–1 when the Mongol invasion diverted the rulers' attention to other, more pressing matters.

between priest and parishioner but between priest and religious superior; Rome wants all priests to perform the western rites. While this is tolerated in 1220, it will become problematic in the years to come.

Bosnia

Bosnia is entirely landlocked, bordered by Croatia to the west, Serbia to the south and east, and Hungary to the north. Its northern extremities occupy parts of the Pannonian basin, running as far north as the Sava and Danube Rivers. Sitting atop the Dinaric Alps, much of Bosnia is mountainous and hilly. Seven major rivers drain into the distant Adriatic Sea, the largest of which is the Neretva River, which separates Bosnia from Serbia and, once the river turns south, Serbia from Croatia. Human settlements dot the river banks. In the 13th century, the largest communities are: Vrhbosna (a precursor to modern-day Sarajevo), home to the ruling family and center of the religious community; Banja Luka ("Duke's Meadow") in the northwest; and Zenica on the Bosna River. Vrhbosna houses one of House Mercere's oldest mansions. This semi-public trading post is notorious for the amount of trouble that occurs on its premises. Arguments are daily events and brawls common. A year ago fisticuffs between two local merchants escalated to murder. None of the visiting magi

Serbia's Slavic Neighbors

The Kingdoms of Bulgaria and Hungary are not Serbia's only neighbors. The Bošnjani and Croats are ethnically more similar to the Serbs than the Bulgars and Magyars. Weaker in political power, their political relationships are different from those of Serbia. Both are vassals of the King of Hungary, as is Stefan II, but whereas Stefan has been crowned a king, the Bosnian and Croatian rulers are merely *bans*, a title equivalent to duke. Bosnia and Croatia are weaker than Serbia, but Hungarian support and sporadic internecine feuding in Serbia have kept Stefan II from claiming these territories.

Croatia

or their staff was implicated. Some speculate that an Infernal aura has developed in the mansio but it has yet to be detected.

Called the *Banate* of Bosnia — *Banate* being a Slavic word for “frontier providence” — the area is ruled by a *ban*, the social equivalent of Serbia’s *archižupa*. The current *ban* is a vassal of the King of Hungary, who holds the real reins of power. Like Serbia, Bosnia has its own church. Recently formed from remaining Bogomil followers who survived Stefan Nemanja’s pogrom to destroy them in the late 12th century, the Bosnia Church exists autonomously, thriving in the gap between the Roman and Greek Churches. The congregation calls itself Patarians (Latin: Patareni), and continues to follow Bogomil doctrines. Led by the *djed* (the bishop) with his council of twelve men called *strojnici*, the Bosnia Church is a loose organization of monastic houses (*biža*) each led by a *gost* (abbot) and his *strojnici*. The Bosnia Church does not concern itself with political affairs, and besides burials has little interaction with the Bošnjani.

Alongside their tolerance for fellow Christians, the Serbs and Croats also tolerate the alleged religious heresy of the Bosnian Church, but this sentiment is not shared by Bosnia’s more powerful neighbors. Recent letters from the King of Hungary command that the Bosnia Church purge itself of the Patarians. The Bosnia Church officially claims that there are no heretics in Bosnia and has ignored these commands. If you saga follows medieval history, the Kingdom of Hungary will soon invade Bosnia.

Croatia sits at the border of western and eastern Mythic Europe, sandwiched between the Italian communes on her left and the Slavs of Serbia and Bosnia and the Magyars of Hungary on her right. Croatia is geographically diverse: the foothills of the Alps extend into Croatia’s western border, the lush valleys and plains of the Pannonian basin lie to the north, the densely wooded Dinaric Alps form her eastern border, and to the south sits the rocky coastline of the Adriatic Sea.

The Croats have a similar history to the Serbs. Migrating from some lost homeland in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Slavic tribe settled in the junction of the Pannonian Plain and the Balkans, along the Adriatic Sea. Originally two duchies — the Duchy of Pannonia to the north and the Duchy of Littoral Croatia to the south — both fell under Frankish rule in the eighth century, introducing the Croats to the feudal system of government long before their fellow Slavic neighbors. Adopting the Frankish and Byzantine system of political military obligation over the more loosely structured tribal organization of the Slavs, the ruling families raised Croatia to an independent kingdom in the 10th century. The last ruling family — the Trpimiroviæ family — ended their rule in an ineffectual power struggle between brothers in 1091, at which point the northern Croat nobles asked Ladislaus I of Hungary to rule the kingdom. Since then, Croatia has been a vassal principality of the Kingdom of Hungary.

While ruled by the Arpád dynasty of Hungary, the Croats have the freedom to govern themselves as long as they stay within the limits of vassalage. The *ban* and his twelve deputies oversee the administration of Croatia and command its army. They avow that the King of Hungary has no say over Croatia unless he is physically standing in the country, and that Hungarians may not settle within the country’s boundaries. These pronouncements are more fiction than fact. Croatia serves the King of Hungary as a buffer state to the west, especially against the power-mongering Italian provinces and the Holy Roman Empire.

KNIN

Located at the source of the Krka River, fortified Knin is the former capitol of the Kingdom of Croatia and still plays a major role in the present political environment. Founded on a Roman military camp called Burnum, the city is overlooked by an impressive fortress. Viewed as the major stabilizing factor along the Croatian Adriatic coastline, Knin is a symbol of Croatian solidarity in a landscape otherwise dominated by the militarily superior Venetian Republic. Though powerful and well fortified, Knin is also an example of Croatia’s military impotence. While most of the Croatian coastline pays tribute to Venice, the nobles in Knin do nothing.

ZADAR

Better known as “Zara,” the name given it by Italian merchants, Zadar is the most prosperous seaport on the Croatian coastline. The city was raided and destroyed by crusaders in 1202, and despite it being a possession of the King of Hungary, little was done to remove the Venetian force. Two years later, however, a loyal Croatian nobleman wrested Zadar from the crusaders’ hands, but the respite was short-lived. Within a year Zadar was again under Venetian control, although this time the Venetians concluded a peace treaty with Zadar’s ruling council, making them overseers rather than occupiers.

The peace treaty is a sham and most citizens know it. Zadar’s overall prosperity hasn’t suffered, just shifted hands, which makes the situation worse for the locals. Re-

Story Seed: Diocletian’s Palace

The Roman Emperor Diocletian (245 – 316 AD) was born near the city of Salona, in the Roman Province of Dalmatia. He constructed a huge limestone palace near his birthplace and retired there after his reign. Centuries after his death the palace was used as an administrative building for the various governments that ruled the area. Nearby Salona was a focal point of Croatia’s Christian conversion in the ninth century, and legends say that the monks Cyril and Methodius invented the Glagolitic alphabet used to translate the Gospels into Old Slavonic in one of the palace buildings. A favored site for refugees and those escaping religious per-

secution, Diocletian’s Palace lies in ruins in 1220, a broken fragment of its former glory.

Ruined but not abandoned, the palace still attracts the attention of many. Monks from Salona search the ruins for relics of martyred saints and treasure seekers still prowl the unexplored complex looking for vestiges of Diocletian’s treasure. Tremere magi occasionally investigate the palace looking for the rumored dragon that lives within, wrapped around a mound of Roman gold. Current speculation is that the dragon must live within a regio, but whether it is an Infernal or Magic beast is an open question.

sentments run high and violence regularly occurs on nighttime docks and in dark alleyways. Periods of extended violence have led to an increase in Infernal auras, and Infernal regiones have developed over scenes of the more gruesome examples. Money, murder, and malcontents draw demonic attention, and several magi worry that if something isn't done to soothe the tension, Zadar will become a focal point of demon activity. Many prospective demon-hunter magi brag that they will hunt demons in the deserted nighttime streets of Zadar. Historically, sporadic violent insurrections occurred throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. Venice finally released the city to Croatia and Hungary in 1358.

Soon after the violence of 1203, House Tremere built a zenodochium in a regio in a magical lacuna found in the city. Anticipating more fighting, the building was staffed by a competent surgeon and a few assistants. The House lost contact with the men several months later and the regio itself seems to have disappeared. Efforts to find the men have tapered off over the years, but occasionally young magi try their hand at finding the surgeon.



The Oppida of Histria

Histria contains two closely linked oppida, Old Histria and Shrouded Bay. These camps claim the resources of a large Adriatic peninsula and its surrounding islands. Originally Histria was a covenant in the Roman Tribunal, but its magi now serve as the gatekeepers to the Transylvanian Tribunal, and are its main negotiators with foreigners. These camps, together, serve as the Mercere House for the Tribunal.

History

Histria takes its name, however distantly, from the tribe that occupied this peninsula when the Romans invaded. The Romans named the territory after its inhabitants. The Covenant of Histria, then in the Roman Tribunal, took the name of the peninsula as its own. It asserted a right to the resources of the entire area, using its name to emphasize that claim.

The incessant political conflicts in that Tribunal wore Histria down, and its members sought refuge as foederates in the Transylvanian Tribunal. Old Histria has since become the Mercere House for the Tribunal, and acts as the main point of contact between the Transylvanian Tribunal and those to the west.

Rego vis washes up on one of the beaches of an island called Cres. It seems to form after storms, but it steadily accrues through the year, rather than being harvested annually. Cres is too far from Old Histria for its magi to deter raiders. A chapter house was thus established here to defend Cres from raids by Transylvanian Tremere magi. When Histria joined Transylvania, the settlement on Cres, called Shrouded Bay, also became

an oppidum. It is theoretically independent, but the two camps have mutual membership and are closely allied.

Setting and Description

The Istrian peninsula is cradled by the northern Adriatic Sea. Its coastal areas have a Mediterranean climate. To the northwest the ground rises through a series of forested hills into low mountains. This area has forests filled with pine and oak.

OLD HISTRIA

The most defensible Histrian site is the old covenant. This is a pre-Roman fortress on a mountain northeast of Pazin. It has ditches and walls that have been periodically upgraded for centuries, providing superb layered defenses against mundane attack, and it is protected by powerful magical items. It is a little-known fact that the spell *Incantation of Lightning*, often considered Dru-

Unusual Vis

Folk witches in Transylvania know that fevers can be broken by making a potion from the roof tar taken from the four houses at the far corners of a village. Hermetic scholars studying this have discovered that on Saint John's Eve, the roof tar on the houses at the corners of apparently random villages in the Tribunal becomes infused with a little *Creo vis*. They ensure that the roof tar of many villages is annually collected and inspected, to gain this vis.

That the vis forms only in the Dominion seems strange; that it can only be dis-

tilled from tar of the correct four houses, and fails to coalesce if samples are mixed or lost, is also unusual; but it is called the *Strange Vis* for an even more remarkable quality. Tremere magi thought it was found only in this Tribunal through a quirk of geography, but when Histria joined the Tribunal, it began to appear in villages on the Istrian peninsula. The vis collection area seems to expand as the Tribunal expands. Some magi believe this indicates that whatever causes the vis to form is aware of the Tribunal's boundary, but others say that this is ridiculous.

idic, was actually invented in Old Histria, as an agricultural tool.

Old Histria is well sited for a covenant. The aura here is strong, a Magic aura of 7. A pool of magical mercury provides bountiful *Terram vis*. Children dipped into the pool develop the *Visions Flaw*, but this is rarely done, because many also develop other Flaws.

The forests of northern Istria are rich in truffles. These are hunted by a group of strange nocturnal men in dark cloaks, aided by clever dogs. The truffles are an *Herbam vis* source, and delicious. Magi believe they grow best in ground struck by lightning. Faeries desire truffles and hound those who find them, unless they know the proper methods of propitiation. Magi purchase truffles, weight for weight, with gold.

Many covenant members find Old Histria unpleasant to live in during winter. It is cold and the weather is often bad. Old Histria is commodious enough to host formal events, though, and has spare space for the many projects of the Redcap families. Its powerful Magic aura also rewards magi performing research sufficiently for them to ignore the freezing rain.

Pula

Some magi claim the amphitheater of Pula was built by the Romans, but the faeries of the town know better. They built the amphitheater one night, but were startled by a cock's crow before they could finish the roof. The amphitheater remains open to the elements and retains a Faerie aura of 6, which rises to 8 on special nights. Characters per-

forming plays on these nights sometimes slip between worlds, or are granted favours by the strange powers that watch from the shadows behind the final rows of the audience.

Some who have slipped into a regio in Pula claim that it is built on top of a faerie town. The residents of *Diviægrad* react to the needs of the visiting human, or lampoon the lives of those in the mortal realm, but behind their games there is a layer of strange symbolism that magi hope is a trace left by the founders of the town of Pula. Pula was founded by the Colchisan war band sent to reclaim the Golden Fleece from Jason and the Argonauts after the enchantress Medea defeated them. The Colchisians were ruled by a family of sorcerers, and at least one of these magicians had the power to reverse aging.

The Temple of Augustus in Pula is dedicated to the Goddess Roma and has a powerful Magic aura of 5. Seekers are convinced that it was once a site of power for the Cult of Mercury. The mundane town surrounding the temple has made it difficult to examine this site inconspicuously. Ancient amphorae are often found near the temple by locals, seeming to rise up out of the ground to be struck by gardeners and passing foot traffic. These contain vis, but are difficult to collect.

Pula is the burial site of King Solomon of Hungary. He is a folk hero, and is rumored to have founded the *Scholomance*, described in Chapter 6.

Mount Klek

To the east of the lands claimed by the oppida of Histria lies a mountain on which

witches and tainted elves dance to demonic music. Its summit has a powerful Infernal aura, and may have a gateway to Hell itself. Witches are common around the mountain.

It is said that if you are walking at night and see a dust devil rise at a crossroads, it means two of the witches are fighting, pulling each other's hair. It is vital not to draw attention by walking through their quarrel. A wise man returns the next morning and places a stone on the spot, thereby giving away any curse placed upon him.

SHROUDED BAY ON CRES

Most Histrian magi prefer the island of Cres to Old Histria, particularly in the winter. Cres is ruled by Venice, and is one of a group of islands made, according to folklore, by the enchantress Medea. She tore apart her brother, Aspytrus, who was sent to retrieve the Golden Fleece from her lover, and then built the island chain from his severed limbs. The local faeries insist that this is true.

The island has many useful magical resources. There is a well of blood that provides a major *Corpus vis* source, which is used to produce longevity rituals for Redcaps. *Rego vis* washes up on a particular beach after storms, in the jetsam of ships. The magi of Histria maintain a large villa there, hidden with *The Shrouded Glen*. The villa has a Magic aura of 6, but a Magic aura of 1 is found over much of the island. Some say this confirms the myth that it is built on the body of a titanic prince.

Grave of Aspytrus

After Medea raised the island of Cres, using her brother's body as a magical focus, she entombed him in a palatial mausoleum. His servants, too afraid of her father to return to Colchis, founded a city near modern Pula. After Medea was cast aside by Jason she spent some time among her people in this city. They were plagued by magical serpents, and Medea banished them by sealing them into her brother's tomb.

The magi of Cres are loath to disturb the tomb. Medea was a powerful sorceress, and her curses may still guard her brother's remains. Even without curses, the tomb is meant to be filled with magical serpents. In Istria, that might mean orms — wingless and legless drag-

ons. That would be bad enough, but it could also refer to *zmije zatocnice* — votaress snakes.

Votaress snakes are murderous little faeries that take serpent form. Their name comes from their vow to not sleep in winter until they have killed a human. They are very intelligent faeries, and are difficult to catch or subdue. Releasing a plague of them from Aspytrus's tomb just to see what they are protecting — if anything — seems excessive.

Some Seekers would like to enter the tomb. They believe that Medea transformed her brother into an airy spirit, who could act as the patron for a mystogic cult. The serpent guardians may play some role in the Ordeals of his servants. Most magi dismiss this speculation, but a few souls desperate for Medea's secret of regeneration have tried to break into Aspytrus's Tomb, and been killed by potent wards. Some say Medea left these, others claim that they have been placed here by the Histrians, and yet others contend that a cult serving Aspytrus already exists.

Culture and Traditions

Istria's oppida serve as the gateway to the Transylvanian Tribunal. They attract members who wish to be close to, but not within, the Roman Tribunal. Old Histria is the Mercere House for the Tribunal, and acts as a recruiting center, training site, and com-

Mansiones

A *mansio* is a rest stop like a coaching house, operated by a member of House Mercere. These are placed one day apart on the major roads between covenants. Some mansiones are secret, and only used by members of the Order. Others are semi-public, and also accept custom from traders and priests who travel. Mansiones are not oppida, because they

lack a *cives* as a resident. The largest mansiones are now surrounded by small towns of the descendants of the founders. This has yet to cause trouble because landowners don't owe fealty to the king in Hungary, but some of the heirs to mansiones are beginning to marry into the petty nobility, which may eventually lead to problems.

mercial hub. House Tremere also uses these covenants as bases for its merchant navy and quarters for the Tribunal's diplomats. Some people say that they are also the coordinating center for the House's spies in the Roman Tribunal. The Tremere deny this, of course.

MERCERE HOUSE

House Mercere's members in the Tribunal do not vote unless they are Gifted, as a feature of their covenant with the Tribunal. In exchange for this, the population of Redcaps in this Tribunal has been allowed to balloon. An oppidum can expect a "Redcap" every week, if its members so desire. Whole families of "Redcaps" tour as actors; they carry messages, but also perform works of theatrical art to sway the opinions of the common people. Retired "Redcaps" run businesses in

most of the significant towns. The spouses of magi are sometimes acknowledged as "Redcaps," to provide them with additional rights under Hermetic law.

The problem, here, is that House Mercere does not recognize many of these Redcaps as proper members. Formally speaking there are only fifteen Redcaps in all of Transylvania. House Tremere thinks there should be at least two per major oppidum, plus enough to staff the Mercere House, plus those who are retired, in training, or honorary. That's around 45, by their calculation, but there's no reason not to have even more. The Roman leaders of House Mercere disagree on this.

As detailed in Chapter 8, the children of many forms of Transylvanian vampire make excellent Redcaps. Local representatives of House Mercere are always happy to seek out children that may have the mild, useful supernatural talents granted by vampire blood.

Story Seeds for the Mercere House

Characters in the service of the House Mercere have the same duties found in all Mercere Houses: they recruit, train, support, and rescue Redcaps. The family is, however, so much larger in this Tribunal than in others that it poses unique problems.

Many Redcaps do their work in family units. In other Tribunals, the disappearance of a single Redcap is a story hook. In Transylvania, single Redcaps do occasionally require rescue, but, far worse, sometimes whole troupes of actors or ships of messengers disappear. When this happens, every covenant can expect a formal request for aid, and ignoring such is considered vile.

The House has many children to recruit, raise, and train. New *coloniae*, particularly in interesting geomorphological

areas, may find a small Mercere school tacked into their covenant. Trainee Redcaps are always troublemakers.

NEGOTIATING WITH HARCO

Houses Tremere and Mercere are closely allied, but the cultural innovations that House Tremere is fostering may cause tension. House Mercere has only 150 members: the Tremere preference that Transylvania's "true" Redcap contingent be increased by 35 is seen as unbalancing to the structure of House Mercere. The problem for the Roman Mercere is that the Transylvanian Mercere agree with the Prima of Tremere. They see that there is

useful and profitable work for them to do, and they see no reason why all of their children shouldn't also be Redcaps. That some hereditary recluse in Piedmont says it's not allowed, because she wants to be in control of things, doesn't sway them.

The current *détente* is that the heads of families of "Redcaps" are accepted as members by the Roman leadership of House Mercere. The House leadership accepts that they may have agents acting on their behalf. Transylvanian magi treat these "closest agents" just like, and informally call them, Redcaps. This *détente* may break down if someone on the Roman side pushes too hard for control of the House in Transylvania. Player characters could assist both sides by mediating a new *détente*.

Those whom the House does not accept as messengers are often trained as grogs.

The Roman Mercere think this is all a bit creepy. They currently don't recognize any of the vampire-blooded Mercere as proper members of their House. Vampire-blooded Redcaps are considered particularly controversial by Redcaps who see themselves as having the blood of classical heroes. They are, however, on good terms with the blood-cap faction, from Celtic areas, who also have murderous faeries in their ancestry.

This Tribunal's Redcaps see themselves as a large, loving but eccentric family of almost-magicians. Redcaps, and their allies, nurture this family. The family keeps the Order going. As an effect of this, Redcaps in Transylvania routinely call each other "cousin."

NAVAL STORIES

The Tribunal has two coastlines, but the Adriatic coast is the most secure. This narrow sea is one of the busiest channels of global trade, and it surrounds Istria. The Mercere and Tremere each maintain a small trading fleet. There are support facilities for this in Shrouded Bay and in an undisclosed cache somewhere in the southern Dalmatian islands. This secret naval base, called Leviathan in House Tremere's plans, is to be activated in wartime if Shrouded Bay seems insecure.

Many stories dealing with trading, piracy and salvage can be developed using the material published in *City and Guild*.

DIPLOMACY AND INTRIGUE

The magi of Histria are the most likely to act as Tribunal envoys to the domus magna in the regions to the east of the Tribunal. Harco, Magvillis, Valnastium, and the

Cave of Twisting Shadows are all ruled by powerful personalities who have a range of needs and priorities. Envoys are always sent in pairs, at minimum: a Tremere and a non-Tremere magus as co-representatives of the Tribunal. Player characters who can strike favorable deals with these senior magi can rapidly gain a reputation outside the Tribunal.

Magi

There are currently eight Gifted Histrian magi, plus many unGifted Redcaps, and three other Gifted magi who are members, but are currently in Venice. The unGifted are full members of Histeria, and vote in its internal ballots. Two magi are not detailed below, to allow space for NPCs with strong hooks to the player characters.

Magi of these oppida often have the designation "Adiran" added to their name. It signifies that they are "of the Adriatic" and prevents confusion when two magi in the Tribunal have the same name. The large numbers of Redcaps make name duplication much more common than in other Tribunals.

ACCURIUS ADIRAN, CHIEF MERCERE

Age: 90

Personality Traits: Dutiful +3, Finicky +2,
Specializes in craftwork and illusions

Privilege: Soci

Accursius is an elderly magus who is, in a limited sense, the leader of the magi of Histria and the Redcaps in this Tribunal. He has a great deal of prestige, and determines which Redcaps are granted longevity rituals, but doesn't really have the power to force the

sprawling Redcap family to follow his policies. Accursius came to peace with this long ago, and now controls the local Redcaps through annual meetings of the heads of the major families.

He takes his duties, which include the protection and supply of the Redcaps, seriously. His advanced age means that he cannot travel without magical aid, which limits him to a laboratory role. He chooses to live at Shrouded Bay, because its simply more pleasant, even though it means his lab is not so good as that of his assistant, described later.

Player characters might contact Accursius for many kinds of assistance. He can deploy families of Redcaps to help with various problems. He makes weak longevity rituals, suitable for young magi. He can provide access to the House's cache of magic items. He is always seeking favors, to use when a Redcap has caused trouble beyond that which the Code requires magi to extricate him from. He may also visit a city near the PCs' oppidum when on one of his revels.

Every few years, his laboratory-bound life annoys Accursius to the point where he goes on a vacation. His vacations are legendary for his ability to embarrass himself, get into trouble, or cause widespread shock and consternation. Whenever he disappears, word is quietly sent throughout the Redcap network to keep an eye out for the Old Man, and to limit the scandal if possible.

LEONTINE ADIRAN OF TYTALUS

Age: 30

Personality Traits: Intrigued by other magi +3, Loves practical jokes +1, Specializes in espionage.

Privilege: Hospes

Leontine is the chief negotiator for the Tribunal. She is only thirty, but is one of the most skilled communicators in Mythic Europe. She is usually accompanied on her missions by Merit of Tremere, who currently resides in the Venice chapter house. He is an older Tremere with a shaven head, a muscled frame, and a gaze that can crack bricks. Leontine is being encouraged to nurture her unique talent for diplomacy, at the expense of her mystical abilities. She accepts the rationale of this trade-off, and is happy with it, for now.

Saga Seed: Diplomats

Characters who regularly act as envoys, or their assistants, travel to the most awe-inspiring places in Mythic Europe. They are honored guests at powerful Autumn covenants. They visit the courts of the mightiest rulers in Mythic Europe. They are sent to negotiate in-

tricate treaties with Arabic, Cuman, and Hebrew sorcerers. A saga for envoys is focused on deals and favors that have Europe-wide consequences, and has magnificent settings for side stories. It allows troupes to pick their favorites from all of the Tribunal books.

Leontine is not the apprentice of, but has become the protégé to, Dominic of Tylalus, the aedile of Coeris. Tylalus relationships are always confusing to outsiders, so there are many rumors about a passionate affair spiced by occasional attempts at mutual murder. These are not true: Dominic has found in Leontine an apt and amusing student, and she has found in him a witty and sly mentor and paternal figure.

Characters with special skills, particularly those with narrow Affinities, will often be sought out by Leontine. Her job is to threaten, bribe, and convince, and to do this she needs magical aid in a wide variety of tasks. She can repay this with access to some of the most powerful magi in this, and in surrounding, Tribunals. She also has a vast array of contacts, so she can often suggest just the right person to aid the player characters with a particular situation they find insurmountable.

PAHNIRO ADIRAN OF TREMERE, AEDILE OF OLD HISTRIA

Age: 110

Personality Traits: Brave +4, Likes fooling people with his ancient codger act +3, Dedicated +3, Specializes in equipping mundane spies.

Privilege: Civis

Pahniro of Tremere is an elderly magus, close to Twilight, who was given this role as a sort of productive retirement. Few members of the House feel that Histria is likely to be at the forefront of trouble. Pahniro acts as the House's eyes over this gateway to the Tribunal. He is rumored to be a spymaster, in charge the House's assets in the Roman Tribunal, but he points out how ridiculous this is. A spymaster would be far better placed in Venice, surely? He's just an old man preparing his talisman as a House legacy, or so he says.

Characters breaching the Code in this part of the Tribunal may meet Pahniro as the first responding magus, assessing the situation before calling in the hoplites and Quaesitores. His talk of being elderly and almost retired, though true, is misdirection. In his youth he served as a hoplite for two decades, and he's killed three magi in personal combat.

Panhiro is a very active letter writer. He may approach Tremere characters for aid if he wants to investigate situations without alarming the Redcaps. Non-Tremere characters may approach him for information, as part of a trade in favors. Aiding senior Tremere is often written into the covenants of coloniae, and so player characters may have a legal obligation to aid Panhiro in fulfilling his "whims."

PLACIDO ADIRAN OF TREMERE, AEDILE OF SHROUDED BAY

Age: 32

Personality Traits: Hates pirates +6, Wants to be virtuous +3, Enjoys killing people +2, Specializes in combat magic, particularly as it relates to ships.

Privilege: Civis

Placido is a young Tremere magus with an Affinity for Aquam magic. He oversees the Tremere trade fleet, and maintains its capacity for warfare. Recently he has developed a particular interest in naval sabotage. He has a budget to develop and test new methods of naval warfare, and is seeking collaborators.

Placido's interests may connect with those of the player characters in many ways. Navies, even small ones, have enormously complex logistical systems. Placido needs to keep this network running smoothly, and that requires constant tinkering with his suppliers, their commercial rivals, and the nobility of the areas in which they are active. He may desire specialist skills the player characters have if new ports open. Coloniae with strategic resources on their land will see Placido often, particularly if they have some of the odd resources that sometimes appear in Faerie areas, like cattle that lactate tar or mines filled with prefabricated nails.

Placido hates pirates with a surprising zeal. At his core, he likes fighting people to the death, because he finds it challenging and exciting. He doesn't want to think of himself as a murderer, however, so he channels his destructive urges into the annihilation of people who, everyone agrees, really deserve it. Player characters with a talent for mayhem or magical movement might be invited to clear out pirate nests with Placido.

Placido is also aiding Pahniro, acting as the lab assistant to the older magus while

he completes his talisman. This style of aid, which is considered dishonorable in other Houses, isn't unusual in House Tremere.

PRISCILLA OF VERDITIUS

Age: 40

Personality Traits: Wants to do her own thing, +3, Proud +1, Tentative +1, Specializes in longevity potions.

Privilege: Hospes

Priscilla is a middle-aged maga who spends most of her time in Old Histria, crafting longevity rituals for the unGifted. She thinks this is a waste of her talent. Priscilla has fallen out with her teacher, but she lacks either the inclination to join a covenant on the frontiers of the Order, or the political acumen to make a better deal for herself. Priscilla does not use the Adiran prefix with her name: she doesn't feel she belongs here. She wants a workshop where she can make magical puppets in peace.

Priscilla hates talking about her work, because she thinks it's demeaning to craft by rote. She is, however, a gold mine of information for characters designing a coloniae in the Tribunal. She knows how the local laws and customs work. She is familiar with sites mentioned in local folklore, and with the more promising sites the Tribunal's Survey team has flagged for possible development. Her connections with senior magi, who might aid the project in exchange for concessions, are not strong, but at least she knows who to talk to.

VOLANTE ADIRAN, GIFTED MERCERE

Age: 60

Personality Traits: Happy +3, Amused by people +2, Fierce defender of her family +2. Skilled in travel magic, but her interest in politics has somewhat precluded her magical training.

Privilege: Socius

Volante is a Mercere of middle age who is likely to succeed Accursius when he dies or fades into Twilight. She is from Italy, and has even less control over the local family than her superior. She recently married a local man from one of the older lines of Redcaps,

which has made her less of an outsider. It has, however, also drawn her away from her duties as the magus who fixes the things that go wrong for the family. They live in Old Histria, using the luxurious suite and excellent laboratory that are Accursius' by right, since he lives somewhere more pleasant.

Many of the senior Redcaps in this Tribunal feel that shipping in a new magus from Harco every generation is socially divisive. They don't understand why there are so few Gifted Redcaps, and want Volante to raise an heir herself, preferably two. That would ensure Transylvania's Redcaps a line of leaders who understand how things are done locally. Volante is not interested in taking apprentices at this time, and this may cause tension when she succeeds Accursius.

Volante is the maga who turns up when something terrible has happened to a Redcap. She is the one characters will report to if they discover one slain. She is a mistress of flight magic, and is the effective controller of the (small) military elements in the Redcap fleet. The magic items she can loan to player characters are those that allow Redcaps to "force passage through difficult regions." She is always looking for favors on behalf of her House, and personally she's currently seeking a suitable magical bird for her familiar.

Local Creatures

There are many faeries active in Istria, and some of them are particularly powerful.

BUILDERS (DIVIÆE)

The building faeries found on the peninsula are individually small, and not particularly powerful, but they work together in large groups and this can have surprising effects. The Arena of Pula, for example, appeared overnight. It is incomplete due to the early crow of a disorientated rooster, but the stones it is built from come from miles away. This is demonstrated by the path of gigantic rocks left by the faeries interrupted while transporting them from their distant mountain quarry to the city. Faeries provided with building materials and suitable motivation can construct impressive buildings in a single night.

The Arena of Pula has a Faerie aura. Magi who have been able to convince these creatures to build other structures report that they too have useful supernatural auras. Efforts to tame and then spread these useful faeries have been made, with mixed success, and are not currently being pursued. The most dangerous, but probably most rewarding, way of gaining the assistance of the building faeries is to enter their city and seek their leaders. Alternatively, characters may attempt to negotiate with the secretive things that watch from the back row when plays are performed at the Arena of Pula on auspicious nights.

Use the Brownie statistics from *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 81, for building faeries.

GIANTS

Giants are rare in Istria, but in ancient times they lived in the valley of the Mirna

River. They built two of the towns here, Motovun and Biznet. Some of the locals carry their blood, and many of these are hired by the Mercere and magi of Tremere as grogs. It's unclear if these are Magical or Faerie giants, because blood of both types has been found in the valley's population.

STRIGONS

The local type of vampire in Istria is called the *strigon*. It wanders the streets after midnight, knocking on doors as a signal of a death to come. It also sleeps with widows, and sucks the blood from children. Exhumation and staking in the stomach destroy a strigon. This process fills the strigon's grave with vis-rich blood: the older the strigon, the more vis is produced.

Redcaps, who sometimes prefer to travel at night, hate strigons. They may be attacked by the creature, or in areas where a strigon is active, they may be mistaken for it and pursued by a mob. Strigons are difficult to destroy except when they are resting, and their graves can be difficult to locate. The Mercere often ask Pahnino of Tremere to destroy the creatures, a task he sometimes delegates to younger magi.

LOCAL DRAGONS

A race of wise and friendly dragons can be found in Istria. See the dragon section of Chapter 8: Creatures for more details on these beasts.

Peoples of the Transylvanian Border

The Transylvanian border region contains a variety of people, many from smaller ethnicities not described in other chapters. Some groups have invaded from the east and remain, while others have been asked to settle here by the kings of Hungary. These settlers boost the population to prevent future invasion, and bring specialist skills that allow the rich natural resources of this region to be exploited. Aside from the groups mentioned here, each of the larger ethnic groups, which have their own chapters, are also represented in Transylvania's population.

The Cumans (Kipchacks)

The Cumans are a nomadic people that invaded the lands east of the Carpathians in the 11th century. Most retain their nomadic lifestyle, but some have settled into agriculture. The Cuman confederation controls a vast territory, stretching out into the depths of Asia, but lacks a central leader. Its members live in tribal groups, and these groups independently raid, colonize, trade, and negotiate with outsiders. Within the confederation are many different ethnic elements, the largest being Turkic and Alan.

The Cumans are a potent military force. The threat of Cuman invasion of Transylvania has led subsequent kings to move whole tribes of Szeklers from their traditional lands to those guarding the passes against the Cumans. King Bela of Hungary took this further and invited the Teutonic Knights to colonize

the Burzenland in Transylvania, specifically because it was a province "facing the Cumans." He also used the threat of invasion by, or marital alliance with, the Cumans to demand concessions from the Pope.

The Asens — the rulers of Bulgaria — have blood ties to the Cumans. The Cumans gave pivotal aid to the initial Bulgarian rebellion from Byzantine rule, sheltering the rebel princes after their first army was defeated, then providing them with a force of merce-

naries as the core of their new army. The Bulgarians still depend on Cuman mercenaries in warfare. The Cumans always withdraw to their camps south of the Carpathians during the summer, to tend their livestock, and this influences Bulgarian military planning.

Raiding the Cuman lands is rare, and usually unsuccessful. It is easy to take Cuman land, because there are no towns in Cuman territory. It is, however, hard to keep this land, again because there are no towns.



This makes it difficult to garrison against the return of the expelled tribal group. The expelled group usually pushes out the invader, through a war of attrition. They are aided by other Cuman groups who do not favor foreign encroachment into Cuman lands.

Cuman religion is Tengrist, focusing on a sky god who is creator. The indigenous magicians are shamans, and have powers similar to those of the Hungarians *taltos* (see *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, page 115) allowing scrying, weather control, rapid healing, and swift travel. The Cumans do not, it appears, have shamans equivalent in power to those seen in Bulgaria before Christianization eliminated them. Some members of House Tremere believe this indicates that something other than

Christianization destroyed the most powerful local shaman groups, while other suggest that the Cumans do have powerful shamans, they just do not become involved in frontier wars, and therefore their magic is rarely witnessed.

The Szeklers and Pechengs

The Szeklers (Latin, *Siculi*) are the remnant of the army of Attila the Hun, left behind in the Tribunal by his son as a beach-head for the Hunnish army's return.

Their name means "frontier guards." When the Magyars appeared a few centuries ago, claiming to be of Hunnish descent, the Szeklers allied with them. The Szeklers now speak Hungarian, but remain a separate class in modern Hungary, in part due to their military service.

The Szekley are divided into six tribes, each with four branches. In war, each branch must provide 100 horsemen. Fields are farmed by branches, and pasture and arable land are never personal property among the Szeklers. The right to use land for a single year is determined annually by a system of bow-shots. Each branch is led by a war leader, and those Szeklers who are officers form the upper class, supported by farmers and cattle herders. From a Hungarian perspective, all war leaders answer to a count, who usually rules from near Miercurea Ciuc. In practice, the relationship is more complicated.

The Szeklers provide infantry, horse archers, and light cavalry to the Hungarian king. They are required to provide the vanguard of his army when it marches out and the rearguard of his army when it marches home. The size of this guard increases if the king himself leads the army. The Szeklers do not fight in wars to the north or west, although they are required to send mercenaries in their place. In exchange, all Szeklers are free men, and pay no taxes to the king. Each household does, however, give the king the gift of ox, marked with its sign, at his coronation, wedding, and the birth of an heir.

A few centuries ago, all Szeklers lived further south, in the territories now controlled by the Teutonic Knights. The movement of the Szekler people to the eastern edge of Hungary is a continuing process, assisted by the various monarchs. Szekler light missile cavalry are better suited to fighting Cuman raiders than the Byzantines.

As a nation they have a special magical power that defends them from genocide. If ever badly threatened, the ghosts of Atilla's army are drawn from beyond the grave to defend them.

THE PECHENGs

The Pechengs were a loose confederacy of nomadic warriors who used to rule the western area of what is now Cumania. When

The Cumans in War

Kaloyan was not in Adrianople for long, but he sent the Cumans against the Latins, to use the Cuman war techniques against them. Now it was the habit of the Latins to ride on prancing horses that were completely covered by armor, so that their charges against the enemy were slow. The Cumans, by contrast, were armored more lightly, so they attacked the enemy more freely. – George Acropolites

The Cumans ... would attack, shoot their arrows and begin to fight with spears. Before long

they would turn their attack into flight and induce the enemy to pursue them. Then they would show their faces instead of their backs ... and struggle even more bravely. This they would do several times, and when they gained the upper hand ... they would stop turning back again. Then they would draw their swords, release an appalling roar, and fall upon the Romans quicker than a thought.

– Niketas Chiontes.

A Potential Future

If your saga's history follows medieval history, the Mongols shatter the Cuman confederacy at the Battle of Kalka in 1223. 20,000 families of Cumans settle in Hungary, under the agreement that they will become Christians and fight the Mongols if they return. Other Cuman groups are incorporated into the Golden Horde and lose their distinctive identity. In 1237, a massive wave of migration makes Thrace

a "desert" according to period writers. 10,000 families of Cumans enter the service of the Nicene Emperor in exchange for land. The two princes take Latin wives, but one remains pagan. In 1241, when the pagan prince dies, he is buried outside the walls of Constantinople with traditional rites including a burial mound, the sacrifice of 24 horses, and the voluntary human sacrifice of ten of his finest warriors.

Palace of the Giant King

The giants who live in the Szekler lands have a king. When this king is deposed or dies, his successor builds a new palace for himself, abandoning his predecessor's home. There are several sites in the Szekler lands that were once the palaces of giants.

One is particularly famous because its king, the giant Balbona, would summon the other giants to conference with enormous golden bells. These were buried deep underground at Balbona's death, but still ring on feast days, which causes harmless earthquakes.

the Byzantines defeated them and took their lands, they became Christians, and were given land in the southern Carpathians by the Hungarian kings. The Pechengs now help guard the passes that were once guarded against them.

Many Pecheng warriors entered Hermetic service when their lands were taken. Pecheng shamans also entered the service of House Tremere at this time. Pechengs are *bo-spites* as described in the Hungarians chapter.

Teutonic Knights and Transylvanian Saxons

The Teutonic Knights — more formally, the Order of the Hospital of St. Mary of the Germans in Jerusalem — are the youngest of the military orders of warrior-monks, founded some twenty years ago in the Holy Land. Although a young order, the Teutonic Knights have already become a significant presence in the Transylvanian Tribunal. For more information on the Crusading orders in general, see *The Church*, Chapter 7.

Origins

After the death of the Hohenstaufen emperor Friedrich Barbarossa in 1189, most of the German nobles who had joined the Third Crusade hurried back to their lands, leaving only a devout few to honor their vows and join the siege at Acre. However, the besieging armies were beset with disease, and the Hospitallers favored their own — the French and English — over the Germans. A group of crusaders from Bremen and Lübeck decided to found a hospital order for the German sick, and Duke Friedrich of Swabia garnered support from his brother the Emperor, the Templars, the Hospitallers, and the patriarch of Jerusalem. With such prestigious support, Pope Celestine III was quick to approve the new monastic order.

Good and Evil Faerie Courts

In the Szeklers' lands, the good faeries are ruled by one queen, the evil faeries by another. The good queen, named Firtos, has a palace of gold. The evil queen is named Tartos. Her palace is lit

by three glowing diamonds the size of human heads, hung from golden chains. Her treasures are bars of gold, gold lions with carbuncle eyes, a gold chicken with her chicks, and gold casks filled with coins.

When more German crusaders arrived in the Holy Land in 1197, they found the Teutonic Order thriving, providing not only care for the sick and injured, but also hostels for the newly arrived, and money and food for the destitute. The frontier forts of the crusader kingdom were poorly garrisoned, and since the Teutonic Order was populated by former knights who had taken up the religious life, the new arrivals concluded that they could take on military as well as hospital duties; in 1198 the pope issued a new charter to this effect.

Customs and Structure

The body of laws that govern the Teutonic Order are known as the customs, and they are written in German so that every (literate) member can understand them. They involve vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The Teutonic Knights are obliged to tend the sick, but where this is not compatible with their military and religious duties, the hospital duties are carried out by a specialized non-noble branch of the Teutonic Order. The knights attend services held at the usual canonical hours, and are required to wear priestly clothes covered with a white mantle bearing a black cross. Rather than be entirely abstemious, the Teutonic Knights are warned to shun secular gatherings where the wine runs freely and where light entertainment might entice them to sin. They are expected to avoid the company of women. Punishment for breaking the customs run from whipping and deprivation of food right up to spending months or years in shackles in the dungeons. Three crimes warrant expulsion and possibly execution: cowardice in the face of the enemy; going over to the infidels; and sodomy.

Each knight is supported by ten men-at-arms, called half-brothers, or "grayman-

ties" from the color of their surcoats. The graymantles are commoners, and serve as squires and sergeants for the knights they serve. They assist in maintaining his weapons and armor, caring for the horses, and attending their knight on hunts, which were permitted to the Teutonic Order explicitly by the papacy.

Each of the Teutonic Order's missions is commanded by a master, and the officer superior to them is the hochmeister ("high master") — the head of the Order. The hochmeister is elected by the general chapter for his lifetime or until he resigns. His role is primarily as a diplomat and overseer, meeting with important potentates and consulting with the pope, and he travels widely to visit various outposts of the Teutonic Order, reviewing discipline and overseeing its resources. Hermann von Salza has served as the hochmeister since his election in 1210. The hochmeister appoints his inner council, which consists of the masters, plus the treasurer, the grand commander, and the marshal. The treasurer is responsible for all the possessions of the Teutonic Order, providing not only food, horses, weapons, and armor, but also organizing the building of castles, churches, and hospitals. The grand commander is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of all activities not related to warfare. He administers the lesser officials, assists the treasurer, and conducts all correspondence of the Order. The grand commander also directs the Teutonic Order's forces in the Holy Land in the absence of the hochmeister. Finally, the marshal oversees the military preparation of the Teutonic Order, and is in command of training and tactics. The master of robes and the commander of the hospital are in theory his subordinates, but in practice are largely independent of the marshal's functions. As of 1220, the Teutonic Order has its headquarters in Acre, and has just two missions, one in the Holy Roman Empire, and a second in Transylvania.

The Teutonic Order in Transylvania

The invitation to Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Order to take up lands in Transylvania was issued in 1211 immediately after the signing of a marriage contract between King Andrew II of Hungary and Count Hermann of Thuringia (head of the powerful Salza family) on behalf of their respective children. The king has given territory — the Burzenland — and immunities from tax and duties while retaining the right to coin money and to receive half the gold and silver mined. In return, the Teutonic Order is charged with defending the passes through the Carpathian mountains from incursions by the Cumans.

Brother Theoderich is the master of the mission in Transylvania, but with the hochmeister dividing his time between the Holy

Land and Egypt, Theoderich has been left to run the Teutonic Order's operation in Transylvania without the guidance of the rest of the Order. The combination of the Teutonic Order's rapid expansion, Theoderich's lack of diplomatic skills, and the suspicion and jealousy of the Hungarian nobles promises to be an explosive mix. The knights have already made an enemy in the local bishop by refusing to recognize his own rights in the Burzenland. Nevertheless, the Teutonic Order has the support of the pope and is seeking even closer alliance with the papacy in an attempt to distance itself from the kingdom of Hungary.

BURZENLAND

The Burzenland lies within the Carpathian mountains. The Order of Teutonic Knights has the right to administer its own

justice here and establish markets. In the nine years since occupying the area, the Teutonic Order has established several forts, and is in the process of completing five castles: Marienburg, Kronstadt, Rosenau, Schwarzenburg, and Kreuzburg. Kronstadt lies in the center of the other four, which are spaced twenty miles apart from each other. These castles form the focus for expansion into the Cuman lands, bolstered by Saxon immigrants (see insert).

Teutonic Knight Characters

Members of the Teutonic Order may be priests, knights, or graymantles (either men-at-arms or chirurgion-physicians). The knights are all of noble birth, but some are drawn from the *ministeriales*, or serf-knights of the Holy Roman Empire, and may enter the Order with very little (the Poor Flaw). Teutonic Knights very commonly carry relics (the Relic Virtue), often in the hilt of their swords.

The Teutonic Order is principally a fighting order, and values Martial Abilities over all else, but they also are schooled in Theology and Church Lore so as to better understand their mission. As monks as well as warriors, Teutonic Knights often invoke God's aid before entering battle against infidels or pagans (*Realms of Power: the Divine*, page 41), so knowledge of Dominion Lore is highly prized.

NEW VIRTUES

These new virtues are appropriate for Teutonic Knights.

Brother Chaplain

Minor, Social Status

The character is a priest of the Teutonic Order, which is like other priests except that the required Vow includes obedience and poverty, in addition to chastity. Outside of the Teutonic Order he is answerable only to the pope. He may purchase Academic Abilities during character generation. He wears the black cross of the Teutonic Order on a green surcoat. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

The Transylvanian Saxons

Colonization of Transylvania by Germans started in the middle of the 12th century, but it was really under the Teutonic Knights that volunteer settlers from the Holy Roman Empire — principally from Saxony — began to emigrate here in substantial numbers. These settlers were needed by the Teutonic Knights to produce grain, wool, and meat for their Order, and grant them the self-sufficiency they desire. The Saxons also work in mines controlled by the Teutonic Knights to bring forth gold

and silver (half of which they must give to the Hungarian crown) as well as iron ore (which they trade or smelt themselves).

The land settled by the Transylvanian Saxons is larger than that directly controlled by the Teutonic Order. The region is called *Siebenbürgen* by the Saxons, after their seven principal fortified towns: Bistritz, Hermannstadt, Klausenburg, Kronstadt, Mediasch, Mühlbach, and Schässburg. The Burzenland occupies just the southeastern part of this area.

The Future of the Teutonic Order in Transylvania

The ambition of the Teutonic Order proves to be its downfall in Transylvania. If your saga follows medieval history, King Andrew II returns home from crusade in 1222 to face a hostile nobility. They force from him an agreement called the Golden Bull that allows the nobility to govern the actions of the king. Nevertheless, he refuses to rescind the grant of the Burzenland, increasing the disaffection of his nobles.

In 1225, Hermann von Salza exploits his influence with the pope to place the Burzenland under his protection, making

it a fief of the Holy See. This proves to be the end of the Teutonic Order in Hungary, while sympathetic to the Order, King Andrew II cannot permit the loss of valuable territory. When the knights refuse to leave without a second hearing, they are driven out by armed force.

Predictably, the Cumans exploit the weakness in Hungary's defenses to enter the Danubian basin, partly in order to relieve pressure for territory imposed by the horde of the Great Khan to their east. They remain a persistent problem to the Hungarians for the rest of the century.

Brother Knight

Minor, Social Status

The character is a knight of the Teutonic Order, and it is his duty to be ready to fight infidels and pagans at any time. He has sworn a lifelong vow of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and is answerable only to his superiors and the pope. Unless he is Poor, he may have expensive weapons and armor, and two horses. He may take Academic and Martial Abilities during character generation. He wears the black cross of the Teutonic Order on a white mantle. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

Brother Sergeant

Minor, Social Status

The character is a member of the Teutonic Order, but not a knight or nobleman. He has sworn a vow (which may be lifelong or twenty years) of obedience, poverty, and chastity, but this may not be enforced as strictly for him as it would be for a brother knight. He is answerable only to his superiors and the pope. He may be a clerk or physician, in which case he can take Academic Abilities during character generation. Alternatively, he may be a man-at-arms, and can take Martial Abilities during character generation. Unless he is Poor, he may have superior equipment appropriate to his role; for a man-at-arms this means high-quality weapons and armor, and a horse. He wears the black cross of the Teutonic Order on a gray surcoat. This Virtue is only available to male characters.

Stories Involving the Teutonic Order

House Tremere and the Teutonic Order have similar goals in the region: to establish an autonomous state for the good of mankind under their respective guidance. The plan of the Teutonic Knights is to continue to extend their territory along the Danube River valley, occupying the land from the Burzenland to the Black Sea. Through their successful tactic of controlling swathes of countryside with garrisoned forts, they will be able to re-open the land route to Constantinople that has been unsafe to crusaders since the coming of the Cumans. The danger

New Blessing Guideline

Level 15: Extend the beneficial effects of a relic over a standard Group of men. Size modifiers may be added to extend the effect further. The target of the spell is the relic, not the men affected by the relic's powers.

HE STANDS FOR THE INJUSTICE OF THE PEOPLE; CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS IN THEIR RANKS

Invocation, Blessing 30
R: Touch, **D:** Sabbath, **T:** Ind

Up to ten men are granted the Magic Resistance offered by a single relic; this does not stack with Magic Resistance granted by other relics, but does stack

with Magic Resistance offered by other Divine sources. Furthermore, any demon attacking any of the affected group is affected by the relic's *Scourging of Infernal* power (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 45) — demons cannot harm the protected men if their Infernal Might is less than the Divine Might of the relic, and even if it exceeds the relic's Might, they suffer damage equal to its Divine Might every round they continue to attack. The affected men must remain as a coherent group to be continually affected for the entire duration. Only the wielder of the relic can use its Faith points as Confidence points.
 (Base 15, +1 Touch, +2 Sabbath)

posed by these pagan nomads to the Hungarians and the Latin Empire is negated, with the Teutonic Order holding them back.

Currently, House Tremere has forbidden formal contact between magi of the Transylvanian Tribunal and the Teutonic Order. The Teutonic Order has also been charged by the pope with investigating heresy and diabolism, and the Tremere fear that the knights could view the Order of Hermes as a heretical, idolatrous, or even pagan entity due to its practice of magic, and thus claim that it falls under its remit to protect Christendom from such forces. It is unlikely that the Teutonic Knights will remain ignorant of the Order of Hermes for much longer. But for the moment, the less they know, the better — at least until an appropriate strategy can be worked out.

The Scholomance — a school purported to be run by the Devil himself — is an object of specific interest for the Teutonic Order, for it is believed to be located somewhere to the east of the Holy Roman Empire. The hochmeister has failed to discover anything other than the same story repeated again and again, and suspects it to be mere legend. The Order of Hermes knows differently (see "The Scholomance," later in this chapter).

A MORE HOLY ORDER

An alternative to a pious, but ultimately mundane, Teutonic Order is to cast them as truly holy warriors, fighting for God's Do-

minion. Their crusade against the Cumans is a natural extension of their holy mission to fight infidels and pagans. Since the Cumans are a "new" threat compared to the centuries-old fight against the Moors and Arabs, cadres of proselytizing priests are sent into Cuman territory in an attempt to save their souls prior to the military offensive.

In a more holy version of the Teutonic Order, the lands conquered by the knights carry a Dominion aura with a Brave temper (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 39). The knights themselves have an inner circle populated by a Holy Tradition of Divine wonder-workers, whose favored Methods and Powers are Invocation, Blessing, and Cursing, and the Supernatural Ability Sense Holiness & Unholiness.

A MORE PROFANE ORDER

Some sagas might prefer the Teutonic Order to be a sinister organization that seeks to gain dominance over man on behalf of its infernal masters. Under this option, the Order is less concerned with exterminating pagans as it is amassing political control over territory. The infernal Teutonic Order is obsessed with occult knowledge, and might capture shamans, witches, and taltos in order to learn their secrets. A fair few of the Order's upper echelons are goetic sorcerers (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 114), and the rest are will-

Story Seeds: The Teutonic Order

A pagan hedge wizard who has had unfriendly contact with the Order of Hermes in the past is captured by a garrison of Teutonic Knights, and he confesses to them what he knows about magi. Even allowing for embellishment by this unfriendly witness, the Order of Hermes' secrecy could well work against it in this case. Since the Order of Hermes would rather that the Teutonic Knights remain unaware of its

existence altogether, correcting their misapprehensions is in breach of the Tremere edict regarding secrecy. When the garrison start picking Hermetic targets, the characters are drafted to deal with this delicate situation. They must strike a fine balance in deciding what they reveal about the Order of Hermes' true purpose and existence — or else simply eliminate the entire garrison and ensure there are no witnesses.

ing diabolists who augment the powers of their masters by participating in infernal ceremonies. The demons summoned by the Teutonic Order are used to exert control over the mundane populace, either through intimidation and fear or else through possession and blackmail.

USING THE TEUTONIC ORDER IN YOUR SAGA

Any of the three versions of the Teutonic Order presented here could be a foe to individual magi and/or the Order of Hermes in general. The biggest danger would be for the Order of Hermes to be considered heretical in its use of magic, because this could cause the Teutonic Knights to pay more attention to the wizards who live in their midst.

Likewise, the Teutonic Order could just as easily be an ally, although one used carefully to avoid breaking the Code of Hermes. The knights have few friends among the Hungarians, and they are isolated from the main chapter of their Order. A hand offered in friendship may well be accepted, even if the intent isn't pure.

The Vlachs

The native people of the northern areas of the Tribunal are called "Vlachs," a Byzantine term coined in the 10th century. The Vlachs live north of the River Danube in the eastern portion of the Kingdom of Hungary, both north and south of the Carpathian Mountains. The people refer to themselves as *rumân* or *roman*, descendants of the original inhabitants of the area. Like the Tribunal as a whole, this area was frequently repopulated by foreign invaders and migratory tribes, and it is difficult to specify how native the current people may be. The first named tribe, the *Getae*, were conquered by Darius during the Persia wars described by Herodotus (sixth century B.C.). Later conquered by the Roman Empire, who called them *Dacii* (the Dacians), the population continued under Roman rule. Roman influence had a lasting effect, and the area was from then after called "Dacia." Generations of commercial contact and intermarriage between Roman and Dacian blurred the physical and cultural distinctions of both people. When the Roman administration withdrew from the area in 275, they left behind a conglomeration of Romanized Geto-Dacian people, mostly

farmers and shepherders.

With the urban centers' defenses abandoned, the pastoral Vlachs became the victims of other migrating tribes. First the Visigoths, then the Huns, the Gepids, and the Avars pushed the Vlachs further away from the area's cities and into the remote wilderness. Each century-long occupation influenced the Vlachs' culture, as more intermarriages and cultural borrowings diluted their ethnicity. The great migration of the Slavs in seventh century swept through Dacia with little resistance, but rather than envelop and extinguish the race, the area was large enough for Slavs and Vlachs to coexist. Dacia has always been fertile, with topography equally suitable for growing cereal and raising sheep, and the native Vlachs have easily accepted and adapted to foreign rule. This trend continued during the invasions of the Magyars in the ninth century and the smaller imprint of the Pechengs in the 10th. While each wave of invaders brings new people and new cultural trappings, they ultimately leave nothing more than a simple impression on the Vlachs.

The Vlachs have three social groups: the land-owning noble boyars, dependent peasants, and independent peasants. Boyars who hold power are called *juþani* (singular *juþan*), *cnezi* (singular *cneaz*), or *voievozi* (singular *voievod*), all equivalent titles to a feudal duke. Boyars and their warrior entourages live in large settlements full of dependent peasants. Large communes of independent peasants also exist, called *obote*, which are self-governing economic settlements run by elected officials and whose inhabitants hold the land in common ownership. Communes are not completely autonomous; they must pay tribute to the ruling government body (in this case the Magyars of the Hungarian Kingdom). Commune citizens have more rights than dependent peasants, the greatest being the right to relocate at will. As in other countries of Myth-

The Swords of the Teutonic Order

In a saga with an Infernally-tainted Teutonic Order, favored knights are gifted with swords prepared by the goetic sorcerers of the Order. Each great sword has a demon bound within it, which serves as a receptacle for the following effect. Owners of these swords have reported that they can hear the demon bound within whispering to them in their dreams.

BITE DEEP AND DRINK

Incantation, Consumption 37

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind

Pen 0, 3/day

Upon successfully striking a target with the sword, instead of inflicting normal damage, the wielder of the sword can

instead elect to inflict an Incapacitating wound. This simultaneously heals the wielder's most serious wound — up to and including an Incapacitating wound. This effect has to Penetrate any Magic Resistance.

(Base 30, +1 Touch, +2 3/day)

ic Europe, dependent peasants are tied to the land they work and cannot move about without their lord's permission. Most of the settlements, both boyar-owned and communes, are located on the vast plains and fertile river basins of the area and at the footsteps of the Carpathian mountains. Communes are more numerous in the east and boyar-held settlements proliferate in the west, situated closer to the political center of the ruling Hungarian Kingdom. Among the grand tally of Vlach population centers, communes outnumber boyar-held settlements.

The Vlachs, along with the Greeks, are one of the oldest Christian races. According to legend the Apostle Andrew brought Christianity to the Vlachs, preaching in the Dobrogea region located between the Black Sea and the lower Danube. Most of the area was converted by the second and third centuries. Even though the Roman Empire had fled the area, the Vlachs maintained ties with Roman Christians, so that in the 13th century Vlachs follow the Western Orthodoxy of the Roman Church instead of Eastern Orthodoxy, like many of the area's neighbors. Vlach bishops continue to owe their alliance to the pope rather than the Byzantine patriarch. Like the Slavs who live in the same area, the Vlachs worshiped a single god before their conversion and this preference for monotheism facilitated the acceptance of Christianity.

Geography

The Carpathian Mountains are a central feature of the area inhabited by the Vlachs, forming a backwards L through the middle of the combined regions. To the north and west of the mountains is Transylvania, a derivation of the Latin words "trans" (beyond) and "sylva" (forest) combined to refer to the land "on the other side of the forest." The entire area sits atop a high plateau rising 1,200 feet on average above sea level. More Vlach lands sit to the south of this arm of the Carpathians, resting between the mountains and the Danube River. More Vlach lands sit further to the east of the Carpathians, past the Milcov River and south of the Cheremosh River, which separates the territory from the Ukraine. This hilly area levels out into plains as the area runs to the Black Sea. In the past this entire area was called Dacia

Story Seed: The Bran Pass

Because the Bran Pass is an important land route, House Tremere built a zenodochium in the pass (see "The Hospital," Chapter 7). Located atop a steep cliff face on the southern end of the pass, a group of southern knights has recently taken up residence, harassing commercial traffic as it passes. The leader, a second-cousin of the King of Hungary's nephew, is a rebellious man who hopes to raise a Vlach force and ultimately confront royal forces. House elders want the zenodochium reclaimed and ask the player characters to address this situation. This is a good test for young magi. Do they kill everyone and hide the bodies, perhaps drawing royal attention, or find a subtler way to remove the knights?

Story Seed: The Waters Furious

Behind a Carpathian mountain named "The Priest's Mountain" lies the small Vlach village of Ikafalva. A small brook called the Furus runs along one edge of the town. According to old Magyar legends, the village founder was a famously strong Magyar, not a Vlach, who claimed the surrounding countryside for his people. Shouting that he was a warrior-servant of the Goddess Furuzsina, the hero fell in the final battle that secured the area for his tribe. A spring spouted from where his blood touched the earth, and continues to be the source of the Furus. According to the nearby villages, the people of Ikafalva are unnaturally strong because they drink from these waters.

The waters are a source of conflict between the Vlachs living in the village and the various Hungarian clans who live to the west. Both claim the land, and the brook, as their own and occasionally fight over it. Compounding matters is the fact that the brook is magical, and under a full moon a pawn of *Aquam vis* can be siphoned from the source. It is not especially difficult to gather the *vis*, under normal circumstances, and the nearby oppidum Scholomance regularly sends its older Gifted children to accomplish this task. It only becomes dangerous during skirmishes between the Vlachs and the Hungarians. Stories could involve children player characters getting caught up in such a conflict, or adult magi (or companions) rescuing children thus involved.

by the Romans, and in the 13th century is the eastern reaches of the Kingdom of Hungary. These areas will find a national and geographic identity in the coming century.

CAPITOLS

Each area has a main city that historically will become the principality's capitol sometime during the 13th century. In 1220 each city is run by the area's most powerful voivode, all of whom are currently vassals of a more powerful neighbor. While securing independence this early in the 13th century is historically incorrect, it could serve as an interesting foundation or backdrop for a saga.

The capitol of Transylvania is Alba Iulia (White Castle), built atop the foundations of the ancient Roman city Apulum, one of the largest population centers in Roman Dacia. The present voivode of Alba Iulia is a vas-

sal of the King of Hungary. South of the Carpathians, Câmpulung is the major urban settlement in the area south of the mountains. Built on the remains of a Roman colony, Câmpulung sits 15 miles south of the Bran Pass, a heavily trafficked mountain pass that cuts through the southern Carpathians and allows access to Transylvania. The lands further east do not have a city that will become its capitol, this area being much more autonomous than western Vlach lands. The major ethnic group, a Vlach-Slav mix called the Brodnici, owe allegiance to Suzdal, a principality in the Ukraine. Other groups are vassals of more powerful Vlach and Transylvanian voivodes, but the area as a whole is not united.

THE BRAN PASS

Running through the Southern Carpathians from Campulung to Kronstadt, the Bran

Pass has been used by travelers for centuries. The 13th century sees the beginning of several defensive fortresses built along the pass, whose importance will increase dramatically in the decades to come. The leading voivode of Transylvania has built a simple stone castle at the northern entrance to the pass, and two wooden castles lie along the pass, built by the resident Teutonic Knights. The voivode of Cămpulung has plans to build a fortress at the southern end of the pass and hopes to ask his Saxon neighbors for assistance.

These early stages of territorial control could easily lead to war-mongering, as any Tremere can see. Stable, easily identified borders usually lead to independence. Closing the Bran Pass would further separate the southern plains from Hungary, allowing the leading voivode to break his feudal bonds. House Tremere can get pulled into this situation from nearly every side, depending on how closely connected they are to any of the principal parties. A southern voivode could ask for assistance in building a castle, or a Transylvanian voivode might ask for help in destroying a Teutonic Knights' castle. Every mundane group has a small military force at hand, which could readily lead to small-scale military actions as they raid each other's territory. Perhaps House Tremere merely wants to keep the current status quo and moves to anonymously diminish the military strength of all participants equally.

The Cult of Zalmoxis

Before worshipping Christ, the native Geto-Dacians worshiped Zalmoxis, a monotheistic deity favored by the rich and powerful.

As more and more of their countrymen converted to Christianity, worship of Zalmoxis became hidden, retreating underground and into the hidden recesses of the Carpathian Mountains. Similar to the various pagan Rome mystery cults, the Cult of Zalmoxis shrouded itself with secrets, obfuscating the truth and limiting religious rites to a select few. The wealthy and arrogant congregation stubbornly continued their zealous devotions, having both the means and tenacity to continue the cult for centuries.

According to the cult, before Zalmoxis became a god he was a student of Pythagoras, who taught the young man magic on the island of Samos. Continuing his education, Zalmoxis visited Egypt and learned of the Egyptians' mystical knowledge about immortality and reincarnation. Returning to his native land, Zalmoxis meditated in a secret cavern hidden atop Kogaionon, a mountain already held holy by his people. After three years Zalmoxis resurfaced to teach knowledge and magical learning to his people and preach about the immortality of the soul. Others say that Zalmoxis died in his cave and was resurrected. It is not unusual for a cult to exaggerate tales of its founder, but having these same stories repeated in the writings of Herodotus, Plato, and early Christian authors is unnerving. No one calls him a god except his cult; Christian authors call Zalmoxis a charlatan and both Herodotus and Plato call him a man.

The size of the cult of Zalmoxis isn't known, but both princes and priests suspect that it continues in several Vlach principalities. Evidence of the cult's rites can be found, especially the gruesome tradition in which,

every five years, a messenger is sent to Zalmoxis. This messenger is thrown atop a pointed spear to accomplish this. If the spear kills him it means Zalmoxis has accepted the messenger and is pleased. If the spear does not kill him, Zalmoxis is displeased and the messenger is refused entry into the god's otherworldly eternity.



The Oppidum of Lycaneon

Lycaneon is the physical embodiment of many ancient Tremere schemes for power, or safety. It was originally the domus magna of House Tremere, the "throne from which to rule the world," in the words of the Founder. It has never served in that role, and now acts as one of the great manufactories of the Order.

History

The Founder Tremere established Lycaneon as the center of his House. He was drawn by the enormous deposits of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and salt found in these mountains. Lycaneon served as his domus magna until the Sundering, and is connected to Harco with this Tribunal's Mercere Portal. Following the Sundering, Tremere moved his base of operations to Coeris, but retained Lycaneon as the manufacturing center for his House.

Lycaneon is busiest when war is expected, or when rebuilding the House's stores of material after a conflict. It was expanded, and staffed to capacity, for many decades after the Schism War. Its resources were fully mobilized almost a year before the Corruption of Tytalus was formally disclosed at Tribunal,

Story Seed: The Return of Zalmoxis

The southern range of mountains that encloses the Maramures region contains several separate groups of cultists, each led by a *vrajitoarea* (plural: *vrajitoarele*) — a Vlach with the powers of a folk witch (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 3). Unlike some folk witches in other Tribunals, the *vrajitoarele* are associated with the Magic realm and none of their powers are infernally tainted. One group is led by a charismatic Gifted *vrajitoarea*, who is slowly asserting his influence over the

other cultists. His Gift is not helping him and the others remain aloof, until it is discovered that one of the wizards who lives in the nearby hollowed-out mountain is called Zalmoxis. Claiming that their god has returned from the dead, again, the Gifted *vrajitoarea* begins uniting the cults, saying that the other wizards are keeping Zalmoxis imprisoned and he must be freed by his faithful followers. Naturally, the magi of Lycaneon know nothing about this.

which suggests House Tremere knew that conflict was coming.

Lycaneon currently houses 14 magi. This is above the peacetime baseline, which is eight magi, but far below full capacity, which is 32. The disruption to the Theban Tribunal caused by the Fourth Crusade has weakened House Tremere's rivals. Some of the magi who would usually be acting as hoplites at Seuthopolis have been reallocated here, and are pursuing projects for the Prima. A pair of Verditius magi have also been hired, bringing the total to three. In peacetime, the Tremere usually have only one Verditius employed here, as Verditius magi are so touchy with each other. Two more of the oppidum's magi are Bonisagus performing original research using spare laboratories: they have agreed to train the Tremere in any useful breakthroughs they develop.

Setting and Description

Lycaneon is a forested mountain that has been hollowed out using Terram magic. This has created a massive facility, much of which is mothballed, awaiting a project or crisis that suits each particular section. The aura of Lycaneon is, in some places, exceptionally high (9), but areas that cause Warping are usually vacant, as there is plenty of work-space, most of the time, in safer areas.

GEOGRAPHY

The covenant is inside a mountain, which is surrounded by many high, steep peaks. These overlook a valley, where the weather is cooler than in much of the rest of the Tribunal during winter, but surprisingly warm in summer. Lycaneon is connected by subterranean tunnels to the Sasar River, from which it draws its water. Locally this is called the River of the Ladies. This perhaps refers to nymphs, handmaidens of the goddess Danu, who dwell in the depths of all the streams that eventually flow into the Danube.

This valley is part of a region called Maramures. This portion of the Tribunal was never conquered by the Romans, because the terrain made it impractical. Dacian religious practices continued in this region far longer

than in the rest of Hungary. The wolves of the mountains around Lycaneon claim their ancestors were humans, who worshipped pagan gods while in wolf form.

STRUCTURE

Lycaneon seems to be made of endless levels of passages, but that's an impression fostered to confuse outsiders. The mountain has been hollowed into 16 levels, each square in plan. Each level is slightly larger than the one above. The levels are connected with five shafts that rise through the center of the structure, and from the corners of the ninth level. These can be accessed using magical items that allow flight. The most basic of these are wooden pallets, which covenfolk use to move supplies both between levels and along the corridors. There are also stairs and trapdoors connecting most levels, but these are little used.

Above ground there are six highly defensible buildings connected together in a great hexagon. They were designed by Tremere himself, and look exactly like House

Tremere's detractors would expect. Basalt blocks link in a Romanesque building that encircles the mountain's summit, brooding at the world through storm clouds. From each vertex rises a curved tower, giving the whole structure the appearance of a vast, black crown. The wide, dark road to the massive doors is lined with golden statues, designed with Imperial themes.

AESTHETIC

Lycaneon was designed, initially, as the center of House Tremere, by Tremere himself. Much of it has been re-purposed and extended, but the large public areas of the covenant have a grand aesthetic to them that is meant to impress, and perhaps overawe, visitors. Tremere lived before the invention of Gothic architecture, so he could not use soaring spaces and natural light to bring grandeur to his covenant. Instead it uses surface texture, ornamentation, and scale.

This aesthetic doesn't suit the modern House, but renovating the older areas of Lycaneon has never been a priority. It is



Saga Seed: Providing Solutions

The player characters form a team sent by Lycaneon when a magus pays for a solution to a setback he's encountered; they must also design a magic item that will solve it. A good solution story involves player characters researching a problem, finding an innovative way to solve it, and then building, or ordering built, the device they have prescribed. Twists can be added by making the problem not what it seems, the device have undesired effects, or the client unable to pay.

A LIST OF WEIRD ASSIGNMENTS

- The client covenant is surrounded by agricultural land filled with cabbages. Is there any practical way to weaponize a cabbage?
- The client needs to sneak mundane agents, with magic items, past a potentate's faerie bodyguards. Is there a way to make magic items that you can swallow, but that automatically trigger the

character's vomit reflex after a time? At command? Can they also disintegrate the rest of the stomach contents, for stealthy and hygienic reasons?

- The client is trying to find a better way to abduct Gifted babies. What's a good way to kidnap a baby and smuggle him past city guards? Can you put one inside a living horse?
- The client covenant is located on top of a magical mine that oozes custard. What can they possibly do with all this custard?
- The clients are beset by demons that are terrified of their own reflections. How can they use this to their advantage, without making the covenant one huge reflective surface?
- The client covenant is sick of ships passing their riverbend without paying the toll. Can the characters come up with something better than the old-fashioned chain across the river?

Gold Isn't Really Worth Much

All of the gold in the mountain on which Lycaneon rests was mined out, by grogs with magic items, in the first few decades of the covenant's life. There are slightly over four thousand tons of gold, and twice that of silver, sitting in a vast storage cavern underneath Lycaneon. There is very little the Tremere can use it for.

Gold, the Tremere have discovered by virtue of having more of it than anyone else, isn't valuable unless you can spend it. You can only spend a little gold in any area before suddenly it becomes a lot less valuable than it was. This is because there are only a tiny number of rich people in Mythic Europe who can afford to buy gold at a high price.

Silver is easier to spend, because money is literally made out of it. But large amounts of silver added to a kingdom's economy, as most recently seen in Stonehenge, causes economic collapse. Economic collapse causes poverty. Poverty causes diabolism. So, spending too much silver causes diabolism. Because of this, the Tremere now advocate laws that limit how much wealth magi can create.

The other problem is that gold isn't, in itself, very useful. It's great for enchanted items, if you want them to be soft and heavy, and to wear away with simple handling. Gold doesn't rust, but most stones don't rust either, and mundane nobles don't act like idiots when they see a polished stone. Silver is more useful, because many of the local faeries either love or hate it, and so it can be swapped for vis or used in weapons, and these are consumables.

Few other Houses understand this, but the mining at Lycaneon ended House Tremere's territorial ambitions. Land, like gold, wasn't worth anything except the labor of the people on it, to gather its natural products, like vis. This meant that expansion was only necessary when it gained a strategic resource that wasn't cheaply duplicable inside the Tribunal, and which couldn't be attained more easily with trade.

The way for the House to be powerful was, they concluded, to have more magi in it or, given that a sudden rise in the number of Tremere would alarm the rest of the Order, to have more magi doing the things the House wanted them to do.

filled with imperialist detail incongruous to the modern House. Most walls in the older section are incised with martial scenes, aphorisms by Tremere, or decorative elements with a Roman flavor. Lycaneon uses gold in its decoration, something modern Tremere consider gauche.

The room containing the Mercere Portal, for example, contains an 18-foot statue of Tremere, with a huge eagle of solid gold alighting on his wrist. Similarly, the Grand Refectory has a statue of Tremere (this time only 12 feet tall — none of his statues are human height) with his hand upon the head of a subdued dragon, again made of gold. These statues, which are merely representative of his general preference, have been retained because each is a magic item. They are useful for defence if Lycaneon is attacked, but also immediately assail anyone who attempts to remove them.

Culture and Traditions

Lycaneon is the oppidum where House Tremere makes magical and specialized mundane items. Its membership is flexible, because members of the House often travel to Lycaneon to use the excellent laboratories here, if engaged in a significant project. Its long-term members are very informal with each other, particularly by the standards of House Tremere. Their work is non-competitive and, within the select group of senior Tremere, not secret. This fosters a collegial atmosphere, suitable for honest discussions of expensive and dangerous research.

MANUFACTURING

Tremere designed Lycaneon as a manufactory, and the House has continually upgraded the facilities here since his death, but the covenant actually makes surprisingly few magic items. With a few obvious exceptions, the Order's history is peaceful. This means that House Tremere's strategic reserve is complete. Lycaneon has tremendous surplus capacity because it's designed to replenish the strategic reserve rapidly during emergencies, but in 1220 that's not necessary.

Lycaneon's magi create new magic and mundane items to fill holes in the strategic

reserve. These occur for three reasons. Some items are used up in the daily operation of the House, or in pursuit of its projects. Occasionally a Hermetic Breakthrough, a new spell, or a new strategy makes part of the reserve redundant. Finally, Tremere magi continually create new projects, and some of these require novel equipment.

Many mundane items are produced here using magical equipment for the heavier work, with finishing by skilled mundane artisans. Items of military significance are then stored in Circle wards that prevent decay. There are caverns full of arrows and rooms filled with swords stored here, for example.

STAGING AREA

Lycaneon has this Tribunal's Mercere Portal to Harco. This makes it the obvious staging area for military forces being dispatched to deal with problems in distant Tribunals. Player characters who have been called to form part of such a force may be sent off on their own to deal with side issues, while waiting for a member of their force to finish a seasonal lab project.

REFUGEE CAMP

When a crisis occurs, and multiple covenants fall, the Order has more members than it can house. Traditionally these magi have been drafted to deal with the problem, and then absorbed by other covenants, helped to reconstruct their own covenants, or sent to found Spring covenants on the edges of the Order. House Tremere, however, believes that the refugees from crisis are, almost by definition, poorly suited to solving the crisis which has destroyed their home. Any problem they could not manage surrounded by their covenant's defenses, supplied by their covenant's resources, and abetted by their more militant sodales, they will not be able to solve as guerrillas defended with simple wards, scavenging from the land, and without military support.

Lycaneon has 32 laboratories, with various specializations, and space for many more sancta. This ridiculously large number is a vestige of the Schism War. Lycaneon was redesigned to house the huge number

The Infernal Aura of Körösfő

Once there was a town called Körösfő, made the richest in the Tribunal by gold and silver mines. Every person who lived there was as rich as a nobleman. Their children wanted for nothing, and had the best philosophers as teachers, but they were never taught to work, being so wealthy that it was not necessary.

When the older generation had passed away, none of their heirs knew how to work, and so they did not value resting on the Sabbath. They ceased attending church, and made their lives a series of feasts and parties. Eventually they decided that their own houses were too small for the dance they wished to have, and so they selected the church as the only building large enough. But none of them realized that the dance was to be held on Good Friday. When the first strains of the

musicians began, when the first step was taken, God drove the town into the earth.

The damned can sometimes be heard screaming in the fields that cover what once was Körösfő. Every so often a peasant will discover the massive gold cross that adorned the very top of the church's spire. Unable to scratch the gold from it, and needing proper tools and the help of neighbors to remove it, he hides the cross while seeking aid. He then cannot find it on his return.

Perhaps God allows the cross to be found every so often to allow virtuous men to redeem the fools of Körösfő. Or perhaps it is merely a reminder, and a warning, that unearned gold is morally corrosive.

When visitors ask why each ingot kept in Lycaneon has the word Körösfő inscribed on its surface, they are told this story.

Saga Seed: Rapid Response Force

In this saga, the Prima of Tremere has decided to curry the goodwill of distant covenants by establishing a team of military specialists who can be rapidly, and publicly, deployed to other Tribunals to aid covenants in combat. The player characters bivouac and resupply at Lycaneon, but are sent through the network to deal with problems that appear near any of the covenants on the Harco network of portals. As the saga progresses, the characters discover a link between the combat zones they are subduing — like a cluster of faeries, or separate diabolist groups serving a single master. Suitable foes include:

- Faeries of different themes.
- Tiny demons that gather together to create large demons.
- Magic traditions from the Order's fringes.
- Vast magical creatures.
- A group of hedge magicians in a well-defended site.
- Corrupted Hermetic magi.
- Raiding Diedne magi (surprise!) or faeries pretending to be them.

Story Seed: Covenant Failure

Storyguides can use oppidum of Lycaneon as a second-chance setting. This means that storyguides can design stories in which the player characters play for high stakes without worrying that if they fail, the saga will end. Following a

crushing defeat, the player characters instead fight their way clear of nearby enemies and retreat to Lycaneon. After years of suitable preparation, both political and magical, they retake their covenant's site.

of refugees that would have flooded east if House Diedne had dominated western Europe. This was to keep displaced magi lacking military aptitude as participants in the war effort. All magi on the Tremere side

knew that if their covenant fell, and they had nowhere else they preferred to go, they could flee to a Mercere Portal, get to Harco, and then they would be safe and useful at Lycaneon.



MUNDANE INHABITANTS

The inhabitants of Lycaneon, and the small towns that surround it, are descended from the miners that Tremere bought to this oppidum at its foundation. Their culture and economy have been dominated by House Tremere for hundreds of years, and so they are dissimilar to any mundane culture. Groggs who retire from the service of the covenant often settle in these towns. The descendants of the various specialists employed in Lycaneon continue their ancestral crafts, so a wide variety of odd manufactures can be found here. Redcaps ship many of these products throughout the Tribunal.

The residents of these towns speak a dialect of Latin, are for the most part literate, and have a grasp of commercial mathematics. Each village elects three leaders, and these meet regularly at a "Tribunal" to discuss border issues, trade, and crime. Women often rise to leadership. Local warriors are also trained as mountain skirmishers, and are skilled with bows, axes, and short swords.

LYCANEON WOLVES

Lycaneon's name refers to the packs of magical white wolves that are the custodians of these mountains. Tremere made the dominant wolf of the mountain his familiar, and many of his descendants similarly seek a white wolf as their companion. The House's philosophy seems similar to wolf practices of pack loyalty and alloparenting, which may have entered Tremere's thoughts through his familiar bond. This, in turn, makes wolves suitable familiars for his descendants.

The wolves of the mountains claim that their ancestors were humans, who were turned into wolves as part of a religious ceremony. They were stranded in animal shape following the Silencing of the Oracles, an ancient calamity. Sometimes a cub is born who is a throwback to these ancestors, and becomes human on the first, middle, and last nights of summer. With training these strange children can control their transformations, and they enter the service of the House in various roles. These wolves sometimes marry humans, and their children seem more prone than other children to nightwalking in wolf shape (See *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition* Chapter 6 for details on Nightwalkers.)

Magi

There are currently 14 magi at Lycaneon, but most have been left undescribed so that storyguides may flesh out the oppidum as needed.

ARCHMAGUS ALBERTUS OF TREMERE, PRAECO OF TRANSYLVANIA

Age: 58

Personality Traits: Likes tinkering with machines +3, Humorous +2, Prefers Rego, Terram, and Vim. His specialization in Rego is known, which makes him comparatively ineffective in Certamen.

Privilege: Cives

Albertus is the magus responsible for allocating work in Lycaneon, and making sure that projects come to fruition on time. He is the magus most likely to commission pieces from player characters skilled in magic item fabrication. He is also the person characters negotiate with when they want to buy or borrow a magic item. He likes to keep up with who is in the Tribunal, and what they are doing, because constructing teams is one of his most valuable skills, and he needs to know what "raw material" is available. Albertus is a Rego specialist, and by initial training he's an engineer.

Albertus is one of the youngest archmagi in the Order: he is only in his late fifties. He is a popular target for challengers. Albertus realizes that his relatively low level of magical skill means he is likely to lose his maximum number of challenges quickly. He has selected as his challenge "Donating the most useful item to House Tremere after three years of work."

This particular challenge has many useful features. It excludes many Verditiis magi, who are unwilling to give away excellent examples of their work. It is a long trial, and so unsuited to many challengers who would like to complete the whole test during a single Tribunal meeting. Even if he loses, House Tremere gains a wonderful magical item. Only a handful of members of House Tremere know the entirety of the strategic reserve, so his challenger's item may be less useful, even if more powerful, because House Tremere already has something similar. So far, he has only faced one challenge, which he won.

Albertus has no plan currently to chal-

lenge for Primushood, although he is sure he'll want it eventually. If he becomes Primus, then the Tribunal's network of secret roads, private coaching houses, and hidden hospitals will be the focus of a tremendous building program. New spells will be commissioned from researchers across the Order. Redcaps will scout routes, and other magi will be sent to clear them of troublesome creatures. Skilled magic item crafters from across the Order will receive invitations to work, and House Tremere may sponsor a prize at the Verdi competition. House Tremere's cache of engineers will be fully occupied for many years.

ARHMINA OF EX MISCELLANEA

Age: 31

Personality Traits: Prone to wander +3, Patiently vengeful +2, Specializes in Rego and Vim.

Privilege: Colona

Arhmina is a young Moorish sorceress from Iberia, who has been asked to Lycaneon because she is willing to aid House Tremere in developing counterspells against her own tradition. Her motivations for this are obscure. Gossip indicates that she lost a series of magical duels against a rival who wanted to marry her, and wants protection, then revenge. Arhmina is also to be paid handsomely with an excellent longevity ritual, access to fine study materials, and magic items specifically tailored to harm her rival. If she is particularly useful, when she returns home, Tremere reinforcements will be sent to participate in her confrontation.

Arhmina doesn't plan to stay in Transylvania for more than a decade, but while she is here, she wants to fill her time usefully. She plans to foster her Arts, learn about the odd spirits of the dark mountains, visit Constantinople, and perhaps head to Mecca. Player characters may meet her as she travels the Tribunal, or makes plans for further adventures in the East.

CLEMENT OF TREMERE

Age: 45

Personality Traits: Likes commanding battles +3, Loves chess +2. Specializes in Rego, Perdo, Mentem, and Vim

Privilege: Cives

Clement is a middle-aged Tremere who specializes in combat-related Mentem spells. He's a necromancer, and was initially trained as a magical spy.

He has been recalled to Lycaneon as part of the Prima's project to find more effective ways to extend the power of the House into the Levant. His current research project involves finding ways to influence the minds of the spirits from which Arab sorcerers derive their power.

Clement is particularly interested in meeting Muslim magicians, to determine if there are other simple wards for these spirits. He works closely with Arhima of Ex Miscellanea. He also spends time in the Muslim towns founded by the King of Hungary for his public servants. The folk magicians here have often emigrated due to pressure from more powerful sorcerers in the Levant, and they have no qualms about working for Christian employers.

His spells, thus far, are based on two complementary strategies. The creatures seem to be averse to the name of Allah. This can be projected at some distance using powerful Creo Imaginem effects. Also, many djinni are apparently made of "smokeless fire." This might leave them vulnerable to environmental effects, outside their Magic Resistance, which cause freezing air temperatures. Clement is not skilled in this style of magic, and would value a collaborator who is.

PHILLIP OF TREMERE

Age: 32

Personality Traits: Fascinated by the varieties of rare wood +3, Enjoys shipbuilding +2. Prefers Muto, Rego, Herbam, and Terram.

Privilege: Cives

Phillip is a youthful Herbam specialist of some renown for spells involving the magical creation and maintenance of siege engines. His current project involves looking at different types of magically created wood, to see if particular species are better suited for magical boat building than others. He is not the first magus to do this, but his approach is tediously systematic, involving scale model tests in large tanks throughout his vast laboratory.

Philip particularly values samples of rare woods. The examination of these reduces

the Finesse required to replicate that species with magic. Once Phillip has determined a preferred wood, his recommendations will be diffused through the vexillation of Tremere magi seeking ways to make ships a dependable combat platform for magicians.

Phillip has an arcane connection to Leviathan, House Tremere's mothballed naval base on the Adriatic coast. If a naval war breaks out, he will likely redeploy there. His skill at crafting naval parts, reinforced by the facilities at Leviathan, means that House Tremere's main lack will be crews, not hulls, in a naval war. He is often at Shrouded Bay, tinkering with elements of the Tremere and Mercere fleets.

Too young to consider Primushood for many decades, Phillip is fascinated by the idea that the many lakes of the Tribunal connect to the sea through underground passages. This is demonstrated by the flot-sam and bones that wash up on their coasts. Phillip would love to create a naval base in the mountains of Hungary, which access a sea through these tunnels. Some say the lakes are linked to the Black or Adriatic Seas, but others suggest that the tunnels go as far as the Baltic. Who knows what horrors lurk in the tunnels, though? If he were made Primus tomorrow, an expedition into one of the sea-linked lakes would be his favorite project.

ARCHMAGUS ZALMOXIS OF VERDITIUS

Age: 70

Personality Traits: Vain +2, Specializes in crafting longevity potions.

Privilege: Hospis

The senior Verditius in this Tribunal, Zalmoxis has worked here for over forty years. He specializes in Corpus effects, particularly those that allow battlefield healing and cure diseases. He is also skilled at the creation of longevity rituals. Zalmoxis is named after a local pagan god, but has no direct link to the ancient cult.

A persistent problem for House Tremere is that their magical focus, certamen, precludes any member having a magical focus suitable for making longevity rituals. Lesser longevity rituals are often purchased from young Verditius magi. Excellent longevity

rituals are expensive, but the House arranges for them to be made available to senior Tremere, so that their wisdom and skill remain accessible to the House for an extended life. Many of these rituals are simply purchased from Corpus specialists in other Tribunals, but the House always ensures that at least one longevity specialist is close at hand, so that, in Order-wide emergencies, their ability to train apprentices as healers and extenders of life is preserved.



The Oppidum of the Scholomance

Travelers' tales from the Carpathian Mountains occasionally speak of a mysterious castle overlooking a high mountain pass, which only appears at the heart of a storm, and is gone whenever storm-tossed travelers seek refuge there. Locals nod sagely, and tell them they have glimpsed the fabled Scholomance.

The legend of the Devil's School is told throughout the Balkans and beyond; its name is whispered in the Byzantine corridors of power and even in the court of the Holy Roman Emperor. According to the legend, the doors of this school are open to only the most gifted individuals, who are taught the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all magic spells by the Devil himself. Only ten students are admitted at a time, and at the end of the seven years they leave brimming with forbidden knowledge; all except for one, who the Devil claims for his own and who is never seen again. In reality, the Scholomance is run by an oppidum in Transylvania and is a school for recruiting agents, companions, and apprentices.

Education in the Transylvanian Tribunal

Unlike Western Europe, the Transylvanian Tribunal does not have a preponderance of famous schools, other than the dubious reputation of the Scholomance. The schools of Mostre and Veszprém are the closest thing the region has to universities. Mostre's school is a cathedral school of the Bosnian Church, specializing in theology, cosmology, ethics, and medi-

cine. The cathedral school in the Hungarian city of Veszprém teaches the Artes Liberales and Civil & Canon Law, as well as training diplomats.

The seats of the various bishoprics across the region usually have grammar schools attached, and there are numerous private tutors — often exiled Greeks — willing to take on pupils for an appropriate fee.

Given its reputation, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Church has taken an interest, and a papal legate has been ordered to investigate rumors of the Scholomance and its devilish practices. He has sought lodging among the Teutonic Order (see Chapter 5) while he prepares his case. Since the only people who know anything concrete about the school are either magi or those who have attended it, the legate has yet to discover anything other than hearsay.

History

The Order had been aware for a while of a "ghostly castle" in the Carpathians, but it was not until 1095 that Jeremiah of Tremere discovered the secrets of its regio and gained entrance to the tower for the first time. Never one to pass up a useful resource, Coeris claimed the site thirty years later, and turned it into a mansio — a waypoint for Redcaps serving the north of the Tribunal. A few years later, it expanded its operations to the training of Redcaps, and soon after also became a training ground for mundanes of interest to House Tremere.

Within the last ten years or so, Simium (the current headmaster of the School) has been corresponding with the covenant of Polyaiagos in the Theban Tribunal. Polyaiagos has a similar remit to teach pupils prior to apprenticeship; they also train mundane agents, although they have a decidedly more military bent to their curriculum. There is talk of an exchange program between Polyaiagos and the Scholomance and Laniena (see Chapter 3), but the centuries-old distrust and dislike between Thebes and Transylvania has prevented this thus far.

Setting and Description

The Scholomance resides in an isolated valley high in the Carpathian mountains south of Hermannstadt. The valley itself contains a small unnamed lake and little else other than a Magic aura of 3; on calm days the lake is mirror smooth, and reflects the entire sky in its surface. The tower inhabited by the oppidum resides entirely within a regio, and there is usually no sign of it, except during violent storms. When lightning rages about the crags of the valley, the Scholomance is visible, perched on a cliff's edge overlooking a rarely used pass. At such times the regio (which has a Magic aura of 5) lies open and anyone can walk in, but the regio is capricious, and the tower disappears as readily as it appears. Occasionally, the tower appears in other locations, mostly within the mountains of the Tribunal, but sometimes in more far-flung localities. On one memorable occasion the Scholomance opened its doors in the midst of a sandstorm in a mighty desert. The headmaster of the school (see later) can exert some control over the appearance of the tower in its valley, but its far wanderings appear to be random, albeit infrequent.

The Scholomance consists of a squat

ivy-clad tower. The ground floor provides residential areas for the meager servants and the ten pupils, along with kitchens, workshops, and other essentials. There are also guest quarters for Redcaps, and a dining hall. Substantial cellars store all manner of food, tools, supplies for laboratories and scriptoria, and other consumables, assisted by enchantments that preserve perishable items indefinitely — the Scholomance receives a wagon-train of supplies just once a year, although Redcaps occasionally bring a pack of necessities or luxuries.

The second story consists of a lecture hall and several smaller galleries and scriptoria for independent study. There is also an extensive library of both mundane and esoteric studies, although there are no books on the Hermetic Arts or on the Order of Hermes.

The third and final story is reached by a single staircase that is always guarded, both physically and magically. It contains the office of the headmaster, and beyond that, sancta for four magi and guest quarters for another four. The latter do not have laboratories, but there is a single spacious laboratory that can be reserved for a season or more. There is also a second library containing the Hermetic texts of the oppidum. There are rumors that there is a second level to the regio known only to the headmaster, but this has never been confirmed or denied.

All corridors of the tower and some of the rooms have enchantments that garble the sound of any speech so that it cannot be understood. This discourages idle chatter between the pupils and prevents them from overhearing matters that they have no right to know. Most of the study rooms have similar enchantments that smear written text for anyone but the single person touching the text, preventing pupils from easily discovering what the others are studying. These

Storm-Chasers

The opening of the regio's borders during storms indicates a connection to the Storm Wizards (see Chapter 9: Hedge Traditions), and these hedge wizards have certainly shown an interest in the site. Twice in the past, these wizards have joined forces and tried to take the tower by force, using their pow-

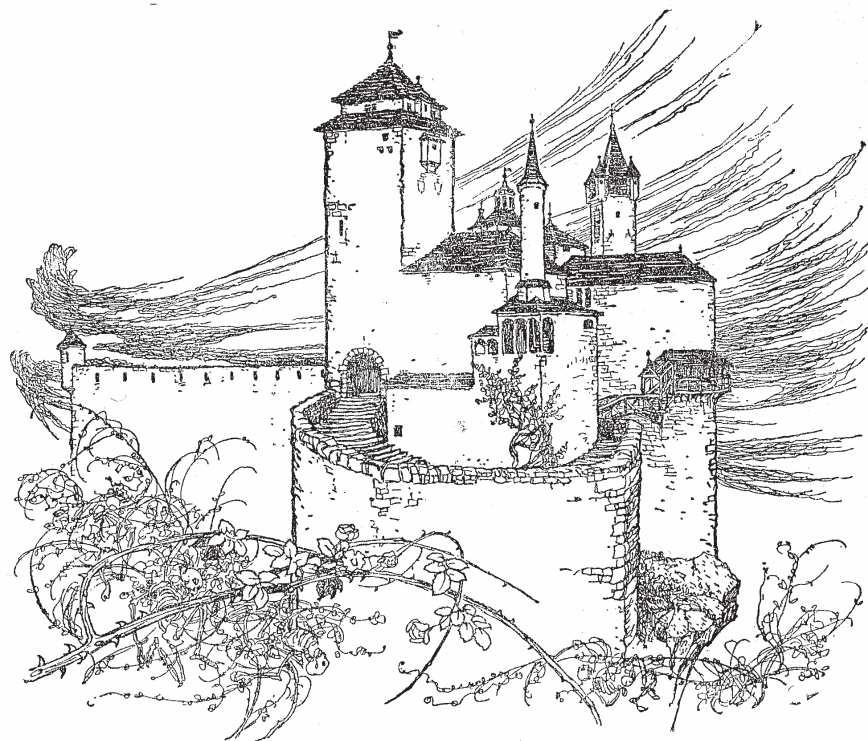
ers to keep the tower from fleeing into its regio. Both times they have been successfully repulsed, but their motives have never been truly divined except for some notion of reclaiming something they have lost. Whether they mean the tower itself or something hidden within is unclear.

methods are not foolproof, but add to the mystique of the school.

Culture and Traditions

The Scholomance is first and foremost a school. It accepts ten pupils at a time, all at once, and they remain for a total of seven years. These pupils have many different origins, but fall into one of three categories. First are the mundane scholars. The Scholomance is famed as a school of esoteric knowledge, and scholars from across Mythic Europe seek to be admitted, ignorant of its connection to the Order of Hermes. They have all managed to make the acquaintance of a former pupil of the school, and received an invitation from the school to attend. Of those that apply only the most favored will secure a place, and it is rumored that noblemen, bishops, and even kings have attended in their youth. The Scholomance usually picks applicants who are of interest to House Tremere, either as mundane agents, contacts, or companions. These lucky few seek to learn subjects that cannot be studied through more usual methods of education, subjects which are often considered to be occult knowledge or even called the "dark arts."

The second type of pupil is individuals who have grown up in the family of House Mercere and are destined to be Redcaps. The Scholomance is considered to be a superior training ground for House Mercere, and there is stiff competition for entry into the class. Finally, each class contains at least one Gifted individual, either a youth receiving a basic education prior to commencing an apprenticeship, or else an apprentice whose master decided that he needed a wider basis in non-Hermetic subjects. In the latter case, the master usually joins the oppidum for the duration of the class, so that the apprentice's Hermetic education may continue uninterrupted. Occasionally, the Gifted individual is called away to begin his apprenticeship, or because his master needs to relocate; in such situations the class receives a new pupil. These new pupils are normally from House Mercere, and have been following the Scholomance's curriculum since they missed their first chance to enter. They are behind the other pupils, and have a lot to prove.



Magic Lore, Faerie Lore, and even Infernal Lore feature heavily on the curriculum, as well as unusual languages such as Arabic and Hebrew, and the arts of astrology, alchemy, and pharmaceuticals (see *Art & Academe*, Chapter 5). Pupils who have a natural aptitude for magic are taught the Arcane Abilities of Penetration and Finesse, and may even receive instruction in Supernatural Abilities, if they have the aptitude and the school currently has a master who can teach them. Even Organization Lore: Order of Hermes is taught, allowing House Tremere to control the information that mundanes know about them. Pupils are required to make copies of some of the texts that they study at the school, and to write at least one summa or three tractatus during their stay. The Scholomance has amassed an unparalleled collection of books on non-Hermetic magic, which they hope one day might provide assistance in the expansion of Hermetic magic.

It is not unknown for the members of a class to remain in contact through correspondence after the seven years are concluded; friendships forged at the school can last decades. Even Redcaps occasionally remain friends with their classmates, culturing them as contacts. Of course, the Scholomance provides rich grounds for recruiting companions with unusual skills. Contrary to the

legend, a member of the class is not claimed by the Devil, but this rumor may have arisen from the apparent disappearance from mundane life of those who go on to complete a Hermetic apprenticeship.

Naturally it is not possible to keep the identity or the affiliations of those running the Scholomance a secret from its pupils, particularly with apprentices and future Redcaps in the class. In the past, headmasters have ruthlessly edited the memories of its mundane pupils with magic and provided false trails to throw them off the scent. However, the current policy is to culture friends for the Order of Hermes through the Scholomance, and therefore ensure that it is shown in the best of lights. While their affiliation is not advertised, it is not denied either.

Attending the Scholomance is a good way to explain Virtues such as Educated, Arcane Lore, Privileged Upbringing or (for apprentices) Skilled Parents.

THE MASTERS OF THE SCHOOL

The members of the oppidum take on duties of teaching at the school in return for access to the Scholomance's superior library. Their efforts are supplemented by non-Hermetic teachers who make up the school's

Playing Gifted Children

An alternative saga for *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* could start the characters before their apprenticeship starts, or else sometime after the Opening of the Arts. Having them as members of the Scholomance's class gives an opportunity for characters of different backgrounds to meet and form friendships. The *Apprentices* sourcebook is a great help for a saga of this kind.

The Scholomance provides a good back-story for the reason a disparate group of player magi wish to set up home together. They originally all were members of the same class, and some of the other pupils could be their companions. The saga could even begin with a story or two set in the Scholomance itself. Life-long friendships and bitter rivalries are often forged in one's school days.

STORY SEED: A SHADOW ON THE MIND

A player magus begins to have bad dreams that are filled with a sense of foreboding, terrible claws dripping blood, and scenes from his time at the Scholomance. Through these dreams he comes to realize that the memories of a whole season of his time at the school are entirely missing.

Questioning other members of his class (who may be a mixture of other player characters and storyguide characters), he discovers that all of them have the same gap in their memories. They may wish to return to the school to discover the source of this lacuna, but may not be prepared to discover why the masters thought it best to erase the minds of their pupils. This might eventually lead to a flash-back story with the players running younger versions of their magi.

STORY SEED: A FRIEND IN NEED

This story works particularly well if the player character has risen to a position of trust or authority within the Tribunal. He is contacted by one of his classmates from his days in the Scholomance, whom he has not seen for years. It seems like a social visit at first, but eventually the friend asks the PC to provide an alibi for him. He has been accused of an Hermetic crime in a different Tribunal, and while he swears he is innocent, he needs to buy some time to prove it. By using a member of another Tribunal as a witness, he hopes to delay proceedings long enough to get the evidence he needs. Does the player character risk his good reputation for a friend?

companions. Magi are expected to spend one season a year teaching, and mature magi of House Tremere are often assigned to the oppidum in preparation for them taking an apprentice of their own. If a magus has his own apprentice at the school, he is required to fulfill his obligation to his apprentice in addition to teaching another pupil. Teaching is often performed one-on-one, but if the Scholomance is currently short of members, the master may be assigned a small study group. Magi are required to extend their Parma around those they teach to negate the social effects of The Gift.

Magi

The Scholomance has four Hermetic sancta, and enough room to accommodate four more magi as guest tutors. Currently

there are only three resident magi, following the recent departure of one of its members for a distant Tribunal. The guest quarters are used by magi assigned as tutors to the oppidum; they must use the shared laboratory if they desire to perform lab work while resident here. The Scholomance prefer magi who have some interest in the liberal arts, natural philosophy, or occult lore, or who possess some Supernatural Ability.

Story Seed: The Specialist

A character who possesses a Supernatural Ability is asked to do a stint teaching that Ability at the Scholomance. A pupil with that Ability has come to the school for teaching, but he is a troubled child. It turns out that all of his former teachers, before he en-

SIMIUM ARILEINS OF HOUSE BJORNAER

Age: 78 (apparent age 58)

Personality Traits: Raven +3, Stern +3, Talkative -2

Privilege: Cives

Simium is the eldest magus of the school and its current headmaster. He is famed in the Order of Hermes as an historian and philosopher, and a prolific writer of entry-level texts on a number of subjects, the Hermetic Arts included. His books can be found as far away as the Stonehenge and Iberian Tribunals, although they are usually only suitable for young magi.

Having spent years at a lectern or bent over a table, Simium's back is bowed and he constantly blinks his beady eyes. He prefers to wear simple black robes, with a black skullcap. Simium's heartbeast is a raven that is larger than a man, thanks to the Mystery of the Inner Heartbeast (see *The Mystery of the Epitome, Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 28). His frequent trips into the mountains in this form have led to local legends of a demon-bird that can carry off a fully grown adult.

ANDREW MELANCHTHON OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 49 (apparent age 36)

Personality Traits: Dedicated +3, Hopeful +2, Naïve +1

Privilege: Cives

Melanchthon was forced to leave the Rhine Tribunal after a series of public disputes with a prominent member of House Bonisagus left him branded as both an empiricist and atheist, and unlikely to ever succeed on a political stage within that Tribunal's hierarchy. The accusation of atheism is unfair;

tered the Scholomance, suffered horrific deaths quite beyond the apparent capabilities of the child, but somehow linked to the Supernatural Ability he possesses. The characters must discover the source of these terrible events before becoming victims themselves.

like most Tremere, he is impious but not an atheist *per se*. His true crime was being vocal about his rejection of God as a loving father.

The Scholomance allows Melanchthon to pursue his own curriculum with the pupils of the school. He is specifically interested in the teaching of moral philosophy and rhetoric, drawing on non-standard texts deemed heretical or blasphemous by the establishment. He dreams of a time when his pupils enact his humanist agenda in the universities and courts of Mythic Europe.

Covenfolk

The Scholomance employs just three soldiers, relying on the remoteness of the tower to discourage visitors. Most of the grogs are servants; they grow and prepare food for the pupils and masters, and perform menial tasks like cleaning. The servants have orders to ignore all pupils as if they were deaf and mute. The punishments threatened for disobedience are sufficiently terrible that infractions are rare.

There are also several specialists who are each experts in a particular field, who act as tutors to the oppidum's pupils.

SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is something of an enigma. He was the only inhabitant of the tower when Jeremiah of Tremere first entered it, and he is still alive having apparently not aged a day. Most of the magi assume he is some variety of magic kin rather than a human, but those few who are rude enough to probe him with magic have failed to discover anything, including a Might score. This has bred a certain paranoia that the headmaster tries to keep in check. Sebastian tells each headmaster his secret (or part of it, at least), and he is sufficiently trusted to help in the logistics of

Story Seed: A Snake in the Classroom

The characters are teaching at the Scholomance when one of the class gains access to the upper library by somehow defeating the guardians of the third story. A search of the uppermost story fails to locate him, although several important texts have been stolen, including a summa on

the Parma Magica. Further investigation suggests that the pupil was actually a member of another magical tradition. It is now a race to find the thief before he is able to get the valuable book to his compatriots. If they fail, the future of the Scholomance may have to be re-evaluated.

A Haunt of Dragons

The Carpathian mountains are home to dragons (see "Dragons" in Chapter 8: Creatures) in sufficient numbers that they are merely an uncommon sight. The local dragon king is Aževastjepan, a seven-headed zmaj who enforces the Pax Draconis ruthlessly and has outlawed aždaje from his realm (with varying success). No magus has dealt directly with

Aževastjepan and his lair is unknown even to other dragons, but they speak of him with awe. The similarity of the dragonking's name with that of the Scholomance's caretaker has been noticed by some magi. No one is known to have challenged Sebastian directly over this connection, but those noticing it tread more carefully in his presence.

running the Scholomance. He clearly knows more about the tower and its regio than anyone else, and has assisted the headmaster in asserting control over it in troubled times. As well as being a caretaker, he also serves as a tutor, as he is remarkably knowledgeable on subjects of philosophy, the liberal arts, dead languages, and forgotten lore.

Sebastian has the appearance of a man in his forties with no distinguishing features. He is friendly yet keeps his secrets close to his chest, delighting in knowing more than others. This demeanor changes when he teaches, something he enjoys greatly.

LUDMILLA

Ludmilla is a Romanian *strigoica*, or witch. In addition to being a Gifted member of the Folk Witch hedge tradition (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 3), she has the

Entrancement Ability and is suspected — rightly, although she denies it — of being a Nightwalker (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 6). Her role within the Scholomance is to tutor pupils in any Supernatural Abilities they have in common. Ludmilla is willing to help in return for free access to the oppidum's texts, but she also uses the school to identify recruits for the coven of witches that she leads. The Scholomance politely ignores these transgressions, since she has occasionally Initiated an unGifted agent of House Tremere trained by the Scholomance into one of the Supernatural Abilities of her tradition.

Ludmilla is a slim woman in her mid-fifties, with a look of fading beauty. Her hands are knotted with swollen knuckles, and she prefers to keep them hidden. When nightwalking, her *phantasticum* takes the form of a white moth with the face of a beautiful young girl.

Chapter Seven

Networks of Hidden Fortresses

The two organizations described in this chapter control many sites scattered about the Tribunal which, by coincidence, all share the form of a hidden fortress. These two networks help troupes to design sagas about highly mobile magi, who visit many areas of the Tribunal, so that full use can be made of all the material presented in this book.

These fortresses differ from mansiones, the network of rest stops maintained by members of House Mercere. These accommodations are designed for travelers, much like coaching houses, and troupes telling highly mobile sagas may wish to include them among the options for shelter and chance encounters on the road. Mansiones are described in greater detail in the Shrouded Bay section of Chapter 5 in this book.



The Hospital

The Hospital is neither a covenant, nor an oppidum. Instead, it is a service provided by the Transylvanian Tribunal, to the magi of the Transylvanian Tribunal. The intent is that, if any magus falls ill or is wounded while traveling in the Tribunal, then he may find his way (or be brought by his grogs) to a safe-

house. These traveler's safehouses, referred to as zenodochia, contain enchanted items that either help the magus to heal, or cure him directly. As zenodochia are intended to be used by magi who are far from their oppidum, few are actually constructed near oppida.

The Zenodochium

Each zenodochium contains magical items, casting tablets, mundane supplies, and up to two rooks of Corpus vis that can be used by magi in need. The magical items and casting tablets are not supposed to be removed, and the vis and other supplies must be replaced as soon as the magus is able to. Stealing vis from a zenodochium is a Low Crime. However, a magus who takes vis and then finds himself unable to repay is usually

Story Seed: The Plague House

Fresh from a hard fought battle against faeries or other enemies, the grogs bring their heavily wounded master to a rural zenodochium. When they arrive, they discover a young woman in the main hall, sleeping the deep sleep of the nearly dead. Her breath is very light, her pale skin is blotched and covered in an angry rash, and she smells of vomit and excrement. The woman has a plague.

Although it may not be immediately obvious, the woman, named Lucia, is from a nearby village. The villagers have discovered the zenodochium, and have learned

that sick and injured characters who rest in its hall have a good chance of recovering from almost any ailment. The villagers have since been using the zenodochium as a kind of quarantine. At the first sign of any sickness, the strong men of the village carry ill villagers to the zenodochium, leaving them there and returning after one month to see whether they have survived, or left a corpse to bury.

The Tribunal is unlikely to care if the villagers are making use of the zenodochium, as long as they leave it in good repair. However, the grogs may not be aware of

this, and they may take exception to the presence of this unknown woman. Then again, they may assume that she is a servant, or even a maga, of another oppidum.

However, when the village men return to check up on Lucia, they will be surprised by and suspicious of the presence of the magus and his grogs. The plague house is a valuable resource for the villagers, and they will assume that the Gifted magus is trying to damage or interfere with the house in some way. Whether or not Lucia has survived may also help the men decide whether the magus means ill or well.

offered the chance to pay his debt by working for the Tribunal. Damaging or destroying a zenodochium is a High Crime, but a magus who arranges without prompting to repair a zenodochium he has accidentally damaged would not be prosecuted. It is important to realize that the Tribunal *wants* magi to use this resource. So, the Tribunal will not create unnecessary hurdles to the use of a zenodochium, and will not impose strict or harsh penalties on those magi who make mistakes. On the other hand, deliberately damaging a zenodochium deprives all the other magi of their magical resources. This is unforgivable.

UNFINISHED WORK?

The zenodochia network was devised during the Schism War. The Tremere generals reasoned that a single hospital oppidum, even if hidden, would eventually be discovered and destroyed. However, although the nodes of a network of tiny hospitals would be individually quite vulnerable, the whole network would be much harder for enemies to destroy. The original logic was also that individual Tremere would only know of the location of a few zenodochia, reducing the risk posed by captured Tremere or traitors.

Unfortunately, the ambitions of the wartime Tremere generals may have proven greater than the subsequent resources and dedication of the Tribunal. In theory, there are hundreds of zenodochia. In reality, many were never built. Precisely how many zenodochia exist, and whether the Tribunal is still enthusiastic in 1220 to maintain and expand the network, is left as a decision for your saga. There could be as few as a dozen functioning zenodochia, or there might be hundreds.

Placement of Zenodochia

Most zenodochia are in rural or wilderness areas, although a few are in large towns. Although the coverage of the zenodochia network is incomplete, it is rare for a magus to be very far from a zenodochium. Few magi know the precise location of every extant zenodochium, although Tremere are generally better informed. Grogs are permitted to use the facilities, and a magus is held responsible for any damage that his grogs cause. Redcaps

Casting Tablets

Zenodochia contain a number of spells written on casting tablets. Full rules for casting tablets are given in *Covenants*, page 89–90. Briefly, any magus may cast a spell from a casting tablet. A casting tablet may be used multiple times. Generate a Casting Total as if the magus knew the formulaic spell or ritual, and remember to include Wound and Aura Penalties. The magus cannot vary the spell in any way, and cannot expend vis on the Casting Total, although he must spend the required vis for a ritual spell.

If the Casting Total equals or exceeds the Spell Level, then the spell is cast and the

magus loses one Fatigue level. If the Spell Level is up to 10 levels greater than the Casting Total, the spell is still cast, but the magus loses two Fatigue levels. If the Spell Level is up to 20 levels greater than the Casting Total, the spell is cast and the magus loses three Fatigue levels. If the Spell Level is up to 30 levels greater than the Casting Total, the spell is still successfully cast, but the magus loses four Fatigue levels and gains a Warping Point. Finally, if the Spell Level exceeds the Casting Total by more than 30, the spell is not cast; the magus loses five Fatigue levels, and gains Warping Points equal to the magnitude of the spell.

often stay in zenodochii, and leaving a message in the nearest zenodochium is a good way to contact the Redcap network.

zenodochia usually contain no staff. Some zenodochii are empty wooden houses beside lonely forest paths; others are caves on quiet mountainsides, or isolated hovels in a field of wheat. The few urban zenodochia occupy basements of buildings with other purposes, often controlled by the agents of a nearby oppidum.

Obviously, characters in your saga who have been to a zenodochium can usually find their way back to those safehouses again. However, to check whether a character knows the location of a close zenodochia, which he has not been previously visited in your saga, make an Intelligence + Order of Hermes Lore roll. This is against an Ease Factor of 9, if the character has lived in the Transylvanian Tribunal for at least 1 year; for visitors, the Ease Factor is 12. In either case, Tremere characters have a +3 bonus to the roll. Alternatively, you may make an Intelligence + Area Lore roll against an Ease Factor of 12. However, if the Area Lore is particularly narrow — say, a single village — then there may be no zenodochia within its remit. These Ease Factors assume that zenodochia are relatively common. Increase the Ease Factors by 3 if zenodochia are rare in your saga.

The Curantis

A special officer of the Tribunal, the Curantis, is appointed at each Tribunal meeting,

for a term that lasts until the next Tribunal meeting. The Curantis' duty is to travel among the network of zenodochia, checking that each is in order and making repairs, and he is expected to construct at least one new zenodochium during his term of office. The Curantis spends about a season each year traveling the zenodochia network.

It is also the Curantis' responsibility to investigate the cause of any damage to the zenodochia and, if magi are the culprits, to bring prosecutions against them. The Curantis thus has the same legal powers, within the Transylvannia Tribunal, as a Quaesitor, but limited to investigations involving zenodochia.

The Curantis receives a generous vis salary from the Tribunal, and he may requisition vis from Tribunal stocks to discharge his duties. The troupe should set the Curantis' salary to reflect the availability of vis in your saga. The salary should be high, to reflect the fact that the Curantis needs to be a powerful character who is capable of fulfilling the office.

Although the Curantis is technically voted into his office by the Tribunal, the election is often unopposed. The Tribunal elders meet prior to the formal Tribunal meeting and usually agree among themselves who will be proposed and supported as the single candidate for election. A character may not serve two successive terms as Curantis.

The Curantis is accompanied by his Notary. The Curantis' Notary is a magus, selected by the previous Curantis, who acts as aedile to the Curantis. The Notary is often a Redcap. Freshly gauntleted magi may also serve this function.

Minor Covenant Hook: Zenodochium

There is a zenodochium within a day's travel of the covenant. The covenant may freely make use of the zenodochium, but must replace any vis or other items that are used or removed. The covenant will be visited once every few years by the Curantis while on his tour of inspection of the zenodochia, and if the nearby zenodochium is found to be damaged, the covenant

will surely be the first point of inquiries.

The zenodochium will be periodically used by other magi who are injured while passing through the region near the covenant. An injured magus or his companions might visit the covenant during his convalescence, either out of curiosity or for assistance in dealing with whatever peril befell him.

Story Seed: The Disease Trap

The characters travel to a zenodochium carrying a heavily wounded companion. Unbeknownst to the characters, the *Hippocratic Staff* has been removed from the zenodochium and replaced with an *Ague Staff*, which causes disease. This trap may have been laid by the character's enemies, or it may be intended for someone else. If the characters survive, can they discover what has happened, and identify and prosecute those responsible?

Determinations (see ArM5, page 157) cast upon it, which makes the staff appear to be a *Hippocratic Staff* when magically investigated. The *Shell of False Determinations* is also shrouded.

DISEASE EFFECT

PeCo 33

Pen +0, 1 use per day

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Structure

This effect activates every dawn and inflicts the ague upon any character in the Room. This has no effect on a character who already has the ague, but if a character is cured or recovers, the disease he will be re-infected if the staff affects him again. The ague causes a Heavy Disease Wound.

(Base 15, +1 Touch, +3 Structure, +3 Environmental Trigger)

THE AGUE STAFF

This enchanted item has been made to look superficially similar to a *Hippocratic Staff*. It contains two effects, one that causes disease, and the other shrouds the sigil of the item maker. The staff also has a magnitude 8 *Shell of False*

(Base 2, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 Group, +1 Herbam Requisite; +4 Constant Effect)

VERMIN WARD

ReAn 24

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This enchanted item, a carved statue of a mutilated rat, keeps all animals without Magic Resistance out of the Structure. This means that an unoccupied zenodochium will not be ruined by marauding animals.

(Base 2, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +3 Structure, +4 Constant Effect)

ARMS OF THE SALAMANDER

CrCo 30

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Individual, Ritual

This ritual, written on a casting tablet, instantly restores a character's lost limb. If the character has been without the limb for more than a season, it takes him about a week to become used to its presence again (rolls that require the limb are at a -3 penalty for the week). Casting this ritual requires 6 pawns of vis. Note that, unlike *The Severed Limb Made Whole*, this ritual does not need the original limb. If the target is missing several limbs, the most recently detached is restored by this ritual.

(Base 25, +1 Touch)

Zenodochium Items

The following enchanted items and casting tablets are stored in zenodochia. Occasionally, some items may be missing, but this is rare, as it means that a previous occupant has stolen something.

The *Hippocratic Staff* and *Bowl of the Honest Traveler* are high power, constant effect items that affect every human within the zenodochium. So any human character who remains within a zenodochium for a season accumulates 6 Warping Points (there are two effects in the *Hippocratic Staff*). It takes a bit more than a season to recover totally from Incapacitating or Heavy Wounds. Generally, to recover from Light or Medium Wounds requires only a week or month respectively, which will both only incur 3 Warping Points.

If activated, some of the other items and casting tablets will also cause Warping.

CHEST OF GOOD FOOD

CrAn(He) 24

Pen +0, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Group

This enchanted item is a large chest carved with scenes of feasting. Food made from animal or plant products, when placed in the chest, is preserved while it remains in the chest. The food will not putrefy, rot, or decay in any way. When it is full, the chest contains one man-month worth of food.

It is expected that characters who eat from the zenodochium's supplies will restock the chest before leaving.

THE HIPPOCRATIC STAFF

This enchanted staff of twisted hyacinth, encasing an amber gem, is usually mounted above the inner lintel of the hall of the zenodochium. It is invested with two effects. These give the character a +9 bonus to Wound Recovery rolls and a +9 bonus to Disease Recovery rolls.

Obviously, a magus character must also lower his Parma Magica in order to be affected. Note that magi who are unconscious cannot cast their Parma Magica, and so it automatically falls at the next sunset or sunrise.

Wound Recovery Effect

CrCo 34

Pen +0, Constant Effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This effect gives characters within the Structure a +9 bonus to Wound Recovery Rolls.
(Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +3 Structure; +4 Constant Effect)

Disease Recovery Effect

CrCo 34

Pen +0, Constant Effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This effect gives characters within the Structure a +9 bonus to Disease Recovery Rolls.

(Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +3 Structure; +4 Constant Effect)

THE RITE OF HEALING

CrCo 50

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Group, Ritual

Zenodochia contain a casting tablet for this ritual, which heals the targets of all Wounds the user may have. Casting this ritual requires a rook of vis.

(Base 35, +1 Touch, +2 Group)

UNIVERSAL POULTICE

CrCo 50

R: Touch, D: Momentary, T: Group, Ritual

Zenodochia contain a casting tablet for this ritual which cures the targets of any disease they may have. Casting this ritual requires a rook of vis.

(Base 35, +1 Touch, +2 Group)

ANKH OF MOVING FORWARD

CrCo 60

Pen +12, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Individual

When this silver ankh is placed around the neck of a character, all of her wounds are instantly healed and she no longer suffers any Wound Penalties.

This enchanted item does not permanently heal the character; it actually suspends her natural healing, and when the ankh is removed all her wounds return. The intended use is that grogs may place this ankh around the neck of their grievously injured mistress, who can then cast spells and direct the grogs as to the best course of further action with-

out penalty.

Note that, as this item has low Penetration, a typical maga needs to suppress her Magic Resistance when she puts this item on, in order to be affected by it. Recall that if a maga is unconscious, then her Parma Magica will automatically cease at the next sunrise or sunset when she does not renew the ritual, leaving her protected only by her Corpus Form. The item's Penetration is often enough to defeat that Magic Resistance, but not always.

(Base 35, +1 Touch, +2 Sun; +4 Constant Effect; +6 Penetration)

BOWL OF THE HONEST TRAVELER

ReMe 29

Pen 0, constant effect.

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This enchanted pauper's bowl, resting on a shelf in the zenodochium, inclines all who are within the structure to scrupulous honesty. This is usually enough to prevent opportunistic thieving from the zenodochium, in much the same way that *The Shrouded Glen* (ArM5, page 152) prevents casual discovery of a location. If a character is determined to steal from the zenodochium, make a Personality Roll (using a suitable Personality trait) against an Ease Factor of 12. If the Personality Roll is failed, the character's conscience prevents him from stealing from the zenodochium.

Obviously, as this item has no Penetration, it does not prevent magi and other characters with Magic Resistance from stealing from zenodochia.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun +3 Structure; +4 Constant Effect)

WARD AGAINST THE INFERNAL AGENTS OF DISEASE

ReVi 35

Pen +12, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This enchanted cross is hung above the entrance to the zenodochium. It prevents minor disease demons (and other types of demons, too) who have a Might of 10 or less from entering the zenodochium.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun +3 Structure; +4 Constant Effect, +6 Penetration 12)

WARD AGAINST MAD DREAMS

ReVi 35

Pen +12, constant effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Structure

This enchanted iron horseshoe is hung above the entrance to the zenodochium. It prevents faeries of Might 10 or less from entering the zenodochium.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun +3 Structure; +4 Constant Effect, +6 Penetration 12)



The Oppidum of Kezdő Válasz

Kezdő Válasz is a commitment rather than a physical site. Its members swear to be the first to respond to threats and promise to abandon laboratory work and personal study at a moment's notice. The oppidum is not located in a single place; rather, it is a series of forts. All of the members are citizens of the Tribunal, cives, including foreign magi who would otherwise be considered foederati. Joining Kezdő Válasz can be viewed as instant citizenship to the Tribunal, but it is not a guarantee. Tremere magi permanently keep this privilege, but magi of other Houses must renegotiate this privilege if they leave Kezdő Válasz.

History

Originally named Primum Responsans, Latin for "initial response," this oppidum is better known by the Hungarian name *Kezdő Válasz*. In 1008, the Tremere magus Norsius established an oppidum to defend the Tribunal's borders during the Schism War. More

historian than military expert, Norsius was inspired by the defensive features of the Roman Empire, particularly Trajan's Wall. The wall allowed troops to be rapidly deployed from one section to another. Realizing that it would be impossible to construct a wall entirely around the Tribunal, Norsius focused on fast deployment. He constructed a handful of forts throughout the Tribunal, each placed in a magic aura found somewhere near the Tribunal's extensive border. Each fort would be staffed by two magi, who would live there and react to any nearby threat. In the meantime, each magus would work to improve his magic, either through study, creating enchantments, or other arcane experiments. The battlegrounds of the Schism War never reached Transylvania, though, and Norsius' defensive network was never tested.

As the kingdoms of the Balkan Peninsula emerged, Norsius' filius, Gasparus, took his parents' idea one step further. He spread the forts throughout the Tribunal, allowing the magi of Kezdő Válasz to live near any potential problem area, internal or external. So as not to become static and immobile, each pair

of magi promised to move after every Tribunal meeting, relocating every seven years to a new fort. Forts were created as necessary and magi moved, taking their sanctum markers and laboratories with them. Sometimes old forts were destroyed but other times they remained, with some few being reused over the decades. The entire operation was organized by the oppidum's leader, who traditionally lived in the first fort Norsius created.

Setting and Description

Currently there are four active forts in the Tribunal, each home to two magi. All the forts are physically the same: a two-story stone building with a single entrance, pierced by narrow arrow slits, and a taller watchtower rising from one of the corners. The ground floor holds a kitchen and great hall, where most of the daily routine activities happen. Two circular stairways are built in the thick walls, one leading up to the second story and watchtower, and one leading down to the basement, where supplies and

armaments are kept. The upper floor has four equal-sized rooms. Two are Hermetic suites that serve as laboratory and bedroom for the resident magi, one room is used as a meeting chamber complete with table and chairs, and the final room serves as the library and storage room for vis, magical items, and other arcane gear. The meeting room can be converted into a guest chamber if necessary.

Active forts are staffed by approximately a dozen people: men-at-arms, cooks, animal handlers, servants, various craftsmen, and an autocrat. Spouses and children were originally restricted from living on the premises, but this rule has been relaxed over the years. The staff moves when the magi do, and it is their responsibility to move the possessions, provisions, and equipment from the old fort to the new. The magi readily delegate this duty to the autocrat. Depending on how distant the new location is from the old, establishing the fort can take one to two seasons.

The first fort created by Norsius is located in the ruins of Sarmizegethusa, the former palace of the second-century Dacian king Decebalus. Located near the center of the Tribunal, Sarmizegethusa Fort is the only fort that isn't abandoned every seven years. It retains a permanent staff and two Hermetic laboratories, although the labs are not always occupied. Traditionally, the two labs are for the leader and his partner. However, both magi have other labs located elsewhere, and it is in those that they hang their sanctum markers. Sarmizegethusa Fort is the only permanent location of Kezdő Válasz, and it is here that the oppidum stores its many casting tables, stockpiles of vis, and equipment that isn't immediately needed.

After the Transylvania's Tribunal meeting, the magi choose new locations for the next seven-year stint. If a fort doesn't already exist at the desired location, a new one is made. Kezdő Válasz has several casting tables containing the ritual spell necessary to create a fort, and other casting tables to create generic laboratories. If a magus has a specialized lab, it is up to him to move it, naturally with assistance. If the lab isn't specialized, the magus can simply create a new one. Old forts are left where they are or destroyed, depending on other factors. If the fort has drawn mundane attention, it will be removed. The members like to keep the forts fairly secret, within the House at least, and if too much supernatural attention has been drawn to the



fort, it will be destroyed. Casting tables exist that can reduce a fort to rubble. Abandoned forts are generally left empty.

Culture and Tradition

Most of the time the magi of Kezdő Válasz lead lives much like their fellows. Seasons are spent in the laboratory or library, studying Arts, improving Arcane Abilities, and enchanting items. Different from their fellows, however, is the pledge to leave the fort immediately if a threat arises. As they wait, poised to act, the magi focus on spells and enchanted devices that allow long-distance communication and instantaneous travel. To ensure that they are the first on the scene, the oppidum keeps a network of spies and mundane agents in key positions throughout the Tribunal.

Kezdő Válasz has approximately 55 grogs in total. Not all of the mundane staff live at one of the active forts. Many live apart, operating as field agents in courts, cities, and religious centers. Their duty is to keep the magi informed through regular reports. Each magus has a number of rings, bracelets, and small charms that can be used to contact one another. Many of these devices have been enchanted personally, but others have been invented by Leona. Each charm affects the magus in a specific way, and each is constructed with enough Penetration to pass through the magus' Parma Magica. The magical effects are minor, and are used as signals. For example, Essedarius has a ring that when activated changes his left thumbnail blue. He has given the ring to a custos living in the city of Niš on the Serbian-Bulgarian border, who uses the ring to signal Essedarius if anything is amiss. Other agents who report to Essedarius have similar communication devices, but the minor magical effect is slightly different. If Essedarius' thumbnail turns blue, he knows that his agent in Niš needs him. Every magus of Kezdő Válasz has a handful of such devices given to his agents and colleagues.

Speed is essential and every member of the oppidum has developed ways to move rapidly to distant locations. Norsius originally thought magi should ride horses, a romantic yet impractical notion, and invented spells and enchanted devices that suppressed

Fort Locations

Kezdő Válasz's forts can be anywhere, placed specifically for adventures in your Tribunal. While not movable, a fort is easily created and destroyed with magic, so that locations can easily change. As mentioned, the only permanent fort is located near Sarmizegethusa. Other possible locations for forts are:

- The Bran Pass.
- The Madara Plateau.
- North of Varna on the Black Sea coast.
- Near the border of Serbia and the Despotate of Epirus on the Adriatic coast.
- The Iron Gates on the Danube River.
- West of the Carpathian Mountains on the Pontic-Caspian steppe, an area notorious for large gatherings of Cuman warriors.
- North of Adrianople on the Bulgarian-Byzantine border.

The Treasure of Decebalus

In 105, the Roman Emperor Trajan invaded Dacia because the Dacian king Decebalus had broken the terms of a treaty. As the superior Roman army marched toward his palace, Decebalus hid his kingdom's treasure. He ordered captive Roman soldiers to divert the Sargetias River, and hid the majority of his and his nobles' wealth in the river bed, sealing the vast quantities of gold and silver in place with stones, and then allowed the Sargetias to return to its regular course. More treasure was hidden in the many grottoes and underground caverns along one stretch of the river. Killing every captive involved in the effort, Decebalus thought his treasure secure.

Captive Dacian nobles proved otherwise, and told their Roman conquerors where the treasure was. According to a Byzantine official's report, Decebalus' treasure contained unparalleled amounts of gold and silver, and thousands of priceless heirlooms of the Dacian nobility. The official's report also says that the treasure wasn't recovered, nor does it mention finding the caves that hid Decebalus' personal goods. Was the treasure buried under the river discovered and then moved, or was it located but not retrieved?

The ruins of Decebalus' palace, Sarmizegethusa, have been found and, in 1220, are used as the foundation for one of Kezdő Válasz's forts. The Sargetias River and the caves have not been discovered. There is a small river flowing from the western slopes of the Hargitta Mountains that the local Vlachs call the "Vargyas River" which might be the Sargetias. The magi of Kezdő Válasz have not specifically looked for the treasure because it pales beside the amount kept at Lycaneon. But there might be another reason the magi haven't looked for it: dragons. Slavonic dragons love lining their lairs with gold and silver, and a horde of this size is very likely to have attracted a dragon over the years.

the horse's revulsion to a Gifted rider. Some current members ride — it is traditional for the leader to ride a horse, and some of the younger members enjoy being in the saddle — but horses are not the quickest means of moving around the Tribunal. The oppidum owns several enchanted devices that instantly transport a magus to different locations using Arcane Connections to those places, and the members are encouraged to learn Rego Corpus spells to accomplish the same method of transportation. While they can't suddenly appear anywhere, they can instantaneously travel to designated locations.

Once a year, on the anniversary of the founding of the oppidum (August 12), the oppidum's magi meet at Fort Sarmizegethusa to exchange information and ideas, and to generally catch up with each other. The meeting usually lasts a week. New members are introduced, if they have not been already, and assigned to a fort. When there are an odd number of members, a fort that normally holds two magi will hold three, the meeting room being replaced with a third Hermetic laboratory. Magi who want to form a vexillation announce their intentions at the annual meeting.

Magi

Kezdő Válasz's current membership is eight. Only two of the four pairs of magi are described, leaving you room to detail the other members of Kezdő Válasz. The oppidum readily accepts new members, especially recently gauntleted Tremere magi. Kezdő Válasz can easily provide players who enjoy mission-based adventures with a home for their characters.

ESSEDARIUS OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 85 (apparent age: 38)

Personality Traits: Steadfast +3, Thoughtful +2, Cheerful +1.

Privilege: Cives

Essedarius, filius of Macrobius, is the leader of Kezdő Válasz. Tall and stocky, with brown eyes and a bald head, Essedarius appears confident and relaxed. He usually dresses in dark-colored riding clothes and always carries his talisman, an enchanted sword instilled with several powers that inflict wounds and affect things at a distance. A Corpus specialist, Essedarius looks the same as he did years ago, when he underwent his first longevity ritual.

Essedarius is the fourth leader in Kezdő Válasz's history, a direct descendent of the founder, Norsius, through Gasparus and his filius Macrobius. Born into the Order of Hermes, the son of a warrior who lived at Laniena, he was trained at the Scholomance and has never known of a life outside House Tremere. A determined if not brilliant stu-

dent, he was selected as Macrobius' apprentice and has followed in his parents' footsteps. When Macrobius was slain in 1215, rent to pieces in an accidental encounter with an angry griffin, Essedarius accepted the position of leading the oppidum.

New in his position, Essedarius has not faced any real threats yet. He is keenly aware of the growing conflict between Bosnia and Hungary, and fears the widespread slaughter that a crusade might bring. He has identified several Hungarians knights who frequently cross the border searching for heretical Patarians to kill. He warns his agents to stay out of their way, but will defend his Bosnian spies if they are attacked. To prove his leadership capabilities, Essedarius has not been living in his fort but in the field, staying at a camp with six armed gogs. He believes this display shows his commitment to the oppidum, while others complain that it is a waste of his time and he should be working to improve his Arts instead.

Story Seeds for Kezdő Válasz's Magi

Kezdő Válasz readily accepts young magi as members, both newly gauntleted Tremere and foreign magi who would otherwise be coloniae. It is one of the easier oppida to join, and is an ideal way to introduce new magi to the Tribunal. New members might be paired with other new members or with older magi. They will be placed in a fort, and each receives an equal share of the oppidum's privileges and responsibilities. New members are not free agents exactly, and must follow the commands of Essedarius, the oppidum's leader. His agenda is always full, and he will never run out of errands and missions for the younger members.

NEW FOUNDATIONS

Worried that hostilities between the Hungarians and the Bošnjani could result in military action, Essedarius equips the young magi with vis and casting tablets, and tells them to create a fort at the Iron Gate, a gorge that separates the upper and lower Danube valleys at the junction of the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains. Remnants of the Bridge of Apollodorus, built during Emperor Trajan's reign and destroyed 100 years later, remain. Rumors say that ghostly legionnaires still cross the bridge on nights of the full moon. Essedarius wonders if a magical version of the bridge still exists in a regio, which might

explain the ghosts, and tells the characters to investigate that as a possible location for the fort.

RUSHING TO THE RESCUE

The museum oppidum Tablinum calls for help. A zmaj has entered one of the hidden exhibits, arriving through a previously unknown entrance, or by some power possessed by the dragon. It is destroying the contained items and must be stopped immediately. The hidden exhibit is called "The Bones of the Founders" by the curator, but he will not say more, telling the magi that they should only kill the zmaj, not explore the regio.

WRANGLING A FEW NEW STEEDS

Forever horse-lovers, the magi of Kezdő Válasz desire new mounts. Adulio has heard that a renowned faerie horse called "Golden Sunshine" has been spotted on the plain of horses, a vast area along the upper Danube. He asks the player characters to capture the faerie horse for him, as he is otherwise committed. Actually, Adulio has heard that faerie horses can be more trouble than they are worth, and wants to see what happens if the steed befriends one of the player magi first, before becoming property of the horse's new owner.

LEONA OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 106 (apparent age: 56)

Personality Traits: Quick-tempered +3, Competitive +2, Naturalist +2.

Privilege: Cives

Leona is currently partnered with Essedarius, her former partner Macrobius' replacement. Of average height and overweight, she also dresses in riding clothes like most of her sodales. An expert at Herbam magic, she gains most of her information from the local flora, asking questions directly from the trees and shrubs in the various areas she visits. Her magical sigil is the scent of lilac, which is stronger with higher magnitude spells. Many assume she is slow-moving and ponderous, but in truth she is quick to act and easily angered.

Leona was not with Macrobius when he was slain by a griffin, and she still blames herself for her partner's death. Tracking down and killing the beast did little to quell her rage, and she persists in hunting the magical creatures. When she can, she prowls the southern Dinaric Alps, focusing on the Prokletije range in southern Serbia. The locals call the Prokletije the "Accursed Mountains," a name she finds particularly apt since it is where Macrobius fell. She has recently built a fort there, near the source of the Erenick River. Remote and difficult to

access, her sodales complain that it is a misuse of Kezdő Válasz's casting tablets and vis. Essedarius has assured them that it is only a phase, and the fort will be abandoned as soon as Leona's anger cools.

ADULIO OF HOUSE TREMERE

Age: 41 (apparent age: 36)

Personality Traits: Ambitious +3, Restless +3, Loyal +2.

Privilege: Cives

Adulio joined Kezdő Válasz in 1204, two months after the city of Constantinople fell to the Latins. This climatic event at the end of his apprenticeship led Adulio to believe the Transylvanian Tribunal was also in danger, and that joining Kezdő Válasz was the most effective use of his abilities. The magi of Thebes have seen the harm that crusading armies can do to their Tribunal, and Adulio means to prevent a similar event in Transylvania. Reed-thin and dark-haired, Adulio has a perilous look to him, as if he is ready to launch into violence at the slightest provocation. His familiar is a Eurasian lynx named Ucgas (Romanian for "Killer"), a restless creature that adds to Adulio's dangerous appearance. Adulio prefers Auram spells that destroy things.

In the 16 years since his joining, Adulio has been mostly disappointed at the lack of a large threat to the Tribunal. Infrequent run-ins with giants have only momentarily abated his desire for combat, but he still hopes for greater challenges. The most vocal war-monger at Kezdő Válasz, Adulio sees danger at every corner. He has been censured twice by the Tribunal's Quaesitors, once for needlessly antagonizing the local faeries, and a second time when he intentionally slew a band of Latin knights raiding from Epirus. Neither reprimand changed his nature; Adulio remains a strung bow ready to shoot.

Like Essedarius, Adulio likes to ride. He has a magic bridle crafted by Essedarius that soothes a horse and allows the beast to carry the magus. Adulio's father was a horse breeder and the magus has a good eye for well-bred mounts.

Story Seeds for Kezdő Válasz's Environs

Every seven years, Kezdő Válasz's magi leave their old forts for new forts. Not every fort is destroyed when the magi leave, and if they think they may use it again, the magi let the fort stand. Even if they never intend to return, if the casting tablet with the *Destroy the Fort* spell isn't handy, the magi may just abandon the fort. A few forts lie scattered about in locations that no longer interest the magi of Kezdő Válasz. While all were originally constructed in Magic auras, things change. Some remaining forts rest in Magic auras, a few in Faerie auras, and one or two sit in Infernal auras.

Abandoned forts could house new inhabitants. Wandering coloniae who know the operations of Kezdő Válasz might temporarily move into a fort, hoping that the oppidum won't come visiting anytime

soon. While it once belonged to the oppidum, they left it. Who owns it now? A story could involve a powerful colonia taking up residence in a fort that the magi of Kezdő Válasz want to re-occupy. Elder magi might ask the oppidum's newest members (the player characters) to figure out a way to deal with the interloper.

Wandering magi are not the only possible squatters. Transylvania is thick with faerie creatures. Giants are always on the watch for a new home, especially if that home is near a local village. Unattended forts in remote mountain locations might suddenly become home to a magical dragon. Forts near human settlements could be taken over by wandering knights seeking refuge or local bandits seeking a hiding spot.

NECULAI OF HOUSE BJORNAER

Age: 47 (apparent age: 39)

Personality Traits: Observant +3, Agile +2, Grumpy +2.

Privilege: Socius

Neculai is a Hungarian native, born in the Carpathian foothills. Found by a migrating Bjornaer magus, he was apprenticed and raised in the Stonehenge Tribunal. Once gauntleted, he yearned for his homeland, and petitioned several Transylvanian covenants for membership. Needing an aedile at the time, Kezdő Válasz quickly accepted his application, to which he reluctantly agreed. Neculai is small-framed and hawkish, with a beak-like nose and hair so black that it seems tinted blue. An Intellego specialist, Neculai can magically speak to almost any bird, beast, and fish.

Neculai is a member of Clan Sirnas, the branch of magi within House Bjornaer who serve as protectors and guardians. Always suspicious of House Tremere, and being one of the few non-Latin Houses of the Order, Clan Sirnas keeps a watchful eye on the Tremere magi. Neculai serves these

interests well, and the clan expects him to return useful reports on the machinations of House Tremere. Personally, Neculai resents this role almost as much as he resents being paired with Adulio. He refuses to act covertly, either for his House or his oppidum sodales. He does not repeat what happens at the Gathering of Twelve Years to his oppidum members, but informs them that he may recount his personal observations at the Gathering, which he has twice attended since joining Kezdő Válasz. These observations may or may not contain Tremere business. Essedarius is unconcerned, saying that House Tremere has nothing to hide and House Bjornaer has nothing to fear.

Neculai's heartbeast is a pern, also called a honey buzzard: a kite-sized, migratory raptor that usually preys on wasp and hornet larva, but will also eat small reptiles, birds, and mammals. Flying is an ideal mode of transportation for the Tribunal's rugged terrain. Recently, Essedarius has asked Neculai to visit Leona at the remote Prokletije fort, ostensibly to keep her informed of the oppidum's business but also to keep her under observation.

Chapter Eight

Creatures

The many strange creatures of the Transylvanian Tribunal cannot all be described here. The broad classes of monster popular in local folktales are described here, but storyguides should strive to make each example a distinctive person. A Transylvanian vampire, dragon, or witch is a particular and unique individual.

Dragons of the Tribunal

Of all the creatures that prowl the remote landscapes of the Transylvanian Tribunal, none are more terrible than the dragons. The Transylvanian Tribunal covers hundreds of thousands of square miles of land, more than half of it nestled behind nearly impenetrable forests, tortuous ravines, and imposing mountain peaks. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of dragons live in the Tribunal. These fierce beasts can be found in several locations: secluded forest gulches, hidden valleys in the vast plains, rugged river ravines, remote castles, and beneath the surface of the Tribunal's many lakes and rivers. Superior (literally and metaphorically) to all these climes are the towering peaks of the Tribunal's mountains, which offer ideal homes for the reclusive beasts.

According to legend, dragons are predisposed to mankind depending on the dragon's gender. A female dragon is always hostile, a bringer of bad weather, and a destroyer of crops. Her brother, on the other hand, takes loving pity on mankind and protects the crops from his sister's depredations. Many stories tell how a female and male will continuously battle each other, reminiscent of the tales of the Slavic gods Perun and Veles.

Such legends are half right. The separation among dragons is not between genders, but supernatural realms. The majority of Transylvanian dragons are affiliated with one of the Infernal or the Magic realm. Infernal dragons prey on mankind, taking what they want and returning to their secluded lairs. Magic dragons prefer isolation and tend to interact with man less frequently, but like Infernal dragons, they value human wives and hordes of gold. Faerie dragons are rare. Transylvania faeries already have strong traditional roles that they play. A faerie playing a dragon role runs the risk of antagonizing one of the proper dragons. Divine dragons may exist, but according to Hermetic records, no true Divine dragons have been encountered in the Tribunal, only those blessed kings who can assume dragon form (see Vampires, later).

There are many similarities between Infernal and Magical dragons. Both types vary in size, ranging from the size of large wolves to great behemoths. Predominately quadrupeds, Transylvanian dragons usually have multiple heads, with three and seven being the most common. Infernal and Magical dragons are similarly colored, favoring dark woody tones and earthy hues. Both sorts of dragons can be extremely intelligent and cultured, enjoying the refinements of a noble lifestyle. Both Infernal and Magical dragons are difficult to find, for those foolish enough to go looking. As supernatural creatures, they can easily live in areas with extreme conditions. Neither the bottom of a lake nor the top of a barren mountain peak presents any difficulty, although a dragon may make accommodations for his captives. Knowing that he might be able to live beneath the Danube, but his human wife can't, a dragon might create an environment in which she could breathe.

Hermetic magic makes a clear and accurate distinction between Infernal and Magic

dragons. Intellego Vim spells will indicate which realm a creature is associated with, although each Intellego Vim spell must be realm-specific. A spell to indicate if a creature is Infernal will not work on a Magic dragon, but will work on an Infernal dragon, and the same holds true for a spell that indicates Magic creatures when cast on a Magic dragon. A simple process of elimination will tell a magus if he is dealing with an Infernal or Magic dragon.

Realms of Power: Magic has several ranks of dragon and dragon-kind, from the lowly serpents to the powerful true dragon (page 74). Transylvania's dragons are all true dragons, even those that don't conform to the Transylvanian standard of four legs, bat wings, and multiple heads. Weak dragons have Infernal or Magic Might Scores between 15 and 30, typical dragons between 30 and 40, and the most powerful dragons have Might scores between 40 and 50. Legendary dragons have Might scores around 60.

Infernal Dragons

Called *aždaja* in the Slavonic languages (pl. *aždaje*), an Infernal dragon is not a demon but an Infernal beast. Unlike other Infernal beasts, *aždaje* are intelligent instead of cunning. *Aždaje* raid and plunder without remorse, amassing wealth and inflicting harm. In *aždaje* society, might makes right; the stronger *aždaje* control the weaker. Lesser *aždaje* hope to grow in power and then reverse the social situation. Reveling in their power, the stronger *aždaje* take the better lairs and hunting grounds. This hierarchy is controlled through strength. Reputation matters, but an *aždaja* controls his inferiors by punishing them when they disobey or get in his way.

Intelligent and sly-tongued, an aždaja is capable of lies and deceit. After centuries of living in the same geographic area as Hermetic magi, some aždaje pretend to be Magical dragons to avoid Hermetic interaction. This ploy only works if the magus' Intellego Vim spell cannot penetrate the dragon's Magic Resistance. However, a very powerful aždaja cannot hide his Infernal nature. Such a beast almost invites magi to come find him, so he can decorate his lair with the their charred bones and seared skulls.

Not every aždaja is a multi-headed quadruped. Some aždaje have no legs and resemble huge snakes. Some of these legless dragons have wings. Legless, wingless aždaja prefer dense forests, where they can hide among the fallen pine trees. Colors of both types of aždaje run from midnight black to deep blue to dark green. Aždaje do not breed, and their method of procreation is a mystery. Aždaja numbers have stayed relatively stable for hundreds of years, each living in a well-defined area large enough to

support its greed.

Like a Magical dragon, an aždaja prefers to live in a remote location. Although the locations may be similar, the trappings are not. Infernal dragon lairs are dark, desolate places, creeping with despair and edged in rot. Usually placed in Infernal auras, the vast majority of these auras are corrupted with the taint of malevolence (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 15).

Magical Dragons

To most Tribunal residents the magic dragons aren't much better than the aždaje. Called *zmaj* (pl. *zmajevi*), magic dragons lust after the same things — wives and treasure — and often use the same means to get them. Whereas the aždaje know that they are inflicting harm on humans, the *zmajevi* aren't aware of the destruction they cause or the hate they engender. Far from stupid, a *zmaj*

is simply unconcerned with his neighbors' ill feelings. *Zmajevi* are often multi-headed and darkly hued, like aždaje, and have a size range similar to their Infernal counterparts. Some *zmajevi* walk on two hind legs, a physical characteristic unique to the Magic dragons. Such *zmaj* have short forearms ending in clawed hands that can manipulate items, tools, and weapons.

Zmajevi lairs are very different from aždaje lairs, although the difference is only discernible by those few individuals lucky enough to visit one. Placed in remote areas, *zmajevi* lairs are luxurious affairs. A *zmaj* displays his wealth and decorates his lair with precious stones, stolen tapestries, ornately carved furniture, and other signs of opulence. Some keep human slaves as servants, especially those *zmajevi* who have human wives. *Zmajevi* are indifferent toward man, but not necessarily toward their wives, and sometimes happiness can be found within a *zmaj's* lair.

Zmajevi also live in a social hierarchy, like their infernal cousins the aždaje. The

Upokorituma, an Aždaja

Aždaje are corrupted beasts, not demons, and follow the rules found in *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 77. In most cases, a corrupted beast is a tainted version of a mundane beast, and game statistics are created by adding Infernal Virtues and Flaws to the mundane beast's existing statistics. Because there are no mundane dragons, a corrupted dragon's game statistics can either be created using a combination of Infernal Virtues and Flaws (*Realms of Power: The Infernal*, pages 77–79) and Virtues and Flaws appropriate for beasts (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, pages 38–43). You may also add Infernal Virtues and Flaws to a Magic dragon, using the rules found in *Realms of Power: Magic*. In the latter case, the dragon is a creature of the Infernal realm, and has Infernal Might instead of Magic Might, even if it has powers created using the rules for Magic creatures. The following example uses Infernal Virtues and Flaws and standard Virtues & Flaws to create a sample aždaja.

Infernal Might: 17 (Vim)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -5, Str +2, Sta +4, Dex +1, Qik -2

Size: +2

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Infernal Power (x2); Great Stamina, Lesser Infernal Power, Tough, Greedy, Horrifying Appearance, Demonic Weakness (abhorrent material: Serbian spruce tree), Corrupted Beast, Fear (doves).

Personality Traits: Covetous +6, Furious +3, Vengeful +3

Combat:

Claws: Init -3, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +4

Soak: +7

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1–7), -3 (8–14), -5 (15–21), Incapacitated (22–28), Dead (29+)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (flying), Awareness 3 (food), Brawl 6 (claw), Survival 3 (wooded gulches)

Powers:

Claws as Sharp as Satan's, 5 points, Init +3, Animal: Upokorituma can magically cause his claws to harden and become sharper for a limited period of time (D: Dia), causing an extra +4 Damage with his claw attacks.

(Incantation/Effusion Base 20, +1 Dia)
February's Frosty Bite, 5 points, Init +3, Ignem.

This power chills the target enough to burn flesh, doing +10 Damage.

(Incantation/Effusion Base 5, +3 Sight, +1 magnitude of extra Damage)

Flight of the Raven, 0 points, Constant, Animal: This power grants Upokorituma wings with which he can fly.

(Debauchery/Phantasm Base 3, +2 Sun, +1 Constant, +1 Size adjustment)

Vis: 4 pawns of Vim vis, one in each of the aždaja's largest canine teeth.

Appearance: Upokorituma is squat and stocky, like a thick-legged horse, with eight heads resting atop eight thick necks. His membranous wings appear too small to support its weight, but this is a false impression and the aždaja is a skilled flier. He is dark gray with pink eyes and blood-red gums.

Upokorituma lives along the upper Danube, hiding in gulches and hard-to-reach ravines. He constantly watches for merchant vessels, often waiting submerged until a targeted ship passes above him. Once past, the beast rises out of the river to attack with surprise. Typically he slays all aboard, sinks the vessel, and returns to his lair with all the loot he can carry.



zmajevi social framework is based on reputation, and consists of remembered favors and slights, assistances and injustices. The zmajevi of the Transylvanian Tribunal have co-existed for thousands of years and have a long history of interactions. They remember the violent years, before Fetillusclaviceps created the peace (see insert), and the relatively tranquil time of the last few centuries. The stronger still abuse the weaker, taking their treasure and property, but it is tempered by other relationships and the threat of retribution by other zmajevi. A stronger zmaj might not take a weaker zmaj's recently abducted wife, if that zmaj is somehow attached to a more powerful third party. This complicated social structure resembles human feudal society, but also contains several intricacies pertinent only to dragons. While the magi of House Tremere don't exactly understand how it works, it has worked well enough over the years to keep the zmajevi making only occasional raids against human society.

Pax Draconis

The Roman Empire brought trade, urban centers, and a degree of lasting peace to Dacia. They also brought a dragon, a powerful Roman worm named Fetillusclaviceps who enjoyed secretly watching the Romans. Like an amused child watching a hill of ants, Fetillusclaviceps observed the legions as they imposed Roman rule on the local inhabitants. He was frequently interrupted by native dragon attacks, rapacious beasts who struck without warning or provocation. Dacia, at the time, was a battlefield for dragons. Zmajevi and aždaje warred without peace or patience, engaged in a constant struggle that regularly spilled outside the areas native to dragons and into human places. The Dacian tribes were too disorganized to fight back, and most claimed the reptilian depredations were signs from their angry pagan gods. Fetillusclaviceps realized that the Romans wouldn't ignore the dragons. Years of watching the Romans had shown how persistent they could be. Fetillusclaviceps thought the dragons would lose if they clashed with the Romans.

Transylvania is an ideal habitat for dragons. To save the beasts and sustain their ecology, Fetillusclaviceps had an idea. He would set himself up as ruler, and beat the other

dragons into submission. Once the most powerful were defeated, Fetillusclaviceps would allow the native dragons to assume a role in his "empire," much like the Romans, who drafted native warriors into their army. Fetillusclaviceps would then limit the dragons' involvement with mankind, forcing them to remain hidden and strike only rarely and with caution. If they must raid — and dragons must — he would impose limitations that would sustain the entire population of dragons.

Seeking out the most powerful zmaj in the Carpathian Mountains, a twelve-headed beast named Abur-ciocîrlie, Fetillusclaviceps challenged it to a duel. If the Roman dragon won, the zmaj would become bound to Fetillusclaviceps. Furthermore, Abur-ciocîrlie must bind weaker dragons to him, creating a chain of most powerful to least powerful. If Abur-ciocîrlie won, Fetillusclaviceps promised to show the ancient dragon where the hoard of Decebalus was hidden (see Chapter 7). Overcome by gold-lust, Abur-ciocîrlie agreed and failed in a legendary battle that promoted Fetillusclaviceps to the head of the Transylvanian zmajevi.

Fetillusclaviceps then turned to the aždaje, making the same challenge to the most powerful Infernal dragon he could find. This aždaja, named Britvazub, repeatedly accepted Fetillusclaviceps' challenge and consistently lost. Defeated but not slain, Britvazub would vow submission to Fetillusclaviceps, but then continually break his promise. The Roman dragon needed another tactic to corral the recalcitrant aždaje. Where honor failed, violence succeeded. Fetillusclaviceps found the next strongest aždaja, Slomljenakrila, and promised that if she accepted his peace, Fetillusclaviceps would help her kill Britvazub, which would increase Slomljenakrila's wealth and territory. He also promised Slomljenakrila that if any of the aždaje broke the treaty, he would assist her in killing them.

Forged in the second century, Fetillusclaviceps called his treaty the *Pax Draconis* or "Dragon's Peace." In essence, it states that the dragons will not band together to war on each other, will contain their violence to their immediate area, and will respect the wishes of the more powerful. They will cease to prey on men, although if attacked they can certainly defend themselves. Fetillusclaviceps realized that he could not keep

the dragons from taking human wives, so instead he informed the dragons that it was allowed, with a superior dragon's permission. This clause never worked perfectly; a dragon will not ask another if it can abduct a wife. Instead, Fetilluscalviceps said that any dragon who takes a wife without permission is an outlaw and can be hunted by other dragons, who can band together to kill the outlaw dragon and take his possessions. The end result is that only the more powerful dragons steal wives, and a dragon who does take a human wife does not announce it.

The peace works, most of the time. It needs to be periodically reinforced, and Fetillusclaviceps would emerge from his lair from time to time to smite an upstart dragon. Fetillusclaviceps dealt with the zmajevi and the aždaje similarly, never favoring one kind over the other. As the centuries passed, Fetillusclaviceps' personal appearances decreased. The longer the Roman dragon's absences, the more frequent dragon outlawry becomes. During one particularly volatile episode of dragon raids in the early ninth century, Tremere the founder impersonated Fetillusclaviceps and suppressed the rebellious dragons. Tremere magi aren't sure what the founder's motives were, and any recorded explanation was lost in the Sundering. Was it merely to stop raiding dragons, or did the Founder have other plans in mind? Tremere himself never spoke of his impersonation.

Fetillusclaviceps has been sighted a half-dozen times in the last three centuries, but he never directly encountered by a magus, nor has his lair been discovered. The dragon has not been seen in more than 50 years. Some Tremere magi wonder if the past sightings were really Fetillusclaviceps or one of their own, copying the Founder's impersonation of the beast. There is no official Tremere policy to continue pretending to be the Roman dragon, as far as anyone knows, although it does make a certain amount of sense. Frequent appearances keep the aždaje and the zmajevi in line, making them less of a problem for Hermetic and mundane society.

Dragon-Born

A zmaj with a human wife can produce human offspring. Born in the dragon's lair, the children rarely remain with their father,

Danaslepih, a Zmaj

Danaslepih is young by zmaj standards. Born blind, he has developed acute senses of smell and hearing, and can travel about his territory effortlessly. He knows the smell of every plant in the Tribunal, and if he smells grain crops growing too close to his home, he destroys them. His lair is hidden among a closely growing group of horse-chestnut trees along the Drina River in western Serbia.

Magic Might: 25 (Animal)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre -2, Com -5, Str +10, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik -2

Size: +4

Season: Summer

Confidence Score: 2 (6)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal; Magical Monster; Increased Characteristics (x3), Self-Confident, Tough (x2); Blind

Magical Qualities & Inferiorities: Gigantic (x3), Greater Power (x3); Improved Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Power, Personal Power (x3), Gift of Speech

Personality Traits: Protective +6, Aloof +3, Disrespectful +3

Combat:

*Bite**: Init 0, Attack +17, Defense +9, Damage +13

*Danaslepih can make multiple attacks in a single round, each attack using the statistics earlier. Because of the dragon's size, he can only attack a specific Size 0 target twice in a single round. For each Size above 0, the dragon can add an additional attack to that target in the same round.

Soak: +9

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (19-27), Incapacitated (28-36), Dead (37+)

Abilities: Athletics 3 (climbing), Awareness 2 (listening), Brawl 9 (large teeth), Stealth 3 (hiding), South Slavonic 3 (Serbian), Survival 3 (forests)

Powers:

The Beast with Five Heads, 0 points, Constant, Animal: This constant power gives Danaslepih five additional heads, for a total of six. It does not regrow lost heads or regenerate damaged heads. This effect is achieved by buying the Magical Quality: Personal Power

thrice and the Magical Quality: Improved Powers once. Each head can speak and make an attack.

(Base 25, +2 Sun, +1 constant, +4 additional heads)

Assuming the Horse-chestnut, 4 points, Init -6, Animal: The dragon can turn into a tree. He can assume the shape of a standing tree by standing on his hind legs before the transformation, or a fallen tree by lying down.

(Base 10, +1 Conc, +1 Herbam requisite, +3 Size adjustment)

The Field Made Fallow, 4 points, Init -6, Herbam: Danaslepih can wither crops and destroy a field with a touch of his claw. This power can destroy a group of up to 10,000 plants.

(Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Group, +3 to affect a larger group)

The Captive Encased in Bark, 3 points, Init -7, Corpus: Danaslepih's breath can change a person into a tree, a horse-chestnut similar to, but not as large as, the same kind of tree the zmaj can become. His nostrils need to be very close to the subject, effectively Touch range.

(Base 25, +1 Touch, +3 Moon, +1 Herbam requisite, excess levels used as mastery points to reduce point cost by 2)

Inquiry of the Leafy Sentinel, 3 points, Init -5, Herbam: Danaslepih can speak with trees and shrubs.

(Base 15, +1 Touch, +1 Diam)

Vis: 5 pawns of Animal vis located in the five most prominent dorsal scales on the dragon's back.

Appearance: Danaslepih has green scales that look as if they are tinged with mold, but it is merely his coloring. Long, lean, and low to the ground, his body is 40 feet long from fangs to tail, but stands only 6 feet high at the shoulders. His six heads twist and writhe like snake tongues tasting the air, motionless only when he is stalking prey.

Danaslepih generally prowls the borders of his territory, hunting deer and protecting his grove from encroaching farmers. He is not violent, although he can be very rude. When encountering a farmer, he destroys the man's crops and changes the farmer into a tree. Like other zmajevi, Danaslepih is looking for a wife.

Dragon-Born Statistics

Inherited Virtues: Greater Immunity (fire), Personal Power, Self-Confident
Common Flaws: Greedy (women or gold)

A dragon-born character receives a Personal Power, designed according to the rules found in *Realms of Power: Magic Realm*, page 41. The power should mirror a power possessed by the character's dragon father. Two example Personal Powers are:

LUNGS OF THE FISH

R: Per, D: Moon, T: Part
 The character was born to a dragon

that lived under a lake and can breathe water by expending a Fatigue Level.
 (Base 4, +3 Moon, +1 Part)

HANDS OF THE FIERY BEAST

R: Per, D: Conc, T: Part
 The character can cause his hands to become so hot that they ignite held material and burn those he touches. Visually, the character's hands glow as brightly as molten iron. It costs the character a Fatigue Level to use this power, which has a Penetration of 10.
 (Base 5, +1 Conc, +1 Part. Excess spell levels used for Penetration)

and it is more common for the child to be returned to the mother's kinfolk. A zmaj feels no strong attachments to the child, and the child is not especially predisposed one way or another to his reptilian parent. Some of the most famous dragon slayers of Transylvanian legends were dragon-born men. While dragons themselves have bad reputations, dragon-born children are well-regarded. Peasants think that dragon blood mixed with human kindness produces a person destined to aid mankind.

Dragon-born look like regular men and women to most people. A viewer with Second Sight will see that the dragon-born's pupils are slit like a snake's instead of round, and that the dragon-born's skin has a reflective shine to it, like light reflecting off scales. Dragon-born are another type of Magic Kin, as described in *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 89. Like others of their ilk, each dragon-born character has "Inherited Virtues" and "Common Flaws" that must be purchased at character generation.

The Dragon War

With few interruptions, the Pax Draconis has held, maintaining the peace between the aždaje and the zmajevi, and keeping their depredations against human neighbors to a minimum. Most altercations with dragons are with individuals, who are often defending their lairs or recovering stolen property. But this could change at any time.

The only thing holding the dragons in check is the Pax Draconis, and the only thing that gives the treaty its weight is Fetillusclaviceps. If Fetillusclaviceps was removed, then the dragons would seize new opportunities, revenging old grudges and taking whatever they could. Every dragon wants more, especially gold, and being egotistical by nature, every dragon thinks that it deserves more than it has. Violence would rule the day and descend like a plague on mankind.

Within this war, it is entirely possible that groups of dragons might unite. Revenge or gain motivates dragons to form groups. A powerful aždaja impresses weaker aždaje into a raiding party. Several zmajevi bond together to claim a specific territory. It is unlikely that a zmaj and aždaja would unite for a joint purpose, because the two are too dissimilar in mindset to find common cause. It is more probable that one type would unite to destroy a dragon of the other type. But animosity does not just exist between zmajevi and aždaje, and nearly every dragon in the Tribunal has a laundry list of those he'd like to harm. Both aždaje and zmajevi plunder human settlements at will, taking gold and slaves.

As the self-proclaimed military protectors of the Order, House Tremere cannot stand idle if dragons war against each other and humanity. It is the chance the House has been waiting for, the opportunity to prove themselves to the Order as a whole. While they might hide in their oppida and covenants, they will eventually be found. And dare they risk the state of events if they are not found? What will the Tribunal look

like after a year of constant dragon warfare? They must launch into action, putting their weapons, fortifications, and warlike strategies to work.

A dragon war is an epic saga, one that tests every resource of House Tremere and weighs the mettle of every magus in the Tribunal. Such a saga is not a plug-and-play adventure. It requires that the storyguide select events that are relevant to the characters and enjoyable to the players. Much like a story, the saga needs a hook, something to start the war and get the player-characters involved, several situational events, and a climax, a resolution that the players achieve rather than witness. Several suggestions follow, allowing you to select those that fit your troupe's style of play.

THE HOOK: SPARKING THE DRAGON WAR

The dragons have remained idle in Transylvania for a long time. Something needs to ignite them into action. The simplest trigger is the removal of Fetillusclaviceps, or the awareness that the dragon is already gone, which would make the peace empty. The actual trigger of the war could be any of the following events.

- **Veles Returns.** A rise in the worship of Perun by the Slavs unfortunately rouses Veles, the god's archenemy. Returned from the mystic realm with which it is associated, Veles immediately incites the other dragons associated with him to war. If Veles is a Magic creature, then the zmajevi would break the peace. If Veles is an Infernal creature, he is a demon rather than a corrupted beast, and has the power to force the aždaje to follow him. Fetillusclaviceps cannot be found. Perhaps he has already fallen to Veles. Dragons test their boundaries, and as the conflagration flares, they exercise their power in a mad dash for gold, property, and renown.
- **Abur-ciocîrlie Returns.** Tired of lying dormant, the ancient Slavic dragon once again challenges the Roman worm. Unable to stomach his secondary role any longer, Abur-ciocîrlie leaves his castle fortress and holds council with several dragons. Being older and wiler, he knows that it will take more than mere loot to assemble a team of sparring drag-

ons. He convinces his brethren that the magi are in league with Fetillusclaviceps, and the zmajevi are actually suffering the oppressions of human wizards. Perhaps Abur-ciocîrlie has framed a few magi from Kezdö Válasz (see Chapter 7) by slaying a nearby zmaj and putting its treasure in one of the covenant's abandoned forts. Roused by injustice, the band attacks a nearby target, breaking the peace and dragging the entire dragon species to war.

- **Decebalus' Treasury.** After years of searching, the lost treasury of Decebalus is discovered, either by a zmaj or an aždaja, or both at the same time. Overcome by greed, the dragons break the truce and begin fighting. The winner sits atop the gold, and the loser makes it known to his kin that the victor has snatched the gold from him. Other dragons rise up, pilfering nearby hoards of gold in a frenzy of financial gain. Fetillusclaviceps must reinforce the truce lest it completely fall apart. Mindful of the priests of the Cult of Mercury, many centuries ago, he implores the local Hermetic magi to assist him.
- **What's Good for the Neighbors is Good for Us.** Infernal forces are on the rise in the nearby Theban Tribunal, ever since the demon Akgah sundered of the Divine forces protecting Constantinople (see *The Sundered Eagle*, page 139). Viewing the scene from his mountain aerie, a powerful aždaje named Rabidanadas thinks he could manage the same in Transylvania. Since the Roman dragon hasn't been seen in 50 years, Rabidanadas hopes to coerce a band of aždaje into testing their strength against the Kingdom of Bulgaria.
- **We Have Been Deceived!** It is discovered, either by dragons or magi, that Fetillusclaviceps is long gone, and that the last several sightings have been a magus masquerading as the Roman dragon to keep the peace. If this ruse is discovered by dragons, they instantly react violently, each hoping for new territory and plunder taken from the Order of Hermes. Once one group falls out of line, the rest follow, and dragon raids evolve into raging war. If a magus discovers this ruse, the threat is even more dangerous. Pretending to be the dragon could be construed

as breaking the Oath of Hermes, since the magus is dealing with Infernal beasts in a fashion. How does House Tremere respond? If they stop the ruse, it will only be a matter of time before the dragons test their boundaries, most likely initiated by the aždaje.

- **The Smallest Spark.** Magi of the oppida Old Histria and Shrouded Bay regularly interact with the zmajevi living on Histria. Dragons can be as moody and childish as elder magi, tainted by self-centeredness. The Tytalus maga Leon-tine Adiran (see Chapter 5) often debates with an ancient zmaj, honing her skills as the pair argues the finer points of philosophical ethics. The pair meets at an old stone column, which has lost its significance except to them. A heady disagreement over Aristotle's Golden Mean leads to angry words and name-calling, with neither party willing to apologize. While the two are not speaking, the column goes missing. Maga blames zmaj and zmaj blames maga. A face-to-face shouting match leads to blows with both vowing vengeance. The zmaj brings his fellow zmajevi into the feud and attacks Old Histria. Excited by the violence, nearby dragons attack both dragon and human targets. Endemic violence spreads throughout the dragons' realms.

The best trigger involves your player characters, somehow, as a result of one of their actions. It would be a paradoxical narrative if even the smallest action prompted such a monstrous response. Legal charges could also be brought against the player characters, especially if they purposefully

endangered the Order with their actions. Some suggestions are:

- **Rescue the Maiden.** A wealthy boyar's daughter has been stolen by a dragon, and the noble wants the woman back. He asks a pair of Tremere magi for aid, and they readily deprive the dragon of the maiden. The dragon, positive that his defeat could not have been engineered by mere mortals, complains to a more powerful dragon, which uses this event to convince other zmajevi that the wizards are more nefarious than the dragons once thought. This could easily lead into the "Abur-ciocîrlie returns" idea mentioned previously.
- **Evicting a Zmaj.** A group of magi covet a zmaj's magic regio, and force the beast from it. Knowing that it can't beat the magi alone, the deposed zmaj assembles a team of zmajevi to reclaim the regio. They succeed, and their success entices other like-minded zmajevi to rail against the social framework. Initially led by less powerful zmajevi, this is the equivalent of a peasants' revolt within the realm of the dragons.

THE SITUATIONS: THE WAR RAGES

As the storyguide, you could create a single plot for your players to follow, but you might be safer creating situations for the players, rather than forcing them along a single course of action. Each situation should be more dramatic than the previous, escalating the damage caused by the war

A Dragon-Riding Storm Wizard

There is a legend in Transylvania that says thunderstorms are caused by a dragon-riding wizard, the right-hand man of the devil. According to the tale, 10 students are chosen periodically and taught the secrets of nature and magic at the Scholomance, a school hidden in the mountains (see Chapter 7). Nine of the scholars return to mankind, but the tenth is kept by the devil, given an aždaja to ride, and assists the fiend in making bad weather.

Obviously this is a conglomeration of several facts of the Tribunal. There is a magical school called the Scholomance, and dragons certainly exist, as do storm wizards. Did House Tremere train a magus who was already a storm wizard? Hermetic magic can accomplish many things. Is a magus assuming the shape of a giant, riding a controlled dragon, and causing storms? Or has the devil tainted a magus and granted him Infernal gifts so that he will lead the aždaje against the Order of Hermes?

and threatening targets to which the players' characters are personally attached. The war should move closer to home as it progresses, keeping in mind that "home" doesn't necessarily mean the player characters' covenant, although it could. It might also mean the Tribunal or the entire Order. Whatever the group most prizes should be the ultimate stake in the war against the dragons.

Dragons fill the night sky. Fire falls like rain. Targets shift: first dragon, then human and perhaps magi, and the collateral damage is extensive. Old grudges rekindle and swarms of dragons happily divert from their enemy to inflict damage on an old foe. This is the time to create epic tales; this is the time for the player characters to be heroes. Those who fail will be forgotten, their bones lost where they fell. Some suggested situations are:

- **Sound the Alarm!** As the war begins, the Tribunal rushes to mobilize. Word has to be taken to the five covenants, which can presumably dispense this information to the various oppida. The Prima must be informed, as must the leading Quaesitors, Redcaps, and hoplites. If the characters are bringing the news, stories might involve negotiating some of the more difficult terrain of the Tribunal, finding absent magi, or convincing a doubting superior that this is more than a mere dragon raid. If the characters are receiving the news, they must settle their current business quickly and prepare for action, gathering allies, equipment, and supplies.
- **Rush to the Front.** While other Houses might procrastinate on how to proceed, House Tremere snaps into action. Depending on their rank and Tribunal privilege, the player characters either receive orders or give them. Forces must be marshalled and allocated. The site where the initial conflagration occurred needs to be investigated. Because most Transylvania dragons can fly, the actual front might be difficult to ascertain. Both aždaje and zmajevi prefer mountains, so threats will likely come from the many mountain chains that surround the Tribunal. Several oppida and covenants are located in the mountains, and the defenses of Laniena, Scholomance, Coeris, and Lycaneon must be seen to immediately.
- **The First Assault.** The magi of Scholomance want to relocate the apprentices and mundane students, temporarily ceasing studies until the actual scope of the dragons' conflict can be ascertained. The player characters are charged with leading a group of scholars through the Bran Pass and south into Bulgaria. Midway through the journey, a group of aždaje attacks a smaller group of zmajevi in a daring aerial dogfight. The combatants continue the battle on the ground, as the magi rush the scholars to safety. The aždaje have the upper hand. Can the magi tell the zmajevi from the aždaje? If they can, do they assist the Magically aligned dragons?
- **Consequential Confrontations.** The dragon war upsets the entire supernatural landscape of the Tribunal, killing several faerie creatures and driving others out of their usual habitats. A trio of giants arrives at a heavily populated village and begins destroying the buildings, their rage spilling out in uncontained mayhem. Must the player characters kill the giants or are there other ways to deal with the situation?
- **A City in Flames.** A wave of zmajevi descends on the royal city of Veszprém, their single purpose to burn it to the ground. The college library houses a large collection of important books and manuscripts, and more than one magus has benefited by the serendipitous inspection (or clandestine borrowing) of a text. Losing the library would be a great blow to the scholars of the Order. Saving the town would certainly impress the bishop, and ultimately the king. What do the player characters do as the rain of fire begins?
- **The First to Fall.** As the war progresses, it is likely that one of the Tribunal's oppida will be destroyed. Such an event will surely heighten the tension in your saga. Destroying an oppidum offstage might increase the drama, but putting the player characters in the flaming edifice itself surely will. Which oppidum or covenant would most affect your troupe were it destroyed? How do the player characters react when it becomes obvious that they cannot prevent the oppidum from falling? For example, the oppidum of Laniena is discovered by an aždaja, who is repelled

but not slain. Several hunters were killed in the attack, and the remaining magi fear that a second assault will be their end. The player characters arrive to help a few hours before 25 aždaje are sighted in the sky. Lexander decides to abandon Laniena, saving as much as he can, and asks the player characters to help.

- **Returning the Blow.** An airy nest is discovered, temporary home to over 50 zmajevi, who use the mountain sight to bivouac between assaults. The player characters have enough time and available resources to stage an attack, if they desire it. Using the assembled forces of the Tribunal, can the players deliver a resounding blow to the enemy?
- **Containing the Conflagration.** As the war escalates, the very real possibly exists that the dragons will war outside the boundaries of the Transylvanian Tribunal, heading into the Greater Alps, Novgorod, Theban, and Roman Tribunals. House Tremere has staked its reputation, even its very existence on preventing such an event from destroying the Order of Hermes. Can they confine the war to the mountain ranges that circle the Transylvanian Tribunal?

THE CLIMAX: RENEWED PEACE, ANNIHILATION, OR WORSE

Initially targeting each other, the dragons inflict unimaginable damage on the countryside, leveling cities, toppling kingdoms, and forever changing the face of the Tribunal. Whole areas are ravaged and scorched earth runs for miles. Rivers boil and vanish, and lakes are swallowed whole by the sundered earth. The dragon war is an event unlike any Mythic Europe has seen. It is a cataclysm of biblical proportions. The climax to this war must be spectacular, and a satisfying climax is one that the players engineer.

As storyguide, you do not need to know how the dragon war will resolve when it begins. You might hope for a particular resolution, but let events unfold as they will. Regardless of the player characters' positions in the Tribunal, your players will determine how the war ends through their characters' actions. Aggressive characters will resolve the war differently from investigative or

defensive characters. In any event, let the player characters' actions influence the war's outcome. Some suggestions, direct counters to the suggestions found earlier when starting the war, are:

- **Destroy Veles.** To successfully defeat the ancient dragon-god, the magi must first suppress the worship of Perun that has arisen in the Slavic villages. Christian forces exist to aid the characters, predominately armed knights, but the magi might desire a more peaceful approach. Having the magi acting as missionaries is a rare story arc.
- **Drive off Abur-ciocîrlie.** The magi must convince the assembled zmajevi that Abur-ciocîrlie lied, that the Order is not the enemy. They move to reinstate the Pax Draconis by a single magus challenging Abur-ciocîrlie to a duel. If no magus exists who can best the worm, the player characters must find Fetillusclaviceps and convince him to challenge his old rival.
- **An Equal Share.** The magi decide to equally distribute the wealth of Decebalus' treasury, devising a scheme in which more powerful dragons receive a larger share, but every dragon gets something. This will only likely work with zmajevi, since offering this bargain to aždaje is dealing with Infernal beings. The magi may have to unite with the zmajevi and destroy every aždaje they find. Even if this is agreed to, the magi must devise a method of enforcing the redistribution of wealth.
- **Helping Others Helps Us.** To truly defeat Rabidanadas, the magi of Transylvania must go to Thebes to defeat the demon Akgah. Only then can the dragon war be ended. Theban magi will naturally suspect foul play, but if successful, Transylvanian magi could heal a wound that has festered between the Tribunals for centuries. Doing so might clean House Tremere of its tarnish, allowing others to finally forgive the House for its tumultuous past.
- **The Culprit Among Us.** It is true: a Hermetic magus had been posing as Fetillusclaviceps for the past century. A renowned Flambeau seeker, he had tracked the elder dragon to its lair and killed the beast, only to realize that, by killing the

Roman dragon, he had sundered the Pax Draconis. Rather than admit his error, he began the subterfuge. This could have several outcomes. Continuing the impersonation is likely a Hermetic crime, and if caught, House Tremere will lose the rest of its credibility. Can the magi of House Tremere find a replacement for the Roman dragon?

- **Find the Column.** The war can only be settled if the original instigators, Leontine Adiran and her zmaj debate partner, can settle their feud. Characters discover that Dominic of Tytalus, the aedile of Coeris, stole the column to purposefully start the confrontation. Did he intentionally start the war, or was it a simple test of his protégé that spiraled out of control? Dominic is gone, either killed or missing, and the column cannot be found. Perhaps it is hidden deep within Coeris, although the player characters' superiors don't believe it is. The characters must clandestinely foil the covenant's many defenses to retrieve the column (see *Legends of Hermes*, Chapter 5).

Giants and their Mothers

Giants are notorious faeries who prowl the countryside — kidnapping princesses, waylaying travelers, and stealing horses. Unlike other areas of Mythic Europe, where giants are often portrayed as being as stupid as they are strong, Transylvanian giants are more refined. Interchangeably called ogres, giants carry arms and armor similar to knights, build holdings and homesteads, raise and even ride horses. They can be witty and charming, if it is their wish, but many would rather be bashing heads than bandying words.

To accommodate the different roles they play, many Transylvanian giants can change Size, ranging from Size +2 to +5, with some growing even larger. Because their armor and weapons are an integral part of their role, these also change in size relative to their bearer. A giant will often shrink to his smallest Size (+2) to ride a horse and then grow



Georghe and Ladislau, a Pair of Giant Brothers

Neighbors to their mother, Georghe and Ladislau have built adjacent homesteads that share a common border. Over the years, each has tried to push the fence that separates the two homesteads onto the other's land, hoping that the other brother won't notice. When he invariably does, the two come to blows. Because they are evenly matched, these quarrels can last for hours with neither gaining the upper hand.

Faerie Might: 15 (Corpus)

Characteristics: Int -2, Per -1, Pre 0, Com -2, Str +11, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik -5

Size: +4

Virtues and Flaws: Negative Reaction, Focus Power, Huge (x3); Humanoid Faerie, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (places)

Personality Traits: Warlike +3, Persistent +2

Combat:

Long Sword & Heater Shield (on foot): Init -3, Attack +13, Defense +6, Damage +17

Long Sword & Heater Shield (on horseback): Init -3, Attack +15, Defense +8, Damage +17

Lance & Heater Shield (on horseback): Init -3, Attack +14, Defense +4, Damage +16

Soak: +12

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

Wound Penalties: (Size +2) -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Wound Penalties: (Size +4) -1 (1-9), -3 (10-18), -5 (19-27), Incapacitated (28-36), Dead (37+)

Pretenses: Area Lore 2 (hidden pastures), Animal Handling 2 (draft horses), Ride 2 (charging), Single Weapon 6 (long sword), [Local] Living Language 4 (bragging)

Powers:

Sbrinking, 3 points, Init x, Corpus: The giant can shrink to Size +2 or grow to Size +4 in an instant. Cost: 20 spell levels (Base 3, +3 Size increase)

Equipment: Full chainmail, heater shield, long sword

Vis: 3 pawns of Corpus vis (each ear and nose)

Appearance: The giant brothers look like a pair of local knights, magnified in size. Their armor is unadorned but well-kept.

The brothers' farms are adjacent to a road. When the pair battle, they inevitably fight in the road, especially if one notices an approaching traveler. The battle will obstruct travel, and after a few minutes of traded blows, one of the giants asks the traveler to intervene, either to settle the disagreement between them or to pick up arms against the requestor's brother.

Nicoleta, a Giant's Mother

Nicoleta exists as a shadowy figure living deep within the forest, known by the local populace but routinely avoided. She goads her son into action, prompting him to inflict whatever evils he can on his human neighbors. Because of her horrendous wrath, people prefer to suffer her son's sporadic intrusions instead of permanently removing him and angering her. While the giant's behavior might be bad, his mother's will undoubtedly be worse.

Like giants, no two giant's mothers are identical. Nicoleta is just an example. Giant's mothers are forces of destruction; other common powers include breathing fire, creating earthquakes, becoming poisonous clouds of gas, and throwing mountains. A giant's mother is not necessarily giant-sized, and many are the same size as mundane mothers.

Faerie Might: 30 (Ignem)

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

Size: +1

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Monstrous Appearance, Greater Power, Faerie Speech, Humanoid Faerie, Large, Lesser Power, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (edelweiss); Slow Might Recovery

Personality Traits: Vengeful +3, Greedy +2, Suspicious +2

Combat:

Brawl: Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +12, Damage +1

Brawl (as a wheel): Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +12, Damage +6

Brawl (as a flaming wheel): Init +3, Attack +10, Defense +12, Damage +26

Soak: +2

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Pretenses: Animal Handling 2 (horses), Athletics 4 (running), Bargain 2 (hiring servants), Brawl 8 (fist), Folk Ken 2 (detecting lies), Hunt 4 (tracking), Profession: Rancher 4 (breeding horses)

Powers:

Assume the Shape of the Spinning Wheel, 4 points, Init -2, Corpus: This power allows the giant's mother to turn into a large wagon wheel. She uses this form to chase down enemies and crush them. The stone-like wheel adds +5 to the giant's mother Brawl Attack Damage. (Base 25, +2 Sun, +1 Rego requisite, +1 Terram requisite. Excess spell levels convert to 1 mastery point which reduces the point cost.)

A Mother's Fury, 1 point, Init +2, Ignem: The giant's mother can surround herself in fire, which does +20 damage to those she touches. This power must penetrate any Magic Resistance the target has to damage it. (Base 15, +2 Sun)

Vis: 6 pawns of Ignem vis located in Nicoleta's two tusks.

Appearance: Wire-haired and filthy, her skin covered in warts and boils, Nicoleta is tall and lean. Two huge boar tusks project from either side of her mouth. She dresses in a dirty patterned dress and soiled apron.

Nicoleta lives on her horse farm, hidden in a remote valley of the Madara Plateau (see Chapter 3), where she raises horses and watches her son. One of her horses is a faerie horse, which she keeps filthy and underfed to disguise its uniqueness. Stories typically involve a character trying to win the faerie horse from her, by doing complicated chores that can't be completed without supernatural aid or magical powers. She will also appear if her son is threatened, defeated, or disparaged. When aroused to violence, Nicoleta uses her powers to transform into a terrifying flaming wheel, speedy and deadly, and tries to run over her opponents.

seconds before combat. Changing shape is as common as changing size, and many giants have powers that turn them into other things. Some giants can shapechange into pear trees, others into brooks, and others into poisonous flowers. While inconspicuous, such changes are dangerous for the giant, who can be hurt when in a different form.

Giants' Mothers

While giants are individuals, each has one thing in common besides his immense size: a mother. A giant's mother is always a sorceress, and invariably smarter than her son. She selects the home, manages the household and the herd of horses, guides her son's decisions, and wrathfully pursues those who best him. While a faerie giant can exist within his role perfectly well without a mother, a faerie giant mother is often more reliant on a son to manage, cajole, and verbally abuse. Though she doesn't draw vitality from the giant son, the faerie gives her role significant meaning. If she loses her son, she searches for another, becoming either listless and withdrawn, or irritable and violent, until she adopts a new one.

Another strikingly odd commonality in giants is hair growing inside the mouth, often under the tongue but sometimes also inside the cheeks. The strange physical deformity is hereditary, and those with giant blood also have hair growing under the tongue. The hair does not impair the giant-blooded speaker's speech and can be hard to notice in conversation.

Faerie Horses

A faerie horse exists to serve a hero as a mount, martial companion, and sage advisor. It also knows that it must spend a period of time imprisoned on a giant's mother's ranch, kept filthy and underfed so as to disguise its faerie nature. The typical story of a faerie horse is to be discovered and saved from a horse farm, serve a hero with advice and as a means of transportation, and finally leave the hero moments before his final victory, so that the hero can achieve his goal on his own. An alternative version of this story finds the fa-

Costache, a Captive Giant

Another common giant is the one trapped in a king's palace, locked away in a room that guests are forbidden to enter, and contained in a spike-lined wooden barrel bound with three iron chains. Easy to initially capture, Costache is difficult to keep. He has a magical power that makes residents of the palace curious, and he thrives on the anxiety and wonder produced by those who know they are investigating where they shouldn't.

Faerie Might: 20 (Mentem)

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre -3, Com -3, Str +7, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik -6

Size: +3

Virtues and Flaws: Negative Reaction; Greater Power (2), Huge (x2); Humanoid Faerie; Incognizant, Traditional Ward (iron)

Personality Traits: Deceitful +3, Sly +2

Combat:

Fist: Init -6, Attack +8, Defense -1, Damage +7

Soak: +3

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-8), -3 (9-16), -5 (17-24), Incapacitated (25-32), Dead (33+)

Pretenses: Athletics 3 (running), Awareness 2 (listening), Brawl 4 (fist), Charm 1 (princesses), Folk Ken 3 (guests), Guile 4 (inventing stories), Legerde-

main 4 (snatching small objects), [Local] Living Language 5 (telling lies), Stealth 4 (sneaking through castles), Survival 1 (forests)

Powers:

Rousing the Castle's Curiosity, 4 points, Init -10, Mentem: This power instills a powerful sense of curiosity in all those within the targeted structure. Those affected will prowl and snoop through the structure, investigating every corridor, chamber, and locked door. (Base 4, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +3 Structure)

Flee like a Bird, 3 points, Init -9, Auram. This power mimics the Hermetic spell, *Wings of the Soaring Wind*, allowing Costache to fly out a window once he is released.

The Shock of Consequence, 4 points, Init -10, Corpus. This power paralyzes a group of up to 10 people. Costache invokes this power as soon as he is free, freezing his rescuers into immobility while he chastises them and steals something valuable as they stand helpless. (Base 5, +2 Voice, +2 Sun, +2 Group)

Vis: 4 pawns of Mentem vis in his tongue

Appearance: Costache looks like a large, captive prince or nobleman, with tattered robes, tussled hair, and dirty skin. His eyes nearly sparkle with treachery and malevolence. A few moments after being freed, Costache's clothes regain a like-new appearance, and he suddenly becomes well-groomed and clean.

Fet-Frumos, a Faerie Horse

Faerie Might: 10 (Auram)

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +2, Str +4, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik -2

Size: +2

Virtues and Flaws: Positive Folktales; Highly Cognizant, Huge; Great Strength, Increased Characteristics (x2), Faerie Speech, Focus Power

Personality Traits: Patient +3, Wise +2, Compassionate to Humans +1

Combat:

Kick: Init 0, Attack +9, Defense +4, Damage +5

Soak: +2

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Pretenses: Athletics 6 (flying), Brawl 5

(kick), Faerie Lore 4 (giant kin), (Local Area) Lore 4 (faerie homes)

Powers:

Flight, 2 points, constant, Auram: The faerie horse can fly, as described in *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 62.

Equipment: The faerie horse is equipped with appropriate tack and harness.

Vis: Two pawns of Auram vis, one in each front hoof.

Appearance: Fet-Frumos has two modes of appearance. While captured, he looks like an old, dirty, rundown nag, sway-backed and bowlegged. Once rescued and when serving a hero, Fet-Frumos looks like a healthy, young horse, with a coat so well-groomed that it actually shines. Although smaller than a warhorse, it can easily transport an armored knight.

erie horse imprisoned as a giant's mount, but still waiting to be saved by the hero.

A faerie horse tends to be one of the more cognizant faeries living in the Tribunal, and most are fully aware of the role they play in human interactions and their means of gaining vitality. His awareness of his role and the ways it interplays with other faeries, especially giants and their mothers, allows the faerie horse a degree of foresight that mundane characters may interpret as divination. He cannot see into the future, but because he is more cognizant than other participating faeries, he knows that a giant will try to steal a maiden and, once thwarted, his mother will attack the maiden's castle. The faerie horse only has this insight when involved with other faeries; he will have no idea or helpful information if an Infernal dragon attacks the castle.

Vampires

All the lands of the Transylvanian Tribunal are infested with vampires. Every district has been affected by vampires at some time, and most people know of someone who has been the victim of a vampire. The vampire seems to be a Slavic phenomenon, although stories have permeated westwards into the Rhine Tribunal, and southwards into the Theban Tribunal.

Other creatures may drain the life from the living, but a vampire specifically takes the form of a known deceased individual within or just outside a particular community. Contrary to Slavic belief (see insert), a vampire is not normally the spirit of the deceased giving horrible life to his corpse. Instead, a vam-

Story Seed: The Lady and the Vampire

A young man and woman fall in love, but because the man is poor, his paramour's parents refuse him permission to marry, and he kills himself in shame. The youth subsequently rises as a vampire, and while the young lady adored the man in life, she is repelled by the vampire. She asks the characters for help and they might seem to slay it quite easily; however, the wom-

an becomes sick as her vitality is drained each night. Simply slaying a vampire with magic or weapons cannot sate a vampire's thirst for vitality; only the correct rites can do that. If efforts to destroy the creature are made, but without the correct rites, only temporary surcease is gained; another faerie will take the form of the corpse and continue its depredations.

pire is a form of faerie that derives vitality both from blood and from the fear its presence engenders. Every time that a vampire is repulsed by the superstitious rituals of a peasant, the vampire's story is enforced, and it gains vitality. The vampire kills in various ways, chiefly by drinking or sucking blood from its victim's heart or veins, or by devouring their flesh and choking them to death. More rarely, they draw out the breath from their lungs and suffocate them.

Every vampire is unique. While the tales about vampires often give them similar properties and powers — thus the regional variants in vampires discussed later — each one has its own set of rituals for preventing it from forming in the first place, and for laying it to rest for good, and its own set of limitations and vulnerabilities. This has led to a wealth of conflicting and contradictory information among humans about the best way to thwart and destroy vampires.

Becoming a Vampire

Various superstitions suggest who will become a vampire after death. The most

commonly held beliefs are that the following people or circumstances create a vampire: any corpse that an animal jumps over or alights upon; any corpse that has a living person's shadow fall upon it; the victim of any untimely death, including those killed by natural forces, by animals, or by other men; anyone who dies a bloodless death (such as drowning); anyone unbaptized or excommunicated at time of death; anyone who committed a mortal sin in life; anyone born during the Unclean Days (the 12 Days of Christmas); any witch or sorcerer; anyone born with a caul; where there are seven children of the same sex, the seventh child; any child of a vampire.

None of these situations actually causes a person to become a vampire *per se*. Instead, they attract the attention of a faerie who takes on the role of vampire if the correct propitiatory rites are not performed. A correctly performed Church burial (or indeed, a burial by any Divinely ordained religion) does not necessarily prevent the formation of a vampire, unless this is one of the specific conditions of the faerie who has been attracted by the death.

Folklore has a whole host of precautions that are supposed to prevent a vampire attack; these rituals in truth feed the faerie vitality, causing it to become sated and to move on. If the rites are not performed correctly, the vampire instead seeks vitality from the villagers in the form of blood and fear. It takes the form of the corpse during the day (having disposed of the real corpse) and often resides in its coffin, but at night prowls about in a number of different forms. If the vampire is hunted and slain in the correct manner, its need for vitality is satiated, and it moves on, perhaps reforming in a different shape in another district. If the rituals surrounding its destruction are

Slavic Belief

The Slavic pagan belief is that the spirit is quite distinct from the body, and is free to leave even during life. Issuing forth from a sleeping person, the spirit takes the shape of a bird, butterfly, snake, mouse, point of light, or may enter a tree. Such a spirit is called a *zdubacz* or a *sjenovik* (shadow). The spirit of any domesticated animal might become *zduhacz*. A witch sends out her spirit as a *vjedogonja*, a blood-sucking spirit. These spirits assemble on mountain tops where they battle, the victors bringing rich harvests to their countrymen (Night Battles are described in *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 6). The battles between the *zduhacz*s of land and sea are noted for their impact: the former brings drought, and the latter rain.

The Vampire Life Cycle

botched, then its need for vitality keeps it in the region, and its presence attracts further vampire-forming faeries who attach themselves to the first vampire's victims. For more information on faeries and their need for vitality, see *Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 12.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST VAMPIRES

The living often take precautions to prevent a recent corpse becoming a vampire. This is usually only done if there is real danger of the corpse walking; for example, if he was known to an evil man or a witch, or if he died from disease. Every region has its own method of attempting to prevent the creation of a vampire; for more information, see *Hunting Vampires* (Chapter 9, *Hedge Traditions*). For each vampire, choose one to three items from the following list: these precautions, and these alone, will prevent the formation of a vampire. If more than one is chosen, all precautions must be met.

- Cut off the heels.
- Hamstring the corpse.
- Place its head under the knees.
- Turn the body face down.
- Drive thorns or nails into the soles of the feet.
- Place a nail or thorn under the tongue.
- Fill the mouth with garlic and salt.
- Drive thorns under the fingernails.
- Put small stones in the ears, mouth, and navel.
- Bind the hands behind the back.
- Put a red hot needle through the heart of the corpse.
- Drive a nail into the place where the corpse's head lay.
- Scatter the place of death with millet, red thread, or thorns.
- Place millet in the coffin.
- Bind the coffin with wild roses or ivy.
- Stick nine distaffs in the soil above the coffin.
- Bury the body in a swamp or forest.
- Bury the body at a crossroads.
- Drive an iron spike through the head.
- Drive an aspen or hawthorn stake through the navel, the heart, and/or the behind.
- Pile stones on the grave.

A common motif among the vampires in the Transylvanian Tribunal is that they go through a series of phases in their existence. Each of these phases has different characteristics, but each one retains the essential vampiric feature of feeding on the vitality of others to their detriment. Immediately after death, a vampire takes an invisible, ghostlike form (the *zduhacz*) and haunts the family of the deceased. After seven days (or forty), the vampire takes on a physical but shapeless form called a *gadja*.

If it survives 40 days as a *gadja*, then it takes on the human form of the deceased and is called a *platenik*. The vampire's principle prey is now humans, starting with its own family. The longer the vampire exists, the more powerful it becomes until, after seven years, it moves out of its home district and sets up residence in a distant region.

This vampire (a *kukudhi*) masquerades as a human, taking up a trade, and settling down with a family, all the time making nocturnal forays for human blood. These vampires have lost the traditional vulnerability

to daylight, although they are hurt by direct sunlight and tend to stay inside during the day. Any children arising from an old vampire such as this become *dhampirs* (see Chapter 9, *Hedge Traditions*). Vampires are most active between St Andrew's Eve (November 30th) and St George's Eve (April 23rd); and this is when most *dhampirs* are sired.

Creating a Vampire Character

Vampires are intended as storyguide characters. There is no sympathy for the vampire in Mythic Europe. They are ravaging beasts, driven to cause illness and death by their very nature, and this single-mindedness makes them inappropriate as player characters. Players wanting a character who is damned by a dark fate should probably look elsewhere. This being said, there is some small scope for an unusual character in the form of a *kukudhi* vampire (see *The Vampire Life Cycle*, earlier). Such vampires can become sufficiently self-aware that they might make suitable player



Powers for Vampires

This insert describes some powers commonly possessed by vampires. They commonly cause disease and weakness, or call down natural disasters on a region. Many of these powers may also be designed to affect livestock.

LESSER POWERS

Each Lesser Power Virtue is a Minor Virtue that grants 25 levels of powers. To convert these Lesser Powers into Greater Powers (Major Virtues that grant 50 levels of powers), halve the Might cost and the penalty to Initiative.

Cause Drowsiness

ReMe 15
3 points, Init Qik – 6, Mentem

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind
Allows the faerie to cause a human it touches to fall asleep.
(Base 4, +1 Touch, +2 Sun),

Eidolon

CrIm 20
4 points, Init Qik – 8, Imaginem
R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind
This power creates an illusory form that is visible and audible. The creature can create a single form for each version of this power they possess. The image can move and speak as directed by the faerie, and lasts until the faerie has no further use for it.

(Base 2, +2 move at direction, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 intricacy)

Sap the Life

PeCo 15
3 points, Init Qik – 6, Corpus
R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Ind
This power causes the target to weaken and lose the vitality that sustains life. This is treated as a disease that initially inflicts a Light Wound; in addition, the victim loses two Fatigue levels which cannot be regained until the disease has abated. Every week, the afflicted character can make a Disease Recovery Roll; he must beat an Ease Factor of 12 to remain stable, and a 18 to improve. If you are using the disease rules of *Art & Academe*, this is a Serious disease of Severity 15. Either Faerie Lore or Medicine may be used to treat the effects.
(Base 10, +1 Touch)

characters; however, these vampires are usually among the strongest of their kind, and would fit best in a relatively high-power saga, among older magi.

VAMPIRIC VIRTUES, FLAWS, AND POWERS

All vampires share a few common characteristics that define their status as vampires. See *Realms of Power: Faerie* for more details on creating faerie characters.

All vampires must take a Virtue or Flaw that represents their physical form, a Virtue or Flaw that describes their level of cognition (most vampires are Incognizant), and a Virtue or Flaw representing their social interaction with humans (many vampires have the Negative Reaction or Monstrous Appearance Flaws). All vampires have the Feast of the Dead Virtue that allows them to obtain vitality from human life, and have a Traditional Ward of sunlight which causes them to take damage if exposed to the light of day. Finally, all vampires have the Sap the Life Lesser Power (see insert).

Common Virtues for vampires include those on the following lists. See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, Chapter 3, for details of the Virtues and Flaws marked with an asterisk.

Common Virtues

- Greater Immunity to Edged Weapons (Major, Supernatural)
- Time of Power: New Moon (Minor, Supernatural)*
- Tough

Common Flaws

- Might Recovery Requires Vitality (Major, Supernatural)*
- Restricted Might: Saturday (Major, Supernatural)*
- Sovereign Ward: those born on Saturdays (Major, Supernatural)*
- Vulnerable to Garlic or Thorns (Minor, Supernatural)*

LIMITATIONS

In the same way that there are rituals that ward off the formation of a vampire by providing it vitality, there are also rituals that can repel the powers and the physicality of the vampire for the same reason. By obeying the dictates of its own stories by limiting itself by these traditional wards, the faerie is unconsciously feeding on the vitality generated by those rituals. For each vampire, pick one to three of the following limitations; the vampire has to obey these rules:

- Cannot leave resting place during the day (almost universal).
- Cannot spend Might points on a Saturday (very common).
- Cannot harm anyone born on a Saturday (very common).
- Cannot cross a line of thorns.
- Cannot leave millet uncounted.
- Cannot cross running water.
- Repulsed by garlic; cannot pass a barrier warded with garlic, or attack a person or animal smeared in garlic.
- Repulsed by black hawthorn.
- Cannot pass a tangle of red thread.
- Cannot approach when you are telling stories.
- Cannot ask the same question three times.
- Repelled by the Cross and by prayers.

WAYS TO KILL A VAMPIRE

As described in Chapter 9: Hedge Traditions, each vampire has a number of folk rituals which, if correctly performed, sates the vampire for good. These rituals make good the lack of the vitality that caused the vampire to form in the first place, and following its death, the faerie reforms into a completely different creature somewhere distant from its place of death. Failure to kill

the vampire with the correct rituals allows the faerie to reform its glamour after a matter of days or weeks, and continue to prey on the region's inhabitants.

For each vampire, pick a method of dispatch that results in permanent death:

- Exhume the body on a Saturday (or Sunday).
- Women or virgins exhume the body.
- Burn the heart and/or liver.
- Cut the heart and/or liver to pieces with a scythe.
- Throw the heart and/or liver into running water.
- Immolate the body.
- Decapitate the body.
- Drive a hawthorn (or aspen) stake through the navel (or heart).

Vampire Bestiary

The following section describes character templates for various vampires, built with

Magi as Vampire Slayers

Vampires are attracted to the psychic wounds of a community that has suffered some trauma, and destroying them is not a simple task of just destroying the faerie. Even if a magus extracts the vis from the corpse (killing it permanently), another vampire is attracted by the community's wound and takes up where the other left off. The rituals associated with slaying a vampire heal the wound correctly and sate the vampire with vitality, driving it off once and for all.

the minimum number of Virtues to describe their basic powers. The storyguide should customize these characters with extra Virtues, Flaws, and powers. None of these characters are designed as player characters, so they do not need to be balanced in terms of Virtues and Flaws.

VAMPIRES THAT TAKE HUMAN FORM

The human-like vampire is the most common variety in the region. It takes the form of a recently deceased individual, and

is usually seen wrapped in a burial shroud. Of particular note are the kukudhi, who are human infiltrators; having lost their vulnerability to direct sunlight, they live among mankind.

The humanoid vampire is known by a number of different terms throughout the different people of the Balkans: *platenik* or *ubour* among Bulgarians; *drakus* among the Thracians of the Rhodopes; *moroï* by the Vlachs (pl. *moroïi*; fem. sing. *moroaica*; fem. pl. *moroaice*); *oiocoi* by the Transylvanians; *lampir* among Bosnians; and *upir* among the Rutenian people.

Powers for Vampires (cont'd)

FOCUS POWERS

Focus Powers are Major Virtues.

Ghost Touch (Focus Power)

ReTe 25

Variable cost, Init Qik – 5, Terram

R: Varies, D: Varies, T: Varies

Moves objects that are not held by another or fastened down. For 1 Might point, a maximum of 5 lbs. can be moved; every additional Might point doubles this weight limit. If the item is hurled with force, the spirit requires the Thrown Weapons Ability, and the item inflicts +5 damage per Might point spent. If the faerie has a Martial Ability, it can enter combat with an object when using this power (most weapons weigh less than 10 lbs.), and uses its Characteristics to calculate combat totals as normal. All physical attacks with this power need to penetrate Magic Resistance. The power lasts until the object is released by the faerie.

PERSONAL POWERS

Personal Powers are Minor Virtues, and each allows a character to buy 25 levels of effects.

Flight

ReFo 15

2 points, constant, appropriate Form

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

The character is capable of flight. He may use the Athletics skill to simulate difficult maneuvers, but may not engage in combat while flying incredibly swiftly. The faerie may not fly when heavily encumbered, or with a passenger of its Size or more, unless assisted by another faerie that shares the load.

(Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 constant. This base is deliberately lower than Hermetic magic might suggest.)

Invisibility

PelM 15

2 points, Init –2, Imaginem

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

A personal version of *Veil of Invisibility* (ArM5, page 146)

(Base 4, +2 Sun, +1 for moving image)

Silent Motion

PelM 10

1 point, constant, Imaginem

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

Allows the character to move without making a noise.

(Base 3, +2 Sun, +1 constant)

Supernatural Agility

ReCo 25

3 points, constant, appropriate Form

R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind

This power allows the character to perform minor supernatural feats when using its Athletics Pretense. These include swiftly scaling walls, leaping from the ground onto the back of a galloping horse, and dropping great distances to the ground without harm.

(Base 10, +2 Sun, +1 constant)

Human-like Vampire

Faerie Might: 15 (Corpus)
Characteristics: Int -2, Per 0, Pre -3, Com 0, Str +3, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +3
Size: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Negative Reaction; Feast of the Dead, Humanoid Faerie, Increased Faerie Might x2, Lesser Powers, Incognizant, Traditional Ward
Personality Traits: Hungry +3
Combat:
Teeth: Init +3, Attack +8 Defense +10, Damage +4
Soak: +2
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (livestock), Ath-

letics 5 (climbing), Brawl 5 (teeth), Charm 3 (bereaved family), Living Language 5 (local dialect), Stealth 5 (village streets)
Powers:
Sap the Life, 2 points, Init Qik -2, Corpus: See earlier for details. PeCo 15 (base 10, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (15 levels, -1 Might cost, +1 Init)
Vis: 2 pawns of Corpus, in grave dirt
Appearance: A recently deceased human corpse, often with red eyes and fingernails. Vampires usually wear burial shrouds, or else go naked.
 This vampire has 5 points of Virtues and 3 points of Flaws.

cracks in pursuit of a meal. A common cause of this form of vampirism is being killed by a wolf, or eating from a beast killed by one. Violent crimes such as murder also attract the vukodlaci.

VAMPIRES THAT TAKE GHOSTLY FORM

Slavic vampires often go through an incorporeal form called a *zduhacz*, or *sjenovik* (shadow), before adopting material form, other vampires only manifest in this form. They haunt the family of the deceased, breaking crockery and making a nuisance of themselves. These incorporeal vampires can visit people in their dreams, and may engender children with a widow. They often reveal themselves as glowing points of light, or perhaps burning shafts. Among Hungarians, these vampires are called *luderc*. The *nekrstenik* or *ustrel* is a vampire attracted to the death of an unbaptized child, and is a particular threat to newborn children and young mothers. The *sjanka* forms from the blood of a man killed by a knife. Finally, the *ljugat* is a more benign vampire that feeds only briefly from its victims.

MISCELLANEOUS VAMPIRES

Although the human-shaped, bestial, and incorporeal vampires are the most common types, there are a few other varieties of vampires found in the Transylvanian Tribunal.

Formless Vampires

These vampires are a stage in the lifecycle of the human-shaped vampires (see The Vampire Life Cycle, earlier). The *gadja* is a swollen bag of skin and hair, filled with jelly-like blood. Instead of a nose, it has a sharp snout through which it sucks blood, mostly from animals. In this form, it moves principally by rolling, and is sometimes described as like an ox's head. Formless vampires are particularly susceptible to thorns and piercing weapons, which inflict terrible damage upon them.

Vampire Animals

Vampires are not always human. Venomous snakes are the animals most likely to become vampires. Stallions, lambs, and

Bestial Vampire

Faerie Might: 20 (Animal)
Characteristics: Int -3, Per +2, Pre -3, Com -1, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex +2, Qik +1
Size: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Increased Faerie Might, Feast of the Dead, Hybrid Form, Lesser Powers, Personal Power (Transform into Animal), Tough, Monstrous Appearance, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (sunlight)
Personality Traits: Hungry +6
Combat:
Claws: Init +1, Attack +13, Defense +10, Damage +7
Soak: +9
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Pretenses: (Area) Lore 3 (livestock), Athletics 5 (running), Awareness 3 (movement), Brawl 5 (claws), Hunt 5 (human prey), Stealth 5 (woods)
Powers:

Contort the Boneless Body, 2 points, Init -1, Animal: The vampire can squash its boneless body through the tiniest gaps, or hide in a seemingly impossible small space. MuAn 10 (Base 5, +1 Conc) Lesser Power (10 levels)
Transform into Animal, 1 point, Init -1, Animal: Transforms the faerie into wolf form. MuCo(An) 20 (Base 10, +2 Sun) Personal Power (20 levels, -1 Might cost)
Sap the Life, 3 points, Init -2, Corpus: See earlier for details. PeCo 15 (Base 10, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (15 levels)
Vis: Two pawns of Animal, in eyes
Appearance: An horrific hybrid between wolf and man, this hairy creature stands on two legs, yet has the claws and muzzle of an immense wolf. Huge, human-like eyes stare crazily from its snarling face.
 This vampire has 8 points of Virtues and 5 points of Flaws.

VAMPIRES THAT TAKE BESTIAL FORM

Like the humanoid vampires, bestial vampires go by a variety of different names. In Slavic areas, they are called vukodlaci, although this term is also used for non-vampire werewolves (see later). Other names include: *farkaskoldus* to Hungarians, *blaut-*

sauger among the Transylvanian Saxons, and *pricolici* to Vlachs.

Bestial vampires are covered in thick gray fur, and have sharp teeth and claws, and appear wolf-like (or more rarely, bear-like or dragon-like), although walking on two legs. Despite their immense strength, bestial vampires have no bones, and are able to squeeze themselves through the tiniest

Incorporeal Vampire

Faerie Might: 5 (Ignem)
Characteristics: Int +1, Per 0, Pre +2, Com 0, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik +2
Size: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Feast of the Dead, Focus Power (Ghost Touch), Lesser Power (Eidolon), Lesser Power (Vampiric Touch), Second Sight, Intangible Flesh, Freshly Sprung, Incognizant, Negative Reaction, Traditional Ward
Personality Traits: Malicious +3
Combat:
*Dodge**: Init +2, Attack n/a, Defense +7, Damage n/a
Thrown Knife: Init +2, Attack +5, Defense +6, Damage +7
 * Since it is incorporeal, the vampire need

not actually avoid physical attacks
Soak: +0
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (village), Awareness 2 (family), Brawl 3 (dodging), Charm 5 (bereaved family), Living Language 5 (local dialect), Second Sight 3 (spirits), Stealth 3 (livestock), Thrown Weapon 3 (knives)
Powers:
Eidolon, 2 points, Init -2, Imaginem: See earlier for details. Crlm 20 (Base 2, +2 move at direction, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +1 intricacy) Lesser Power (20 levels, -2 Might cost)

Sap the Life, 2 points, Init -1, Corpus: See earlier for details. PeCo 15 (Base 10, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (15 levels, -1 Might cost)
Ghost Touch, variable points, Init -3, Terram: See earlier for details. ReTe 25: Focus Power
Vis: 1 pawn of Ignem, in item affected by the Ghost Touch power.
Appearance: Normally invisible, this vampire can visually manifest as a glowing point of light, or else use its *Eidolon* power to take the form of the deceased.
 This vampire has 7 points of Virtues and Flaws.

Gadja

Faerie Might: 10 (Corpus)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -3, Com 0, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex -2, Qik 0
Size: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Feast of the Dead, Hybrid Form, Increased Faerie Might, Lesser Power, Monstrous Appearance, Clumsy, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (sunlight), Traditional Ward (thorns)
Personality Traits: Hungry +3
Combat:
Bite: Init 0, Attack +7, Defense +7, Damage +4

Soak: +3
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (livestock), Awareness 5 (livestock), Brawl 5 (bite), Concentration 3 (while feeding), Hunt 5 (wounded animals), Stealth 5 (fields)
Powers:
Calm the Sheep of the Field, 2 points, Init Qik -2, Animal: The gadja can prevent an animal from fleeing as it approaches, allowing it to feed from them. ReAn

10 (Base 4, +1 Eye, +1 Conc) Lesser Power (10 levels)
Sap the Life, 3 points, Init Qik -3, Corpus: See earlier for details. PeCo 15 (Base 10, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (15 levels)
Vis: Two pawns of Corpus, in the jelly-like blood within the gadja
Appearance: A flaccid sack of skin about one pace in diameter. It has a face bearing a sharp snout and a pair of beady eyes.
 The gadja has 4 points of Virtues and 7 points of Flaws.

Vampire Snake

Faerie Might: 5 (Animal)
Characteristics: Cun -1, Per -2, Pre -5, Com -6, Str -6, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik +2
Size: -3
Virtues and Flaws: Faerie Beast, Feast of the Dead, Lightning Reflexes, Incognizant, Negative Reaction, Traditional Ward (sunlight)
Personality Traits: Hostile +2
Combat:
Fangs: Init +2, Attack +10, Defense +8*,

Damage -5
 * +6 to Defense against grapple attacks
Soak: +0
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-2), -3 (3-4), -5 (5-6), Incapacitated (7-8), Dead (9+)
Pretenses: Awareness 2 (prey), Brawl 4 (fangs), Hunt 4 (rodents), Stealth 4 (stalking prey), Survival 3 (grassy areas)
Powers:
Sap the Life, 3 points, Init Qik -3, Corpus: See earlier for details; except that the

vampire snake's touch inflicts a Medium Wound. PeCo 20 (Base 15, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (20 levels, -1 Might cost)
Vis: 1 pawn of Animal, in tongue
Appearance: A remarkably large snake, easily two paces long and as thick as a man's thigh; the vampire snake has red eyes.
 The vampire snake has 3 points of Virtues and 3 points of Flaws.

Vampire Tree

Faerie Might: 10 (Herbam)

Characteristics: Cun -3, Per -1, Pre +1, Com -3, Str +10, Sta +5, Dex 0, Qik -5

Size: +5

Virtues and Flaws: Huge x 4, Feast of the Dead, Lesser Powers, Passes for Plant*, Freshly Sprung x2, Incognizant, Limited Movement**, Traditional Ward (fire)

* Equivalent to Passes for Human

** *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 42

Personality Traits: Hostile +2

Combat:

Branch: Init +5, Attack +9, Defense +2, Damage +12

Grapple: Init +5, Attack +8, Defense +1, Damage n/a

Soak: +15

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)

Pretenses: Area Lore 3 (fields), Awareness 3 (victims), Brawl 4 (branch), Native Language 5 (local dialect), Leadership 3 (menacing), Stealth 3 (pretending to be a normal tree), Survival 2 (harsh winters)

Powers:

Sap the Life, 1 point, Init Qik -3, Corpus: See earlier for details. PeCo 15 (Base 10, +1 Touch) Lesser Power (15 levels, -2 Might cost)

Vis: 2 pawns of Herbam, in bark

Appearance: This vampire is based on a white willow. It stands about twenty feet tall, and all its branches point upwards — until they lash down in pursuit of blood. Its silver-green leaves are usually spotted with blood, and the ground around its roots is littered with bones. Vampire trees can understand human languages, but cannot speak.

A vampire tree can attack as a trained group with up to four limbs simultaneously, and has a +9 Group bonus which it always adds to its Attack. It usually concentrates on one victim at a time, attacking with a grapple and then holding tight. It can use limbs not involved in striking to hold onto grappled victims. Every round it uses another branch to hold onto a victim increases the Grapple Strength (ArM5, page 174) by +5. The vampire tree is not suitable as a player character.

Even gourds and melons are at risk, if a careless housewife should keep them too long.

People are most at risk from vampire trees. A tree is more susceptible to becoming a vampire if a man was hanged there, particularly if he was a suicide. Thorn trees never become vampires, and are therefore most often used as impromptu gallows.

INFERNAL VAMPIRES

Not all vampires are faeries. Sometimes, a demon consumes a corpse, and takes the form of the deceased. These demons are known as the *broukolak* in Bulgaria, and are the same as the *vrykolakas* of Greece (see *The Sundered Eagle*, Chapter 12). The same factors that can lead to a faerie vampire taking over a body can attract the attention of a *broukolak*, but the most surefire way is to be cursed at the moment of death. Some particularly evil individuals, who die with evil yet to do, may curse themselves as they die in the hope of attracting the attention of a demon.

With its ability to blend into society without fear of detection, the *broukolak* often sets up trade in a nearby village where it will not be recognized. They are fearsome predators, first eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the deceased's relatives, then ranging further abroad. An area with a *broukolak* suffers a general decline in health and vitality as it feeds at night on both livestock and on men.

some other animals can also become vampires, but never dogs or wolves. The same methods that result in human-shaped vampires are capable of generating animal vampires, as well.

Vampire Plants

Not even plants are immune to vampirism. A plant that has been the cause of a man's death, or which has grown in soil fertilized by his life's blood, can become a vampire.



Broukolak

Order: Vessel of Iniquity
Infernal Might: 20 (Corpus)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +4, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik +2
Size: 0
Confidence Score: 1 (3)
Virtues and Flaws: Shapeshifter; Improved Characteristics, Lightning Reflexes
Personality Traits: Hateful +6, Depraved +6
Combat:
Grapple: Init +2, Attack +6, Defense +7, Damage +4
Teeth: Init +2, Attack +10, Defense +8, Damage +7
Spittle: Init +2, Attack +6, Defense n/a, Damage +10
Soak: +14
Fatigue Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Athletics 10 (leaping), Brawl 5 (grapple), Folk Ken 3 (passing for human), Shapeshifter 3 (at night), Thrown Weapons 5 (spittle)
Powers:
Form of Wickedness, 2 points, Init 0, Mentem: See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 39
Form of Man, 0 points, Init 0, Corpus: See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 39
Contagious Obsession, 1 point per victim, Init 0, Mentem: See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 39
Obsession, 1 to 3 points, Init -5, Vim: Fear. See *Realms of Power: The Infernal*, page 32.
Burning Spittle, 0 points, Init +2, Ignem: The spittle of a broukolak is liquid fire, and it can expel it up to 5 paces. If it hits and penetrates Magic Resistance, the spittle inflicts +10 damage; if it is parried, it eats through any object it touches, rendering that object useless.
Weakness: Protected Group (those born

on a Saturday).
Vis: 4 pawns, in teeth
Appearance: The broukolak is indistinguishable from ordinary people in appearance, until it reveals its powers, at which point it takes on its true form. They have shiny black skin and are hunchbacked, with black hands and long nails. Their faces are blood-red and peeling, their teeth are like those of a cat or wolf, and they have wild hair and beards. With their Shapeshifter Ability, they usually take the form of cats, goats, and owls.

Broukolaci usually take victims who are on their own, locking them in a grapple before biting them. They occasionally keep their victims alive and feed from them night after night by inflicting scuffle damage rather than normal damage.

LIVING VAMPIRES

The people of the Transylvanian Tribunal often make the distinction between living vampires and dead vampires. Living vampires are witches or sorcerers, who prey on the locals much like the dead vampires. None of the following characters are vampires in the traditional sense; that is, they are humans rather than faeries, and they do not need to drink blood to survive (although some do anyway). When living vampires die, they attract the attention of particularly powerful vampiric faeries.

The Strigoi and Vjestitza

In Romania, the term *strigoi* (sing. and pl.; fem. *strigoica*; fem. pl. *strigoice*) is the most commonly used word for vampire, but a distinction is made between the *strigoi vii* (living vampires; sing. *strigoi viu*), and the *strigoi morti* (dead vampires). In the Balkans, the *vjestitza* (pl. *vjestitze*) is the same as the *strigoi viu*.

The *strigoi viu* or *vjestitza* is a witch who leaves her body at night and takes the form of an owl, black hen, a moth, or a fly called a *vjedogonja*. She enters houses and feeds on the heart-blood of her victims, who are usually children. These witches, who are invariably female, form covens, and a girl can

learn to become one by joining the coven. It is said that these witches are the masters of the dead vampires, and meet with them at district boundaries to decide upon their pro-

gram of evil for the following year.

These characters are Nightwalkers (*Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, Chapter 6), but they may have other powers. Malicious stri-

Thief's Valerian

There is a weed which grows in faerie-touched areas of Transylvania, that has heart-shaped yellow leaves that look flecked with blood. Also called *jarbe cherului* ("key flower") or irongrass, this strange plant undoes any mundane lock, lifts any mundane bar, and shifts any mundane bolt. To command the Thief's Valerian, it must be collected at daybreak on all fours; thieves say it sprouts where rainbows touch the earth. The character must cut the ball of his palm, and plant a sprig of the weed into the cut, where it will thrive and grow on his blood. Mundane courts in the Tribunal know the powers of ironweed, and cut the sprigs out if they find them in the hands of criminals.

Hermetic magi believe that ironweed is a particularly odd sort of faerie parasite: yet another weird vampire from these lands so rich in them. Some Redcaps have a sprig in their hands, but many oppida forbid it inside the Aegis of the Hearth. Ironweed is Lesser Enchantment Vis (see

Realms of Power, Magic, page 120), each sprig containing two pawns of Rego vis. Players should remember that mundane characters who see the sprig act much as if the character had dropped open a bag of housebreaking tools.

THIEF'S VALERIAN SPRIG OF REGO VIS

ReHe (Te) 18

Pen 0, 6/day

R: Touch, D: Mom, T: Part

If implanted in a person's hand, Thief's Valerian can open locks, lift door bars and shift bolts at a touch. Every time the faerie plant uses its power, it takes a Long Term Fatigue level from its owner. If the weed is ever removed from its owner's hand, he suffers a Light Wound, and the sprig loses all powers and vis.

(Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Part, +1 requisite; +3 6/day)

Story Seed: House Bjornaer as the Enemy

House Bjornaer are resolutely opposed to shapeshifters (see Chapter 1 of *Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*), particularly those who are organized into cults or brotherhoods. They are intolerant of varcolaci, whose brotherhoods strongly resemble the Infernal cult that they hate and fear. They may even be hostile to the shape-shifting kings of the Transylvanian Tribunal, although this enmity may be mollified if the Divine provenance of this power is

demonstrated.

A Bjornaer magus player character is commanded by his elders to see to the extermination of a local wolf brotherhood. However, the brotherhood is responsible for protecting the community from vampires controlled by a strigoi viu. The character must weigh up his conscience versus his loyalty. This story could also be run the other way around, with a player character as a member of the brotherhood.

goi vii could be designed as infernal witches, employing maleficia to work their evil, or the Goetic Arts to control dead vampires (see *Realms of Power: The Infernal*). Alternatively, they could be faerie wizards and use the *Ars Fabulosa* (*Realms of Power: Faerie*) to summon and captivate vampires for good or ill.

The Varcolac and Vukodlak

Certain people can take the form of wolves during their lifetimes. These are called varcolaci by Romanians, or vukodlaci or kudlaci among Slavs. They are also considered to be vampires of a sort, and referred to in the same terms. A child who is born with a blood-red or black caul, feet-first, or with teeth becomes a varcolac; a man may also become one through magic. Some varcolaci can become hens, horses, cows, dogs, or cats instead of wolves, but the wolf form is the most common. While all varcolaci are treated with a great deal of suspicion, not all of them are evil. Some of them form "wolf brotherhoods:" secret societies dedicated to protecting communities and hunting vampires — the wolf is well-known as an enemy of the vampire, and these man-wolves are doubly so. Other varcolaci use their magic for mischief. At night, they attack cattle, suck the milk from mares and sheep, strangle horses, cause cows to die of plague, and occasionally attack humans. The varcolac is also credited with eating the moon during eclipses, which are certainly powerful times for these werewolves.

A varcolac character has either the Shapeshifter Virtue if he was born a werewolf, or the Skinchanger Virtue if he has learned to change shape. Some varcolaci are also Lycanthropes. Like the strigoi, the kudlaci who cause mischief and attack livestock

are Nightwalkers, and are battled in their phantasm form by the *kresnici*, a rival tradition who seek to protect the community (see Chapter 9). When they die, a varcolac — regardless of good or evil deeds during life — becomes a bestial vampire (see earlier).

Divine Werewolves

Most tales of werewolves center on rural villages and remote outposts of civilization, but not every werewolf is a living vampire stalking his fellow villagers. Some stories relate

that kings have the power to turn into wolves and other creatures, a living example of God's promise that man should have dominance over the beasts of the wood and field. In Mythic Europe, kings crowned by the religious representatives of both the Roman and Greek Church receive a Magic Resistance of 10 (*Realms of Power: The Divine*, page 43). If that king is of Slavic, Magyar, or Vlach blood, he also receives the free Supernatural Major Virtue: Shapeshifter. The allowable forms for this Virtue are wolf, lion, and dragon; the Divine origin of this power permits the dragon shape despite the usual restrictions on the Shapeshifter Ability. Stefan II of Serbia has this power and can change into a dragon when he so desires.

Vilas (White Ladies)

Most of the communities in this Tribunal tell stories of beautiful faerie women, dressed in pale clothes, or naked. These faeries all have similar names, but play different roles

Generic Minor Vila

This weak vila is suitable for stories with grogs, or other characters lacking magical powers or Resistance. She is suitable as a player character, but will be more useful in most covenants if given additional powers and a larger Might pool to support them. Any added Virtues need to be balanced with Flaws.

The powers listed in this section are Greater Powers unless otherwise noted, and are purchased as Major Virtues. Most Greater Powers can be transformed into Lesser Powers, which are Minor Virtues. Notes on doing this are in *Realms of Power: Faerie* on page 57. Troupes preferring speed over accuracy should double the Might cost and quadruple the Initiative penalty of the powers given here. Powers noted as Personal affect only the faerie, and are Minor Virtues.

As an antagonist, augment these statistics using the suggestions for customization by role, given later. NPC faeries do not need balanced Virtues and Flaws.

Faerie Might: 5 (Usually Corpus)
Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre 3, Com 0, Str 1, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0
Size: 0
Virtues and Flaws: Passes for Human: Faerie Sight, Human Form, Incognizant, Traditional Ward (suggestions given later).
Combat:
Claws: Init -1, Attack +6, Defense +7, Damage +3
Soak: +0
Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)
Pretenses: Athletics 3 (dance), Awareness 3 (mortals), Brawl 3 (claws), Carouse 3 (getting mortals to drink), Charm 6 (preferred type of mortal), Folk Ken 3 (festivals), Music 5 (singing).
Powers: As per role, defined later
Vis: 1 pawn Corpus, a long blonde hair
Appearance: A beautiful maiden, either naked or dressed in white clothes.

in each community. Storyguides designing vilas should use the statistics for a generic faerie woman, and then tailor them to the role that the particular vila plays. Vampiric vilas should be created using the suggestions in the Vampire section.

Wards

Vilas often have a Sovereign Ward Flaw for a strand of their own hair. Vilas encountering a character with a strand of their hair revert to their basic form (which is sometimes human, and sometimes animal) and cannot cause that human harm, whether with their powers or through indirect means.

The hair of a vila is often a Minor External Vis source. (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 50). This means that the vila cannot truly die while its hair survives, and if lost, over time the hair can reassemble matter for the vila's body. Some powerful vilas have the Residual Power Virtue (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 51) which causes their hair to be lost or carried off if they are defeated, to ensure it remains safe.

Traditional Wards for vilas include food, special cakes, and ribbons. These offerings can be left near a particular house to protect it, or placed just outside the homes of vilas, to protect communities. These offerings are made at the verges of woodlands, the edges of roads, the banks of rivers, and the mouths of wells.

Powers Found In Many Roles

Five powers seem to be common among vilas, regardless of the role they are currently playing.

SHAPESHIFTER

Many vilas can take animal shape, or are faerie animals that take human shape. Most vilas have only a single alternate form, but even within single regions, it is unremarkable to find vilas with differing animal shapes. The most common shapes are falcon, horse, serpent, swan, and wolf. Faeries retain the power of speech in animal form.

Personal shapeshifting powers include:

Transform into Animal: 2 points, Init -2, Animal: Transforms the character into a specified land animal of human size or smaller for Sun duration

Transform into Animal: 3 points, Init -3, Animal: Transforms the character into a large animal (current Size +1) for Sun duration.

Transform into Animal: 3 points: Init -3, Animal: Transforms the character into a specified land animal of human size or smaller for Until duration.

Transform into Bird or Fish: 3 points, Init -3, Animal: Transforms the character into a specified bird or fish of human size or smaller for Sun duration

Transform into Bird or Fish: 4 points, Init -4, Animal: Transforms the character into a specified bird or fish of human size or smaller for Until duration

Transform into Human costs the same as the inverse power. A faerie crow transforming into a human uses more Might than a fox that does so.

ENTHRALLING VOICE

The beautiful voice of vilas often encourages, or forces, humans to dance. The strength of this effect varies, and can be simulated by the following powers:

Allure: 1 point, Init -1, Mentem: Makes the faerie supernaturally attractive. Grants a +3 bonus on all rolls that convince or impress others.

Enthralling Sound: 3 points, Init -3, Mentem: Allows a faerie to create, or intensify, a particular emotion in a group of people for Sun Duration. A Personality trait roll against an Ease Factor of 9 allows a character to ignore this effect.

Entrancement: 4 points, Init -4, Mentem: Allows a faerie to take complete control of the mind of a human for Sun Duration. Requires initial eye contact. The faerie still sings while making the eye contact, because folklore says the song is the transmission mechanism, but that's stage dressing.

Guide: 3 points, Init -3, Mentem: Subtly guides a group of people to an action that the faerie desires, for Sun duration. This power acts like a version of the Common Sense Virtue that gives the character advice which suits the vila. Again, the vila sings when using this power, for folkloric aptness.

Kiss of Forgetfulness: 4 points, Init -4, Mentem: Causes a mortal to forget her life until she sees a particular object, or class of object, associated with her home. This effect has an Until Duration, and requires physical contact at inception. Despite the name, holding hands while dancing works perfectly well. The vila will sing to the character at some point, because her role says she should do so when using this power.

Steal Judgment: 2 points, Init -2, Mentem: Causes a human to believe any lie the faerie tells. Can be resisted with an Intelligence roll against an Ease Factor of 6 for implausible lies.

BLESSING DANCE

Some vilas provide magical powers to mortals who dance with them, or complete other tests. The following powers are used to grant these blessings:

Grant (Major Virtue), 10 points, Init (Qik -20), Vim: Grants a Major Virtue either permanently, which drains the character's Might pool permanently, or until a condition is met. This is a Ritual Power and is purchased as a Major Virtue.

Grant (Minor Virtue), 5 points, Init (Qik -10), Vim: Grants a Minor Virtue either permanently, which drains the character's Might pool permanently, or until a condition is met. This is a Ritual Power and is purchased as a Major Virtue.

Grant Puisseance in (Ability), 2 points, Init -2, Vim: Bestows the faerie power of pretending to have an Ability. For every added point spent, a group can be granted +1 on all rolls in a certain situation (combat or court, for example), or one character can be given +3 on a particular Total or roll (Soak or Carouse, for example.) This effect has Sun Duration, and the faerie only recovers its Might once the effects are withdrawn.

CURSING DANCE

Some vilas lure victims into their dances. The most common cursed dances cause exhaustion, loss of time, loss of memory, or death. These can be simulated using the En-

thralling Voice powers earlier. One added power is also commonly found, and is unusual:

Craft Magical Trinket: 10/15 points, Init 0, as per Target. The circles where vilas dance must not be stepped upon, or curses fall upon the trespassers. This power, which makes the circle a kind of magic item, costs 10 points if the curse is a Minor Flaw, and 15 points if it is a Major Flaw.

SPIRIT AWAY

Many vilas draw humans into the Faerie realms.

Spirit Away: Variable. This is the power that allows faeries to assist the passage of mortals to their Realm. It is discussed at length in Chapter 2 of *Realms of Power: Faerie*. Troupes not using these rules should just assume the attempt succeeds when it suits the story.

Role-Specific Powers

Vilas for specific story roles can be created with the following modifications. If the vila is a player character, added Virtues must be balanced with Flaws. Points for added Pretenses can be gained by selecting the Ostentatious Major Virtue or Pretentious Minor Virtue. The first adds 10 times the average age of the PC magi points to the character's pool of pretense points. The second adds 5 times the average age of the PC magi points.

CAPTURED WIFE

Vilas who change shape, particularly from bird to human, can be captured by hiding their animal skins or feathers. These faerie brides always find their lost items eventually, or are released by the husband breaking a condition made upon marriage. Their children have strong faerie blood and sometimes receive visits from their mothers, but these vilas seem to lack any sort of maternal skill.

The animal skins can be designed mechanically as the prop for the Skinchanger virtue, as External Vis Source, or as a Sov-

ereign Ward (while you have the skin, your wife cannot hurt you by leaving).

CLOUD OR STORM MAIDEN

In many areas, vilas are ghostly women associated with clouds. In some areas, they are believed to lure travelers astray and torment them with wild weather. Powers suiting this role include:

Flight, 2 points, constant, usually Corpus: The character can fly.

Storms (Focus power), by Magnitude, Init – (Qik – 5), Auram: The character has a range of weather-related powers, simulating all Hermetic weather spells of level 25 or less.

Guide, described in the Enthralling Voice section, earlier, but here used to cause people to become lost.

CURSED LOVER

Some vilas play a role that warns frivolous girls that they are doomed to repeatedly fall in love with a mortal who dies. The vila is not aware that she is a sort of vampire, feeding on the deaths of her admirers. The death is caused by subconscious use of one of the following powers:

Pine Away, 3 points, Init –3, Corpus: Target gradually loses the will to live. Simulated as a major disease with an Ease Factor of 9 that causes a Light Wound. Faerie Lore or Medicine may be used to treat the effects.

Craft Magical Trinket: As per the Cursing Dance section, earlier. The favor the vila gives to her lover causes a fatal accident. Each vila has a single, repeated motif for the manner of death of her beau, such as his horse stumbling when at full gallop, or his boat being swamped by a rogue wave.

HUNTRESS

Vila huntresses ride deer or horses, and kill with their arrows. They are particularly likely to slay those who break oaths to other humans.

To the generic vila earlier, add:

Bow 5 (mortals)

Ride 5 (horse or deer as appropriate)

Virtues which increase Characteristics, Attack, Damage, or Defense scores.

Soak of up to +6, for armor.

Combat: Bow: Init –1, Attack +9, Defense +6, Damage +7

Shake the Earth: 3 points, Init –3, Terram: This power causes the ground for 100 paces to violently shake. Characters fall unless they make a Quickness – Encumbrance stress roll against an Ease Factor of 10, modified as follows: +2 standing still, +2 on solid stone, +0 moving slowly or on earth, –2 running, –6 on a narrow bridge. (As Earth Shock, in *ArM5*, page 56.) Note that the faerie is unaffected by her own power.

TEMPTRESS

A faerie who steals young men away into the depths of the woods or waters.

Allure: as per Enthralling Voice Section.

Illusory Home, 4 points, Init –4, Imaginem: Makes a place look, sound, smell, and feel like a suitable place for the faerie's role.

Pine away: As described in the Cursed Lover section, earlier.

WATER MAIDEN

Spirits of drowned maidens, or faeries pretending to be such, are common in this Tribunal's folklore. Powers suiting this role include:

Illusory Home, as described in Temptress, earlier.

Kiss of the Mermaid, 3 points, Init –3, Imaginem: Allows the recipient of the kiss to breathe water until he or she next steps on dry land.

WEAVER WITCH

Some vilas seem to create soldiers using their looms. This isn't really a power; it just creates opportunities for other faeries to join the story. These vilas appear to create an infantryman when pushing the shuttle through their loom to the right, and a cavalryman if they push it to the left.

WOODLAND MAIDEN

Vilas as maidens of the woods seem similar to the nymphs of other areas of Mythic Europe. Additional powers suiting this role include:

Extend Glamor: 0 points, constant, Mentem:

The faerie is aware of all activity in her place of power. The more powerful the faerie, the larger this area can be, and the more vis she can force it to produce each year, as per *Realms of Power: Faerie* page 61. This is a personal power.

Guide: Described in the Enthralling Voice section earlier, but used to make people lose their way, or draw them toward the faerie.

Manifestation (Focus power):, by Magnitude, Init -(Qik - 5): Allows the faerie to simulate any Creo Animal, Rego Animal, Creo Herbam or Rego Herbam spell of level 25 or less in the area of its glamor.

Transform Victim Into (animal): 3 points, Init -3,

Animal: Turns a character who can hear the voice of the vila into a specified animal for Sun duration.

Transform Victim into (object): 5 points, Init -5, as per object: Turns character who can hear the vila's voice into the specified object for Sun Duration. Some vilas instead have a version of this power with Touch Range and Until Duration. This version has the same cost and Initiative as earlier. Note that a faerie with extended glamour has extended Touch.

WISE WOMAN

Vilas are also sometimes confused with folk witches. Those performing this role usually have the ability to foretell the future and heal.

Healing (Focus power): by Magnitude, Init -(Qik - 5): Allows the faerie to simulate

Ecology of Transylvanian Faeries

Giants have daughters who are vilas.

Vilas have daughters who are human, vilas, or witches

Witches have daughters who are witches, giants or dragons.

any Hermetic healing spell up to level 25.

Prophecy: Faeries can't really see the future. Some have Virtues which allow them to pretend to, while others use a mixture of obfuscation and spying to pass themselves off as oracles. Some vilas with this power need to keep their eyes propped open with iron bars weighing 300 pounds.

Chapter Nine

Hedge Traditions

Transylvania, a land of mixed cultures, has representatives of hedge traditions from many parts of Mythic Europe. This chapter focuses on two traditions not found elsewhere: storm wizards and monster hunters. Players desiring hedge wizard character from any other supplement may find local representatives of nearly any group. The local law, which forbids trying practitioners for witchcraft, has also attracted settlers from many lesser magical traditions.

Storm Wizards

For thousands of years, in the isolated communities of Transylvania, children who are born with deformities, seem to be mad, or are the issue of incest have been left to die

of exposure on the barren slopes of mountains. This sacrifice, it is hoped, will exorcise whatever devils or sins cursed the sad parents. Usually, the screaming baby quickly grows quiet and blue with cold, and within a season, only his cracked bones and torn swaddling cloth remain, scattered by beasts warring over his flesh.

However, a few of these dismal, unwanted children have The Gift. Their cries do not echo in vain down the wooded valley walls. Above the churning roof of storm clouds that roll down the sky and crash against the jagged Transylvanian mountains, stride giants, with thick beards that sparkle with ice, pluck the Gifted babies from the slopes.

Such is the manner in which the Transylvanian hedge tradition of storm wizards both finds and opens The Gift of its new apprentices. The Transylvanian storm wiz-

ards are an old but lonely Gifted tradition. Almost exclusively male, these bearded giants make their solitary homes in caves well above the snowline.

Storm Wizards and the Order

Most magi know little about storm wizards, apart from the fact that they summon and manipulate storms, and that there are supposed to be fewer than half a dozen storm wizards haunting Transylvania. Many common folk believe that all storms are called by storm wizards, but magi can plainly see that only a small fraction of the storms which wrack Transylvania have magical origins. Of course, as the storms created by storm wizards actually appear to

Thietmar

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

Size: +2

Age: 37 (37)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (4)

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Storm Wizard; Giant Blood; Personal Vis Source (ice cave); Puissant Ability (Storm Calling); Tough; Feud (Giant Tribe); Reclusive; Visions; Weird Magic.

Personality Traits: Reclusive +3, Persistent +2

Reputations: Storm wizard living in caves above the snow line 4 (local)

Combat:

Dodge: Init 0, Attack n/a, Defense +2, Damage n/a

Fist: Init 0, Attack +3, Defense +3, Damage +3

Knife: Init 0, Attack +3, Defense +2, Damage +5

Soak: +7 (+3 Tough, +3 Sta, +1 hide clothing)

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-7), -3 (8-14), -5 (15-21), Incapacitated (22-28), Dead (29+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Mountain 4 (Magical Sites), Athletics 2 (Running), Awareness 2 (Ambush), Brawl 2 (Fist), Folk Ken 1 (Storm Wizards), Hunt 2 (Giants), Native Language 5 (Peasant), Organization Lore: Storm Wizards 5 (Ice Harvesting), Penetration 2 (Storm Fighting), Stealth 3 (Forest), Storm

Calling 5+2 (Storm Moving), Storm Fighting 5 (Attacking Giants), Storm Riding 5 (Travelling (Self)), Survival 4 (Mountains), Swim 2 (Rivers)

Equipment: Warm fur and hide clothes, magic ice in satchel (6 pawns), knife.

Appearance: The storm wizard Thietmar is a tall, shy man. He hides his face deep within a wild, unkempt beard, and he dresses in fetid, poorly cured, ice-jeweled furs and hides. He has an uneasy relationship built on mutual fear and distrust with the villagers scattered about the foot of the mountain. Thietmar and the villagers have arrived at a complex routine of caches and paths, whereby they leave "gifts" of food for him, and he moves storms away from their settlements, all without needing to meet.

Story Seed: The Largest Prey

While traveling in the mountains, an unexpected storm falls upon the magi and their grogs. As the group shivers together through the cold night, a flash of lightning illuminates the figure of a man. At first, the grogs are startled as the man seemed very close, but a further lightning strike reveals that he is, in fact, a distant giant. Subsequent flashes of lightning show that he seems to be actually pur-

sued by the lightning; several spears of jagged light even hit the giant as they watch him.

The party has stumbled upon a storm wizard initiation. Do they interfere in the ritual and save the giant? Might they decide to help the storm wizard? Depending on the outcome, either the giant or the storm wizard may become an ally (or enemy) of the covenant.

Heart of the Storm Initiation

The storm wizard initiate gains Giant Blood Major Virtue.

Initiation Ease Factor: 21

Initiation Total: Presence + Organization
Lore: Storm Wizards + Script Bonus

Script Bonus: +15 (+3 Quest, Hunt and eat the heart of a giant; +9 Major Ordeal, Gain Feud (Giant Tribe) Major Flaw; +3 Sympathetic Bonus)

be natural storms, the magi could be wrong (and the common folk could be right). There may be many more storm wizards than suspected by magi.

As storm wizards are Gifted, the "join or die" provisions of the Code technically apply to them. However, storm wizards have so far managed to dodge this danger, largely because they are rare enough and apparently non-threatening enough that few magi have had the opportunity or desire to find out that the storm wizards are actually Gifted.

Several storm wizards did, in fact, join the Order of Hermes (as members of House Ex Miscellanea) during the Schism War, and fought alongside the Tremere. However, this fact has been forgotten by the wider Order, and there are apparently no surviving texts about their powers. One possibility is that (as the storm wizards' non-Hermetic magic was useful to baffle and surprise Diedne forces during battle) the Tremere are deliberately trying to keep knowledge about the storm wizards' powers obscure for use again as a tactical surprise in a future conflict.

Quite what the storm wizards' goals are (if any) is a mystery.

Storm Wizards and Giants

Storm wizards all have the Supernatural Virtue Giant Blood (see *ArM5*, page 43). If you are making a storm wizard character, this Virtue is free. Storm wizards do not gain this Virtue by being literally descended from giants. Instead, at the end of their appren-

ticeship, storm wizards undergo a mystery initiation in which they must slay a true giant and eat his heart. Tracking down a giant and acquiring a suitable Arcane Connection to him (to aid Penetration) can take the young storm wizard several seasons.

Undergoing this ritual marks a true storm wizard and gains him the Giant Blood

Virtue. Note that this initiation merely marks the end of the storm wizard's apprenticeship, much like a Hermetic apprenticeship ends with his gauntlet. A storm wizard can use his full powers as soon as he has had his Gift Opened, although obviously he will not have the Giant Blood Virtue until he has slain a giant.



Storm Wizard Magic

Storm wizards are exclusively Gifted, and their powers are derived from the Magic realm. Their magic consists of three favored Supernatural Abilities: Storm Calling, Storm Riding, and Storm Fighting. Storm wizards also have an Arcane Ability, Organization

Lore: Storm Wizards, and access to a new seasonal activity called ice harvesting.

STORM CALLING

Supernatural Ability

This Supernatural Ability allows the

storm wizard to either create or move a storm.

To create a storm, make a Storm Calling roll against an Ease Factor that depends on the size and duration of the desired storm (see insert). The storm wizard must also sacrifice a number of pawns of Auram vis (see Ice Harvesting) that depends on the size of the storm (see insert). The storm is centered on the location of the wizard at the time of casting, but if he subsequently moves, the storm will stay in place. It takes a number of rounds equal to the required Ease Factor for the storm to manifest. If the storm wizard calls a storm while indoors, the storm will appear outside, above and around, his location.

Creating a storm is a Supernatural effect, so the Storm Calling roll is affected by the aura like any other Supernatural Ability. However, once created, the storm is entirely natural; it does not need to Penetrate to cause damage to characters who have Magic Resistance, or to enter an *Aegis of the Hearth* effect. Any character with a Score in Magic Lore (or Wilderness Sense) who witnesses the creation of a storm can automatically identify that the storm is being created artificially, but unless he is familiar with storm wizard magic, he will be unable to identify the specific form of magic.

To move a storm, make a Storm Calling roll against an Ease Factor that depends on the size of the storm (that is, the Ease Factor for moving a storm does *not* depend on the storm's Duration). A storm can be moved at rate of about 1 mile per Diameter, and the storm wizard must be able to see the storm while it is moving. Moving a storm does not cost any vis, but while it is being moved, the storm is considered to be under a supernatural effect. If the storm wizard wishes to keep a storm moving for an extended period of time, make a new roll to keep the storm moving every Diameter. The speed at which the storm wizard moves the storm is not unnaturally fast, but the storm wizard may move the storm in an entirely unnatural way, for example, he can move the storm against the wind, or even inside through windows and doors.

A storm wizard may move any storm, regardless of whom (if anyone) created it. If two (or more) storm wizards wish to move the same storm, then the storm moves according to the direction of whomever rolls the greatest Storm Calling roll (which also

Storm Wizard Magic Game Mechanics

PENETRATION WITH STORM WIZARD POWERS

When required, the Penetration of a storm wizard Power is calculated as:

PENETRATION:

Storm Wizard Effect Roll – Ease Factor
+ Penetration Bonus

The Penetration Bonus is calculated in the same way as for a Hermetic magus (see ArM5, page 84). Storm wizards have access to the Penetration Arcane Ability.

MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT

The magnitude of Storm Wizard Powers may be required (for example, to determine Warping, or whether an effect can be dispelled).

MAGNITUDE:

Storm Wizard Supernatural
Ability Score

REALM INTERACTION

Storm wizard powers are Magical Supernatural Abilities. The storm wizard receives the appropriate bonus or penalty to his powers depending on the local aura as indicated on the Realm Interaction Table (see ArM5, page 183).

STORM TRANCE: WARPING

Whenever a storm wizard gains two or more Warping Points from a single event, or sufficient Warping Points to reach a new Warping Score, he must make a Storm Trance Roll against the indicated Ease Factor. If this roll is *failed*, the storm wizard himself becomes a local-sized

storm (see insert) that lasts for a duration of Moon. While he is a storm, the storm wizard may not use his Storm Wizard supernatural powers, but he can speak by manipulating the winds. The storm wizard may try to reform his body once each day, by making a Storm Trance Roll. If this is successful, his body coalesces out of the storm immediately, at a chosen point. If the storm wizard does not successfully reform his body before the storm dissipates, then he is apparently killed, or possibly enters the Magic Realm. The storm itself is natural and so cannot be dispelled, but it can be destroyed by supernatural means (such as Perdo Auram effects), which kills the storm wizard too.

STORM TRANCE ROLL:

Strength + Stress Die

STORM TRANCE EASE FACTOR:

3 + Warping Score

INSIDE THE STORM

Some storm wizard powers affect characters who are "within a storm," or "at any point in a storm." This means a character (or other target) who is either on the ground, or in the air, and is affected by the storm. In some cases, this will be clear, but in others the troupe will need to use their best judgment. A good quick test is: is the character getting wet from the rain, snow, or sleet borne by the storm, or are they blown about by the wind of the storm? If so, then they are sufficiently "within the storm". Characters inside buildings are not normally considered to be within a storm (even if the building is), unless there are large openings in the roof or walls or the storm itself is inside the building!

exceeds the required Ease Factor). Storm wizards cannot usefully work together to move a storm.

STORM CALLING ROLL:
Communication + Storm Calling
+ Stress Die vs Ease Factor

STORM CREATION VIS COST:
Depends on Storm Size

STORM RIDING

Supernatural Ability

Storm Riding allows the storm wizard to either sense or travel to any point covered by a storm. The storm wizard must be able to see the storm to use this Supernatural Ability, and he receives a +3 bonus to the Storm Riding roll if he is actually inside the storm when he uses the Ability. As it is a Supernatural Ability, the Storm Riding roll is affected by the aura.

STORM RIDING ROLL:
Perception + Storm Riding + Stress Die
vs Ease Factor

The Ease Factor for Storm Riding depends on what the storm wizard wants to achieve:

Ease Factor 9: The storm wizard may use his senses from any point in the storm. Note that such magical senses need to Penetrate to "see" characters with Magic Resistance. A successful roll allows the character to see from a specified vantage for Concentration duration. Using any other storm wizard Supernatural Ability while concentrating on seeing is simple (Concentration Ease Factor of 3).

Ease Factor 12: The storm wizard may travel instantly to any point in the storm. If the storm wizard can see the destination, he arrives at the precise location; otherwise, he must estimate the relative distance to the destination ("500 feet, east," for example). If required, the troupe can make another suitable roll to determine the accuracy of this estimate.

Ease Factor 15: The storm wizard may cause another character to travel instantly to any point in the storm. The storm wizard must be touching the target char-

Storm Calling Ease Factors

The Base Ease Factor for creating and moving a storm is 0. The storm creation Ease Factor is modified by both the Duration and Size of the storm. The storm moving Ease Factor is modified by only the Size of the storm.

STORM DURATION

- +3 Storm lasts for 1 Diameter.
- +6 Storm lasts for 1 Hour.
- +9 Storm lasts for Sun.
- +12 Storm lasts for Moon.

STORM SIZE

- +3 Local: Storm affects an area 3 miles across. Vis cost: 1 pawn Auram.
- +6 Provincial: Storm affects an area 21 miles (7 leagues) across. Vis cost: 2 pawns Auram.
- +12 National: Storm affects an area 150 miles across. Vis cost: 4 pawns Auram.

EXAMPLE STORM CALLING USES

To create a storm that covers an entire province and lasts for 1 hour, the Storm Calling Ease Factor is 12 (6 Hour + 6 Provincial), and this costs 2 pawns of Auram vis.

To move this storm, the Storm Calling Ease Factor is 6 (6 Provincial), and costs no vis.

acter, and the effect needs to Penetrate the target's Magic Resistance. Characters who are sent to a high altitude take damage when they hit the ground (see *ArM5*, page 181).

STORM FIGHTING

Supernatural Ability

Storm Fighting allows the storm wizard to use the fury of a storm to attack other characters and structures, such as houses, castles, forests, etc. The storm wizard must be able to see both the storm and the target of the attack, and the target must be within the storm. As it is a Supernatural Ability, the Storm Fighting roll is affected by the aura.

STORM FIGHTING ROLL:
Strength + Storm Fighting + Stress Die
vs Ease Factor

The Ease Factor depends on the type of attack used:

Buffet: Ease Factor n/a. The Storm Fighting roll is treated as a normal melee Attack Total against a target character. Shields and weapons can be used in a defensive roll against this attack. The storm wizard may make a number of Buffet attacks equal to his Storm Fighting Ability Score in a round. These attacks may all target the same individual, or can be spread without penalty among multiple

targets within the storm. If an attack is successful, the target takes +10 damage from being torn and thrown about by strong winds. In a round where this attack is used, the storm wizard may also make a Storm Fighting roll as a Defense Total. Storm Fighting has an Initiative modifier of 0. This attack type has no Penetration, and so a target with Magic Resistance cannot be affected by a buffet attack.

Deluge: Ease Factor 3. This attack affects everyone within an area no more than 30 yards across. All mobile characters must make a Dexterity roll against an Ease Factor of 6, or lose their footing and fall. This attack is Aimed, and thus bypasses Magic Resistance (see *ArM5*, page 86).

Hail: Ease Factor 6. This attack affects everyone within an area no more than 30 yards across. All characters take +3 damage (which can be soaked as usual). This attack is Aimed, and thus bypasses Magic Resistance (see *ArM5*, page 86).

Erosion: Ease Factor 9. This attack affects a single Structure or a part of larger Structure. Examples include: a tree, a house, a small tower, or part of a castle wall. If this roll is successful, the storm washes away the dirt beneath the foundations of the structure, causing it to collapse. As the erosion actually attacks the earth beneath the structure, the quality of the built structure is largely irrelevant. However, the storyguide can elect to increase the required Ease Factor to represent, for

Storm Wizard Virtues and Abilities

Storm wizards are Gifted and so actually acquire their Supernatural Abilities (at Score 0) when they have their Gift Opened (if needed the storm wizard Opening Total is generated as Intelligence + Organization Lore: Storm Wizards; see *Hedge Magic: Revised Edition*, page 7). Storm wizard characters thus do not normally have the Virtues associated with their Supernatural Abilities. Nonetheless these Virtues might be acquired by other characters.

STORM CALLING

Minor Supernatural Virtue

The character has a Score of 1 in the Supernatural Ability, Storm Calling. **Specialties:** storm creation, storm moving.

STORM RIDING

Minor Supernatural Virtue

This Virtue gives the character a Score of 1 in the Supernatural Ability, Storm Riding. **Specialties:** seeing, traveling (self), traveling (others).

STORM FIGHTING

Minor Supernatural Virtue

This Virtue gives the character a Score of 1 in the Supernatural Ability, Storm Fighting. **Specialties:** specific attack targets (giants), specific attack types.

STORM WIZARD

Free Social Status

The character is a storm wizard.

ORGANIZATION LORE: STORM WIZARD

Arcane Ability

This Arcane Ability is an Organization Lore that concerns the magic, personalities, and special locations (such as magical ice sites) of the storm wizard tradition. It is also used in ice harvesting and storm wizard initiations. **Specialties:** ice harvesting, initiations, history, locations, personalities.

Story Seed: The Ice Cave

The player characters stumble upon a cave high in the mountains. The icy surfaces of the cave are carved with strange runes and depictions of hazy figures striding over stormy mountains. There is a strong magic aura in the cave, and the walls of the cave are imbued with a number of pawns of Auram vis, which the magi could extract using spells similar to *Gather the Essence of the Beast*.

The cave is a site used by storm wiz-

ards for ice harvesting, and if the player characters remain in the area for long enough, they will surely encounter one or more storm wizards. If the player characters utilize the ice cave as a vis source, they will need to compete for the resource with the storm wizards. The storm wizards are initially alarmed and angered at the discovery of their sacred site, but if they can be placated, they might consider trading or allying with the magi.

ICE HARVESTING

Storm wizards require special magical ice that does not melt in order to use their Storm Calling Ability to create storms. The magical ice comes from special mountain peaks and mountain caves, and requires a complicated ritual which lasts for an entire season to harvest correctly. The location of these special sites is a closely guarded storm wizard secret.

example, a structure which is directly anchored to the bedrock by deep foundations. Such well-secured structures are very rare in Mythic Europe, especially among mundane architecture.

Lightning: Ease Factor 12. This attack strikes a single target with a jagged arc of lightning, which causes +20 damage. Assuming the Ease Factor is met, this attack cannot miss, but it must Penetrate the target's Magic Resistance.

Hermetic magi would, of course, identify this magical ice as Auram vis, and from the perspective of Hermetic magic storm wizards seem able to extract Auram vis from mountainous magical auras. In fact, any Auram vis will serve to power the Storm Calling Ability, but a storm wizard would be unlikely to believe a Hermetic magus who made this suggestion.

"Ice" Harvesting: (Intelligence + Organization Lore: Storm Wizard + Magic Aura) / 3 (round up) pawns of Auram vis per season

Vampire Hunters

Vampire hunters are almost as common as vampires in the Mythic Balkans and Romania. They are a special class of human: touched in some way to make them particularly effective against the blood-drinking creatures that terrorize peasants at night. What is less well-known is that their magic can be turned against all supernatural creatures, not just vampires. Traditionally there are two ways in which one can become a hunter: through particular circumstances surrounding one's birth, and through having a vampire as a parent. However, in recent years, a third type of vampire hunter has come into existence: the Hermetically-trained hunter or *factor* (see the Laniena section in Chapter 3: Hungary).

An Inauspicious Birth

The circumstances around a character's birth can make him particularly suited to slaying vampires and other supernatural creatures. Throughout the Balkans, there are a number of unlucky circumstances and taboos regarding one's birth — both when and how it occurs. An individual who breaks one of these taboos, through no fault of his own, is set apart from society, and occupies a liminal role in his community. This makes him the target of much supernatural activity, but also gives him a greater capacity to combat it.

THE SABOTNIK

A common taboo on vampires is an inability to go abroad on Saturdays, or harm those born on a Saturday. Anyone born on a Saturday is therefore immune to the direct powers of such vampire. In Bulgaria, such an individual is called a *sabotnik* (pl. *sabotnici*), whereas in the rest of the Balkans he is called a *vaperar* (pl. *vaperari*), and further south in Greece, he is called an *alaphroskiotos* (see *The Sundered Eagle*, Chapter 5: Customs).

A sabotnik can also arise from being born during one of the Unclean Days (*Mrâsnite dni*) between Christmas and Epiphany, or during the Wolf Holiday (*Vâlêite praznici*) in November. These sabotnici are fated to become vampires upon their death, and those born during the Wolf Holiday are often capable of turning into wolves (and become a type of vampire called *pricolici* after death).

Not all sabotnici become vampire hunters, but all benefit from the protective effect of their day of birth. You can either randomly determining the day of birth of all characters, or assume that only those with specific powers of the sabotnik had that auspicious day of birth. Sabotnici often have an instinctive sense of the unseen, and can detect the presence of a vampire even if it is immaterial. They can sometimes also detect the presence of magicians and witches. Most sabotnici who develop magical powers are men, but the rare female sabotnici are usually more powerful, and possess powers of dream interpretation. Not all sabotnici are human; dogs can also be a sabotnik, and can be easily identified as having black marks over each eye, leading to them being known as "four-eyed dogs."

THE GLOG

The *glog* (pl. *glogove*) is a character who is born feet first, or with teeth or red hair. The glog is named after the black hawthorn, which is also called glog, a potent defense against vampires. Unlike the sabotnik, who are usually skilled at finding vampires, the glog's special skill usually revolves around protecting people from vampires, or occasionally destroying them. Glogove usually craft weapons such as staves or swords from the wood of the black hawthorn, although these are mainly used defensively rather than

offensively. Glogove are often aggressive and argumentative; they are known to have a fearful temper, which often gets them into trouble in the community. It is also common for them to excel in physical pursuits.

THE TALTÓS AND THE KRESNIK

The taltós is a Hungarian magician born with special powers to fight off evil creatures. They are marked at birth by being born with a caul, or with extra fingers and toes. At the age of seven, a taltós enters a deep sleep, and is visited in his dreams by an elder taltós in animal form. The two fight, and if

the younger taltós wins, he is initiated into a society of nightwalkers who leave their bodies at night to do battle with evil creatures to secure the safety of their villages.

The *kresnik* is similar to the taltós, but is found in the Balkans, particularly in Serbia and Slovenia. Kresnici are specifically opposed to a group of sorcerers and vampires called the kudlaci. A kresnik is born with a clear or white caul and has powers to promote fertility, whereas a kudlak is born with a red or black caul, and works to kill livestock and sap the vitality from crops. When a kudlak dies, he becomes a type of vampire (see the Vampires section of Chapter 8: Creatures).

Zuban, a Four-Eyed Dog

Magic Might: 5 (Animal)

Season: Spring

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

Size: -2

Ferocity Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magical Animal, Magical Friend; Ferocity (against vampires), Long-Winded, Sharp Ears; Clumsy, Reckless

Mundane Qualities: Domesticated, Keen Sense of Smell, Pack Leader, Tireless

Magical Qualities and Inferiorities: Improved Abilities, Improved Powers, Lesser Power (Dispel the Dark), Minor Virtue (Second Sight); Minor Flaw (Slow Power).

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Reckless +3, Brave +2

Combat:

Bite: Init +4, Attack +7, Defense +9, Damage -3

Soak: +3

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-3), -3 (4-6), -5 (7-9), Incapacitated (10-12), Dead (13+)

Abilities: Athletics 2 (distance running),

Awareness 3 (keeping watch), Brawl 3 (bite), Hunt 3 (track by scent), Leadership 3 (dogs), Penetration 3 (Dispel the Dark), Second Sight 2 (vampires)

Powers:

Dispel the Dark, 1 point, Init +1, Vim: Any faerie hearing Zuban's bark loses 5 points of Might, if the effect Penetrates. Because of his Slow Power Flaw, Zuban must bark for two rounds before this power has its effect. PeVi 10 (Base effect, +3 Sound) Lesser Power (10 levels, -1 Might cost, +1 Init, 5 experience in Penetration).

Vis: 1 pawn of Intellego, in eyes.

Appearance: A medium-sized dog with an erect tail. His coat is tawny, although his chest and feet are white, and he has a black muzzle. He has two black marks above his eyes. He is always bumping into things, perhaps because his eyes are focused on other things no-one else can see.

Zuban is suitable as a Magical Animal Companion, or perhaps as a grog character. In the latter case, his Cunning should be made into Intelligence.

Black Hawthorn

Black hawthorn is a slow-growing wood that twists as it grows, and has little use in carpentry since it can't be made into planks. It has these Shape and Material Bonuses:

SHAPE AND MATERIAL BONUSES
 Protection from vampires +7
 Protection from evil +4
 Prevent disease +4

The Taltós Legacy

Over 1000 years ago, a powerful tradition of hedge wizards walked the Balkans. They were called the *taltós*, and they possessed many varied powers, from shapeshifting to spiritwalking, from potion making to vampire slaying. The *taltós* were the wise men of the Hun tribes.

However, the *taltós* were a fractious and argumentative people, a personality that was exacerbated by The Gift. Soon, factions arose within the *taltós* community, and battle lines were drawn up. As the tribes warred with one another, so did the

taltós. The turning point in the war came when one side adapted their vampire-slaying magic to the slaying of other *taltós*. The other side was quick to ape the technique, and the war transformed from one of dominance to one of extermination. Within a few short years, the *taltós* were virtually extinct. A few souls survived the pogroms, and managed to transmit scraps of their knowledge to others, and there are surviving fragments today who continue to practice *taltós*-derived magic, but they are pale shadows of their forebears.

The powers of the *taltós* and the *kresnik* are fully described in the Nightwalker chapter of *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*.

A Dark Parentage

Many vampires make their former family home their first stop after rising from their graves. If the deceased's widow still lives there, the vampire seeks her out and impregnates her with a child. This posthumous child grows up to be a powerful vampire-hunter.

THE DHAMPIR

Throughout most of the Transylvanian Tribunal, the child of a vampire is called a *dhampir* (pronounced "DUM-pier," fem. *dhampiresa*, pl. *dhampiri*). *Dhampiri* are inheritors of vampire-slaying magic, and attract a fair amount of fame for their actions. The names of some are a matter of legend, such as Obrad of Niš, who is both priest and *dhampir*; and Murat of Terezin, who single-handedly dispatched over 200 vampires.

A *dhampir* usually charges a fee for his services, which by tradition cannot be bargained down, and he is often given gifts of livestock, clothing, and food — above and beyond his fee — by grateful villagers. However, *dhampiri* carry a dark secret: that they themselves will become vampires following their death. They ensure that another is prepared to take the necessary precautions to destroy this vampire before it can do any harm; this task is usually entrusted to the *dhampir's* son.

THE VAMPIRDZHI

A vampire's son is called a *vampirdzhi* (pl. *vampirdzbia*) in Bulgaria, and a *vampijerovik* (or in Bosnia and Albania, a *lampijerovik*) in the rest of the Balkans. Only men are believed to be *vampirdzhi*; the daughters of vampires become witches instead.

Unlike the *dhampir*, the *vampirdzhi* usually becomes a hunter out of necessity, and has no strong tradition of vampire-slaying lore or magic. Nevertheless, some might discover an innate talent, or be trained by an experienced hunter and become a great boon to a community in the grips of a vampire plague. In the Sanžak region of Serbia, there is a whole district of *lampijeroviki*, all descended from the same vampire, and these have become experts on their prey, available for hire and for training.

Like *dhampiri*, the *vampirdzhi* are liable to rise as vampires after death, unless appropriate precautions are taken. Untrained *vampirdzhi* may be unaware of this, and a village may have a perpetual vampire problem, thanks to the propagation of the curse through family lines.

Hunters' Arts

The Hunters' Arts are the remnants of a shattered hedge tradition of magic. For nearly 1000 years, these Arts have not been passed on as a coherent whole, but instead as fragmentary knowledge deriving from the *taltós* of old. There are three Practices that are akin to Hermetic Techniques: Scry, Ban, and Slay. Each of the Practices is coupled with a Foe Art that is analogous to a Hermetic Form, although much smaller in scope than a Form. Practice Arts are bought as Major Supernatural Virtues, whereas Foe Arts are Minor Supernatural Virtues, but a character buying his first Practice Art as a Virtue gets one free Foe Art at no additional Virtue point cost. A character taking more than one Practice Art does not gain additional Foe Arts. Experience points in the Hunters' Arts can be gained from Exposure, Adventures, Practice, Teaching, and Books (ArM5, Chapter 10). However, there are very few texts on the Hunters' Arts, and most have been written by Hermetic practitioners (see the Laniena section in Chapter 3 on Hungary).

Most hunters are entirely unaware of the existence of the Foe Arts, and never gain experience in them, due to the splintered nature of their magical tradition. They are therefore unable to apply the Practice Arts to any other type of supernatural creature other than the Foe that comes free with the first Practice Art, which is most often the Vampire Foe.

New Virtues

These new virtues are designed for vampire hunter characters.

The Hunters' Arts and Mortal Foes

The Hunters' Arts are most effective against supernatural creatures, but they can also affect applicable humans and creatures who are aligned to a Supernatural Realm — that is, have one or

more Supernatural Abilities or Arts, but who are not members of that realm and therefore lack a Might Score. Against such mortal foes, the levels of all effects are 10 higher.

DHAMPIR

Major, Supernatural

This is a variety of Strong Faerie Blood (ArM5, page 49). A dhampir has the Second Sight Virtue at no extra cost, and can see normally in darkness. Their eyes are a peculiarly vivid color. They do not start making aging rolls until the age of 50, and get -3 to Aging Rolls, cumulative with any other bonuses. Dhampirs may learn Faerie Lore during character creation, and they are so in tune with their faerie nature that they gain a +1 bonus to all Faerie Lore rolls. If a dhampir dies, he becomes a vampire after death unless the correct rituals are performed on his body.

This Virtue was first described in *Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*.

(FOE) ART

Minor, Supernatural

There are many different variants of this Virtue, each one specific to a particular supernatural foe. The foe chosen must be a distinct type of creature, or else a specific tradition of humans aligned to a Realm. A foe must have some supernatural power: wholly mundane groups cannot be foes. A foe can span Supernatural Realms as long as they have a unifying feature which identifies them. For example, Dragons can belong to any realm, but are clearly identified as a group. Other examples include Vampires, Ghosts, Aerial Powers (an Order of Demons), Witches (both folk witches and infernal witches), and Shapeshifters (humans with the Shapeshifter Virtue or similar intrinsic power). The storyguide is the ultimate arbiter of the breadth of a Foe Art. Choosing this Virtue gives the character the (Foe) Art with an initial score of 0. (Foe) Arts are Difficult Arts, meaning that they are treated as any other Art except that they use the Ability Advancement Table rather than the Art Advancement Table. (Foe) Arts must be combined with a Practice Art to be used.

SCRY ART

Major, Supernatural

Choosing this Virtue gives the character the Scry Art with an initial score of 0. Scry is a Difficult Art, meaning that it is treated as any other Art except that it uses the Ability



Connections to a Foe

Some Arcane and Sympathetic Connections are commonly used in the Hunters' Arts are given here, in addition to those in ArM5, page 84.

SYMPATHETIC CONNECTIONS

ITEM	BONUS
Name of vampire in life	+1
Soil from a foe's footprint	+1

ARCANE CONNECTIONS

ITEM	DURATION	MULTIPLIER
Wound caused by a foe	hours	1
Personally conversing with a faerie foe	special (until conversation ends)*	2
Body of victim	weeks	2
Earth from grave	weeks	2
Personally wounded by a faerie foe	special (until wound heals)*	3
Child of the vampire hunted**	decades	3

* See *Realms of Power: Faerie*, pages 11–12, for more details. Note that the faerie also gains the same Arcane Connection as the hunter.

** Includes a dhampir himself.

Penetration and the Hunters' Arts

Most of the Hunters' Arts need to Penetrate Magic Resistance to have an effect; where they do not, this is noted. The Penetration Total is calculated in the same way for all Arts:

PENETRATION TOTAL: Art Total + Penetration Bonus – Level

The Penetration Bonus is computed in the same way as for a Hermetic Magus (ArM5, page 84). Hunters rely on gathering Arcane Connections and sympathetic connections to their foes.

Advancement Table rather than the Art Advancement Table. The Scry Art must be combined with at least one (Foe) Art to be used.

SLAY ART

Major, Supernatural

Choosing this Virtue gives the character the Slay Art with an initial score of 0. Slay is a Difficult Art, meaning that it is treated as any other Art except that it uses the Ability Advancement Table rather than the Art Advancement Table. The Slay Art must be combined with at least one (Foe) Art to be used.

BAN ART

Major, Supernatural

Choosing this Virtue gives the character the Ban Art with an initial score of 0. Ban is a Difficult Art, meaning that it is treated as any other Art except that it uses the Ability Advancement Table rather than the Art Advancement Table. The Ban Art must be combined with at least one (Foe) Art to be used.

Hunter Characters

Sabotnici and glogove characters should have the Second Sight Virtue, and possibly the Magic Sensitivity Virtue in addition. If they have developed their vampire-hunting abilities, they are most likely to have the

Scry Art, or, for the glogove, the Ban or Slay Art. A female sabotnik might have the Dream Interpretation Virtue (*Realms of Power: The Divine Revised Edition*, pages 136). A glog typically has experience as a Warrior, skill with a weapon (represented by an Affinity or Puissant Single Weapon), and all too often, the Wrathful or Fury Flaws. Characters born during the Wolf Holiday might be Sk-inchangers or Lycanthropes, and have the Animal Ken Virtue.

Both the kresnik and the taltós are described in *Hedge Magic Revised Edition*, pages 114 and 115 respectively. They are Nightwalkers, but may have other supernatural powers. If they know any of the Hunters' Arts, it is most likely that they have the Scry or Ban Arts.

Dhampir and vampirdzhi characters should take the Dhampir Virtue (see earlier) to represent their vampire ancestry. If trained, they are likely to know the Slay Art. These characters may have the Enemy Flaw, if their parent vampire is cognizant of its status; if not, the character may bear the Plagued by Supernatural Entity Flaw.

All hunter characters can benefit from knowing Arcane Abilities, particularly Faerie Lore, for the best ways of warding against and killing the most common types of foes, and Penetration; the Virtues Wise One or Arcane Lore are therefore useful. Hunters do not require The Gift, but a Gifted hunter can be more potent than an unGifted one (see the Laniena section of Chapter 3: Hungary).

Scry

The Scry Art allows a character to track a creature for which she has an applicable Foe Art by forming a mystical connection with it.

FORGING THE INITIAL CONNECTION

The scryer must either touch or see a foe to make the initial connection, or else touch an Arcane Connection to the foe. It takes a single round to attempt this action. She can then attempt to make a connection to her prey:

SCRY TOTAL: Perception + Scry + (Foe) + Aura bonus + stress die

The Level is determined by the strength of the connection to the foe:

SCRY LEVEL: 3

STRENGTH OF CONNECTION: Determine direction and distance to the foe. No sympathetic connection bonus gained.

SCRY LEVEL 4

STRENGTH OF CONNECTION: Smell what the foe smells, and can hear muffled sounds that may give clues as to its whereabouts. No sympathetic connection bonus gained.

SCRY LEVEL 5

STRENGTH OF CONNECTION: Hear everything that the foe hears, and also receives a vague impression of what is occurring in its vicinity, as if seeing through fog. Provides a sympathetic connection bonus to the foe of +1.

SCRY LEVEL 10

STRENGTH OF CONNECTION: See and hear everything that takes place within five paces of foe. Provides a sympathetic connection bonus to the foe of +2.

These levels assume that the target is at Range: Touch when the connection is first made; add 1 magnitude for Range: Sight, and 2 magnitudes for Range: Arcane. Add 10 levels (not magnitudes) if the foe lacks a Might score. To forge a connection to a mortal foe at Range: Sight that can only detect direction and distance is Level 14 (Base 3, +1 Sight; +10 levels mortal foe).

This magical roll must penetrate the foe's (Mentem) Magic Resistance to be successful.

As indicated in the table, a Scry connection to a foe may act as a sympathetic connection if of sufficiently high level. This sympathetic connection can be employed by the hunter in any Supernatural Abilities, Arts, or other powers he has that require Penetration Totals (ArM5, page 84) against that individual foe.

If the Scry roll botches, the foe is connected to the scryer instead; the magnitude of the botch determines how much the foe can tell about his would-be hunter (as earlier). Thus a double botch might grant the foe muffled sounds and sense of smell (as per

the Level 4 guideline). The foe is always able to determine direction and distance at least.

A scryer can have a single connection to a foe at a time, and each has an indefinite duration. He cannot simply cancel a connection once forged; instead, he can attempt once, at each dawn or dusk, to make a Scry Total to the same foe. If he can achieve a higher Scry Total than he made to forge the connection in the first place, he can choose to cancel the original connection or replace it with the stronger one. Canceling a connection to a foe is typically needed after a botched Scry attempt, or if the foe becomes aware of the connection (see later). The connection is automatically broken with the demise of the foe.

USING THE SCRYING CONNECTION

Once established, the connection between his prey has an indefinite duration and an unlimited range. He must simply concentrate on the foe for a round, and make a Stamina + Concentration stress roll. The Ease Factor is determined by the strength of the foe. This roll to sense a foe is not a magical roll. Consequently the aura does not add to this total, and it does not need to penetrate the foe's Magic Resistance.

SENSE A FOE:

Stamina + Concentration + stress die

EASE FACTOR:

6 + (foe's Might/5)

If successful, the scryer receives sensory information about the foe determined by the Scry Level (as described earlier), and can indicate the direction to the foe, and an approximation of distance (a week's travel, an hour on foot, just around the corner, etc.).

EXPLOITATION OF SCRY BY A FOE

A foe that is aware that a scryer has made a connection to it can sometimes exploit that connection through its powers. A foe is not automatically aware of a connection unless the scryer botched her Scry roll. If it is spying on the scryer, the foe might witness the connection being made. Otherwise, make a Perception + Awareness roll for the foe ev-

ery time the scryer attempts to find the foe through the connection she has forged. The Ease Factor starts at 12, but decreases by 1 every time the scryer uses her connection to find the foe. If the roll succeeds, the foe is aware it is being tracked. A Hermetic magus can detect a Scry connection with Intellego Vim spells; the level of the spell to be detected is equal to the Scry Level. Other magicians may manage a similar feat.

Once the foe is aware of its tracker, it can employ any power or spell that has a Range of Eye, Sight, or Arcane on the scryer whenever she attempts a roll to sense the foe. The foe must be waiting for the scryer to make contact, and it must be active and capable of spending Might (so some types of vampires cannot do this during the day) or using the power. The foe is assumed to have an Arcane Connection to the scryer with a multiplier of +2, and can exploit any sympathetic connection provided by the Scry effect. Scryers are usually very careful about over-using their powers against a powerful foe.

Ban

The Ban Art allows a character to protect himself or others against the physical or supernatural powers of a foe through the creation of warding amulets.

A character with the Ban Art and a Foe Art can create three types of amulets that are proof against that foe: Physical Bans, Supernatural Bans, and Weakening Bans. The first two protect individuals, whereas the last affects an area. A character cannot be protected by more than one Physical or Supernatural Ban; only the one with the highest Ban Total takes effect. If a character with Magic Resistance dons a Ban amulet, it only has an effect if its Penetration Total exceeds his (Vim) Magic Resistance.

CREATING A PHYSICAL BAN

A Physical Ban consists of an amulet that lessens the effects of any wounds caused by a foe, whether those wounds are directly caused by magic or by the physical attacks of the foe. Indirect damage — for example, a tree toppled by the foe — is not affected. It takes twelve continuous hours to create

a Physical Ban, and it has a Sun Duration. This duration commences as soon as a character dons the amulet by hanging it around his neck or wrapping it around his left hand. Should he remove it or lose it then the effects cease immediately and the amulet becomes non-magical. A Physical Ban becomes inactive three days after it was made whether or not it has been used.

PHYSICAL BAN TOTAL:

**Presence + Ban + (Foe)
+ Aura modifier + stress die**

LEVEL:

5, or 15 against a mortal Foe

PHYSICAL BAN STRENGTH:

Physical Ban Total – Level

A Physical Ban does not need to Penetrate the foe's Magic Resistance to have its effect. It is capable of absorbing wounds inflicted by a foe. Make a note of the Physical Ban Strength, the excess by which the Physical Ban Total exceeds the Ease Factor. The amulet does nothing until a character has taken a wound from the designated type of foe. If there is a positive Ban Strength, the Ban absorbs the blow and negates the damage; the point value of the Ban is then reduced by the amount shown on the following table:

WOUND	COST
Light	3
Medium	5
Heavy	10
Incapacitating	15
Deadly	20

Once the Ban Strength is exhausted, the amulet loses all power. Note that a Physical Ban always absorbs a blow if there is Ban Strength remaining, even if it is insufficient to 'pay' for the wound severity. *For example, a hunter has a Physical Ban Strength of 14 against vampires. He takes two Medium Wounds (5 points of Ban Strength each) and a Light Wound (3 points of Ban Strength) from a vampire in the fight, reducing the Ban Strength to 1. The vampire then delivers a Heavy Wound. The Physical Ban absorbs this, but is then exhausted and can prevent no additional wounds.*

If there are secondary effects from a physical attack, such as poison, those effects are also negated, but Supernatural powers delivered by a touch are not prevented.

CREATING A SUPERNATURAL BAN

A Supernatural Ban is an amulet that partially protects the wearer from any supernatural powers used by a foe. It takes twelve continuous hours to make a Supernatural Ban, which has a Duration of Sun. This duration commences as soon as a character dons the amulet by hanging it around his neck or wrapping it around his left hand. Should he remove it or lose it then the effects cease immediately and the amulet becomes non-magical. A Supernatural Ban becomes inactive three days after it was made whether or not it has been used.

SUPERNATURAL BAN TOTAL:
Intelligence + Ban + (Foe)
+ Aura modifier + stress die

The Level depends on the effect that the amulet has, determined when it is created:

LEVEL: 10

EFFECT: Reduce the Duration of a power by one quarter; Cause the foe to make an extra Concentration roll to maintain a D: Conc power.*

LEVEL: 15

EFFECT: Reduce the Duration of a power by one half; Cause the foe to make an extra Concentration roll to maintain a D: Conc power at +3 to the Ease Factor.*

LEVEL: 20

EFFECT: Reduce the Duration of a power by three quarters; Cause the foe to make an extra Concentration roll to maintain a D: Conc power at +6 to the Ease Factor.*

* Roll is made once per round.

Add ten levels for Bans affecting the powers of a mortal foe. A Supernatural Ban works only once, and activates as soon as an applicable power affects the warded character. Supernatural Bans do not need to Penetrate the foe's Might to work. If the wearer of a Supernatural Ban is part of a targeted group, or enters a location affected by a power, then it immediately activates and can cause the foe to lose concentration or the power to end early.

CREATING A WEAKENING BAN

Unlike the other two varieties of wards, a Weakening Ban affects an area rather than an individual. The character prepares the area to be warded by clearing it of loose debris, then demarcates the area with at least four stakes. These stakes must be prepared specifically for this ward: each one must be at least foot long, made of hawthorn, and decorated with specially-blessed ribbons tied in a specific manner. They must all be made personally by the same hunter, although this needs no separate Ability. The stakes must be placed at most 50 paces apart around the perimeter, so the size of the area protected determines how many stakes are needed, and how much time — each stake takes about 15 minutes to prepare. The minimum number of stakes is one per 16 paces of the diameter of a circle, rounded up. So an area 50 paces across needs 4 stakes, an area 100 paces across requires 7 stakes, and an area 500 paces across requires 32 stakes. Non-circular areas may need more stakes. A Weakening Ban does not have to be an unbroken circle, just a clearly defined area.

When the last stake is put in place by the warder, and the last spell is sung, the ban becomes active, and remains active for three days. The ban can be put into place any time before, and then activated by the warder at the last minute, but if there is any movement or alteration of the ban stakes between erecting them and activation, the ban will fail. A warder can check the ban before activating it; this takes just one minute per stake. If two Weakening Bans affect the same area, only the stronger one takes effect.

WEAKENING BAN TOTAL:
Intelligence + Ban + (Foe)
+ Aura bonus + stress die

LEVEL:

The number of Might subtracted by the Ban

A Weakening Ban must Penetrate the foe's (Vim) Magic Resistance to have an effect. Weakening Bans cannot affect foes without a Might score.

A foe finding itself within the warded area has its Might Score reduced by a number of points determined by the power of the Ban; if its Might pool is now higher than its

Might Score, it loses Might points equal to the difference. This suppression of Might Score affects Magic Resistance, Penetration, ability to cross wards, and any other effect that targets Might Score. However, the suppression in Might Score is temporary; if the foe leaves the warded area, its Might Score returns to its former value, but any Might points lost do not come back. The ban does not impede the movement of the foe. A foe is not dissipated or killed if its Might Score is suppressed to zero or below; this simply means that it can no longer use any of its supernatural powers, and has a zero Magic Resistance while within the warded area.

Slay

The Slay Art allows a character to craft a magical weapon designed to kill a specific foe designated by one of his applicable Foe Arts. When correctly prepared, this weapon can fell an opponent in a single blow.

MAKING THE SLAYING WEAPON

Before a slayer can embark on the creation of a tool that kills his prey, he must find out as much as he can about his foe. Each foe is unique, and the weapon designed to slay it is similarly unique. The more the slayer can uncover about his foe, the more potent the weapon is; but he must also take care, for erroneous information about the foe can mar the weapon's effectiveness. What is more, some foes know this, and make a point of spreading disinformation about themselves.

The slayer must start with a freshly-made weapon that has not been used before. Most slayers have the skills to make this weapon themselves, and have several ready-made to imbue with the power to slay foes. The weapon must be of standard quality or better (*City & Guild*, page 67), requiring a Workshop Total (Dexterity + Craft) of 6 or more. The type of weapon varies: some slayers have a particular preference, and some foes are only vulnerable to certain types of weapon. It is not always a weapon; some Romanian vampires, for example, are slain with a hemp brake (a tool used in the preparation of linen). It is common to make a slaying weapon out of black hawthorn wood, which is most

potent against vampires.

It takes one day (24 hours) of continuous work to turn a normal weapon into a tool of foe-slaying, and costs the slayer one Long Term Fatigue level. The slayer places the weapon in a circle of chalk or flour, and must chant ancient songs over the weapon, burning various incenses and meditating over the weaknesses of his foe. Once done, the weapon is magically charged, and remains that way indefinitely.

SLAY TOTAL:
Dexterity + Slay + (Foe)
+ Aura + stress die

LEVEL:
25 or less (see later),
or 35 or less for mortal Foes.

The Level is decreased by five points (to a minimum of 5, or 15 for mortal Foes) for every correct fact about the foe that the slayer has been able to discover. This represents the slayer's ability to attune his weapon to a particular foe. See the nearby insert for examples of the type of facts that are relevant. However, incorrect facts included about the foe increase the level by five; it is better to omit information in the Slay ritual than to include potentially erroneous information.

The slayer is generally unaware of the validity of the information he has used, so the storyguide should keep the final Level a secret from the player. Only when used does the slayer learn how deadly his weapon is. Note that the Aura bonus applies to the Slay Total, and uses the aura where the weapon was made, not where it is used.

When the weapon is used against its designated foe, it must strike the foe to have an effect; this normally requires an Attack Total that is higher than the foe's Defense Total, although the blow does not actually need to inflict any damage. If the hit is successful, and the Penetration Total is higher than the foe's Magic Resistance, then the foe immediately takes an Incapacitating Wound. Slay is usually a Corpus effect, but can be any Form appropriate to the foe's Might.

AFTER SLAYING

Once a slayer's weapon has been successfully used against a foe, it loses all magi-

cal powers and cannot be used to slay a second foe, even if the powers of the second foe

are identical to the first. If the foe for which it was designed is killed by a different means,

Relevant Facts About Foes

Some examples of what constitutes relevant facts include:

- True physical form — humanoid, winged human, sack of blood, etc. (some foes might be shape changers).
- Detailed appearance — at least three identifiable features.
- How people know that a particular foe

is involved, and not another.

- The activity of the foe — three or more separate events.
- The precautions against the foe that have worked up to now.
- Name of the vampire before its transformation occurred.
- Why a man became a vampire.
- Date and place of birth or death.

Tibor of Borša

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

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0

Confidence Score: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer, Dhampir, Slay Art, Arcane Lore, Famous, Second Sight*, Tough, Warrior, Driven, Mistaken Identity, Faerie Antipathy**, Infamous, Missing Eye, Reclusive

* Free with Dhampir Virtue

** See *Realms of Power: Faerie* page 114

Personality Traits: Brave +3, Implacable +3, Uncompromising +2, Crossroads* -1

* Sympathy Trait: whenever at a crossroads, penalize all Ability rolls by 1.

Reputations: Dead 4 (Local), Vampire Hunter 4 (Local)

Combat:

Short spear & buckler: Init +1, Attack +10, Defense +6, Damage +7

Fist: Init -1, Attack +6, Defense +3, Damage +2

Soak: +9

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

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

Abilities: Area Lore: Transylvania 3 (graveyards), Athletics 2 (chasing), Awareness 3 (searching), Bargain 2 (food), Brawl 3 (fist), Craft: Green Wood 2 (spears), Faerie Lore 4+1 (vampires), Folk Ken 3 (divining motives), Hunt 3 (two-legged prey), Penetration 2 (Slay

Art), Ride 1 (mules), Second Sight 3 (vampires), Single Weapon 5 (short spear), Survival 2 (scrounging from farmland), Swim 1 (fast-flowing water), Vlach 5 (Romanian)

Arts: Slay 5; Vampire 0

Equipment: Metal reinforced armor, short spear, round shield, several spare spears made from black hawthorn.

Encumbrance: -1 (3)

Appearance: An unassuming man wearing a peasant's smock. He only dons his leather hauberk when expecting trouble, but usually wears leather vambraces. He carries a spear carved from a single piece of wood, and a strip of cloth tied around his head conceals a gaping eye socket.

Tibor was conceived when his father came back unexpectedly from a war; it was only afterward that his mother discovered that her husband had died in battle a month before. At the age of 11, Tibor left his home in the Transylvanian grainlands to hunt down his father's vampire. Since then, Tibor has been a ruthless hunter of vampires. A few years ago he finally met his father's vampire, who put out his eye and left him for dead. He was mourned by the nearby village; but, since they did not know the correct rites, they were unsurprised when his corpse returned from death to haunt them. Tibor was not dead, though, and the vampire who had appropriated his form still dogs his steps. The rumors of his death have spread far, and he often has to compete with his conflicting Reputations.

Working Together

The various hunters described in this chapter work particularly well if they combine their powers and work as a team. The sabotnici are often immune to the powers of a vampire, and are therefore best employed researching their foe, gathering Arcane and sympathetic connections, and using the Scry Art to track them. This can be particularly effective if the connection with the foe can be made under a Weakening Ban. The glogove and dhampiri are strongest in a direct fight against their foes thanks to the Slay Art. Being able to draw a foe into an

area protected by a Weakening Ban, and equipping one's allies with Physical or Supernatural Bans is an important role of the glogove, kresnici, or taltós on the team.

Hunters also have a role working in concert with Hermetic magi. The Ban Art is particularly good for weakening foes, making Hermetic destructive and warding spells more likely to Penetrate. The Scry Art can perform feats that are difficult with Hermetic magic, and the Slay Art does not destroy the vis in a creature's body like some Perdo Vim spells can.

the weapon also loses its magic. An expired weapon made with the Slay Art is magically inert. While it can still be used as a normal weapon of its kind, it cannot henceforth be used again for the Slay Art, or in fact, be enchanted using any other magical procedure.

Hunting Vampires

While other applications of the hunters' Arts are known, the majority of hunters in the Transylvanian Tribunal turn their powers toward the destruction of vampires

bedding or burying something on the spot where the corpse lay, or strewing it with some protective substances.

The efficacy of these measures varies, according to the type of vampire that is generated from the deceased. Most remedies only work on some vampires rather than being universal solutions, and it is common for the rituals involved in the prevention of vampires to be ridiculously elaborate with many ineffective elements. Regions that have had persistent plagues of vampires might perform these precautions on every corpse they bury, but this is unusual, and the Church usually raises strong objections to routine mutilation of the dead.

A list of preventative measures against vampires can be found in Chapter 8: Creatures.

Preventing Vampires

If a person is suspected of being liable to becoming a vampire, then precautions may be taken to prevent this. Broadly speaking, precautions fall into two categories: those performed on the corpse, and those on the place of death of the deceased.

The corpse might be mutilated in some fashion. Such preventions are directed against the feet to prevent the vampire from walking, against the corpse's hands to prevent it from seizing its prey, or against the devouring maw of the corpse.

Alternatively, the place of death might be transfixed in some fashion, either by im-

Killing Vampires

If precautionary measures are not used, or the wrong ones are used, then a vampire may rise to stalk the area. Each vampire has a very precise manner in which it can be killed; if mistakes are made, then the vampire can reform and continue its predation on the region. As a consequence, the slaying of the vampire is often left to the professionals.

The first task is to determine whether a vampire really is responsible for the depredations, and what type of vampire it is. The vampire's daytime resting place must then be discovered. A character with the Scry Art proves very useful for this stage; many vam-

pires do not reside in their graves, but do leave the corpse of their most recent victim inside, leading to the mistaken impression that the vampire has been found and dealt with. Hunting a vampire on a Saturday is a common tactic, taking advantage of the frequent limitation on vampires that prevents them from spending Might points on a Saturday.

The Scry Art is not without its perils. A scryer can be lead into a trap by a cunning foe who has subverted the bond between hunter and vampire. A vampire's resting place can be confirmed using certain animals: neither a white stallion nor a gander will step over a vampire's grave.

If the vampire is seen, then a sabotnik or dhampir (or anyone with Second Sight) can confirm that it is a vampire, as can anyone looking through the arms of a sabotnik's shirt, or looking at the corpse from under his arm or leg. The latter two methods are very dangerous; should the vampire see the character doing this, then it can immediately use one of its powers on the character. Physical inspection of the corpse can also sometimes reveal the vampire; it might be red in the face or lips, turned downwards or lying on its side, or have a foot crammed into one corner of the coffin.

Before the body is exhumed, the grave is usually banned in some fashion to weaken the vampire, should it suddenly animate before it can be killed. This usually requires exploiting a weakness of this particular vampire, such as the inability to touch thorns, or an obsession with counting millet seeds. The Ban Art is particularly useful when combined with these precautions, weakening the vampire as much as possible.

Once the grave site has been warded, and the body exhumed, the vampire must be destroyed in the correct manner. Failure to use the precise method to dispatch the vampire can cause it to reform and return. While the body is immobile or incapacitated, the vampire must be laid to rest usually through some form of destruction of the body. If there are people who are sickening thanks to the activities of the vampire, then eating the ashes of its burnt heart or breathing the smoke of its burning body can restore them to health.

Examples of appropriate methods to ward and dispatch a vampire can be found in the Creatures chapter.

Chapter Ten

Horror Stories

Transylvania, surrounded by dark forests and perilous mountains, haunted by vampires and ghouls, is a wonderful setting in which your troupe can tell horror stories. The following advice is intended to give your troupe some suggestions on how to construct an *Ars Magica Fifth Edition* horror story. It is unlikely that you will want to use all of this advice in a single story, and, of course, your troupe may have better ideas for the sorts of stories that you want to tell. Please think of this advice as merely a prompt to help you think of your own stories.

Horror Plots

These are some examples of horror story plots and themes. Of course, there's no need for your horror story to precisely follow one of these archetypes, and there is some overlap between these examples. Combining elements from different plots may help you to construct an innovative narrative.

Savant versus Monster

In this plot, the monster can only be defeated by the savant, who often goes out of his way to find the monster. The savant is commonly a character with specialist knowledge or skills — perhaps a magus, or a vampire hunter — but he may be privileged due to a mere accident of birth (Death Prophecy or Faerie Blood, for example). In addition to the savant and monster characters, this plot often has a number of witness characters. Usually, many of the witness characters are killed or terrorized by the monster prior to the final battle between monster and savant.

This good-versus-evil plot is very easy to implement in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*. The obvious role of the magus is as the savant; his companions and grogs take on the role of the witnesses, and the monster is played by the storyguide. Knights, exorcists, and vampire hunters also make good savant characters.

VARIATION: THE COMPLICATED SAVANT

The early death (or mere absence) of the savant, which dooms the onlooker characters, is an interesting variation of the basic plot. Perhaps the desperate bystanders have no hope against the monster, or perhaps they scramble through the blood and carnage to try to find another savant.

Ambiguity over which character is truly the monster and which is truly the savant is another interesting variation. Who is the real monster? Is it the shapeshifter who cannot control the bloodthirsty urges of his animal nature, or is it the cold magus who uses his loyal grog servants as bait?

An interesting reversal of this plot is the nemesis, who is a monster, motivated by revenge, justice, curse, or prophecy, who tries to hunt down and slay the savant. Nemesis stories are often dominated by the psychoses of a disturbed savant — the actual monster is almost an incidental detail.

The Psychopath or Bogeypman

In this plot, the monster has no real discernible motivation, except possibly to eat his victims. The monster just exists to kill and kill again. A psychopath may not even be particularly good at killing, choosing to prey on the weak, such as children, the elderly, or pious monks. What is terrifying is not the psychopath's lethality, but his meaningless, irrational insanity. Faerie creatures make particularly good psychopaths, as do covenfolk driven mad by Warping.

The Horde

Here, the main characters are overwhelmed by an endless, implacable flood of monsters. Sometimes, individual monsters are relatively easy to kill, but even so, each dead monster is easily replaced by another shuffling corpse or demon. Even the Mongol invasion could function in this capacity, the Asian warriors seeming as "other" as monsters to the Transylvanians. The main characters have no hope of triumphing over the horde. Their best chance is escape, and even that hope is likely forlorn. Faeries and demons (and animated corpses!) make for great opponents in horde stories. Mundane

Sources

Films, books, and other media are good sources of inspiration for horror stories. For example, some of the archetypal plots discussed here are based on film criticism by K. Newman's *Nightmare*

Movies: Critical History of the Horror Film, 1968-1988 (London: Bloomsbury, 1988) and S. Prince's *The Horror Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

hordes are possible, too. For example, a few lost grogs terrorized by a large gang of outlaws makes for a great horde horror story.

The Idiots

The main characters behave like idiots — they separate into small groups, break mystical wards, and trust strangers, which helps the monster to eliminate them one-by-one. Obviously, this plot relies upon the whole troupe playing along with the story, which the players may be reluctant to do with long-term characters. A useful device to get around this problem is to have the main saga characters discover a frightful slaughter. The horrific story of the slaughter can then be told by the troupe in flashback (perhaps reported by a summoned ghost) using temporary, disposable characters.

Cult Conspiracy

In this paranoid plot, the main characters are the disposable pawns of a vast shadowy conspiracy. Perhaps the characters have accidentally stumbled upon the conspiracy, and must now be silenced. Alternatively, the characters may be members of the conspiracy who have outlived their usefulness, been deemed traitors, or chosen as sacrifices to the wicked power they serve. This sort of horror

story is likely to involve kidnapping and assassination attempts, but may contain direct supernatural enemies, too.

A CONSPIRACY OF MAGI

There are a large number of possible conspiracies in the Transylvanian Tribunal, including House Tremere itself. Mystery Cults, House Diedne refugees or revivalists, and infernalists may also be at work, subverting power to their purposes. However, remember that the Order of Hermes is generally quite adept at identifying the source and sigil behind magical attacks, so if the conspiracy includes magi, they will likely be reluctant to engage the main characters directly for fear of identification. Indirect attacks are also likely to fuel the paranoia of the main characters. Of course, well-prepared cultists may be able to defeat some standard Hermetic investigative techniques, perhaps through the clever use of the *Shroud Magic* effect, and pacts with infernal forces.

The Madness of the Frontier

Large parts of Transylvania are wilderness. Sparsely populated and hard to survive in, the isolated terrain is enough to drive even the most stalwart characters to a desperate frenzy, and those characters exiled from the

more populated areas of the Tribunal are frequently mad or bad to start with. Even without the possibility of supernatural terrors, great horror stories can be told about travelers in the wilderness encountering mad prophets, suspicious in-breeds, lepers, and outlaws.

The Horror of the Human Body

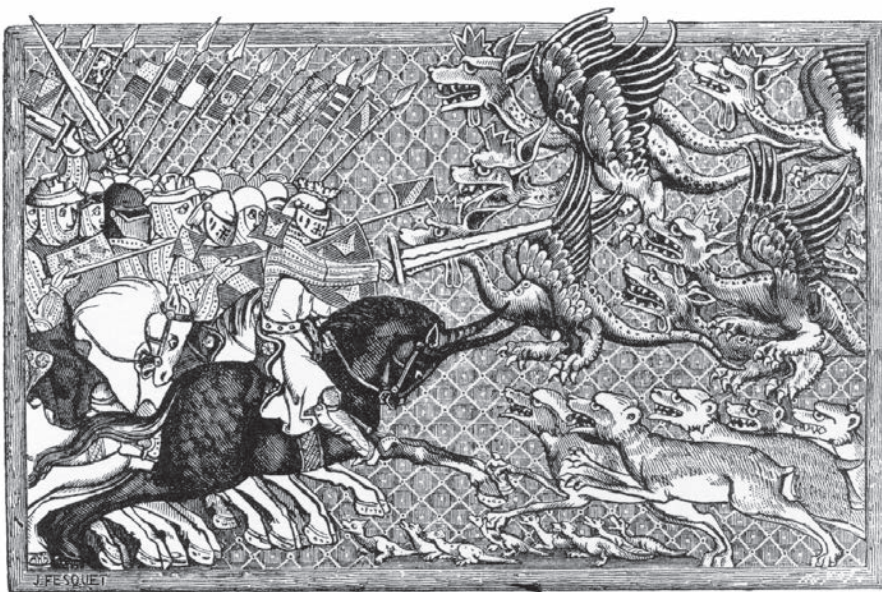
Changes to the human body are a common horror theme. An advantage of this theme is that monster characters from such stories can easily be (or become) a long-term player character. Lycanthropy, vampirism, leprosy, warping, Mystery Cult initiation, and possession are all horrific ways that a character's body can change. The changing body of a pregnant woman can also be a source of horror, especially if the pregnancy is the result of rape, and even more so if the father is an alien, supernatural creature. Unnatural changes to a growing child have much the same effect.

Nature's Revenge

In this plot, the natural world turns on the characters. Faerie or magical wilderness spirits are good monster characters for this plot. If the covenant makes use of magical servants of this kind, these servants might revolt, turning a magus' home into a horror. Alternatively, the covenant's aura, disturbed by the magi's vis harvest, may birth a magical terror to eliminate the human parasites feeding upon it.

History Repeats

Many horror stories have an element of repetition: perhaps the main characters find the remains of the monster's previous victims, or stumble across some kind of cycle — for example, every seven years, the monster wipes out a lonely farmhouse. Discovering information about the previous story cycles, perhaps including how the cycle can be broken, may even help the characters to survive. Faerie monsters are very likely to be involved



in a periodic ritual like this, as faerie monsters are effectively created by the stories told about previous manifestations. However, a monster from another realm might also (consciously or subconsciously) time his slaughter with a periodic natural phenomenon — for example, planetary conjunctions, or returning comets. Ghost stories frequently involve the repetition of the events and circumstances of the original deaths.

Post-modern Horror

In a postmodern horror story, some characters are aware that they are in a horror story, and they believe that, by acting either with or against genre conventions, they can maximize their chances of survival. The characters may be right or wrong about this. In *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*, such a story could be appropriate if some of the characters are cognizant faeries. It could also be appropriate if some of the characters are magi with sophisticated knowledge of faeries, who believe that they are dealing with faerie monsters. (This is, of course, just the sort of double-bluff that demons would attempt to contrive.)

Horror Techniques

The following techniques may help the storyguide to create memorable horror stories. Not all of these techniques will work with all troupes, so it is a good idea to think about the sensibilities of your players, and concentrate on one or two appropriate techniques.

One Time, One Place

Many successful horror stories occur in a very limited location (a ruined castle, for example) or over a limited period of time (Walpurgis Night, for example). The point of this is to create a feeling of claustrophobia, isolation, and intensity in the action. It also restricts the options of the characters.

Setting the story in a location with fixed boundaries — within a regio, on an island, or where violent weather prevents travel — is a good way to achieve this effect. Of course, if the player characters have access to powerful magic, it may be difficult to restrict their travel options.

Vivid Imagery

Try to use *short*, vivid descriptions of characters and locations. For example, compare these two descriptions:

“As you enter the room, the vampire, standing at the window and looking in at the sleeping children, flees.”

“The moon-cast shadow of the vampire standing at the window passes over the sleeping children. As you enter the room, the vampire flees, his red eyes glistening with gleeful slaughter.”

The second example works better, because of the vivid images “moon-cast shadow” and “red eyes, glistening with gleeful slaughter.” Of course, as storyguide it can be difficult to improvise vivid descriptions during the pressure of the gaming session. It can also be confusing for the players if they constantly need to decode new metaphors and images.

One useful strategy to get around both of these problems is to, before the gaming session, try make notes of a few different, short, descriptive images, for each of the main story characters and locations. Don't forget odors, and textures if the characters touch things. Tastes are hard to work into most horror stories, but describe them if they make sense. You can then use these descriptions whenever those characters are encountered during the story. Don't worry about repeating the images during the course of the story; if you look at texts that originally came from oral traditions, as well as more modern novels, you will find that many characters have only a few stock descriptions each that are used whenever that character enters the story. This helps the audience — in this case, the players — to clearly identify particular characters, while

still allowing the storyguide to use evocative images. In the previous example, the stock images for the vampire, that will be repeated from scene to scene, were “moon-cast shadow” and “red eyes glistening with gleeful slaughter.”

Note that the idea here is *not* for the storyguide to bore the players while she reads out large blocks of carefully prepared colorful prose. The idea is to have one or two *short*, memorable, evocative images that can be used *repeatedly* for the major characters and locations in the story. These evocative images should just be descriptive phrases, not whole sentences, so that they are easy to work into the story as it develops.

Implication

Many effective horror stories do not explicitly describe the horrific events of the story. Instead, either the aftermath or the careful foreshadowing of events are presented, with only brief glimpses of the horror itself. In this case, the audience has to fill in the implied details from their own imagination, without the clumsy, clichéd mediation of the author.

This is a technique that can also be used by the storyguide in *Ars Magica Fifth Edition*. For example, the characters may only catch terrible glimpses of the monster that is stalking them. This technique combines well with the idea of vivid images. That is, as the storyguide, make sure that the small amount of information that you do provide to the players is precise and evocative, as this will trigger the player's own imaginations more effectively.

However, a word of caution: be wary of over-using the technique of implication. A roleplaying game works because there is an agreement that the storyguide will convey to the players everything important that the characters experience in the story. You might not have actually discussed this with your troupe, but nonetheless the agreement is there. It's needed because the players are not really the characters, and the story is not really happening, so the players aren't in control of how they perceive events, details, and surroundings.

Unfortunately, the technique of implication breaks this agreement: the sto-

ryguide deliberately refrains from describing all the important points. This is fine for the storyguide to do consciously and occasionally for effect. However, the players are likely to become frustrated and annoyed if they think that they are losing control of what happens to their characters because the storyguide is hiding important information about the story from them. The storyguide should be careful that she does not use sparseness of information as a way to "outwit" the players.

Violence

Horror stories usually involve considerable violence. Often most (or even all) of the characters in the story are killed, and those who are not are usually traumatized or tortured. However, you should carefully decide with your troupe how comfortable they are with explicit violence. Perhaps, as a rough guide, you could aim at the violence levels in the films and television shows that you all enjoy watching.

It is perfectly fine for the violence in a horror story to occur mostly off-stage, and it can be much more effective to understate, rather than overstate, the violence, allowing the players' imaginations to fill in the gory details through implication, as previously discussed. Note that, when using the combat resolution mechanics, the abstract system already tends to push the violence of combat off-stage.

Death of Player Characters

Player character death is a real problem with using horror stories in an ongoing saga. On the one hand, it makes little sense for many characters to survive most horror stories. On the other hand, a saga is usually about the long-term development of characters over many different stories.

One good technique is for the troupe to use different, more expendable characters for the bulk of the horror story. Perhaps the main saga characters only arrive late in the story, to dispatch the monster, after most of

the story characters are already dead. To ensure that the players are still emotionally attached to the temporary, dying, horror story characters, try to introduce a few of the characters to the saga in an earlier game session, preferably in a non-horror story.

Inversion of Normal Conventions

Breaking the conventions and expectations of the characters (and players) is a good technique for unsettling the players and creating a feeling of unease. Perhaps a gang of children are killing off the city watch, one by one. The characters might discover a village where the people munch on grass and defecate in the fields like animals. Or they may encounter a gang of outlaws raiding a sleepy monastery, only to be captured, tortured, dismembered, and eaten by the cannibal monks. This technique is most successful when, early on in the story, the conventions expected by the players are obeyed. Establishing normalcy in this way provides a contrast when conventions are suddenly overthrown.

Broken Narrative

Breaking the flow of the story by flashing forward or backward can be a great technique for disorienting the players. This technique is also useful for revealing information to the players that helps them to make sense of the story, but which their characters could not plausibly discover. Flashbacks can also be a good way of introducing temporary characters who can suffer horrific fates without disrupting the long-term viability of the saga.

For example, if you want to tell a horror story about some of the covenant children being murdered and replaced by faerie dopelgangers, you could have this fact discovered by the magi when the children, returning from a journey outside the covenant, are suddenly repelled by the *Aegis of the Hearth*. After the magi have dealt with the faerie imposters, you can tell the story of the original children's gory demise as a flashback.

Supernatural Versus Mundane Monsters

It is important to remember that not all horror stories need to have a blood-drenched demon, ravenous vampire, or stumbling revenant as the monster. Mundane opponents can just as easily terrorize the player characters, and may even be more difficult to deal with, depending on the specialties (or consciences) of the magi.

Mundane opponents also create more opportunities for the players to question the morality of their own characters' actions, which can be an important element of a good horror story. Beheading a werewolf or impaling a vampire might be too easily considered a "good" action, but murdering the mad wife of the turb sergeant should be considerably more ambiguous.

Props

Some troupes like to use props such as music, sound effects, photographs or drawings of characters and locations, and even physical exemplars of the weapons and other items that the story characters encounter. Props can certainly help make the story experience more immersive, for some players. However, be aware that using props requires a lot of careful thought and planning, and even the use of well-made props will not necessarily make your story more engrossing or entertaining — in fact, props can be a big distraction for some players. Whether or not props will work for your troupe is a matter for your own judgment.

Transylvanian Tribunal Horror Stories

It is by no means compulsory to tell horror stories in the Transylvanian Tribunal. Political stories, stories about mundane interference, and any other sort of story in-

volving magi are perfectly viable. However, Transylvania has a reputation for its native horror elements. Some examples include:

- **Vampires** make good monster or psychopath characters. A vampire who has the appearance of a dead friend (or enemy) could be the basis of a rich nemesis story.
- **Werewolves** are common in parts of Transylvania.
- **Vampire Hunters** make for good savant characters and are often effective against other sorts of monsters. Some vampire hunters have a parent who is a vampire, and the slaying of the parent can make for a good horror story. Vampire hunters may also make for good *monster* characters. For example, dhampir vampire hunters are doomed to become vampires upon their death.
- **The Mongol Horde** descends upon Eastern Mythic Europe in several waves during the mid-13th century, if your saga follows history. The unstoppable tide of Mongol soldiers may make good horde opponents in a horror story. See *The Cradle and the Crescent* for details of the Mongol horde.
- Transylvania is home to hundreds or even thousands of **dragons** who may pose a serious threat in a horror story. See the Dragon section of the Chapter 8 on creatures for more details, including the possibility of a dragon horde.
- **Giants** are good antagonists for horror stories. The Transylvanian brand of hedge wizard known as Storm Wizards hunts giants and could take on the role of savant.
- The **Teutonic Knights** have a strong presence in the Transylvanian Tribunal. Knights of this military order could take the role of savant in a horror story. Alternatively, the military order could make for good antagonists in a conspiracy-based horror story. A small band of knights — whether mad or bad, or both — could also make good psychopathic monsters.
- **Magi** from House Tremere and the wider Order of Hermes are good characters to take on the savant role in a horror story. On the other hand, magi can also take on the role of monster, particularly that of a nemesis or a psychopath. Magi are also suitable antagonists for a conspiracy-based horror story.

Appendix

Glossary

- Aedile:** An odd member of an oppidum who limits corruption. Basically a non-Tremere in a Tremere-dominated oppidum, or a Tremere in a non-Tremere oppidum.
- Archizupan:** A title, grand chieftain, held by the leader of the Serbs.
- Azdaja:** Any Infernal dragon
- Ban:** A noble title, meaning prince or governor, depending on location.
- Bogomilism:** A Divine faith considered a heresy by the Christian Church.
- Bolyar (pl. bolyeri):** A Bulgarian nobleman
- The Book of Legacies:** A list of the resources of House Tremere.
- The Book of Placements:** A list, used in conjunction with the *Book of Legacies*, noting what has been loaned to each member of the House.
- The Book of Places to Avoid:** A list of places within the Tribunal that are too dangerous for magi to safely travel through. Maintained by the Survey Group.
- Broukolak:** A type of humanoid, infernal vampire (Bulgarian term)
- Cives:** A magus-citizen of the Tribunal, with the fullest range of rights and duties.
- Colona:** A magus, usually young, who has been permitted to settle in the wilder parts of Transylvania. Colona have fewer rights than magi with other covenants.
- Covenant:** The legal agreement by which a magus lives in the Tribunal, specifying rights and duties. The five usual covenants give the statuses of *cives*, *socii*, *hospite foederate*, and *colona*.
- Curantis:** An official of the Tribunal appointed to manage the Zenodochii network.
- Curator:** A Tribunal official, appointed for life, who oversees the museum oppidum of Tablinum.
- Cult of Zalmoxis:** An ancient mystery cult of a resurrected hero, native to the Tribunal.
- Decebalus, Treasure of:** The treasure of an ancient king, rumored buried under a river in the Transylvanian Tribunal.
- Decennial:** A meeting every ten years to determine the future course of House Tremere.
- Dhampir (pl. dhampiri):** The child of a vampire, also called a vampirdzhi.
- Fectores (sing. Fector):** Either an alliance of non-Hermetic wizards organized by House Tremere, or else a Hermetic tradition of House Ex Miscellanea, either way a specialist vampire hunter.
- Foederate:** A magus whose rights and duties derive from a historical agreement, made when their covenant joined the Tribunal.
- Gadja:** A swollen bag filled with gelatinous blood; a stage in the lifecycle of many types of vampire.
- Hochmeister:** Literally, "high master." In this supplement, it refers to the leader of the Teutonic Order.
- Hospite:** A magus whose rights and duties in the Tribunal derive from work they have been hired to do by the Tribunal or House Tremere, or a foreigner allowed to stay in Hungary by the king, in exchange for service or taxes.
- Ice Harvesting:** The Storm Wizard hedge tradition's method of harvesting Auram vis.
- Kukudhi:** A powerful vampire able to live among humans undetected.
- Legata:** The representative of, and in emergencies, temporary heir to, the Prima of Tremere.
- Lictor:** A magus who has dedicated a long portion of his life to hoplitem.
- Mansio:** A coaching house for magi, managed by a Redcaps.
- Moroi (pl. moroi):** A Vlach vampire.
- Oppidum (pl. Oppida):** A place where magi live together, likely called a "covenant" in other Tribunals.
- Pax Draconis:** The current state of relative peace between the two major types of dragon in the Tribunal, enforced by an ancient Roman dragon.
- Pecheng:** An ethnic group of migratory horse warriors, dispossessed of their original territories by the Cumans, who now serve the Hungarian king or various covenants.
- Perun:** The Slavic lightning god.
- Platenik (pl. platenici):** A Slavic vampire.
- Pricolici:** A Vlach bestial vampire.
- Rotation:** The Tremere habit of coming home to Transylvania every decade or so, more formal in some areas than others.
- Sabotnik (pl. sabotnici):** A person immune to the direct powers of many vampires and possessing 'The Sight', often a vampire hunter.
- Socii:** A magus whose rights and duties in the Tribunal derive from their role as a Redcap, Quaesitor, or dedicated hoplite.
- Strigoi:** The most general Vlach word for a vampire or witch.
- Survey Group:** The Tremere vexillation responsible for identifying all of the resources in lands controlled by the House.
- Szelkers:** An ethnic group of migratory horse warriors, left behind as a beachhead by the retreating Huns, now allied to the Hungarian throne.
- Taltos:** A type of folk magician native to the Tribunal; arguably extinct in the ancient meaning of the term.
- Tengrist:** A follower of the gods of the steppe horsemen.
- The [Transylvania] Chronicle:** A record of Tribunal history and Peripheral Code rulings. The authoritative copy is kept at Tablinum.
- Tsar:** "Emperor and autocrat of all Bulgarians and Vlachs;" the ruler of Bulgaria.
- Varcolac (pl. varcolaci):** A Vlach werewolf.
- Veles:** The Slavic death god, sometimes draconic in form.
- Vila:** A female fairy, a "white lady."
- Vlach:** A Romanian.
- Voivode:** A prince, governor, or count depending on location.
- Vukodlak (pl. vukodlaci):** A Slavic bestial vampire or hedge magician.
- Zduhacz:** A spirit, or a vampire in its spiritual form.
- Zenodochium (pl. Zenodochii):** A traveler's safe-house run by the Tribunal which contains magical items and casting tablets to aid injured magi.
- Zmaj:** Any Magical dragon.