

# SubRosa

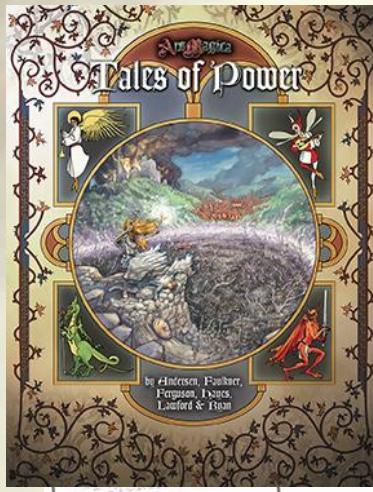
The Ars Magica Magazine

Issue 12, March 2013



A Distant Lands Publication  
[www.subrosamagazine.org](http://www.subrosamagazine.org)

# Out Now and Coming Soon

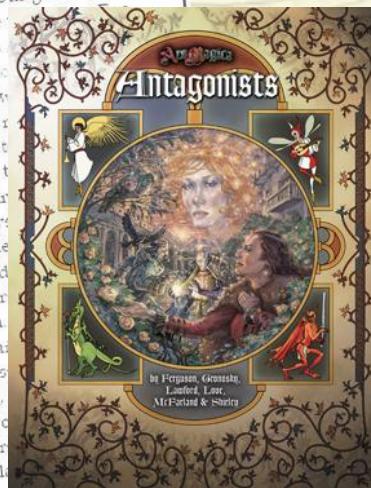


## Tales of Power

Authors: Christian Rosenjaer Andersen, Mark Faulkner, Timothy Ferguson, Lachie Hayes, Mark Lawford, Matt Ryan  
Cover Artist: Christian St. Pierre  
Stock Number: AG0304 | ISBN: 1-58978-138-4 | MSRP: \$27.95 US  
Format: 144 pages, softcover  
Release Date: May 2013

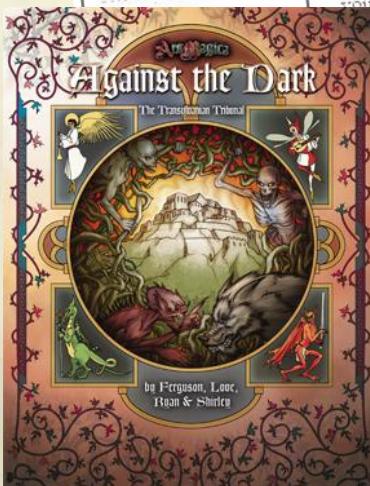
METACREATOR

Enhance your gaming experience! Software's Metacreator provides a covenant creation, training, enchanting Game system adjustment, hundred to use from Edition, customisability, sheet, group, block of the Ar templar



## Antagonists

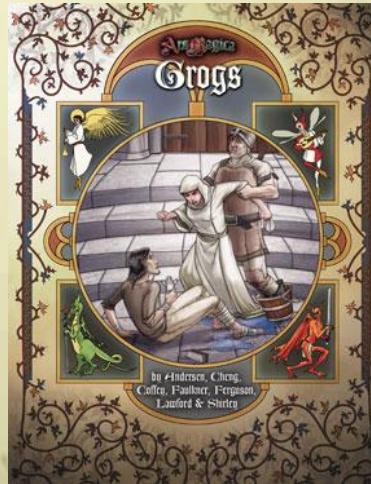
Authors: Timothy Ferguson, Andrew Gronosky, Mark Lawford, Richard Love, Ben McFarland, Mark Shirley  
Cover Artist: Christian St. Pierre  
Stock Number: AG0303 | ISBN: 1-58978-135-X | MSRP: \$29.95 US  
Format: 144 pages, hardcover  
Release Date: Available Now



## Against the Dark: The Transylvanian Tribunal

Authors: Timothy Ferguson, Richard Love, Matt Ryan, Mark Shirley  
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry  
Stock Number: AG0302 | ISBN: 1-58978-130-9 | MSRP: \$29.95 US  
Format: 144 pages, hardcover  
Release Date: Available Now

DOWNLOADS



## Grogs

Authors: Mark Shirley, Christian Rosenjaer Andersen, Evangeline Cheng, Camo Coffey, Mark Faulkner, Timothy Ferguson, Mark Lawford  
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry  
Stock Number: AG0301 | ISBN: 1-58978-129-5 | MSRP: \$29.95 US  
Format: 144 pages, hardcover  
Release Date: Available Now

Sub Rosa

# This Issue

Issue 12

March 2013

## Contents

<b>Under the Rose</b>	.....	Page 4
By Mark Lawford		
<b>From the Line Editor</b>	.....	Page 5
By David Chart		
<b>Storyguide's handbook: Chance Encounters</b>	.....	Page 6
By Gerald Wylie		
<b>The Governance of Kievan Rus</b>	.....	Page 22
By Elliot Smorodinsky		
<b>Love's Labours Lost</b>	.....	Page 28
By CJ Romer		
<b>From the Journal of Vulcanis Argens</b>	.....	Page 36
By Mark Lawford		
<b>Companion Piece: Lazar ben Yosef</b>	.....	Page 40
By Ben McFarland		
<b>Who Wants to Live Forever?</b>	.....	Page 44
By Ben McFarland		
<b>Pilgrims of Darkness</b>	.....	Page 46
By Jérôme Darmont		
<b>Mappa Mundi</b>	.....	Page 59
By Ben McFarland		

## Contributors

**Publisher:** Distant Lands Publishing  
**Contributors:** Elliot Smorodinsky, Jérôme Darmont, Ben McFarland, Gerald Wylie, CJ Romer, Mark Lawford, and David Chart  
**Cover art:** Angela Taylor  
**Interior artists:** Angela Taylor, Barrie James, Jason Tseng, and Patrick Demo  
**Art Coordinator:** Ben McFarland  
**Editors:** Ben McFarland, Mark Lawford  
**Design/Layout:** Alex White, Mark Lawford

## Contact Sub Rosa

Email: [subrosa@distantlandspublishing.com](mailto:subrosa@distantlandspublishing.com)

Web: <http://www.subrosamagazine.org>

Twitter: [@subrosamagazine](https://twitter.com/@subrosamagazine)

**Snail Mail:**

Sub Rosa Magazine C/O Mark Lawford  
119 Royal Sussex Crescent  
Eastbourne  
BN20 8RJ  
England

## Legal Disclaimer

Sub Rosa is an independent publication not affiliated with Atlas Games or White Wolf Gaming Studios. Distant Lands Publishing is not affiliated with Atlas Games or White Wolf. **Ars Magica** is © Trident Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games. **Ars Magica**, Mythic Europe, Covenants and Charting new Realms of the Imagination are trademarks of Trident Inc. Order of Hermes, Tremere and Doissetep are trademarks of White Wolf Gaming Studios. **Ars Magica** was created by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•Hagen.

The intellectual content of **Sub Rosa** is © and held by the authors. All rights reserved. Reproduction of any issue of **Sub Rosa** for commercial use by any means without written permission from the Publisher, except short excerpts for the purpose of reviews, is expressly prohibited.

References to any Trademarks, Registered Trademarks or Copyrights held by any company or individual in **Sub Rosa** is for promotional and recreational use. Use of these terms should not be construed a challenge to their ownership.

*Tweets from the foundation of the Order:*

**Diedne001:** @OneTrueTremere So you've got a splat book?

**OneTrueTremere:** @Diedne001 And a Tribunal book

**PralixAndProud:** @Diedne001 @OneTrueTremere I've got a splat book too

**Diedne001:** @OneTrueTremere @PralixAndProud But you're not even a founder

**PralixAndProud:** @Diedne001 @OneTrueTremere I know, LOL!

**Diedne001:** @OneTrueTremere @PralixAndProud Okay, someone better sort me a splat book out or there'll be trouble

**OneTrueTremere:** @Diedne001 @PralixAndProud Yeah, good luck with that

## Contribute to Sub Rosa

**Sub Rosa** is made up of fan driven content. Contributors receive a complementary copy of the issue their work appears in.

To contribute articles or illustrations, visit the **Sub Rosa** website ([www.subrosamagazine.org](http://www.subrosamagazine.org)) and follow the guidelines.

## Subscription

Individual Single Issue: US\$4.50

Individual Subscription – 4 issues: US\$16.00

Troupe Single Issue: US\$13.00

Troupe Subscription – 4 issues: US\$35.00

# Under the Rose

How was 2012 for you? Books, Tribunals, Video Games, Translations... **Ars Magica** seems to have had a busy year. Let's take a quick look back.

**Spring:** *Apprentices*, the essential sourcebook for bringing new blood into the Order, was finally released. There's a book with a story to tell.

**Summer:** The end of summer saw Grand Tribunals take place once again in both California and England for a very successful fifth and sixth years respectively.

**Autumn:** The big autumn story has to be the KickStarter project from **Black Chicken Studios**. For thirty glorious days we very nearly had a video game version of **Ars Magica**. The ambition and vision was incredible; players able to cast spontaneous magic, to learn and cast every spell effect from the core book, a place for grogs, companions, and magi, and the chance to build and develop your covenant across a century of game time. And what a century that was going to be. Not only would that cover the Norman invasion and conquest of England, but it would take in the Schism War. As a result, for the first time ever, we would have been treated to an official working of House Diedne.

**Black Chicken Studios**, the production house behind the game, were going to be working with **Atlas Games** and the line authors to produce an actual to goodness book detailing House

Diedne, something that the line has shied away from since the House was first introduced to the game back around 1990. It would have been historic. But it wasn't to be.

Despite making a very healthy proportion of their target, and despite a huge sterling publicity effort by the **Ars Magica** community, **Black Chicken Studios** fell short of their funding goal. Under the KickStarter rules, and for sound business reasons, the project couldn't get under way unless it had funded. It's a great shame, not only because of the extra background information we could have had on the Schism War and House Diedne, but also for **Black Chicken Studios** who worked so hard on their vision.

Still, never say never...

**Winter:** While the video game didn't come off, it was announced that a French Translation of **Ars Magica** was seeking subscribers. They hit their target and then some, proving that the game's appeal is still broad and strong.

## On to 2013:

But we're into 2013 now so let's look forward; *Against the Dark* is out now (and isn't it superb?), *Antagonists* will be out soon (and that really is a little gem), and while this issue is a little later than intended, it is packed with really useful content.

Thanks to Gerald Wylie again this issue we have another instalment of the Storyguide's

Handbook, this time presenting a system for generating random encounters. It's hard not to think of lists of goblins, kobolds, and various flavors of ooze or slime when you think of random encounter tables, but Gerald Wylie has added an **Ars Magica** twist to these, which turns a couple of die rolls into the jumping-off point for brand new stories.

CJ Romer, that well-known Grand Tribunal organizer, author, ghost hunter, raconteur, and all-round good egg, brings us a fantastic little scenario to keep your grogs entertained while the magi busy themselves at their Tribunal. Blending the works of classical Greece, Shakespeare, and Linehan & Mathews, the story pits the troupe's grogs against their rivals with the ultimate forfeit at stake.

We are also really pleased to present an updated version of the Pilgrims of Darkness scenario by Jérôme Darmont. Readers of **Sub Rosa** may recognise the scenario from the old Hermes Portal days back around 2002. Pilgrims of Darkness won the scenario contest and was well received at the time. Jérôme has updated the statistics to support **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** and so we're pleased to be able to present this classic with all new artwork.

And... Look, we're running out of space, so just dive in. Anywhere you like.

# From the Line Editor

By David Chart

Those of you who are familiar with role-playing game theory will know about the Gamist-Narrativist-Simulationist triad. These are three different approaches to the design of role-playing games. The **gamist** approach sees RPGs as games first and foremost, like board games. There are rules that must be followed, and there are good and bad choices, leading to success or failure, depending on the rules. All the player characters generally start off in roughly equal positions, but that might change as the game progresses. The **narrativist** approach sees an RPG as a tool for collective storytelling. Whether a choice is good or bad depends on whether it helps the story, and rules should be ignored if they get in the way of telling a good story. The **simulationist** approach sees RPGs as simulating a world, and providing guidelines on what would happen if the characters took certain actions.

All RPGs have elements of all three approaches. They're all right there in the name. "Role" is simulationist, because you guide a character through their world. "Playing", like a stage play, is narrativist; the characters have a story, unlike the pieces in a board game. And "Game" is fairly obviously gamist. However, the balance between the three elements can, and does, vary between games.

**Ars Magica** is primarily a simulationist game. There are rules for everything, and these rules are supposed to reflect an underlying "reality". The rules for Hermetic laboratory work are the best example. These rules are not directly connected to the narrative; research takes place during downtime, and is described rather than played out. The rules tell you what your character can do, and how quickly. They are pure simulation, and a central part of the game.

The same is true, to a lesser extent, of many other rules. Every variety of magic has different rules in Fifth Edition because, in the game world, every variety of magic works differently, and in a simulationist game the rules should reflect that. Everything should be simulated by mechanics that reflect how it works in the game

world, so if two types of magic are fundamentally different in the world, they should have different mechanics in the game.

Of course, **Ars Magica** has elements of the other approaches as well. It is, after all, a game, and the mechanics that simulate the various kinds of magic are supposed to be both playable and, in a sense, balanced. Hermetic magic is supposed to be the most powerful form of magic, but all the options should be interesting. From a simulationist perspective, there is no reason why one form of magic shouldn't just be boring and powerless. In a game, however, there is no point offering something that is no fun to play.

Similarly, **Ars Magica** has always had narrativist elements: troupe-style play is fundamentally narrativist, because players change their characters depending on what will make a better story. Fifth Edition introduced some more explicitly narrativist mechanics, such as Story Flaws, Personality Flaws, and Covenant Hooks. The character gets points for a Story Flaw not because it will be a disadvantage but because it will lead to stories. Covenant Hooks, similarly, are not problems for the covenant, but stories waiting to happen.

At the moment, narrativist games are trendy. They're not the most popular games, as those are still **D&D** and **Pathfinder**, which are primarily gamist with significant simulationist elements, but the "cutting edge" games are all narrativist. Indeed, **13th Age**, by Jonathan Tweet and Rob Heinsoo, is a project to bring lots of narrativist elements to a **D&D**-style game. So, does that make **Ars Magica** an archaic dinosaur?

Obviously, I don't think so, and not just because **Ars Magica** has had significant narrativist elements since before it was cool. I think there are real benefits to having a more simulationist base.

The most important stems from the obvious fact that Hermetic magic does not exist in the real world. There are people who believe that magic is real, but the magic they believe in is nothing like Hermetic magic. As a result, no

one has an intuitive grasp of how Hermetic magic should work. You cannot just make it up as you go along, because you have no frame of reference. Simulationist rules for Hermetic magic tell you how it works, and mean that you can make plans for your characters based on what Hermetic magic can do.

The rules do mean that certain stories do not work with most Hermetic magi. Mundane combat, for example, is almost never a significant obstacle. On the other hand, they create many other kinds of stories, particularly stories of the consequences of a magus's decisions.

Another benefit is that it gives players a sense for the way the rest of the world carries on. Narrativist or gamist mechanics do not apply sensibly to most of the world; **D&D** 3 acknowledged this by introducing the NPC classes, but the very idea of a 20th-level Commoner is a bit silly. On the other hand, **Ars Magica's** mechanics make perfectly good sense for the rest of the world, and the magi in the next covenant over are using the same rules as the player characters. This helps create a sense of reality, which helps suspension of disbelief in the stories.

That's not to say that I think **Ars Magica** is perfect. The rules are too complex to be applied in detail to all the other characters in the world, or even to all the other magi in a Tribunal. From another angle, the rules for Hermetic magic don't create as many stories as they could. However, these are not aspects that can be fixed with minor changes; they would require a full rewrite of the game, reconceptualising Hermetic magic from nothing. That's not something I've been interested in doing. I think that **Ars Magica**, as it was designed 25 years ago, is still one of the best games out there, precisely because of its strong simulationist bias. Even if it is not fashionable.

# The Storyguide's handbook: Chance Encounters

**Ars Magica** is first and foremost a storytelling game and the wider narrative is usually more important than individual encounters; characters grow more in response to stories than they do by confronting arbitrary enemies along the journey. This implies that the storyguide knows exactly what's going on at all times and everything that has happened or will happen to the player characters is part of some grand plan. That is rarely the case, however. All storyguides need to think on their feet in order to cope with those times when the planned sea voyage suddenly turns into an overland slog (or vice versa) at the players' insistence. Such events tend to dry the mouth of even the most experienced storyguide.

Storyguides may sometimes want to fall back on random encounters to provide some unexpected elements to their stories, not just for their players but for their own enjoyment too. Either to add incident to a journey, to provide a diversion from the main plot, or to cover those inconvenient moments when the prepared material is suddenly and ruthlessly surplus to requirements.

So in a slight change in format to other articles in this series, this article presents a set of tables from which random encounters can be generated. These encounters are richer than might be expected as the motives of people or creatures encountered is taken into account, which

allows the storyguide to quickly build some degree of story around the event.

The system presented here is not designed, as some old school RPG random encounter tables were, to determine whether an encounter takes place. As the storyguide, you are better placed to make that decision. The tables here help to string elements together into an encounter with one or more motivated

By Gerald Wylie

antagonists with a minimum of preparation.

Given the widely distributed nature of the **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** canon, page references to appropriate character/creature statistics are provided wherever possible to help populate the encounter more quickly.



Sub Rosa

## Random Encounters

Random encounters in *Ars Magica* should not simply be about gaining Story XP; as a game, *Ars Magica* doesn't work that way. Instead, they are storytelling opportunities, opportunities that may not normally have been apparent even to the storyguide.

### Troupe-Style Play

In troupe-style play all the members of the troupe may take on storyguide duties from time to time, either for longer saga threads or for shorter stories added to the narrative. There are no restrictions on this and storyguides may change between stories, between sessions, or even within a particular session to handle different elements. The use of random encounters actually facilitates this sharing of responsibilities by providing a little hook into a story with limited preparation and few

expectations.

There's another use for random encounters, of course. Redcaps and other player and non-player characters frequently visit covenants and players often expect them to bring a host of tales with them concerning their adventures on the road. Any given character may pick up one or two stories in a season so a random encounter table makes light work of building the Redcap's latest tall tale.

*of someone*". That card, in particular, might prompt a roll for a random encounter, or could further modify the random encounter currently being played.

Given that the event has been randomly generated already, it provides a perfect playground for additional random or semi-random elements being introduced. If you want to try that out, **Sub Rosa** issue 7 includes a PDF sheet of Whimsy Cards.

## The Basics

All you need is the charts below and some D% to hand. You need to decide a few things up front, such as the time of day, general region, etc. as some of these act as modifiers to later rolls (more on that below).

From the tables nearby, work out any modifiers that apply, given your location and environmental considerations, to get a single final number. Do that

### Examples

The following examples show how the system works.

#### Example One: City, Morning, Low Divine Aura

Given the setting of a town or city, in the morning, and in a **Divine aura** of 2, we make a roll for a **mundane** encounter. So we go to the modifiers table and find that Morning provides -5 and the aura of 2 provides -6 for a total of -11.

Then we roll on the Town or City encounter table. We rolled 88, which is modified down to 77. Looking under the mundane column we can see that we've encountered a Band of Players. Now we want to find their motivation. This time we roll 91, which would be Robbery/Violence, which is in keeping

with the mob. But we have a -11 modifier so this becomes 80 instead. Checking the chart, we discover that the Band of Players is actually trying to hide. Interesting. So it sounds like these Players are trying to disperse through the streets, to escape from something. We may need a wildcard. A straight roll on the wildcard table gives us 01, which is... Burning or on fire. That puts a different spin on things. The storyguide now has options. Treat the Band of Players as a literal Band of Players and have them fleeing from something that has the power to set them alight (a magus, a witch, a dragon even), or turn the situation into a fire catching hold in the town.

Either option gives the storyguide a useful hook for a side-story or even the start of something entirely new.

#### Example Two: Woodland, Evening, Moderate Faerie Aura

We're in a Faerie wood (aura level 3) and we want a Faerie encounter. It is evening so we have a modifier of -3 for the aura, +10 for evening, for a total of +7. We roll a 05, modified up to 12: Fool's Fire (*Realms of Power: Faerie*, page 92).

We rolled a 52 for motivation, modified up to 59: This Fool's Fire is on the hunt. As a hunter it's not that great, but it's probably acting as a lure for something larger and more dangerous, or is actively trying to lure the characters into the marsh. Regardless, we'll roll a wildcard and see if it helps us out. With a 97, we can see that this Fool's Fire is a shapeshifter. That's something we can play with as the fire in the distance may now be even more convincing.

ahead of rolling the dice. Then roll a percentile dice and add or subtract your modifier. This gives you the type of entity encountered.

Then roll a new percentile dice and add or subtract the same modifiers as before. If you have a view on the encountered entity's Personality Traits (not those of the player characters), then apply these to the motivation roll too. This gives you the motivation of the encountered person, people, or beasts.

Then you may take or roll for one or more wildcards. These are small enhancements to the encounter that you can perhaps hang a story on. For instance, a robber out for violence at midnight may not sound engaging, but having rolled 51 and 42 on the wildcard table we can see that he has been ensorcelled and he's wet. Is this sign that he's under a Hermetic spell cast by a magus with a distinctive sigil? You can select or roll as many or as few of these as you like until you have an interesting hook for an

encounter.

## Standard Modifiers

There are some conditions that affect later tables. For instance, the time of day influences the weather for each season and a passing drake may be less inclined to violence as dawn breaks than if it were midnight. In particular, the phases of the moon, should you choose to include them, have a curious effect. The modifier reduces with each phase subsequent to a full moon, and then ticks back to its maximum modifier when the moon becomes full again.

The Golden Rule is that you don't need to factor in any modifiers that you don't want to. Use what feels appropriate to you at the time. For instance, if you think that the high infernal aura is penalty enough for the encounter, then you don't need to modify the encounter roll based on that aura. However, if you're rolling for the random encounter in open play, rather than as preparation in advance of a

session, make it clear to your players what you're including and excluding and why.

## Magic and Random Encounters

In a world where magic is so prevalent, there is rarely such thing as pure chance. Various traditions have their ways of manipulating weather, for instance, and the motivations of those a Hermetic magus meets upon the road may well be for him to decide.

### Natural Magicians

The Natural Magicians (*Hedge Magic: Revised Edition*, page 79) know the Arts of Tueor and Fortunam. Together, these grant the target good luck, represented in the published guidelines as an opportunity lessen the effects of botches and to re-roll failed rolls, putting fortune definitely on that character's side.

As an optional general guideline, a Natural Magician may make Charms, Amulets, and

### New Natural Magic Charms

The following new Charms show how Natural Magicians can aid or hinder their targets.

#### Charm Against Ill-Fortune on the Road

TuFa Level 25

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Ind

This Natural Magician Charm uses the arts of Tueor and Fortunam to grant good fortune to the traveler on his or her journey. If the storyguide initiates a random encounter, the character affected may add or subtract up to 10 (this effect's base value) from all storyguide rolls, ostensibly in the character's favor.

This is a case of the target's good fortune rubbing off on their traveling companions as all in the party experience the same event, of course. Should two or more travelers be under the same or similar effects, only the highest or most powerful applicable bonus applies; the effects are not cumulative.

(Base 10, +1 Touch, +2 Sun)

#### Curse of Ill-Fortune on the Road

VuFa Level 30

R: Voice, D: Sun, T: Ind

This Natural Magician Charm uses the arts of Vulnero and Fortunam to bestow ill fortune to the traveler on his or her journey.

If the storyguide initiates a random encounter, the storyguide adds or subtracts up to 10 (this effect's base value) from all storyguide rolls, ostensibly to the character's detriment.

This is a case of the target's ill fortune rubbing off on their traveling companions as all in the party experience the same event, of course. Should two or more travelers be under the same or similar effects, only the highest or most powerful applicable bonus applies; the effects are not cumulative.

(Base 10, +2 Voice, +2 Sun)

Chartae that influence rolls on the random encounter tables. Where the storyguide is rolling for a random encounter in open play, rather than in advance as part of the story preparation, a character under a dedicated Tueor Fortunam effect may add or subtract a number up to the base level of that effect from the storyguide's roll. This applies to any roll used to design the effect, such as the weather, road or track conditions, encounter type, motivation, and any wildcards rolled by the storyguide.

The same can be done with Vulnero Fortunam effects that cause ill fortune to befall the target character, but in this case the role is modified by the storyguide against the best interests of the character.

The nearby insert presents two example new Charms that use this

principle.

## Environment-Altering Magic

Magic tends not to influence the future, but we're not really influencing the future within the game, just deciding how the story goes once we're into the game. Treat magic that alters the environment as a response to the starting environment conditions that you have either selected or rolled.

Roll or select the weather as required for the event, but remember that the actions of the magus may override the local weather. Assuming you rolled for heavy fog, a magus may easily target that weather phenomenon and clear it if he so desired. And that's fine. These elements are generated to give the player

characters something to interact with, not to consistently hinder them.

Rolling to determine the weather (see the nearby table) is often a useful starting point from which the magus can then bend the conditions as he sees fit. This has implications for certain spells. For instance, a player asks whether there are enough clouds for him to draw together for a casting of Clouds of Thunderous Might (**ArM5**, page 128), a spell that relies on pre-existing clouds. If the event (regardless of whether it is a planned story event or a random encounter) is taking place at midnight on the night of the full moon in the middle of winter, the chances are pretty high that there is going to be some cloud cover. A +45 modifier is earned from the time of night and the phase of the



moon (as both are omens of bad fortune), so a roll of 40 becomes 85, which indicates heavy snow is falling that night. There should be enough cloud in the sky for whatever the magus intends.

Lastly, remember that the weather applies to the event itself. So in the heavy snow example above, it would be reasonable to ask why a character would go out at midnight on the night of the full moon in heavy snow. The narrative takes over at this point. The weather is for that point in time and it likely developed as the events leading up to the encounter did. For instance, characters searching for a child lost in the woods likely start their search before the harsh weather sets in and during daylight.

## Virtues and Flaws



Some Virtues and Flaws influence fortune and what individual characters make of it. It is hard to give a definitive list of which Virtues and Flaws provide what modifier, so the nearby table lists some key items and then some generic Virtue and Flaw modifiers that you can apply should one of your characters have something that arguably modifies the chances in some way. For instance, you may decide that the Overconfident Minor Flaw makes a character prone to picking an ill-judged route, which in turn makes a more serious encounter more likely; Add a +5 to the random encounter roll. Alternatively, you may think that Well-Traveled helps ensure the quickest or quietest route is taken, in which case you can apply a -5 to the roll.

If you do decide to take

Virtues and Flaws into account, then you should take into account all the player characters that are involved in the event where they have applicable Virtues and Flaws. The key thing here though is to allow the players some input into this. They should be looking for beneficial Virtues to help their case to counter any plainly problematic Flaws.

## Environment

For the most part, when we talk about environment we really mean to establish what the weather is like and how hard is the traveling under foot.

Weather is influenced by season, so find the appropriate season and roll as described above, applying any modifiers.

Roads are influenced by who maintains them, which varies from nobody to a large city. If you want a view on road conditions, roll the dice, again applying modifiers, and look across to the most appropriate column. Modifiers for time of day, etc. are used as such things may influence what the traveler can see; there may be a fair route through the mountains, but that only counts if the player characters have found it.

Virtues and Flaws can come into play here, as can Area Lore Abilities - allow a roll and subtract it from the storyguide's roll. If the event is being designed in advance, you can adjust the road conditions as you see fit.

The weather affects the safety of traveling by boat or ship either on the river or at sea. If you have determined what the weather is like, you can look across to the River/Sea Conditions table and read off the effect. Having rolled

for heavy snow earlier, we can see that sailing in heavy snow has a base Ease Factor of 18, which is tricky. We can also see that if we are on the open ocean, we need to add 21 to any Stress Checks against the boat as the snow builds up in sails and rigging.

## Random Encounters

Four encounter tables are included with this article covering Towns and Cities, Hills and Mountains, Woodland, and Seas and Oceans. There are other possibilities, of course, and tables can be created for desert and arctic locales, or even underground cave systems.

Each table has five columns; one for mundane encounters and one for each of the supernatural realms. It is for the storyguide (or troupe) to decide what kind of event is going to take place and these are not tied to the particular aura that the scene takes place in (although as we have seen, the aura influences the resulting event).

There is a trend towards naturally more challenging events as the roll gets higher, so a low roll for a magical woodland encounter might result in a ghost or beast of virtue, while a high roll results in a great wyrm.

How the characters enter the encounter is down to the storyguide. Do they see the beast/wyrm/robbers off through the trees, are they ambushed, or do they stray too near to a collapsed pothole?

Random encounters may be the seed of a more fully-featured story. For instance, when a villager comes cap in hand to the covenant asking for help with a problem, just what kind of problem is the villager talking

about? What has happened that has made him seek help? For instance, a roll of 97 against the **Hills and Mountains** table for a magical encounter results in a Drake. A motivation roll of 92 suggests that the Drake is hiding from something. And a wildcard roll of 74 suggests that the Drake is stuck somehow. Note that the first wildcard rolled was 66 for Poetic. Not enough of a hook for us in this case, so we can roll again. The player characters did not need to come across the hapless beast themselves, but there is enough there to now build a story around - who is the Drake, where is it, how did it become confined, and what is it trying to conceal itself from?

## Motivations

So you might have rolled for a

great wyrm (tough challenge), but what does it want or what is it doing? There's a big difference between how a sleeping wyrm is treated compared to a wyrm trying to conceal something. After all, what would a wyrm be trying to conceal? Treasure? Food? Eggs?

Not all encounters must start or end with violence and many of the motivations have nothing to do with the player characters - they happen to be around while the encountered entity is getting on with its own business. Remember that very many supernatural creatures/entities are capable of speech and reasoning and this provides a means through which to engage. Given that this is **Ars Magica**, the assumption is that the player characters are more likely to engage with an encountered



entity than to confront and destroy. But don't worry, there's plenty of scope for robbers and foul beasts to be hunted and destroyed.

## Wildcards

As described above, Wildcards are there to add a little something extra to the events. They cover character motivation, state, and circumstance beyond simply a description of what is encountered and where. Unless

you already have a firm idea of what you want to do with your random event, wildcards themselves should be rolled entirely randomly with no additional modifiers. As they are there to inspire tangents and interesting approaches to the event, there is no restriction on how many you roll, how many you discard, or indeed how many you use.

For instance, in a town setting we want a magical encounter. Assuming no other modifiers, we

roll 02 for a Cockerel of Virtue, 73 to gain Conceal Something as his motivation, but we want something else so we roll a Wildcard or two. The first roll is 99 - the Cockerel of Virtue is fated to Die in Mid-Sentence. We may need a little more than that. 49 gives us Known to the Covenant. He isn't, so we'll discard that one. 57 makes him an Amnesiac Cockerel, which sounds like the start of a mystery story, so we stick with that.

# Chance Encounter Tables

Aura				
Strength	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
0	0	0	0	0
1	-3	-9	+3	+1
2	-6	-6	+6	+2
3	-9	-3	+9	+3
4	-12	0	+12	+4
5	-15	+3	+15	+5
6	-18	+6	+18	+6
7	-21	+9	+21	+7
8	-24	+12	+24	+8
9	-27	+15	+27	+9
10	-30	+18	+30	+10

Time of Day		
Condition	Encounter	Weather
The Early Hours	-15	+15
Dawn	-10	+10
Morning	-5	+5
Noon	0	0
Afternoon	+5	-5
Evening	+10	0
Dusk	+15	+5
Night	+20	+10
Midnight	+25	+15

Phase of the Moon	
Condition	Modifier
New Moon	0
Waxing Crescent	-5
First Quarter	-10
Waxing Gibbous	-15
Full Moon	+20
Waning Gibbous	+15
Third Quarter	+10
Waxing Crescent	+5

Wildcard			
Roll %	Description	Roll %	Description
01-02	Burning or On Fire	51-52	Ensorcelled
03-04	Dead	53-54	Possessed
05-06	Undead or Ghostly	55-56	Bearing a Magical Device
07-08	Crying	57-58	Amnesiac
09-10	Wounded	59-60	Fat
11-12	Enraged	61-62	Recently Fed
13-14	Naked	63-64	Starving
15-16	Bound	65-66	Poetic
17-18	Unarmed	67-68	Nobility or Royalty
19-20	Surrounded	69-70	Shrunken
21-22	Lost	71-72	Giant
23-24	Blind	73-74	Stuck
25-26	Deaf	75-76	Knows of the Covenant
27-28	Pregnant	77-78	At prayer
29-30	Mute	79-80	Foreign
31-32	Diseased	81-82	Confused
33-34	Running from Something	83-84	Juvenile
35-36	Frozen	85-86	Elderly
37-38	Wealthy	87-88	Disguised
39-40	Poor	89-90	Carrying a Message
41-42	Wet	91-92	Carrying Treasure
43-44	Hungry	93-94	Carrying a Body
45-46	Thirsty	95-96	Accompanied by a Possessed Dog
47-48	Drunk	97-98	Is a Shapechanger
49-50	Known to the Player Characters	99-00	Dies in Mid-Sentence

## Motivation

Roll %	Mundane	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
<=00	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Find Someone or Something	Sleep
01-02	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Find Someone or Something	Sleep
03-05	Find Someone or Something	Find Someone or Something	Find Someone or Something	Learn	Find Someone or Something
06-10	Learn	Find Someone or Something	Learn	Learn	Find a mate
11-15	Help	Find Someone or Something	Help	Learn	Learn
16-20	Trying to Get Somewhere	Learn	Trying to Get Somewhere	Trying to Get Somewhere	Learn
21-25	Pilgrimage	Learn	Trying to Get Home	Hunt	Help
26-30	Trying to Get Home	Pilgrimage	Pilgrimage	Hunt	Trying to Get Somewhere
31-35	Pilgrimage	Help	Trade	Hunt	Trying to Get Somewhere
36-40	Trade	Pilgrimage	Pilgrimage	Hunt	Trying to Get Somewhere
41-45	Pilgrimage	Help	Trade	Conceal Something	Hunt
46-50	Trade	Pilgrimage	Tell a Story	Conceal Something	Hunt
51-55	Trade	Help	Trade	Hide From Someone or Something	Hunt
56-60	Hunt	Pilgrimage	Hunt	Hide From Someone or Something	Hunt
61-65	Hunt	Help	Hunt	Robbery/Violence	Escape
66-70	Escape	Trade	Escape	Robbery/Violence	Escape
71-75	Conceal Something	Hunt	Conceal Something	Robbery/Violence	Conceal Something
76-80	Hide From Someone or Something	Trade	Hide From Someone or Something	Robbery/Violence	Conceal Something
81-85	Hide From Someone or Something	Escape	Hide From Someone or Something	Robbery/Violence	Hide From Someone or Something
86-90	Robbery/Violence	Seeking Justice	Robbery/Violence	Murder	Something
91-95	Robbery/Violence	Seeking Justice	Robbery/Violence	Murder	Hide From Someone or Something
96-00	Robbery/Violence	Deliver the Wrath of God	Robbery/Violence	Murder	Robbery/Violence
101-105	Murder	Deliver the Wrath of God	Murder	Murder	Robbery/Violence
106-110	Murder	Robbery/Violence	Murder	Murder	Murder
>= 111	Murder	Murder	Murder	Murder	Murder

## Hills or Mountains Encounters

Roll %	Mundane	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
01-05	Shepherd	Seraph or Archangel ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , pages 21 and 25)	Pixies	Snake	Potential familiar searching for a magus
06-10	Troubadour	Lowly Angel	Fool's Fire ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 92)	Crows	Magus searching for a familiar
11-15	Goats and/or sheep	One of the Nephilim ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 18)	Gnomes ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 96)	Wolves	A bird of virtue
16-20	Fox	One of the Grigori ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 26)	Goblins ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 96)	Bats	A ghost
21-25	Hermetic Redcap	Shrine to a Regional Saint	Someone with Dwarf Blood	Worms	Non-Hermetic Gifted wizard searching for a Gifted child
26-30	Robbers	Shrine to a Patron Saint	Someone with Ettin Blood	Hanged Man	Bird of Nephelococcygia ( <i>Realms of Power: Magi</i> , page 68)
31-35	Pilgrim	Shrine to Local Saint	Potential Faerie familiar searching for a magus	A tortured ghost	Natural Magician
36-40	Peddlar	Funeral Procession	Vestal Maga of House Merinita ( <i>Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults</i> , page 84)	Toad	Elementalist
41-45	Lepper	Recluse ( <i>The Church</i> , page 74)	The Wild Hunt	Goetic Sorcerer	Vitkir
46-50	Pilgrim	Pilgrim	Koerakoonlane ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 95)	Infernal Witch	Witch
51-55	Peddlar	Shepherd	Faerie Ravagers ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 81)	Demon Hound	Troll
56-60	Lepper	Magus of the Donatores Requieatis Aeternae ( <i>Houses of Hermes: Sociitates</i> , page 115)	The Rübezahl ( <b>Sub Rosa</b> , Issue 7)	An Ill Wind, Spreading Sickness	Ogre
61-65	Someone trapped down a gorge. Roll again to find out who.	Lost Sheep	The Goblin King's Retinue	Spirit of Lust	Hermetic Magus
66-70	Pilgrim	Pilgrim	Wise Man or Woman ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 136)	Spirit of Gluttony	Air Elemental
71-75	Hermit	Hermit	Ollamhain ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Greed	Earth Elemental
76-80	Lepper	Lepper	Borrower ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Sloth	Fire Elemental
81-90	Robbers	Papal Legate	Cliff Ogre ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 98)	Spirit of Wrath	Water Elemental
91-95	Lost Child	Ba'al Shem ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	A Homonculus Wizard ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 114)	Spirit of Envy	Harpy
96-100	Merchant	A Cantor ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 93)	A Lamia ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 68)	Spirit of Pride	Drake
101-105	Toll or Tax Collector	A Crusader Knight	The Dragon Vishap ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 101)	Heretic Preacher	Griffon
106-110	Friar	Heretic Preacher	Great Orm ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 99)	Demonic Steed ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 79)	Wyrm
111-115	Shepherd	Lowly Angel	Giant ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 98)	A Cockatrice	Giant
116-120	Military Scout	Moderate Angel	Threshold Guardian	The Second Beast ( <b>Revelations</b> 13:11)	A magus engaged in Wizard War
121-125	Robbers	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.
126+	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.

## Town or City Encounters

Roll %	Mundane	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
01-05	Rats	Seraph or Archangel ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , pages 21 and 25)	Brownies ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 81)	Mischievious Imps	Cockeral of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 59)
06-10	Beggar	Moderate Angel	Juvenile Gwiber ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 100)	Firestarting Imps	Magus searching for a Gifted child
11-15	Watchmen	Lowly Angel	Someone with Bloodcap Blood	Demonic Shadows	An unGifted Fortune Teller
16-20	Lepper	One of the Nephilim ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 18)	Someone with Brownie Blood	Imps that rot food bought in the city	Orphan Born ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 94)
21-25	Notary or Scribe	One of the Grigori ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 26)	Someone with Dwarf Blood	A fallen woman	The Dog that Flew ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 79)
26-30	Craftsman	Shrine to a Regional Saint	Someone with Ettin Blood	A cutpurse	A Raven of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 62)
31-35	Knight	Shrine to a Patron Saint	A Faerie Changeling	A sinful friar	A captured magical beast in chains
36-40	Cutpurse	Shrine to Local Saint	A Curse Thrower ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 116)	An Ill-Wind Spreading Sickness	Grogs and/or companions from a friendly covenant buying supplies
41-45	Pilgim	Funeral Procession	Faerie Cobbler	Infernalist ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 94)	Apprentices from a friendly covenant buying supplies
46-50	Cattle Drover	Ba'al Shem ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	Magus of House Merenita	InfernalCultist	Magus from a friendly covenant buying supplies
51-55	Food Seller	A Cantor ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 93)	A Captured Faerie Beast in Chains	Possessed Man	Grogs and/or companions from a rival covenant buying supplies
56-60	Lost Child	A crusader knight	A Child with an Imaginary Friend	Spirit of Lust	Apprentices from a rival covenant buying supplies
61-65	Jongleurs	Papal Legate	A Craftsman with a Faerie Charm ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 104)	Spirit of Gluttony	Magus from a rival covenant buying supplies
66-70	Clerical Entourage	A nun or nuns	Wise Man or Woman ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 136)	Spirit of Greed	Learned Magician looking for supplies
71-75	Hermetic Redcap	A serene Golem ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 142)	A Restless Ghost ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 80)	Spirit of Sloth	Elementalist
76-80	A Band of Players	A Poor Friar	The Wicked Players ( <i>Sub Rosa</i> , Issue 3)	Spirit of Wrath	An apprentice undergoing gauntlet
81-90	Toll or Tax Collector	Monks Seeking Alms	Ollamhain ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Envy	Non-Hermetic Gifted wizard searching for a Gifted child
91-95	Merchant	Anchoress ( <i>The Church</i> , page 74)	Borrower ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Pride	A Caladrius ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 58)
96-100	Students	Mystic ( <i>The Church</i> , page 76)	Wise Man or Woman ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 136)	Two-Headed Hound ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 79)	Magical Cat ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 70)
101-105	A Festival or procession	Holy Maga ( <i>The Church</i> , page 80)	Ghula ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 74)	Devil Child ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 99)	Fire Elemental spontaneously generated
106-110	Magister in Artibus	Karaite Magus ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	A Homonculus Wizard ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 114)	Tainted Child with the False Gift ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 96)	Fire Elemental purposefully generated
111-115	Cutpurse	An enraged Golem ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 142)	Threshold Guardian	A Goetic Sorcerer ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 114)	A Gifted Fortune Teller
116-120	Angry Mob	Heretic preacher	The White Lady ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 82)	A Cockatrice	A magus engaged in Wizard War
121-125	Robbers	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.
126+	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.

## Woodland Encounters

Roll %	Mundane	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
01-05	Outlaw Robbers	Seraph or Archangel ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , pages 21 and 25)	Sprites ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 85)	Mischievious Imps	Potential familiar searching for a magus
06-10	Magus of House Criamon	Lowly Angel	Satyrs ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 94)	Firestarting Imps	Magus searching for a familiar
11-15	Magus of House Merenita	One of the Nephilim ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 18)	Fool's Fire ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 92)	Demonic Shadows	A beast of virtue
16-20	Magus of House Bjornaer	One of the Grigori ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 26)	Fauns ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 93)	Cutpurse	A ghost
21-25	Wood Cutters	Shrine to a Regional Saint	Faerie Woodsman	Outlaw Fleeing the Country	Non-Hermetic Gifted wizard searching for a Gifted child
26-30	Pigs Loose in the Woods	Shrine to a Patron Saint	The Wild Hunt	Angry Mob	Black Boar of the Bog ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 56)
31-35	Outlaw Robbers	Shrine to Local Saint	Someone with Nymph Blood ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 108)	Outlaw Robbers	Natural Magician
36-40	Outlaw Fleeing the Country	Funeral Procession	Wise Man or Woman ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 136)	An Ill Wind Spreading Sickness	Elementalist
41-45	Tax Collector	Church Messenger	Ollamhain ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Infernal Cultist(s)	Black Dog of the Moor ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 57)
46-50	Monks or Friars	A Crusader Knight	Borrower ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Demonic Steed ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 79)	A Stag of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 63)
51-55	Lost Girl	Divine Lion	Living Scarecrow	Infernal Witch	Automaton Woodcutter
56-60	A Mundane Hunt	Lost Sheep	Talking Tree	Spirit of Lust	Wise Owl of the Forest ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 65)
61-65	Poachers	Heretic Preacher	Animated Tree	Spirit of Gluttony	Pharmacopoeian Magus ( <i>Houses of Hermes: Societates</i> , page 123)
66-70	Militia Patrol	Pilgrims	Council of Animated Trees	Spirit of Greed	Earth Elemental
71-75	Jewish Merchant	Nuns and Novices	Gorgon ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 70)	Spirit of Sloth	Air Elemental
76-80	Stag	A White Stag	Wood Nymph	Spirit of Wrath	Water Elemental
81-90	Wild Boar	Monks Seeking Alms	Centaur ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 76)	Spirit of Envy	Fire Elemental
91-95	A Knight Heading to Tournament (Bohemond of Lucerne, Sub Rosa Issue 8)	Ba'al Shem ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	Warlike Fachan ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 77)	Spirit of Pride	White Stag of the Wood ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 64)
96-100	A Group of Knights Heading to Tournament	Mystic ( <i>The Church</i> , page 76)	The Barking Beast ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 78)	Two-Headed Hound ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 79)	Troll
101-105	A Bohort or Impromptu Tournament by the Roadside	Behemoth	Great Lezi ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 93)	A Goetic Sorcerer ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 114)	Ogre
106-110	A Band of Players	Holy Maga ( <i>The Church</i> , page 80)	A Homonculus Wizard ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 114)	Abbadon's Locusts ( <b>Revelations</b> 9:7)	Drake
111-115	A Dog Loose in the Woods	Karaite Magus ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	Giant ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 98)	The Second Beast ( <b>Revelations</b> 13:11)	Wyrm
116-120	Angry Mob	Unicorn	The White Lady ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 82)	A Cockatrice	A magus engaged in Wizard War
121-125	Outlaw Robbers	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.
126+	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.

## Seas and Oceans Encounters

Roll %	Mundane	Divine	Faerie	Infernal	Magic
01-05	Fish	Seraph or Archangel ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , pages 21 and 25)	Kelpie ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 89)	A lone survivor of a sunken ship	Potential familiar searching for a magus
06-10	Fish	Lowly Angel	Triton ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 90)	A group of shipwreck survivors all together	Magus searching for a familiar
11-15	Basking Shark	One of the Nephilim ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 18)	Fool's Fire ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 92)	Shipwreck survivors having set off from the island against which their ship foundered	The Cat-Fish ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 79)
16-20	Whale Shark	One of the Grigori ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 26)	Faerie Seal ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 92)	Large Shark	Remora of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 67)
21-25	Small Shark	All Wind Ceases	Mermaids	Pirates	Dolphin of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 67)
26-30	Large Shark	A Storm Rolls In	Selkie King ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 91)	A plague ship	Pelican of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 68)
31-35	Dolphin	A lone survivor of a sunken ship	Someone with Undine Blood ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 109)	A Goetic Sorcerer ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 114)	Vitkir
36-40	Pirates	A group of shipwreck survivors all together	Someone with Selkie Blood ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 109)	An Ill Wind Spreading Sickness	Learned Magician
41-45	A Storm Rolls In	Shipwreck survivors set off from the island against which their ship foundered	Sirens	Devil Child ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 99)	Elementalist
46-50	All Wind Ceases	A plague ship	Faerie Fisherman	Tainted Child with the False Gift ( <i>Realms of Power: Infernal</i> , page 96)	Atlanteans ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 90)
51-55	Merchant Ship	Ship Crewed by Angels	Apparently Deserted Ship	Ship Crewed by the Undead	Ship Crewed by Leaderless Automatons
56-60	Merchant Ship	Ship Crewed by Angels	Apparently Deserted Ship	Ship Crewed by the Undead	Tempestaria ( <i>Houses of Hermes: Societates</i> , page 109)
61-65	Slave Galley from the East	A becalmed vessel	Faerie Merchant	A ship laden with every treasure the players can imagine and just one man guarding it all	(aboard the ship) The Mice that Burned the Barn ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 79)
66-70	Crusader Ship	A pilgrim ship	Island with a Faerie Castaway	Spirit of Lust	Water Elemental
71-75	Remains of a shipwreck floating on the sea	A crusader ship	Selkie	Spirit of Gluttony	Air Elemental
76-80	A lone survivor of a sunken ship	A Whale	Guardian of the Fishes ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 98)	Spirit of Greed	Ocean-Going Magus ( <i>Maris of Tytalus - Magi of Hermes</i> , page 70)
81-90	A Whale	An Ascetic, drifting alone on a raft	A Homonculus Wizard ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 114)	Spirit of Sloth	Magical Human Mermaids
91-95	An Island not Marked on the Map	Lowly Angel	Wise Man or Woman ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 136)	Spirit of Wrath	The Storm Dragon Mandrenke ( <b>Sub Rosa</b> : Issue 10)
96-100	Amazon Raiding Party	Moderate Angel	Ollamhain ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Envy	Amazon Raiding Party
101-105	A group of shipwreck survivors all together	Pirates	Borrower ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 135)	Spirit of Pride	Ocean-Going Covenant
106-110	Shipwreck survivors set off from the island against which their ship foundered	Holy Maga ( <i>The Church</i> , page 80)	The White Lady ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 82)	The Sea Serpent Tiamat	Whale of Virtue ( <i>Realms of Power: Magic</i> , page 68)
111-115	Merchant Ship	Karaite Magus ( <i>Realms of Power: The Divine</i> , page 138)	Faerie Pirates	The Sea Demon Rahab ( <i>Psalm 89:10</i> )	Earth Elemental
116-120	Pirates	<b>Leviathan</b> (Job 41:1-34)	Faerie Sea Serpent ( <i>Realms of Power: Faerie</i> , page 99)	The First Beast ( <b>Revelation</b> 13:1)	Sea Serpent
121-125	Pirates	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll once on this column and once on another realm to find out what.
126+	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.	A battle between forces. Roll twice on this column to find out what.

## Weather and Travel Conditions Tables

Use these tables if you want to determine the weather and/or travel conditions randomly.

Pick your current season and roll a percentile dice. The River or Sea Conditions table is driven by the weather, so determine the weather first and then read off the Base Sailing Ease Factor. Outside of any other factors, this is what your captain or crew need to sail effectively given the conditions. Some conditions impose penalties to Sailing-related rolls, while others make

damaging the ship more likely. The penalties may be different for rivers and seas.

Road conditions are based on how the roads are maintained. Either roll a straight percentile or add in any standard modifiers due to the aura. This gives you the quality of the road to be travelled that day.

Then read off the description of how that quality affects travel. A Very Good road is far easier to navigate than a Treacherous track.

### Weather Chart

Roll %	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-05	Rain	Rain	Clear Skies	Clear Skies
06-10	Overcast	Overcast	Clear Skies	Windy
11-15	Overcast	Overcast	Clear Skies	Overcast
16-20	Overcast	Clear Skies	Overcast	Mist
21-25	Windy	Clear Skies	Overcast	Fog
26-30	Clear Skies	Clear Skies	Overcast	Rain
31-35	Clear Skies	Clear Skies	Overcast	Driving Rain
36-40	Clear Skies	Clear Skies	Mist	Downpour
41-45	Uncomfortable Heat	Uncomfortable Heat	Fog	Sleet
46-50	Windy	Uncomfortable Heat	Rain	Hail
51-55	Windy	Uncomfortable Heat	Rain	Rain Storm
56-60	Light Rain	Heat Wave	Uncomfortable Heat	Thunderstorm
61-65	Rain	Heat Wave	Rain	Thunderstorm
66-70	Rain	Windy	Snow	Snow
71-75	Unseasonable Snow	Overcast	Heavy Snow	Snow
76-80	Rainstorm	Rain	Rainstorm	Heavy Snow
81-85	Rainstorm	Rainstorm	Rainstorm	Heavy Snow
86-90	Thunderstorm	Thunderstorm	Thunderstorm	Blizzard
91-95	Intense Lightening	Intense Lightening	Intense Lightening	Intense Lightening
96-00	Tornado	Tornado	Tornado	Tornado

### Road and Track Conditions

Roll %	Open Country	Rural	Maintained by Small Town	Maintained by City
<01	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
01-20	Fair	Good	Very Good	Very Good
21-40	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
41-60	Poor	Fair	Fair	Good
61-80	Very Poor	Poor	Poor	Good
81-00	Very Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Fair
>00	Treacherous	Treacherous	Very Poor	Poor

### Road Condition Effects

Condition	Distance	Fatigue	Effect
Very Good	Standard Plus 50%	No Long Term Fatigue accrued	Minus One Botch Die
Good	Standard Plus 25%	No Long Term Fatigue Accrued Over Short Distances	Normal
Fair	Standard	Normal	Normal
Poor	Standard Minus 25%	Normal	Plus One Botch Die
Very Poor	Standard Minus 50%	One Long-Term Fatigue Level	Plus One Botch Die
Treacherous	Standard Minus 75%	Two Long-Term Fatigue Levels	Plus Two Botch Dice

### River or Sea Conditions

Weather	Base Sailing Ease Factor	River Effect	Sea Effect	Description
Uncomfortable Heat	9	-3	-3	Applied to Sailing-related rolls
Heat Wave	6	-1	-1	
Clear Skies	6	0	0	
Overcast	9	0	0	
Mist	9	-3	-3	
Fog	12	-6	-6	
Rain	12	0	3	
Driving Rain	12	0	6	Added on to Stress Checks vs Ship
Downpour	12	0	9	
Sleet	15	0	12	
Hail	15	3	15	
Snow	15	6	18	
Heavy Snow	18	9	21	
Blizzard	18	12	24	
Rain Storm	18	15	27	
Thunderstorm	21	18	30	
Intense Lightening	24	21	33	
Tornado	27	24	36	

## Character-Driven Events

The system presented in this article takes an almost completely random approach to adding events; they are based on a die roll plus some outside modifiers. However, the characters themselves, with their Virtues, Flaws, and Personality Traits provide the Storyguide with sufficient information to add minor events to the story that

either challenge or respond to those attributes.

These are designed to be dropped into the flow of action during appropriate scenes and could be used to bring background characters into the story, give players small challenges along the way, or even add a little levity where needed.

For instance, a character with a positive Paranoid Personality Trait might hear the rat scratching at the walls in the middle of the night, or the Tough character in the party may find

himself at the center of a brawl not of his own making.

The lists presented here are intended to start the ball rolling and Storyguides are encouraged to design custom lists for their own troupe.

### Personality Trait Events

Personality Trait	Event
Brave	A horse becomes spooked by something and is racing through the street, heading straight for a small child!
Dedicated	Set a task to do, a demon offers you all manner of temptations for you to abandon your post, even promising to leave someone else in your stead.
Honest	Someone you have met during the story does something dishonest in front of you, maybe telling a lie or stealing something. In order to get what you need, you may have to tell a lie.
Loyal	Someone you are instinctively loyal towards, such as the magi, your liege lord, or your spouse even, does something questionable or even harmful to others. You are given orders that go against your natural loyalty to someone.
Pious	You see across someone behaving less than respectfully towards your church, synagogue, or mosque. A disaffected member of your faith challenges you for your unthinking and unswerving piety.
Angry	Someone spills your drink. Your bed is the least comfortable thing you've ever slept on. Someone keeps getting your name wrong.
Argumentative	There is someone who just seems to take the opposite stance to you at every turn - what's more, they don't seem to have a reasoned argument for their opinions. Someone is just blindly agreeing with you on everything you say. What started as welcome affirmation quickly becomes annoying.
Avaricious	You notice someone drop something you are particularly avaricious towards. Someone asks for your help in finding something that they have lost. Someone offers you a good deal, almost too good. Just don't ask any questions.
Perfectionist	You keep finding things that are just out of square. Your cloak just won't sit straight. Someone around you keeps using the wrong word - it doesn't mean what they think it means.
Proud	You overhear someone being disparaging about something you take pride in. You see or hear someone who seems or claims to be better at something you take pride in.
Curious	Someone starts to say something, before breaking off mid-sentence and apparently changing their mind. From the outside, the room at the top of the building seems to have three shuttered windows along one wall, but inside there are only two.
Quiet	Someone quite boorish seems to object to your quiet demeanour and tries to goad you into being more outgoing. You spy a youngster who reminds you of yourself in younger years - he's being bullied over his shyness.
Sociable	You are invited to join a group for drinks and tales around the fire. For some reason, the town or village you have found yourself in is the most unfriendly and morose place you've ever been to. There is no song, dance, and very little recreational drinking. Maybe it is your duty to turn their fortunes around.
Status-Seeking	Someone talks down your efforts to one of your superiors. A demon of Pride possesses someone in your party and spends the rest of the story persuading you to commit sins of pride.
Trusting	Someone asks to borrow a few pennies, promising that they will return them later that day. A woman implores you to help her, leading you away into an alley...

## Virtue Events

Virtue	Event
<b>Ghostly Warder</b>	Someone can see your Ghostly Warder and is determined to lay the restless spirit to its eternal sleep. You chance upon someone who looks, sounds, or behaves very similar to your ghostly warder. Have you found someone connected to it?
<b>True Faith</b>	A distraught parent rails against the Lord as their deceased child is taken from their home. A demon arrives to test the extent of your faith.
<b>Famous</b>	You are recognised by someone who thinks you owe them something. You are recognised, but it is a case of mistaken identity. They are well-disposed to you.
<b>Social Contacts</b>	One of your social contacts finds you and is in need of help. You learn that one of your social contacts has died and their family is in dire straits.
<b>Venus Blessing</b>	At a local fair, you are asked to judge a pageant of young women, apparently a local tradition.
<b>Mercurian Magic</b>	You notice an old Mercurian altar stone in a church - it seems to bear an enchantment. You recognise markings in the ground consistent with a ritual casting circle.
<b>Hermetic Prestige</b>	Someone unexpected recognises the symbols of your House and gives you preferential treatment.
<b>Study Bonus</b>	Something about the environment is just what you need to advance your studies. All you need to do is to gain permission to spend a season or more there.
<b>Landed Noble</b>	You are recognised as nobility and asked to step in to provide sound judgement in a case. The Justice initially hearing the case has been struck deaf and blind. Your presence in another noble's lands is taken as a threat and the hospitality you receive is tinged with suspicion.
<b>Failed Apprentice</b>	A member of a Hedge Tradition approaches you, saying they have seen the magic within you - they are offering you knowledge of their Arts. You chance upon a young Gifted child - do you raise this with the magi or save the child from your own fate?
<b>Craftsman</b>	A tool or item made by someone else breaks while you or your party are using it. The work is clearly shoddy.
<b>Shapeshifter</b>	A nearby relic has the power to force your transformation. A fur trader is selling the skin of an animal you knew to be a shapechanger.
<b>Strong Faerie Blood</b>	Someone recognises your Faerie Blood and objects to your presence. Someone wants your blood for their own magical or folk rituals.
<b>Animal Ken</b>	The animals refuse to talk to you until one of your seniors apologises and makes reparation for breaking one of their taboos. The animals tell you of the poor treatment they have received at the hands of the farmer, the noble who hunts them, or a beast from a foreign wood who devours them.
<b>Second Sight</b>	You see a ghost following a seemingly arbitrary person in the street. What seems to be a dog to everybody else, you can see as a transformed human.

## Flaw Events

Flaw	Event
<b>Mute</b>	Witness to a crime or deception your testimony is called upon.
<b>Clumsy</b>	You are given the drinks to carry across the crowded dockside tavern. As your colleagues clamber down the cliff, you're left at the top to hold the rope.
<b>Social Handicap</b>	A Faerie chances across you and is fascinated by your social handicap, so much so that it gives the same handicap to others you meet during the story. Pretty soon, you're taking the blame.
<b>Study Requirement</b>	You find something that would be just the thing to help guide your studies, but it belongs to someone else and they are not well-disposed towards you.
<b>Infamous Master</b>	Something about your manner, perhaps your accent, style of dress, or even the type of magic you use, reminds someone of an incident some years ago involving your master. You find yourself in the same place as your Infamous Master. Do you try to avoid him or reveal your connection to him?
<b>Susceptibility to Infernal Power</b>	A priest, recognising your vulnerability, offers to sell a charm that holds the Infernal at bay, which counteracts your Susceptibility. However, the charm is in fact possessed by the Infernal. The Infernal has found you and leads people around you into sin, which has the chance of creating a local Infernal aura, the aim of which is to make you vulnerable.
<b>Outsider</b>	You find another of your kind and they are in a poor state. Can you help them?
<b>Branded Criminal</b>	When agreeing accommodation for your travelling party, it is on condition that you are not staying with them. You chance upon instant justice being meted out in the street; a youth, loudly proclaiming his innocence, is being led to the blacksmith's to be branded a criminal. Do you intervene?
<b>Outlaw Leader</b>	Someone recognises you and confronts you over the death of a loved one. You may not remember the incident but this person could make trouble for you. Someone wants to join your band of outlaws, having fled the court's justice on a matter of murder. Can this person be trusted?
<b>Difficult Underlings</b>	One of your underlings is accused of theft and a witness swears blind he saw him. But the underling is innocent. What's going on? Your underlings start a fight, resulting in damage to property and minor harm to several individuals. Can you make reparations and help them avoid legal punishment?
<b>Faerie Friend</b>	Your Faerie Friend finds a new mortal that fascinates them. Is this mortal all they seem? Is the Faerie in danger? Or are you simply jealous?
<b>Mentor</b>	One of your Mentor's agents finds you and tells you of a task that needs tending to. The task involves harm to someone. Does your Mentor really want this or is the agent acting on their own?
<b>Lesser Malediction</b>	You meet someone who suffers the same malediction as you and they want to learn how to cope with it, control it, or cure it.
<b>Offensive to Animals</b>	When entering a given village, the animals go quiet at your approach, becoming almost reverent towards you. But it seems out of fear, not respect. What could cause them to act so differently to your normal reception? A young man takes an instant and violent dislike to you. It seems the kind of response that you would expect from an animal, so why is this man so similarly affected?
<b>Visions</b>	You experience strong visions that dog you through the story. However, they seem to concern not your main goals but the fortunes of a minor character encountered during the story.

# OWN AN ARS MAGICA MEMORY

Original art and prints from the game you love  
Direct from the artist

For over 20 years Jeff A. Menges has contributed to the imagery that makes up the *Ars Magica* setting of Mythic Europe. Here's a chance to have some of it in your home. Full-color covers, subtle pencil pieces, and graphic ink works from *Ars Magica* under all four of its publishers, going back to 1989. Contact Jeff today to see if your favorite is available!



Signed  
and  
numbered  
Limited  
Edition  
Prints,  
\$10-\$20,  
mailed to  
your  
door!

Jeff A. Menges  
Skaircrow Graphics  
P.O.Box 593  
Northport, NY  
11768-0593

Find and like  
Skaircrow Graphics on facebook!  
[skaircrow@optonline.net](mailto:skaircrow@optonline.net)

# Governance of Kievan Rus' in the Ars Magica period

When my troupe settled on the Novgorod tribunal as the location for our new Saga, and one of the players told me he wanted to play a noble as his Companion, I thought to myself “Sure, no problem. Find out the translations, do some research on local differences in rulership... wouldn’t be difficult at all.”

I could not have been more wrong.

The feudal structure of most of Western Europe in the time period we’re concerned with was, conceptually, a neat pyramid. Peasants serve the knights, who serve the

barons, who serve the dukes, who serve the king, with feudal obligations flowing both up and down. By contrast, the governance of Kievan Rus’ (which covers most of Novgorod Tribunal, except for Poland and the Baltic states) is best described as a three-way tug of war between the three major powers: the prince (kniaz), the council of boyars, and the veche (assembly of citizens). In other words, Kievan Rus’ was not, fundamentally, feudal in nature. What it actually was defies easy classification. Hence, this article.

To truly understand this style of

by Elliot Smorodinsky

government, it’s necessary to take a look at the three powers I’ve listed above. We’ll take them in order.

## Who were the Princes?

The princes of Kievan Rus were all, at base, descendants of Rurik, a 9th century Varangian (Scandinavian) chieftain and raider who set himself up as a ruler of the area near Novgorod. It’s worth noting that the



Sub Rosa

word “Rus” originally referred to Rurik’s tribe: only later, by extension, it became the name for the state and for the notion of the “Rus people”. Rurik founded the Riurikid dynasty, which ruled Russia until well into the 17th century.

“Rurikid” is a designation of the modern historians, though. If you asked any of the 13th century princes which dynasty they belonged to, they’d call themselves Yaroslavichi – descendants of Yaroslav the Wise. Yaroslav (978-1054) was the Prince of Kiev, and briefly united Kiev and Novgorod under his rule, earning the right to call himself the Grand Prince of Rus’ (Velikiy Kniaz vseia Rusi). He asserted the independence of the Russian church from Byzantium, pushed the borders of his holdings west, and assembled a codex of law, the Russkaya Pravda, which served as the basis of law in Kievan Rus from then on. However, his primary accomplishment as far as this article is concerned was the establishment of the rota system, also known as “ladder inheritance”.

The principle of primogeniture (the eldest son inheriting all of his father’s holdings) wasn’t present in Russia until the 1800’s. Before then, the holdings of the father were divided among all of his sons. Yaroslav went a step further. In his will, he exhorted his sons to live in peace with each other and divided his holdings between them – “The throne of Kiev I bequeath to Izyaslav [...] to Sviatoslav I give Chernigov, to Vsevolod Pereiaslav...”. He also set in place a provision that the inheritance be passed from brother to brother, and only then to the eldest son of the brother who had held the throne. The demise of one of the princes would lead to all brothers below him moving one step up the ladder: if Izyaslav died Sviatoslav would rule in Kiev in his place, with Vsevolod moving into Sviatoslav’s place in Chernigov, and so on.

## A note on terminology

I’ve tried, wherever possible, to use English terms within this article. In some cases, that’s not possible. Translating “boyar” as “noble” is both inaccurate and extremely misleading, for example. Here are the translations that I have been able to use.

- Prince – Kniaz
- Principality – Kniazhestvo
- City – Gorod

In English, the definitions of “city” and “town” differ in terms of size and importance: a city is much larger. In Russian, especially in the period we’re concerned with, there is no such distinction: cities and towns are both called “gorod”. Given the relative importance of the city/town to governance, I’ve chosen to translate the term as “city” everywhere it’s used.

This country-wide game of musical thrones didn’t stay unchallenged for long. Vseslav the Sorcerer (see the sidebar on the next page), the ruler of Polotsk, was a prince in his own right, but came from outside the genealogical line of Yaroslav. Yaroslav’s own grandson Rostislav was the son of Yaroslav’s eldest son Vladimir: he would have been in line for the Kievan throne, if not for Vladimir dying before

Yaroslav himself. Vseslav and Rostislav were what’re called *izgoi*. The term in this instance means they were ineligible to hold the grand throne of Kiev because their father had never held it before them. Vseslav and Rostislav, each in their own way, challenged the rota system by force of arms, and were moderately successful – Vseslav hung on to the throne of Kiev for about 6 months.

## Story Seed: Vseslav the Sorcerer

Vseslav of Polotsk (1039-1101, prince of Polotsk from 1044-1101, Grand Prince of Kiev 1068-1069) is a fascinating figure. He was an *izgoi*, standing outside the birth order, yet refused to accept his fate. Most of his life was spent attempting, sometimes with great success, to expand his holdings. He was one of the few people to ever successfully raid Novgorod, and was briefly elected the Grand Prince of Kiev by the populace.

He was also a sorcerer. His mother conceived him with magical assistance. He was born with a caul on his head; on the advice of the wizards who aided with his birth, he kept the caul bound across his brow for the rest of his life. Chroniclers of the time ascribe to him great strength, great cunning and the ability to take the shape of a wolf, describe how he was able to reach Tmutorokan from Polotsk in one night (roughly 800 miles as the crow flies, some of it across the Sea of Azov), and

make a big deal of him dying on April 24th, 1101 – the Wednesday before Good Friday.

Most Hermetic magi, when they think of Vseslav at all, think of him as a *kresnik* or *kudlak* (*Hedge Magic*, page 114). But how was he conceived? Is it possible that Fertility Magic (*Ancient Magic*, page 54) was used to affect the birth? If so, it would indicate that wielders of it survived until at least the 1040s... or, more disturbingly, perhaps it was a Hermetic who wielded Fertility Magic on behalf of Vseslav’s mother. Is that a breach of the Code? A maga skilled enough to wield advanced Fertility magic, barely 40 years after the founding of the Tribunal – was she one of the Tribunal’s founders? Can the charter of the Tribunal itself be called into question based on the fact that one of the founders broke the Code so badly? What will the magi do with this potentially explosive knowledge?

Besides, the rota system in and of itself wasn't inherently stable. Once Yaroslav's sons started having sons themselves, the line of succession grew tremendously tangled. Cities rose or fell in power or importance: something that was a prime location in Yaroslav's time might be a booby prize of a city a hundred years later. So, despite several princely summit conferences in the 10th and 11th centuries to resolve genealogical issues, the rota system in the period we're concerned with was mostly defunct. The reason it's important to this article, however, is that it established the idea of a prince's holding being a tradeable commodity, something that could be passed from prince to prince.

Another important thing to note is that while a prince ruled over a principality, or held a principality, they could not be said to own the principality. The concept of land ownership being inherently tied to the nobility is a Western European one. In Kievan Rus', owning a plot of land did not equate to being the feudal overlord of the people on that land. Land was just another form of wealth: it could be bought and sold by a member of any social class, and the mere fact of owning land didn't give one any rights over the people living on that land. The prince was the only one who had such rights, and he had them in his persona as prince, not in his persona as landowner.

## The Prince's Druzhina

The druzhina (lit. assembly of friends) was a key element of the prince's power, being his armed retainers and the primary source of a prince's war capability – his personal warband, analogous to the Welsh teulu. He was responsible for their equipment and upkeep, shared war booty and taxes with them, and they fought for him, administered his holdings, etcetera. The size of the druzhina varied with the prince's power, from a few dozen to several

hundred, and in some cases substantially more than that. For example, Alexander Nevskii's druzhina numbered nearly 3000. They were both native Slavs and foreigners (Poles, Hungarians, Finns, Varangians, Greeks), and could – this being a key point – come from all walks of life. Townsmen, peasants, and even slaves could serve in the druzhina: the only thing that mattered was their usefulness to the prince.

An interesting note is that a druzhinnik – a member of the druzhina – was not bound by an oath of fealty. If he was not happy with his service, he had the explicit right to leave and go seek service elsewhere. A druzhinnik entering the prince's service did swear to serve him using one of several oral formulae – "I shall lay my head down in your service" being a common one – but it was a statement of alliance and/or friendship rather than a swearing of vassalage.

senior retainers, also began granting them land, thus forming a layer of princely aristocracy.

Alongside the senior retainers, there existed another upper-class group. The so-called svoiezemtsi – wealthy land-holders who held their land "in their own right" as opposed to from the prince's hand – were part of it. So were the bishops and metropolitans of the Eastern Orthodox church. So were the "prominent men" (muzhi narochitye) or the "city elders" (stareishiny gradskie). These disparate elements eventually merged with the senior druzhinniks into a single class called the boyars.

It is tempting to equate the boyars with the nobility of Western Europe. Tempting, but wrong. For one thing, while the boyars were indeed the upper class of society, they were not exclusive. Anyone with sufficient personal wealth and/or social cachet

**T**o call a general levy, a Prince had to present his case before the veche, and request that the city put forth forces to bolster his own

## Who were the Boyars?

The upper ranks of the druzhina have always had, as part of their responsibilities, serving as councillors to the prince. When Princess Olga of Kiev (860-969) converted to Christianity and attempted to instruct her son Sviatoslav in the faith, his response was "I cannot convert: my druzhina will laugh at me". During the 11th and 12th centuries, the gap between the upper and the lower ranks of the druzhina began to widen. The junior retainers would be concerned mostly with service, while the senior retainers would fulfill the roles of councilors and administrators. In that era the princes, attempting to win the loyalty of their

could work towards being recognized by the boyar council as one of their own. A peasant or a slave could, through faithful service within the prince's druzhina, eventually rise to a position on the council. It wouldn't be easy in either case, but it is not out of the realm of possibility.

Another thing that differentiates the boyars from the nobility of Western Europe is that they were not a hereditary class. A boyar's son was not automatically considered a boyar himself. It's true that if he inherited a large portion of his father's wealth he could lay a claim to a seat on the council. It's also true that a boyar's son who joined the prince's druzhina would likely be assured of a rapid rise

based on his father's influence. But in either case he would have to work at it – his birth alone wouldn't be enough to guarantee it.

## What was the Veche?

The veche was a democratic city assembly, consisting of all adult males in the given city's population. That is to say that any adult male resident could show up and speak, but the only ones given voting power were the heads of households. A bachelor living in his own house could vote, but a bachelor still living under his father's roof could not.

In most cities, the veche did not meet on a regular basis. Usually citizens were summoned to the meeting by the ringing of a bell (either a church bell or one installed specifically for the purpose). In the city-states of the North (Novgorod and Pskov) there was a council of members who met daily and prepared bills for submission to the veche as a

### Story Seed: Oath of Fealty

The Oath of Hermes does forbid meddling in the affairs of mundanes, true. However, the lack of a formal oath of fealty, combined with the general shortage of Quaesidores in Novgorod, does open a range of options for magi. It's entirely plausible to have a magus Boyar, for example. If they are subtle in their manipulation of mundane society, their interference may go unnoticed for quite a while.

It's also worth noting that the Transylvanian tribunal borders

Novgorod. Given the general Tremere worldview of themselves as natural rulers, and the extreme messiness of mundane politics in their neighbor Tribunal, it would be entirely within their line to subtly interfere. For that matter, exactly who was Vsevolod of Halych? How did he convince his fellow Boyars to take such an extreme step as to elect him? And isn't it interesting that when he was deposed he found refuge in Hungary?

## So, how did this Tripartite Government Work in Practice?

In broad outline it worked the same throughout Kievan Rus', though specifics varied from place to place. The prince was primarily responsible for the defense of the realm, as well as the administration of justice. He could appoint judges, and in some

warrior instead.) People in the countryside would likely not be affected by the levy, except for having to supply horses and carts to the growing army.

The specifics, however, as I said above, varied widely from place to place.

In Suzdal, prince Andrei Bogoluybsky ("The God-Loving") pursued a steady policy of amplification and extension of princely power. This eventually resulted in a plot against him: his boyars murdered him in 1174. The reprisals for that act, carried out by Andrei's cousins Michalko and Vsevolod Big-Nest, broke the power of Suzdal's boyars once and for all. Until the Mongol invasion, Suzdal was the closest to a truly feudal state Kievan Rus could boast.

In Galicia-Volhynia, control over the area's salt mines, the lucrative Dniester trade and the trade routes into Poland and Hungary gave birth to a breed of wealthy, powerful, and obstreperous boyars. When Yaroslav Osmomysl, prince of Halych, set aside his wife in 1172 to take up with a peasant woman, the boyars forced him to repudiate her. In 1205, when Roman the Great was killed in a Polish ambush, it was the boyars who forced his 4-year-old son into exile. And, most telling of all, in 1213 the boyars of Galicia elected one of their own, a man named Vsevolod, to the

**A** peasant or a slave could, through faithful service within the prince's druzhina, eventually rise to a position on the council.

whole, but that was more the exception than the rule. In most cases, the ranking member of the Orthodox Church (bishop, metropolitan or patriarch) would be asked to preside over the meeting.

Votes had to be unanimous to pass. In extreme cases, when a minority would not bow to the will of the majority, debate would devolve into fisticuffs until one side or the other gave in.

The subsidiary cities of a given principality had their own veches, who would meet to resolve local issues. However, in all matters having to do with the principality as a whole, the veche of the capital had authority over the smaller towns.

cases acted as a judge himself. The council of boyars would serve as his advisors, and would assist in the day-to-day business of rulership. Any new laws, matters of war, and other weighty matters had to be brought before the veche for approval.

For example, when the prince rode to war, he could count only on his personal druzhina (and those of his boyars). To call a general levy (opolchenye), he had to present his case before the veche, and request that the city put forth forces to bolster his own. If the veche agreed, they would provide armed men. (In Novgorod, for instance, every ten households would supply an armed and armored horseman... except in cases of imminent invasion, where every four households would supply a

## Discussion of Virtues and Flaws

### Druzhinnik (Minor Social Status Virtue)

This Virtue replaces Knight, and is very similar to it in game effects: the only difference being that a druzhinnik's arms and armor are provided by his Prince, rather than being dependent on the character being Wealthy or Poor. Female druzhinniks were as rare in Kievan Rus as female knights were in the rest of Mythic Europe.

### Slave-Druzhinnik (Minor Social Virtue)

You are a slave to the Prince (an unransomed war captive, a man who's sold himself into slavery, or a man who's married a slave), but you also serve the prince within his druzhina. As a slave, you still may not own property or enter into contracts -- but as a druzhinnik, you are given arms and armor by your prince, and your position within his retinue gives you a great amount of social status.

This functions essentially similar to the base Druzhinnik virtue, with a single exception; other druzhinniks are (technically) free to leave the druzhina at any time. You are not.

### Landed Boyar (Major Social Status Virtue)

This Virtue replaces Landed Noble, and is similar to it in game effects. The major difference is that an Oath of Fealty flaw is not a requirement for a Landed Boyar. The guidelines for Landed Noble within Lords of Men apply to Landed Boyar for the most part, with the notable exception of armed retainers. Any armed retainers a boyar can muster (his personal druzhina, for instance) are essentially mercenaries, whether they are motivated by profit or personal loyalty.

The Landed Boyar virtue, as far as I am concerned, reflects primarily the social aspects of the position. If you're a landed Boyar, you have a voice in the Duma. Svoiezemtsi would have the Landed Boyar virtue, but not the Druzhinnik virtue. Landowners who would (for one reason or another) not have a voice in the Duma (no interest in it, remote area, blackballed socially, etcetera) would just have the Wealth virtue, land being another form of wealth.

### Oath of Fealty (Major Story Flaw)

Despite what I've said in the rest of the article, there were individuals in Kievan Rus' who would (in Ars

Magica terms) have this Flaw. Most commonly they were boyars who rebelled against their prince, and who were in consequence forced to take a binding oath of obedience (usually involving krestotzelovanie, the kissing of the cross). However, this was an exception, rather than the rule.

### Knightly Demands (Major Story Flaw)

The byliny – Kievan Rus' equivalent to the works of Chretien de Troyes – were story cycles about druzhinniks going out and slaying dragons, fighting bandits, rescuing damsels, going on quests... much the same sort of thing that the knights were supposed to spend their time doing. Knightly Demands is an appropriate Flaw.

### Veche (Minor Residents Hook)

Let's face it, some covenants are good-sized towns in and of themselves. The inhabitants of this covenant have formed a veche of their own, and expect the magi to keep them apprised of the doings of the covenant – or, worse still, meet to come to their own decisions about issues in covenant life and expect the magi to abide by them. This would be a good Novgorodian replacement for the Guild Hook.

throne: the only time the throne of any Kievan principality was held by someone not of the Rurikid dynasty. (Vsevolod didn't last long: he was deposed in 1214, and took refuge in Hungary.)

And in Novgorod, it was the veche that ruled. Novgorod was a true city-state, ruling over a vast territory stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the northern Urals. The Novgorodians were the only ones to elect their prince (from a list of acceptable Rurikid candidates, of course). On several occasions, when they thought the prince was not fulfilling his responsibilities, they would depose him, forcing him into

exile, and write to the patriarch of a nearby principality asking him to "send another prince to rule over us". Any new prince, upon assuming rulership, had to sign a written contract with the city, pledging such things as (for instance) not to interfere with elections of city officials, not to dismiss any city official without the veche's say-so, not to allow members of his druzhina to settle within the city, etc.

## Covenant Interaction with the Tripartite System

The "average" Novgorod

covenant, just like the "average" Western European one, has to figure out how to deal with its mundane neighbors. The Novgorodians' task is simultaneously simpler and more difficult.

The "Autocephalous" hook is not in general appropriate for Novgorodian covenants that lie outside the Kuman and Kipchak-held steppes. Wherever they're situated, if they are not completely isolated they would have to deal with an overlord: the local prince or the local boyar. They would, however, have to deal with only the prince rather than with an entire feudal ladder. Claiming to hold the land the covenant stands on

is immeasurably easier than in Western Europe, too: the head of the covenant would, in Russian terms, be one of the *svoiezemtsi*, and that's that.

Here's the dangerous part. Being a land-holder within a particular prince's domain would grant the holder the right to pursue a seat on the boyars' council. Pursuing such a seat for a Magus character, however, could be seen as a violation of the code. *Not* pursuing such a seat is fraught with its own dangers, since any prince worth his salt is going to be extremely suspicious of a *svoiezemets* with a large armed guard of their own.

Covenants within cities or towns (ones with the Urban hook) have their own issues. All heads of household within the covenant automatically have voting rights in the veche, all adult males can show up and participate in the discussion... and whether they choose to exercise those rights or not, the households that comprise the covenant are bound

by the veche's decisions. So if the Prince comes before the veche asking for a general levy, and the veche approves it, the covenant is responsible for arming and supplying a fraction of the armed men for the levy... which may lay them open to charges of interfering with the mundanes.

## Conclusion

Governance of Kievan Rus was a fascinating subject to study, providing a rich and varied source of story ideas, and I hope it aids the other readers of **Sub Rosa** with their **Ars Magica** games.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### English Language Sources:

G. Vernadsky. Kievan Russia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

G. Vernadsky. A History of Russia. New Haven: Yale University

Press, 1969.

Wikipedia – multiple articles.

### Russian Language Sources:

Ancient Rus': Questions in Medieval History (quarterly magazine). [www.drevnyaya.ru](http://www.drevnyaya.ru)

Kotlyar, N. F. (2012, spring). Cruel World of the Middle Ages: Rus' in the appanage splintering period.

Stefanovich, P.S. (2008, winter). The meaning of "loyalty" in the relationship between the prince and his *druzhina*, 12th-13th Century.

Kotlyar, N.F. (2010, spring & summer, 2-part article). Princely administration in ancient Rus'.

Gvosdenko, K.C. (2009, spring). The ceremony of princely enthronement in pre-mongol Rus'.

Stefanovich, P.S. (2008, spring). Druzhinas and German Gefolgschaft: was there an oath of fealty to the ruler?

Wikipedia.ru – multiple articles.



# Love's Labours Lost

*or*

## Kicking Darius of Flambeau Up The Arse!

This story is designed to be played with three to six grogs, and is nominally set during a Tribunal held at a covenant other than the magi's own. However all that is really required is that the grogs are with the magi visiting another covenant; that the magi are caught up in business that requires their entire attention and therefore are unlikely to intervene without a major effort on the part of the grogs to get hold of them, and that there is an important visiting magi of rather unforgiving

temperament and dangerous power, who while enjoying his morning walk around the covenant can clearly be introduced as an august and rather self-important personage. In short, the kind of magus no grog in their right mind would decide to kick up the arse...

A story of low humour, strong passions and bawdy smut, it was written to celebrate the release of the new book *Grogs*. Owning *Grogs* is not actually required to play out the story

by Christian Jensen Romer

though, and it should be readily adaptable to any edition of *Ars Magica*. It can be run as a side story during a Tribunal, cutting back and forth to the magi in the Tribunal room and the grogs outside, with a stark contrast between impeccable manners, great hospitality and civilized debate among the magi and the rough and tumble of the grog's story going on at the same time.



Sub Rosa

## Scene One: Arrival!

When you get to a new covenant as visitors, it's always the same; the bustle of the unpacking; the shouted orders, the scurrying to and fro. Horses and pack mules need watering; the local grooms and stable lads with their funny accents and odd ways try to put your beasts in the worst possible stalls, or declare there is no room in barn or stable, and tell you to tether them to trees. Arrogant, cocky lads half your age think they can tell you how to look after your mounts, and while the magi are caught up in introductions and whisked off to some meeting and drinks, you have to carry everything through strange corridors or dark caverns to wherever they are staying.

Little children pull faces, throw cow pats or little stones; a couple try and steal odds and ends from your supplies, but just for fun. They are little more than toddlers – go easy on 'em or there will be hell to pay.

Half the covenfolk, supposedly busy getting ready for the illustrious guests, find time to gawk, gape and ask idiot questions, and one of two choose to insult any obvious physical deformity or weakness with well aimed insults. If the magi notice they don't comment – your magi are whisked off to their posh quarters, and any companions are found suitable accommodation elsewhere. Your grogs? Grogs are relegated to a camping field, with the grogs of the other visiting covenants...

This scene just sets the mood and



sets up the physical isolation of the grogs and the magi. While paranoid magi could insist on having their own grogs cater for them, run errands or even lurk around as shield grogs, make it clear that no one else is doing this, and Etiquette rolls suggest that it is a major breach of good manners, custom and an insult to the hosting covenant. That does not mean they can't do it, but they should at least think twice, and Tribunal sessions are closed to non-magi by custom here unless they are called to attend by the collective Tribunal, for example to give testimony or act as servants for some reason. If your Tribunal does have grogs in the Tribunal meeting room, by all means allow them to attend however, it will not be a major problem to the storyline. Call for Animal Handling, appropriate Profession and Charm or Etiquette rolls as the grogs deal with the rude and unhelpful locals. A major failure or botch in some roll giving offense to the host covenant's grogs will set the scene nicely for what is to come.

## Scene Two: The Camp Site

Whether in a field, a cavern or the courtyard of a castle, the grogs camp site is always the same. Crowded, noisy, and filled with grogs from other covenants who think they are better than you, have stupid accents and strange manners, and always try to steal the best pitches and probably your rations as well. The host covenant sends a group of amiable half wits to deliver salt bacon, bags of flour and some rancid fruit and vegetables, and they give you half what they give other covenants while asking idiot questions and pointing and staring a lot. Make a mental note that when their grogs come to visit your covenant, you will return the favour and then some...

Suddenly there is confusion, as a huge mastiff, a great slathering brute of a dog bounds through the camp

site, growling at anyone who approaches. An equally unpleasant looking grog, tanned and weathered, some forty five summers old, slowly walks after it, finally calling “Cerberus” to heel after some young grog from somewhere else is scared half to death by the hound pinning him against a tree. There is general hilarity at his discomfort, and leather face, or as you soon learn him to be, Gustbran Trews, head of turb for the host covenant, clearly relishes it.

Then Gustbran strolls over, and regards one of you grogs quizzically. He insolently looks you up and down, says nothing, but then turns and walks away, slowly tutting to himself, and clearly unimpressed. Any

to group combat rules, but still scuffling, until weapons are drawn and real combat begins – at which point after one round Darius of Flambeau appears in a furious mood...

### Scene Three: Enter Darius of Flambeau

This scenario is written as if the august personage, a visiting magi to the Tribunal, is Darius of Flambeau from the **ArM5**, page 34-35. He is here searching for the traitor he hates, or evidence as to his plans, and is deeply lost in thought. A terrifying, dark and brooding figure, Darius likes

mastiff crawls away whining – sensible beast. He them stalks off moodily, without a backward glance.

If no fight broke out, then Darius still appears, and mutters dark threats to grogs who get in his way as he stalks across the camping area, quietly cursing to himself. Everyone else has met him before earlier today, and know he is a dangerous and potent magus, and even something they have learned from his personal shield grog, Otto, of his story. Otto incidentally is busy elsewhere fetching his maters dinner or similar when all this happens. To learn more about Darius, and his back story the grogs may well wish to seek out Otto, and do reward them with some more on his recent past (see ArM5 page 35). It is entirely possible that some grog from another covenant who is doing something stupid will incur Darius’ wrath and suffer a few moments of eye popping pain and terror as he casts Grip of the Choking Hand on them. Nasty bloke, Darius.

This scene introduces Darius as a magus not to be trifled with. That will be important at the end of the story...

### Scene Four: A Romantic Interlude

challenge is met with derisive laughter, and a challenge to fisticuffs, right here, right now. He is confident of his ability to beat to a pulp any grog foolish enough to stand up to his bullying ways... (Note that if any weapons are drawn, a general brawl erupts with improvised weapons, complete carnage and scattered tents, possessions and general disarray, until ended by the arrival of Darius of Flambeau (see Scene 3 below).

This scene just continues the theme of the host covenant’s grogs insulting and belittling the visitors. All the visitors are on their best behavior, so it is up to player characters to intervene if they want to. Play up the roving local grogs arrogance and cockiness, and the fact the magi are very busy elsewhere (being treated with impeccable hospitality, and busy with the main storyline of the Tribunal). The fight, if provoked, is not a walk over – Gustbran is a tough bloke, and he does not want to lose in front of his turb. Use the Scuffling Rules from **ArM5** page 174-175 for the fight. If others join in, then move

to take walks alone, and prowl around outside the meeting. Note you don’t have to use Darius – he is simply given as an example. Feel free to replace him with a similar important and dangerous magus from your saga.

If any fighting has broken out, call for **Perception + Awareness** tests at 9+ (15+ if engaged in combat) to see Darius walking slowly towards the commotion. Anyone who notices him also notices that all the other grogs fall silent, drop their eyes to the floor, and are suddenly involved in very important duties or silent prayer. Any characters unfortunate enough to not notice him, and this includes Gustbran, hears his deep command to halt immediately or perish, and then Gustbran if fighting is lifted away by Lift the Dangling Puppet. Any grog stupid enough to confront or talk back to Darius is then hit by Grip of the Choking Hand. Let’s face it, the fight is over, surely? Darius orders everyone to get back to their duties, and promises any future misbehavior will be punished severely. The huge

In the ancient world, encounters at wells often signify romance. (The Bible has several examples). As the sun sets, a beautiful red haired woman appears, and attracts pretty much every grogs attention as she comes to the well or pool to draw water to take off on some errand. She is clearly by her dress a local grog, and a statuesque and athletic woman in her late twenties. If anyone thinks to ask, her hair is dressed as an unmarried woman, and she wears no wedding band or other sign of a husband despite her age. This is Caitlin (change all names to suit your saga’s locale, obviously).

She is absolutely stunning, but there is something dangerous about her eyes, and any character with Folk

Ken knows redheads are renowned for their wild tempers. Caitlin certainly looks untamed, but she is also stunning. If the player characters don't initiate a conversation she ignores the grogs – but if one flirts, she seems shocked, then flirts chastely back, and instantly takes a liking to any man bold enough to approach her. She happily explains her status as an unmarried overworked skivvy in need of a good husband, and makes humourous and sly jokes at the expense of the character trying to flirt with her. But she also leads them on; she knows exactly what she is doing. If anyone thinks to look, one of the local grogs watches any conversation, then slinks off to find Gustbran and report what he has just witnessed.

Unfortunately for the grogs, Caitlin is not looking for a night of pleasure, but a good man to take her away from this place. She consents to a meeting, or even a betrothal if things go well, but points out she is not free to marry without her elder brother's consent, as her parents are dead. And her brother is... Gustbran. This is why she remains unmarried. (He has no intention of letting his sister marry anyone, as she serves as his housekeeper!). Eventually she sees her brother approaching, blushes in shame at being seen talking to a stranger and rushes away. Gustbran hurls himself at the character who was flirting, shouting abuse and accusing him of every sort of inappropriate intention towards Caitlin. Yep, back to a scuffle, and this time Darius does not turn up. Perhaps Gustbran can be persuaded to back down, perhaps there is a general fight, perhaps Gustbran is knocked down. Whatever happens there is no real bad blood between the player character grogs and the local covenant's grogs.

By nightfall the atmosphere should be tense, and if need be the local grogs have carried Gustbran back to his quarters for Caitlin to patch up. All through the night local

covenfolk creep around the camp, and quietly talk to the grogs from other visiting covenants.

Hercules. If pushed he happily explains what each challenge involves (but not how his team intends to cheat). Only one grog from each team

**T**he contestants must strip naked, and then attempt to wrestle the Empress out of their end of the sty

## Scene Five: A Dawn Challenge

As dawn breaks a young grog from the covenant appears, and calls out to the whole sleepy assembly to come and listen. He has a proposal from the grogs of the host covenant, and a challenge. The grogs of (player covenant) have insulted the ancient customs and hospitality of this his home, (the host covenant). He therefore has come to issue a challenge, a tradition of this place – that the grogs compete in a contest called the Twelve Labours of Hercules. Whichever covenant's grogs win shall be given laurel crowns to wear, and will be "Kings of the Tribunal". All other grogs shall agree to serve and respect them, and treat them like magi for the duration of the visit. Whichever team loses pays a forfeit, that shall be decided by a "Tribunal" of one grog from each of the other covenants.

The meeting hastily disbands and everyone looks bust as Darius of Flambeau chooses this moment to stalk through the camp, his mood still black as thunder. Strangely, several of the visiting grogs seem amused by this, but you need a **Perception + Guile** test of 12+ to notice as obviously they are trying to hide it, though mainly from Darius himself.

As he vanishes off, the "herald" continues with his description of the contests (see Scene Five below), listing the Legendary Labours of

may attempt each challenge, and will be directly competing against a grog from the host covenant. Whoever wins the most of the twelve tasks wins the contests. If it's a draw, then it's down to fisticuffs between Gustbran (magically healed by now if necessary, the first indication the host magi may be backing their grogs) and may the best man win!

The herald asks outright if the characters accept the challenge. Before they can answer Gustbran appears, dragging his clearly tearful sister with him, and hurls Caitlin on the floor. She leaps up and hits him hard around the face, but he just pushes her down again, and shouts "let's make it interesting?! The winner can have this woman, if you can best me you deserve the she-devil and perhaps you can tame her?" Caitlin leaps up again and punches him sending him flying, before rushing off. Gustbran just laughs and asks the characters if they accept the challenge. If they inquire first as to the forfeit, the "Tribunal" of grogs from other covenants immediately tell it. The losing team's leader must kick Darius of Flambeau up the arse – hard!

As Gustbran has no intention of losing, this prospect does not bother him. He set it up after all, and everyone but Otto, Caitlin, and the characters one assumes are amused by it. They might not want Caitlin, or care about winning, but seeing Gustbran lose and have to carry out this suicidal act would surely be prize enough?

## Scene Six: The Twelve Labours

The twelve contests are spaced through the daylight hours, one an hour. Occasionally grogs are called away to other duties, but most just drift around discussing strategy, cheering on the winners and jeering loudly at the embarrassed losers in each competition. Anyone clearly getting their magi to come out of the Tribunal meeting room to help them out or obviously using magic is taunted mercilessly and judged to have lost that challenge. The twelve challenges take up most of the day, a few minutes each but with lots of drinking, eating and brawling among the audience in between each event.

### Challenge One: "Slay" the Nemean Lion

Rather disappointingly the Nemean Lion is in fact simply the ginger tom cat of ferocious temper who likes to sleep on the stable roof. Each grog is issued a large vase, in which to capture this beast – a perfectly ordinary, if cantankerous, cat.

**How they plan to win:** The host teams grog feigns a fall climbing on to the roof, allowing the player grog to clamber up, and only then discover how rotten the thatch is as they fall through in to the stables. Meanwhile they rush inside, get a ladder and make a hole in the thatch, and tempt the cat in to their vase through a large fish they have cunningly placed within.

### Challenge Two: "Slay" the Lernaean Hydra

Near the covenant there is a foul and putrid bog. There is no Hydra within, but there is a large and decayed tree laying in the middle that will do to symbolize it. Each contestant must dash across the bog, lop off a rotten branch to represent the "nine heads", and get back to the

start point. First back wins...

**How they plan to win:** The task is nearly impossible, because the tree is actually a petrified bog oak. The hatchet carried by the host team is enchanted to cut stone – the one given to the visiting grogs is not. Firstly the stench of the bog is overpowering, and the host grogs give their chap a cloth soaked in vinegar to rap round his mouth. Then he knows the safe route through the bog – following him is easy, but otherwise a **Perception + Athletics** test against Ease Factor 12 is needed or the visitor plunges in to the disgusting murky waters. Finally the host team automatically get to lop off their branch and race back – whereas chopping off the petrified branch with the ordinary hatchet requires an attack roll against a defense of 6, and a Soak of 12. More than 5 points of damage breaks off a branch stump. Then the race back is opposed **Dexterity + Athletics**, with a +3 to the host for every round it took the visitor to chop off their branch, if they even managed it and did not give up.

### Challenge Three: Capture the Golden hind of Artemis

This one is pretty much what it sounds like – a straight forward hunt, to bring down a deer in the local woods. Apart from technically being illegal in England (deer are reserved for the King) this is a fair contest, and you can use the rules in *Lords of Men* or any other means to play this out.

**How they plan to win:** Their contestant Gerald has a Ride of 5, a Hunt of 6 and an Area Lore (local woods) of 5. They don't need to cheat surely?

### Challenge Four: Capture the Erymanthian Boar

As unpleasant contests go, this one is pretty vile. In the pig sty lives

the Empress, a huge fat and rather muddy sow. She is happy there, wallowing in mud and her filth. The contestants must strip naked, and then attempt to wrestle the Empress out of their end of the sty. Given her size, foul temper, and the disgusting and unstable footing, this is no mean task.

**How they plan to win:** Arthur has no intention of entering the sty. He sits on the wall and watches the visiting grog get gored and trampled and slide around in the excrement. Then he produces an apple, and the Empress hurls herself bodily at it, and unless grappled immediately clammers over the wall as he offers her more and more apples from a sack. The Empress will do almost anything for apples. Caitlin if approached subtly reveals this plan, as he knows that the grogs were collecting apples from the store earlier, and she can guess why.

### Challenge Five: Clean the Augean stables in a single day

A large cesspit serves as a repository for human waste, and the camp latrines drain in to it. It is ten foot deep, and about ten foot square and eight foot deep in waste products. Two silver pennies are flung in to it, and the contestants are supposed to dive in and retrieve them. They can use a bucket and spade if they wish.

**How they plan to win:** They don't. Gustbran who contests this one simply laughs uproariously at anyone mad enough to try it, and is happy to throw this one. He pretends he is going to dive in, then doesn't. Retrieving a coin slowly sinking through sewage by diving in is a **Per + Awareness** test against Ease Factor 21+, but may be tried each round. Swimming is a good idea, and then the participant must resist against disease caused by the foul humors of the cesspit. The Storyguide can decide the difficulty.

## Challenge Six: Slay the Stymphalian Birds

Back to the bog, where a heron must be slain. The herons are quite visible, but hard to reach, as if anyone approaches they fly up and land elsewhere.

**How they plan to win:** The trick is of course to startle them and then as they fly overhead shoot one so it lands nearby on dry land and can be raced to the judges. Assuming the players work this out the birds fly twenty paces overhead (-3 to hit for range) and they might beat the hosts if fast. The host team puts forward Petra, a covenfolk lass with an **Init +3 Attack +10** with a bow. These herons, in case you were wondering, had a Defense of 15 in flight.

## Challenge Seven: Capture the Cretan Bull

Once again the livestock of the host covenant is abused. A huge bull is led in to a small paddock. Each team have to try and run at it, and vault over its back. Whoever completes the most vaults successfully without falling wins.

**How they plan to win:** Morgana the host team's contestant has known the bull since it was a calf, and it would never hurt her. Furthermore she has practiced the vault many times, and the bull does not mind. She has a (puissant) Athletics of 8 and a **Dexterity** of +3, and the task is against Ease Factor 15. If a visiting grog falls after failing a jump, the bull attempts to gore or trample them.

## Challenge Eight: Steal the Mares of Diomedes

Sir Toby, a local lord has a fine white stallion, his pride and joy, and a beautiful chestnut mare. His manor is just seven miles from the covenant, but he has four very alert guards. The grogs must ride there and make off with one of his horses.

**How they plan to win:** If Caitlin

still favours the visiting team, and they can somehow get a word with her (by this point Gustbran has one of his grogs watching over her) she can tell them that Sir Toby is a companion of the host covenant and indeed has a longevity ritual made by them, and often lends his magical white stallion to the magi for a week or more as it will take a Gifted rider.

All the host team have to do is

may prove shall we say challenging?

**How they plan to win:** Simple. They have already established a suitable undergarment belonging to the maga in question is with the covenant washerwoman, and her daughter Lavinia simply runs to her and collect it. The only clue is that Lavinia is very clean, if anyone thinks to ask about what she looks like, and her apron is spotless. They try

**T**his is a drinking contest. Why? Because all the grogs are bored with messing about with livestock, and every competition needs a drinking contest.

turn up and borrow the horse. The visiting team will actually have to steal one, and they are soon pursued by Sir Toby and his men if they do. (The host team thoughtfully warn him about horse thieves in the area!) He does not hesitate to lance, cut down and then drag off to gaol anyone he finds stealing his horse, and he may well hang them there and then as "caught in the act" despite not having the right of High Justice except in this circumstance. However if he learns of the contest he is delighted and greatly amused, lends the horse and rides over on yet another horse to watch proceedings.

## Challenge Nine: Obtain the girdle of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons

A female maga of considerable dignity and advanced years from the host covenant, or even if need be a visitor, is the target for this. All that is required is that her undergarments (probably a shift) should be acquired and brought before the gathering. Whoever succeeds wins. Of course entering the Tribunal room and somehow persuading this august matron to disrobe, hand you her undergarments, and then leave again

however to sneak back with the undergarments after the hapless visiting contestant has set off to the Tribunal meeting room.

## Challenge Ten: Obtain the cattle of the monster Geryon

Obviously, this is a drinking contest. Why? Because all the grogs are bored with messing about with livestock, and every competition needs a drinking contest.

**How they plan to win:** Mulch has a **Stamina** of +2 and a **Carouse** of 5, and has eaten a hearty breakfast for a +1 bonus. You can do this as a simple opposed test, or a succession of tests until someone falls over dead drunk using the poison rules. The host team don't intend to cheat here, as drinking games are sacred and the other covenant's grogs would lose all respect for them if they did.

## Challenge Eleven: Steal the apples of the Hesperides

A nearby wood has a few apple trees within that produce wonderful golden apples, each worth a pawn of

faerie vis. The contestants must go there and steal an apple apiece, then return here. First back wins.

**How they plan to win:** Stealing faerie vis is pretty much certainly in breach of the Code – *molesting the fey*. As the host covenant has the right to collect a pawn vis a year by an agreement with the faerie lord of the wood, that does not bother them – they can just ride over, collect an apple and return. What they have not taken in to account is that the faerie of the woods is actually quite happy to let the visitors take a pawn too, once he knows what the contest is and why they want it. If they are foolish enough to attack him or just

try to flee when he appears, well then he pursues them and takes it back, probably by force. The faerie of the wood is left to the Storyguide to design as he sees fit.

## Challenge Twelve: Capture and bring back Cerberus

The players have already seen Cerberus the huge and violent mastiff. He is to be unleashed, and the contestants must catch him, leash him and drag him back. Whoever achieves this herculean task wins this challenge.

**How they plan to win:** Gustbran



of course can simply call the dog to heel whenever he wants, and takes on the challenge. However he wants to see the visiting contestant mauled and chewed up a bit first, but if anyone actually wounds his dog beyond a light or a scuffle injury he goes berserk and, grabbing a hatchet, lays about them, stopping only short of actual murder. Then he calls the dog to heel.

If after all the challenges the result is a six all draw, it is down to fisticuffs between Gustbran and Caitlin's would-be lover.

## Scene Seven: Victory or Defeat?

If by some amazing cleverness the player grogs win the contest, then Caitlin is delighted, and immediately joins their camp, and Gustbran storms off in a foul mood, only returning when his turn drag him back. He is a man of immense pride however, and after crowning the victorious grogs with laurel leaves him and his men serve as grogs and treat the visitors if not like kings then like magi. They also produce cask of wonderful booze, and open it in honour of the victors, and after a few pints the grudging acceptance of defeat turns in to comradely toasts and happy and convivial praise for the visiting grogs. Assuming the player characters do not rub in their victory too much on the morrow, they have actually won the respect of all the grogs, and oddly enough the open friendship of those they defeated, yes even Gustbran. He happily gives his sister away in marriage, and even a small bag of silver as a dowry. He knows hen he is beaten, and keeps his bullying for easier targets in future.

If as seems far more likely the player characters lose, then the host grogs humiliate, bully and work them hard the next day, thoroughly

enjoying their victory and reveling in the visitors discomfort. They don't push it too far, but they are exuberant and cocky, and all the other grogs join in the mockery of the losers. Worst of all, Caitlin utterly rejects her suitor, and fawns over her bullying brother, filled with immense pride at his victory, no matter how much she had hoped he would lose. Now he has won she knows she could never love these pathetic men from far away, and she is happy to stay on as her brother's housekeeper, pouring scorn on the losers and especially the man who could not win her heart in a few simple challenges!

And now only one thing remains: the forfeit...

## Scene Eight: The Next Day – Kicking Darius of Flambeau up the Arse!

There are various ways a grog can commit suicide, but kicking Darius of Flambeau hard on his bony seat may be among the more nerve wracking and potentially painful demises. Still if Gustbran loses the competition, then during Darius morning walk the next day he performs the forfeit, creeping up behind the magus and then landing a tremendous boot on his backside. The next few moments are horrible to watch, as Darius shrieks, picks himself up, turns on the cowering grog, and then sets about abusing him with a nasty combination of spells designed to cause the maximum distress. Astonishingly he stops short of killing him. In years to come he explains the restraints were caused by his not wishing to deprive the host covenant of a valuable asset. However on hearing of the outrage the covenant decides Gustbran is clearly mad, and expel him, and leading Cerberus on a leash he then approaches the player covenant and asks for mercy and to be taken on as a grog. His bullying ways disappear for

a whole season or two, and he genuinely does try to reform, even if the change is predictably short lived. Caitlin comes along as well, but her temper is now even worse, and her scorn for the grogs who led to her losing her home is deep and bitter. She is a wild and terrible enemy to the grogs and her ferocious temper drives everyone mad until she is finally appeased somehow – but that's another story...

More interesting perhaps is if the visiting grogs lose the contest. Now they must work out how to kick Darius of Flambeau up the arse, and survive. Who among them is brave enough to perform the deed? Asking the magi for help would have to be done subtly, for if obvious magic was involved everyone would despise them forever. Besides, the magi are busy at the Tribunal. Nope, something else is needed.

Otto, Darius's shield grog, should

Another possibility is to use Otto as an intermediary, and set up a meeting with Darius, and carefully explain the whole thing, and then try for a very impressive Charm roll. Perhaps Darius actually has a (well-hidden) sense of humour, and plays along just for fun? If he simply turned, smiled and thanked the grog who kicked him they would receive the awe of all present forever after, and a reputation as "The Grog who kicked Darius up the" - you get the idea. Winning over Darius to take part in this silly charade, and agree to being kicked in the pants has to be a major accomplishment if it can be done.

Perhaps there are other ways. Players are inventive, and give them time to try and think of something. And if they don't, and they just kick him hard, well they suffer the same fate as described for Gustbran above, but at least they survive, sadder and wiser, and then have to explain to their outraged magi exactly why they

**T**here are various ways a grog can commit suicide, but kicking Darius of Flambeau hard on his bony seat may be among the more nerve wracking and potentially painful demises.

have had several mentions by now. He watched the contest with disdain, and his native language being from elsewhere (unless you are playing in the Rhine Tribunal) his ability in the local language is limited. Still he is aware someone plans to kick Darius up the arse, and he plans to be busy elsewhere when it happens. One interesting possibility however is asking Otto to get involved somehow, and make Darius believe he has been saved from some awful fate by being kicked to the ground, and to do so in such a way it is not obvious to everyone else this is what has happened. The language barrier could work in the character's favour here.

should not be kicked out of their home covenant, or meet an even worse fate. Hopefully, the characters will think of something clever though.

And hopefully, when they return home from Tribunal, they have some new friends, and a lot to reflect upon, even if it really was a case of *Love's Labour's Lost*?

# From the Journal of Vulcanis Argens

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

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

I falter as I commit these words to the page as in many ways I do not wish to be reminded of them again. Conrad assures me however that the

entry should make for an amusement when I read it back to myself in years to come. Well, I have nothing else to do this evening so...

I was returning from market where I had been looking over the wares of a local armourer, having had a fancy to gain some tuition in the art. Valeria, Benedic, and Bellatorius were with me as were a number of the servants who had been tasked with replenishing the stores. Evening had fallen rather quickly that night so rather than looking for a friendly village we decided to make camp in the field off to the left of the road.

When morning came, before any of the magi had chance to cast their Parmae around them, we found ourselves transformed into the semblance of animals. I specify semblance for we were not in truth animals, but more animals in the shape and guise of men. We each wore clothes and I at least still had my casting tools and Caeculus with me (though Caeculus had been transformed into a long twig from its usual proud spear form).

Each of us had taken a different shape. I was a shrew, Benedic had become a rabbit, Bellatorius had become a squirrel, and Valeria had



Sub Rosa

become a dormouse. Though she tried, Valeria's magic could not effect any lasting change on our forms. We were stuck in those shapes and at the mercy of whatever power had transformed us.

We found ourselves near a burrow, some way distant from our camp. We decided that rather than attempt to diminish our dignity further by explaining to our grogs the circumstances in which we found ourselves, we should instead investigate the burrow in the hope of finding answers.

Inside the burrow we found a chamber, a small comfortable room with a table and chairs. On the table there was a mask. I had my back turned, investigating the tunnel that continued on from the room, so I do not know how Benedic came to be wearing the mask when I turned around. I simply heard Valeria and Bellatorius cry out in unison as though to stop our companion. More faerie magic ensued as Benedic could not remove the mask.

But this was not to his or our detriment for this seemed to summon a strange rodent creature, the like of which I have never seen before, riding atop a great harnessed spider. The rodent was under the impression that we were his sons and could not hear of any different. Note, I say could not hear. It was not a case of him refusing to accept that we were not kin, more it was a case that he was unable to accept such a thing.

The creature claimed to be Woden and he wore a wooden mask with only one eye. From the little I know of pagan mythology, his spear and eight-legged steed fitted with the form of Woden.

He addressed Benedic as Wihtlaeg, Bellatorius as Wecta, Valleria as Casere, and myself as Baeldaeg. Wihtlaeg he commanded to stay by his side, but the rest of us he sent on a quest. It seemed that a great enemy, Tiw, had stolen fire, tongs, and a hammer. These tools were needed in

order to reshoe the steeds for there was a hunt due. Without the hunt it seemed this land would suffer.

Reluctantly, I agreed as it was clear that we had little choice. As we set out I was given a small key, Bellatorius an acorn cup and Valeria a mirror.

We came upon a fast-running stream spanned by a wooden bridge. On that bridge stood a great hare, armed and armoured as for a violent engagement and he would not let us pass. His job, so he explained was to guard the bridge and ensure that none crossed over to the other side. No amount of persuasion would convince him to stand aside. I feared that Bellatorius might take matters into his own fiery hands. And then an idea struck me.

I quietly cast a spell upon myself, a spell I had learned years ago to more ably let me cross the waters to and from Donum Chanuti, and I set foot onto the water. The stream supported me and did not carry me away and I started to cross.

"Ho," I called out to the Hare. "What guardian is this that lets a man cross by the bridge?"

"There is no bridge there," replied the Hare, "This is the bridge as all can see."

"Why then, if that is the bridge, how might a man cross over the stream? No," I taunted, "someone has played a trick upon you and set you to guard that rickety pile of sticks while this stone bridge stands unwatched."

"Stone bridge?" questioned the Hare. "There is no bridge there, stone or otherwise."

"Very well, if you are set to guard the way, then I shall leave you to explain to your master how it was that you left his bridge unguarded." And I strolled across. As I reached the bank, I beckoned to my companions to cross where I had.

"See here, these two will cross

against your master's will if you leave the stone bridge unwatched. If you would but defend it, I will watch that pile of sticks you stand on."

The Hare considered for a moment and, just as Bellatorius was about to step into the stream, the Hare relented. He bounded to the bank where I stood, and here I saw his immense size, "I thank you for your offer and accept," said he, "I will guard this bank here if you would but watch those sticks."

Quick as a flash, Bellatorius and Valeria turned and ran across the bridge. The Hare looked angered and was about to remonstrate. And so I spoke again.

"Hare, do not raise your sword, for we are not on the bridge. Nor do we wish to cross the bridge to this side. And I would vouch that your master gave no instructions for you to harm those on this side of the stream. But if you will but take my advice, you should set yourself on the bridge and let no other cross from that side to this."

"Aye, I shall do that. And as you are here and not there, I shall not harm you," replied the Hare.

And that is how we bested the Hare on the bridge.

Soon after, the path conveniently split into three and each of us felt a pull from the charms we were given, each to a different path.

Shrewdly, I ensured that Valeria took her turn first so as to learn more about the nature of the challenges we faced. She returned from the path some time later and described how she met a shape changing creature and bested it by changing her shape faster and into ever more dangerous forms with which to oppose it. But the creature was not defenceless and she had to work hard to gain the tongs. She also returned with a mask and a stick wound around with runes.

Then I fancied that I should take my turn. I took the path and

eventually came to a door standing across the pathway. There was no wall to either side, but the branches of the nearby trees leaned in and supported it instead. Behind the door, which was secured by neither lock nor bolt, was a dark stone chamber and in that chamber writhed a great wyrm with more legs than the hosts of Heaven has Angels. The sly beast introduced himself as Gungnir and promised great harm to me for chancing upon him.

I looked around the room for some tool to use. Though I trusted to my spear Caeculus, even in his diminished form, I thought that the logic of the place would help me far more than my magic.

Then I spotted a cage, strung from the roof. "Wait," said I as the many-legged wyrm bore down upon me, "my crime of chancing upon you should not be so harshly addressed. What say you that we play a contest and if I lose you shall do with me as you will and my fate will be in your hands?"

The beast curled over itself as it considered, "And what if you win?"

"If I win, you give me the hammer that I see tied to your middle there."

The beast twisted and constricted to hide the hammer from me, "There is no contest that you can win here, so I accept your challenge."

I feigned ignorance and looked around for some contest, "That cage there, smaller than both you and I. He who can squeeze inside while the other cannot shall win the contest. I think that is a contest I can win handsomely as you have far too many legs to fit into such a small space."

The beast with so many legs laughed, "But you forget, little man, that this is my place and I know the cage well. I can curl myself tight and fit within its walls and you will lose your contest. See here?" And with that, the beast rose up and pushed himself into the cage.

"Ah," said I, "your body is in, but I see some legs still poking out where the door should be. If you can close the door behind you then I will say you have given me something that I might not best."

The beast reached out with several legs and pulled the door closed behind it.

"Wait, the door looks ajar. Let me help you in closing it fully. I will be careful not to trap your legs in the way."

"Very well," said the beast, "lean

on the door and I shall squirm further into the cage."

I leaned on the door, and quick as a flash, I pulled the key from my satchel and turned it in the lock. I sprang back from the beast in the cage, taking the key with me, lest he reach me with his claws.

"Indeed you can fit entirely within the cage. I had not believed such a thing possible. But if you have taken up residence, then the game is off and you forfeit the hammer."

"Let me out, trickster," raged the



beast, "let me out and I will have my revenge of you."

"If you would give me the hammer, I will give up the key."

The beast with many legs writhed and wriggled and handed the hammer out through the bars of the cage. "Here is the hammer as you ask. Now, give up the key as you gave your word to."

"Indeed," I said, "I did say I would give up the key." I held out the key, an arm's length from the cage, and dropped it to the ground. "No more shall I carry that key. I give it up

and if you wish it, you may take it and use it as you see fit."

The beast writhed in anger and called me all manner of names, many I remember to this day. With a smile, I turned to leave with the hammer in my satchel. On the way, I saw a chest and in that chest was a mask and a short wooden stave carved with runes. I took both and rejoined Bellatorius and Valeria.

And that is how I bested the wyrm in the woods.

Then it was the turn of Bellatorius to try his luck. It was some time

before he returned bearing a cup of fire. He looked uncomfortable and walked with a bow-legged gait, but beyond exclaiming something about saddles he would say no more about his task.

With the three tools in our possession, it was time to take them back to Woden and see about this hunt. We came back upon the Hare who graciously allowed us to cross from this side to that (as he was only to guard against those coming from that side to this).

We then arrived at Woden's hall wherein I used the tongs regained by Valeria to heat iron in the fire captured by Bellatorius and made shoes with the hammer won from the wyrm. The steeds were shod (spiders all) and we were invited to the hunt.

Each wearing the mask that we had retrieved, we rode out with unnatural skill and I speared many prey. I shall not record what they were for my dignity has returned and I do not wish to be reminded in years to come. But I should record that I ignored my nagging better judgement and I both feasted upon and enjoyed the hospitality of the faerie folk that night. Soon enough though, we slept, most of us where we fell to slumber under the weight of so much food, drink, and dancing. Even Valeria, though it could be considered hard to read the expression of a dormouse, seemed to abandon her natural reserve.

When we awoke, we were ourselves again. All four returned to natural size and aspect and, I warrant, each of us carried with us a charm from the faerie world, a reminder of our time and reward for our quick thinking and our tenacity and our skill. I believe that I must keep secret the nature of the charm awarded to me lest its magic fail. It is a peculiar sort of bargain, but the device will, I am sure, prove useful to me in the many long seasons of crafting I have ahead of me.



# Companion Piece: Lazar ben Yosef of Narbonne, the Redcap

The Companion Piece series provides detailed characters ideal for use either as companions to individual magi, important non-player characters within the saga, or as associates to entire covenants. Like the previous companion presented in this series, this article presents a member of the western Mediterranean attempting to carry out his duties in a war-torn region somewhat hostile to him in more than one way.

## Lazar of Narbonne

Born to a well-established family of scholars and philosophers in Narbonne, Lazar's family also includes several Redcaps, "adopted" into House Mercere. His extended family still lives in Narbonne and includes two sons and a daughter. He is both divorced and a widower, as his second wife died of an illness five years ago. His cover varies between merchant, a Jewish scholar from Provence, and an usurer. He has not returned to Narbonne since the Albigensian Crusade began. Instead, he has kept a promise to his son to keep his granddaughter, Hadassah, abroad and safe. She is now thirteen, and tires of the traveling life, sometimes becoming vocal about this sentiment.

Something of a child prodigy, Lazar studied for a short period with both Joseph Kimhi and Abraham ibn Daud, before Lazar entered his Redcap training and ibn Daud was martyred. In fact it was ibn Daud's views on Aristotelian philosophy that drew Lazar's Redcap master to this student of Hachmei Provence, or the learned Jewish scholars who lived

through Provence and Catalonia, maintaining religious schools called "yeshivas." (See *Art and Academe*, page 88 for additional details on yeshivas.)

While he met many who would later become capable kabbalists, like his childhood classmate David Kemhi, Lazar found he did not have the interest in the philosophy his family

had hoped.

Instead, he became a Redcap, and completed his apprenticeship in Harco. While he is an effective Redcap even into his late fifties, he's started feeling a bit of his age, even



Sub Rosa

with his Longevity Ritual. However, despite the slightly increasing difficulty he encounters traveling, Lazar finds teaching at new covenants to be an exhilarating experience. He uses this as a chance to teach the very bright apprentices of the Order while providing excellent safety to his granddaughter. Lazar considers himself a gardener of magi, helping them blossom through his capable instruction, while they often see him as the fondly remembered tutor with not only personality but entertaining stories.

## Companion Material

There are several ways Lazar might join a saga, and while he benefits a covenant with apprentices most, he is a solid addition to a covenant looking to expand its pool of instructors or members able to speak multiple languages.

As a Redcap, Lazar's duties easily bring him to visit the covenant on multiple occasions, establishing relationships and revealing him as not only a messenger of the Order, but a scholar and tutor par excellence. His experiences in the field and across many geographic areas mean he is a natural advisor to younger magi dispatched to complete tasks for the covenant. He knows of many covenants, their libraries, and their members, making him indispensable to a Trianoma magus or an investigating Quasitor.

His Jewish background provides several hooks for stories where magi explore or investigate the mysteries of Kabbalah and possibly the construction of Golems. His knowledge of the Hachmei Provence and the range of southern France mean the magi have many locations to research, potentially find refuge, or

be drawn into conflict against the horrors of the Albigensian Crusade..

## Introducing Lazar

There are a couple of ways a Storyguide might introduce Lazar into the saga.

**Option #1:** Bandits, brigands, thieves, crusaders, or some other unsavory, but regular, villain for your saga chases Lazar with terrible intentions. In the process of defeating his pursuers, members of the turb are injured and in gratitude, Lazar offers to stay and teach their magus or an apprentice as a token of gratitude.

**Option #2:** Operating in his duties as a Redcap, Lazar arrives to deliver correspondence and realizes they have an apprentice or two available for instruction. Based on his reception and the nature of the magi, he propositions their covenant,

### Lazar ben Yosef, The Redcap and Instructor

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

**Age:** 59 (54)

**Decrepitude:** 0 (Aging Roll bonus: -7\*; \*Includes -2 for good living conditions)

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Redcap; Strong Faerie Blood; Good Teacher, Great Communication, Privileged Upbringing, Puissant Teaching; Dependent (Granddaughter), Outsider; Usurer; Busybody, Non-combatant, Visions

**Personality Traits:** Talkative +3, Curious +2

**Reputations:** Expensive Tutor 6 (Order of Hermes), Scholar 4 (Jewish Community), Usurer 4 (Northern Mediterranean Coast), Capable Teacher 3 (Order of Hermes), Redcap 3 (Order of Hermes)

**Combat:**

**Dodge:** Init -2, Atk n/a, Defense +1, Dam n/a

**Soak:** +2

**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: Greece 3 (covenants), Area Lore: Iberia 2 (covenants), Area Lore: Italy 3 (covenants), Area Lore: Levant 3 (Jerusalem), Area Lore: Provence 4 (covenants), Artes Liberales 4 (rhetoric), Athletics 2 (hiking), Awareness 3 (ambush), Bargain 2 (setting terms), Brawl 2 (dodge), Charm 3 (magi), Chirurgy 2 (sword wounds), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Kosher rules), Code of Hermes 3 (rights of Redcaps), Dead Language: Latin 5 (Hermetic terms), Etiquette 2 (magi), Folk

Ken 3 (crowds), Guile 3 (concealing business), Harco Lore 3 (geography), Ledgeremain 2 (slight of hand), Living

Language: Arabic 4 (conversation), Living Language: Catalan 4, (conversation), Living Language: Greek 4 (conversation), Living Language: Hebrew 5 (liturgy), Living Language: Italian 4 (conversation), Living Language: Provencal 4 (conversation), Medicine 3 (treating disease), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 3 (covenants), Philosophiae 4 (morality), Profession: Accountant 2 (recordkeeping), Ride 2 (offroad), Stealth 2 (keeping quiet), Survival 2 (finding water), Teaching 8+2 (single student), Theology 3 (Torah);

**Equipment:** Redcap's satchel, Scholar's robes, walking stick. **Encumbrance:** 0

**Appearance:** Lazar is a somewhat portly man with a thick, steel-grey beard and his Jewish cap. He wears good quality traveling clothes, but insists on covering them with an old, and tattered looking cloak. His boots, however, are expertly tooled and well-cared for, despite their heavy travel.

**Design Notes:** Childhood 45+Native language 75+Later Life (to 8) 45+Redcap 300+Well Traveled (Redcap) 50+Privileged Upbringing 50+Post Apprentice (36yrs) 720

If you wanted to amend his Virtues and Flaws, Lazar might possess the Lone Redcap minor virtue; in this case, you might consider the Magic Items minor virtue, and have one more minor virtue available to customize him. (See Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 106 for these virtues; \*See Houses of Hermes: True Lineages, page 109 for the Usurer flaw-- if you prefer, replace this with Hunchback). If you dislike Visions, consider Driven: Teaching students.

explaining his desire to teach. If they're willing, he can begin the following season.

**Option #3:** Due to research being undertaken by a member of the covenant, Lazar is introduced to the magi either through the covenant's Jewish community, or through the local community. Alternatively, he might meet them through their need for a vis loan. While his vis usury is permitted but often frowned upon, it does help pay for items and other necessities. However, upon learning the magi have students available to teach, Lazar offers to forgo the usual prices for loaning vis if the covenant is willing to negotiate a contract for

his education services.

## Story Seeds for Lazar

Once established within the saga, what sort of stories might focus on Lazar, but still provide for the inclusion of the rest of the covenant?

### Always with the Children

Nothing is more important to Lazar than his granddaughter, Hadassah. When she is captured by townsfolk, slavers, crusaders, someone, Lazar stops at nothing to recover her. He comes to the

covenant and offers to stay if they can save her. If the covenant magi are busy, then Lazar may contract a group of grogs to lead the endeavor or hire an old student to execute the operation. There is no price too high for Lazar in this situation, and he knows his own value.

### Someone's Taken My Satchel

Exploring the classic trope for Recaps, Lazar has been robbed and his satchel taken. If the magi can recover the satchel from this thief, and help Lazar make his deliveries on time, they can earn his services or

#### The Teacher's Drive

If Lazar teaches a single student, he can provide a Source Quality of 29 (4 Communication + 11 Teaching + 3 + 6 single student + 5 Good Teacher), although if provided a laboratory specialized for teaching, he can easily provide a Source Quality in excess of 30.

He is unwilling to accept a contract with a covenant to teach for less than a year, more commonly two, and must have a dedicated space which will be considered his sanctum for the duration of the agreement.

His granddaughter must be permitted to join him, and must be considered a full covenant member for six months after his teaching commitment concludes, so she may remain safely behind while he arranges his next contract and completes his Redcap duties. She may, or may not be Gifted, at the Storyguide's discretion, but should likely have the Covenant Upbringing Flaw. Lazar has taught her to a Latin score of 5 (Hermetic Terms), and she has a Teaching score of 2 (Latin) from exposure.

Lazar is willing to teach multiple students, as long as he has a dedicated environment to do so. Using the rules from *Covenants*, pages 109-121, such a lab needs a Teaching specialization. His ideal space is dedicated teaching structure (Elementary; -2 General Quality, -3 Upkeep) with a lab space of Size +0, with a Gallery (+1 Safety, +1 Aesthetics, +1 Teaching) and a throne made into the focus (-1 General Quality, +1 Re, +1 Teaching). It should be spotless (+1 Health, +1 Aesthetics, +1 Cr), and opulent (+1 Upkeep, +1 Health, +2 Aesthetics, +1 Teaching), with Superior Heating (+1 Upkeep, +1 Health, +2 Aesthetics, +1 Ignem).

Virtues: Gallery, Opulent, Spotless\*, Superior Heating. Flaws: Elementary (Teaching); Lesser Focus (Throne)

\*Free Virtue or Flaw.

**Size:** 0

**Refinement:** 0

**General Quality:** -3 (this does not affect Teaching)

**Upkeep:** -1 (5 Mythic Pounds to set up, 1 Pound per year to maintain)

**Safety:** +1

**Warping:** 0

**Health:** +3

**Aesthetics:** +6

**Teaching:** +3 (This is the maximum permissible bonus for this specialty)

In a single season, he can provide nearly his maximum benefit (29 XP) to a single student in the subjects of:

Area Lore: Greece 3 (covenants), Area Lore: Iberia 2 (covenants), Area Lore: Italy 3 (covenants), Area Lore: Levant 3 (Jerusalem), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Kosher rules), Code of Hermes 3 (rights of Redcaps), Medicine 3 (treating disease), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 3 (covenants), Theology 3 (Torah).

If given access to a laboratory specialized for teaching, with a +3 bonus, he can provide his current maximum benefit (32 XP) to a single student in two seasons in the subjects of:

Area Lore: Provence 4 (covenants), Artes Liberales 4 (rhetoric), Dead Language: Latin 5 (Hermetic terms), Living Language: Arabic 4 (conversation), Living Language: Catalan 4, (conversation), Living Language: Greek 4 (conversation), Living Language: Hebrew 5 (liturgy), Living Language: Italian 4 (conversation), Living Language: Provencal 4 (conversation), Philosophiae 4 (morality).

He is more than willing to take a contract for instructing magi, and content to reach a reasonable agreement for helping them improve their Teaching skill. One season of his instruction could give a magus a Teaching skill comparable to an entire apprenticeship of exposure experience.

keep him in business while saving his reputation. Often, this story is more about the thieves than victims or a race against time to recover what was taken, so while Lazar is the crucial impetus for this adventure, he serves as a vehicle for something which need not be closely tied to him.

## More Knowledge, More Problems

Someone is kidnapping members of the Hachmei Provence and killing them after a period of time. A Catalonian non-Hermetic Sahir or a Hermetic magus is hunting down Kabbalists in an attempt to steal the

secrets of the occult art or the methods of creating golems. Looking for someone effective against this threat, an old friend of Lazar's seeks him out and begs for assistance from the covenant. If the magi agree, they're drawn into the Crusader plagued lands of Provence, looking for a killer hiding in the shadows and preying on a people most refuse to help. What they find might be an unscrupulous peer justifying his actions with the "Join or Die" clause, or possibly a potent jinn in service to a Sahir who considers the Hachmei Provence nothing more than a puzzle to be solved.

## Matchmaker, Matchmaker

Lazar's habit of being a covenant busybody earns him problems on the road after he arranges the marriage of a Jewish girl another local and important person really wanted to marry. As such, the jilted lover frames Lazar for the murder of a man at the next inn. How do the magi respond to the captivity of their Redcap and Tutor? Can they rescue him without breaching the Code?

## Using Lazar as an NPC

Who can't use a developed and detailed Redcap in their game? Lazar provides a distinctive and recognizable character with personality who can be easily inserted at many Hermetic events and locations, such as Tribunal, other covenants, or even Certamen and Wizard War declarations.

In his role as a roaming educator and Redcap, Lazar offers the opportunity to be a knowledgeable resource of the moment, bringing expertise to the covenant when they need it, but at a price. If they have apprentices, or a desire to expand their teaching skills, then it is possible they might leverage what they want against what Lazar loves to do, coming out as winners in the exchange twice over. Discovering this foible of the Redcap may take some investigating, however.

For characters seeking a Jewish contact to the members of Hachmei Provence, Lazar is a Hermetic resource who can aid them with greater ease than they might encounter trying to befriend a mundane member of the community. His prices, however, come in things they likely value more; vis, enchanted items, and seasons spent on tasks such as replacement Longevity Rituals.



# Who Wants to Live Forever?

The shape and material of enchanted items improves the lab totals for their manufacture. Potent magic uses similar shapes and materials to make casting those spells even more powerful. The precedent is there, so why not incorporate shapes and materials into longevity rituals?

## Math with Benefits

Occupying a strange space between enchanted items and formulaic spells, longevity rituals remain a staple for all magi. They plan for a longevity ritual's implementation and development, possibly trading with other members of the Tribunal, or improving their Arts to craft a ritual for themselves. Longevity rituals can be difficult to make, they can utilize extra vis, one can even configure the laboratory to provide a benefit to aging rolls. From all this, it seems a small step to implementing Shape and Material bonuses to provide what essentially results in doubling the effect of the creator's Magic Theory score to the Creo Corpus lab total and, in most cases, add perhaps a decade or two of additional life. Using Shape and Material bonuses one can expect:

This effectively adds a number of decades equal to the bonus to the lifespan of the magus, providing more time before

Aging Roll Bonus	MT Score
+1	<5
+2	5-7
+3	8-9
+4	10-12

one likely requires another longevity ritual. For most games, such added time is a non-issue, permitting the longevity ritual to become a story arc, or a momentary goal, before becoming part of the background.

However gaining such a benefit should

come with a story-based price. Using Shapes & Materials in longevity rituals gives magi a reason to conceal the provenance of their ritual items, as they can be used as arcane connections back to either the longevity ritual or the magus themselves. The source of a magus' longevity ritual materials becomes a target for foes and political rivals looking to gain an edge. By collecting material from the same source, or utilizing objects used in the longevity ritual, spells can use a +3 bonus to the Penetration multiplier. These incorporated items must be kept secret and protected whenever possible, such as eggshells, bathing liquids, or drinking vessels.

## Bringing it to the Game

To implement this change as a part of Magic Theory, no real adjustment to the rules is necessary. Continue using Shape & Material bonuses as normal, but now permit them to be incorporated into the Creo Corpus laboratory total used for longevity rituals. Implementing this change

by Ben McFarland

as a minor mystery to a fertility cult is fairly straightforward. Treat it as a Minor Virtue with an Initiation Target Level 18. To consider this change as a minor Breakthrough, the researcher should learn Potent Magic from *The Mysteries Revised Edition*, then develop a number of Potent Creo Corpus healing spells, researching them to stabilize the effects. Research through Fertility cult objects, like those in *Ancient Magic*, and associated non-Hermetic items or rituals, like the story hook in **Sub Rosa #8**, "Way of St. James," could be done, as well. In all cases, once Shape & Material bonuses are allowed in longevity rituals, require the player to document the source of any materials used, and the storage location of any objects incorporated. These might be manipulated through other hooks, like Tormenting Master, Enemies, or Difficult Underlings. Magi looking to gain the upper hand in Wizards' War or otherwise Penetrate another wizard's Parma might



Sub Rosa

investigate these sources and acquire arcane connections to exploit when the time is right.

## Other Options

Wise magi prefer to incorporate magically-aligned items into their works whenever possible. Another potential beneficial use of Shapes & Materials in longevity rituals is to allow dedicated vis, extraordinary vis, and Materials of Virtue. Such materials still require the sort of protection as mundane materials, but work as described in *Realms of Power: Magic*, Chapter 8. Dedicated vis offers double the Shape and Material bonus, but original bonuses must not exceed the researcher's Magic Theory score. Extraordinary vis and Materials of Virtue add their vis bonus to the laboratory total, but does not count against the maximum number of pawns which may be used in the ritual.

This kind of modification might require a Minor Breakthrough, or be a Major Virtue for Initiation. It will likely increase the laboratory total by another 3 to 12 points. This makes longevity rituals even more powerful, extending the lives of senior members of the Order of Hermes, which has definite political consequences worth considering. For games where such aspects are less of a concern, these additional modifications can be incorporated into regular Hermetic Magic Theory.

## Examples

A magus with a Magic Theory of 7 might choose a baptism (+5) of fire (+2), and then need to safeguard the location and the ashes. If his kindling had been lit with extraordinary Ignem vis (containing 3 pawns) left in the fire throughout the ritual, the magus would add another +9 to the laboratory total, but still be able to use a total of 14 pawns of vis in the ritual.

A maga with a Magic Theory of 7 might choose to bathe in a fountain (+3) laced with salts (+4) and then need to protect the waters of the fountain and the source of her salts. If she used Salts of Virtue, containing two pawns of vis, she

Object	Bonus	Symbolism
Acorn	2	(rebirth)
Acacia	4	(immortality)
Almond	3	(fertility)
Amaranth	5	(immortality)
Amber	5	(preservation, longevity)
Apple	4	(fertility)
Ash Tree	2	(rebirth, Odin hanged from an Ash Tree)
Baptism	5	(rebirth)
Beans	3	(rebirth)
Blood	3	(vitality)
Boughs	2	(fertility)
Bull	2	(fertility, strength)
Butterfly	4	(rebirth, transformation)
Cedar	3	(longevity)
Chalice/Cup	5	(rebirth)
Crucible	4	(purification, refinement)
Dates/Figs	3	(fertility)
Dawn	3	(rebirth)
Deer/Antlers	2	(fertility, growth)
Earth/Soil	2	(fertility, growth, rebirth)
Eggs	5	(creation, fertility)
Emerald	3	(longevity)
Fish	4	(fecundity, fertility)
Fire	2	(purification, rebirth)
Flowers:		
Lily	4	(longevity)
Lotus	4	(rebirth)
Rose	4	(fertility)
Fountain	3	(longevity)
Honey	4	(fertility, longevity, purity)
Milk	4	(fertility, purity)
Phoenix	5	(rebirth, transformation)
Rooster	2	(fertility)
Salt	4	(longevity, preservation)
Ship to the Underworld	3	(rebirth, transformation)
Snakeskin	4	(longevity, rebirth, transformation)

would add another +6 to the laboratory total, but still be able to use a total of 14 pawns of vis in the ritual.

A magus with a Magic Theory of 8 might consume an apple (+4) infused with honey (+4), and then need to conceal the fruit tree and hive. If she had an apple containing dedicated Creo Herbam vis, and used Honey of Virtue, containing two pawns of vis, he would add another +4 for

the apple (doubling the S&M bonus) and another +6 for the vis from the Honey of Virtue. He would still be able to use a total of 16 pawns of vis in the ritual.

# Pilgrims of Darkness

## Inspired by the novel “Pèlerins des Ténèbres”

### by Serge Brussolo, Le Masque 2000

This story won the Hermes' Portal scenario contest 2002, and was published in issue 5, February 2002. Game stats were initially provided for the 4th edition of **Ars Magica**. This version has been proofread again, and also includes stats for the 5th edition, which constitutes its actual added value.

J. Darmont, December 2011

## Introduction

This scenario nominally takes place in the Pyrenean mountains.

However, its precise location does not have a crucial impact on the story arc. It can be relocated to virtually any Christian area with mountains of a fair size. To facilitate such adaptations, I voluntarily remain vague about the exact setting of this story.

The Fourth Edition *Medieval Bestiary: Revised Edition* might be useful to play the last part of the scenario, but is not strictly necessary. Alternatively, the Fifth Edition *Book of Mundane Beasts* ([www.atlas-games.com/pdf\\_storage/ArM5Beasts.pdf](http://www.atlas-games.com/pdf_storage/ArM5Beasts.pdf)) provides statistics for most animals that could be

by Jérôme Darmont

encountered.

## Synopsis

The magi are called upon for help by the prior of a monastery neighboring their Covenant. This monastery is dedicated to Saint Gaudemon, and organizes a regular pilgrimage to the saint's sanctuary, which is located in a remote place up in the mountains. The pilgrimage is reputedly very tough and pilgrims have been rumored to



Sub Rosa

mysteriously disappear for some time. The Prior has sent a young monk to investigate, but he came back apparently mad. Since Saint Gaudemon already has a poor reputation, the Prior needs the magi to solve this mystery as soon as possible to avoid the wrath of the Holy Inquisition.

The characters thus join the pilgrimage of Saint Gaudemon under the direction of a strange guide. From the beginning, they leave the main trail and, as they later discover, are tricked onto a fake path dotted with fake convents inhabited by fake monks. Strange events also occur during the whole journey, and the atmosphere is oppressive. The characters eventually find out what the pilgrims true destination is.

The fake monks and their guide finally attempt to capture them and lead them to a gigantic ark, a vast ship of biblical proportions that is being built between two mountain peaks. These monks are followers of a wingless angel (actually a demon) who prophesies the Flood and tricks humans into thinking they have been chosen to build the ark and re-populate the Earth after the cataclysm. Some pilgrims are convinced and voluntarily turn to heresy, forfeiting their souls, while others are mere slaves used to build the ark, or as food for the animals that are caged inside!

The characters probably put an end to this sham, but after confronting the demon, they also have to escape from the Inquisition that has finally sent an army to destroy all evil: demon, men, women and magi alike.

## Opening Scene

One spring morning, a messenger from a nearby

### The Story as Pilgrimage

The prior is genuine in his concern and there really is a shrine to Gaudemon high in the mountains so your troupe may decide to use this story as a genuine pilgrimage for one or more characters, in which case the rules in *The Church*, page 16 onwards are very useful. Given the demonic nature of the deception and the subversion of the pilgrimage, Noctus' plan counts as a significant oppositional element. The tanglings with Brother Denunzio are sufficient to provide a test of faith, and the pilgrimage to the true shrine of Gaudemon will take a season.

The bonuses are:

**+3 Season**

**+3 Test of Faith**

**+12 Direct Demonic Opposition**

This provides a total of +18, enough to gain a Minor Virtue, remove a Minor Flaw, or to remove a negative Personality Trait.

It is important to note that these are not granted as a result of completing *this story*, but by setting out to find the true shrine and completing *that journey* despite the challenges faced along the way.

monastery shows up at the character's Covenant. The monk, Brother Azael, requires an audience from the council as soon as possible. He represents the Prior of Le Moutier monastery, Diodore the Elder, and literally begs the magi for help. His monastery is dedicated to Saint Gaudemon, and organizes a regular pilgrimage to the saint's sanctuary, which is located in a remote place up in the mountain. For some time now, pilgrims have regularly been disappearing while on the road to the sanctuary. Although the pilgrimage is notoriously tough and dangerous, avalanches and wild beasts cannot be held responsible for so many people vanishing. This causes great concern to Father Diodore, who also fears that Jome the Black, an inquisitor and old enemy of Order of Saint Gaudemon, finally finds an excuse to bring the religious order down. The Prior has sent a young monk with the last pilgrims to investigate, but he came back apparently mad. Hence, he desperately needs the help of more... learned people.

### How to Bring the Magi into the

### Scenario?

The Covenant might already be in contact with Le Moutier monastery, or even owe Diodore the Elder a favor. Otherwise, it may seem interesting to the magi to initiate a relationship with the monastery and have it owe a favor to the Covenant. In any case, make it clear, by the word of Brother Azael, that the Order of Saint Gaudemon will consider itself an ally of the Covenant if they help.

If the magi are reluctant to help the monks, remind them that having the Holy Inquisition investigating around their Covenant is certainly not a good idea... Brother Azael is not in a position to threaten anybody, but he will make that statement clearly as a last resort.

### What the Magi Know of Saint Gaudemon

Have the player make an **Intelligence + Theology, Church Lore or Area Lore** roll. Depending on the result, reveal them what they know of Saint Gaudemon. If there are books covering these subjects in the Covenant library, you may allow some characters to replace their own skill level by the concerned

## Pronunciation Guide

**Constance of Huraut:** con-stance of hu-roh  
**Diodore:** dee-o-door  
**Gaudemon:** go-day-mon  
**Guillaume:** guee-yohm  
**Jehan:** juh-han  
**Jome:** johm  
**Le Moutier:** luh moo-tee-ay  
**Les Paturiaux:** lay paa-tu-ree-oh

**Les Saraires:** lay saa-rayr

**Mahaut:** mah-ho

**Matthieu:** mah-tee-uh

**Noctus Ira Melanox:** noc-toos ee-rah may-laa-nox

**Vauldoire:** voh-dwar

**Venzome:** van-zohm

## A Dark Confession

The monastery of Saint Gaudemon is located at the edge of the town, so the characters may want to meet the monk who went on pilgrimage and returned mad. Diodore the Elder has no objections. Brother Guillaume is held prisoner in a crypt underneath the monastery. Every monk knows he is here and what happened to him, and an atmosphere of fear has taken place in the monastery. However, only Father Diodore and Brother Azael have spoken to the unfortunate (and this is precisely why they decided to hide him).

Brother Guillaume is locked in an iron cage. His state is frightening. The smell is terrible in the crypt. He is nude and lies in his own excrement. His whole body is sore. Visibly, he hurts himself on the cage voluntarily. If talked to, he speaks incoherently, mixing insanities with tales of pilgrims slaughtered in villages inhabited by demons, devils disguised as monks, and churches that are the lairs of sorcerers.

book level. However, reading and searching a book takes half a day. Brother Azael, if questioned, can tell them the first piece of information, and even the second, if pressed.

**6+:** Saint Gaudemon was an early Christian. Caligula, the mad Roman Emperor, had ordered him to be quartered by four black horses in the Circus Maximus. The martyr accepted the judgment with serenity. When he fell flat on the ground, he shouted his faith in Jesus Christ. Gaudemon was strong, but he could not resist. His arms and legs were torn off his trunk and dragged in the dust. But he prayed to the Lord and the horses walked back, at which the bloody limbs of the saint were restored. From this day, Saint Gaudemon has been called upon by people suffering from limb afflictions; the paralyzed, the wounded, and the lame. He performed miracles, too. Pilgrims who travel to the sanctuary where his bones rest and offer him a sculpture of the suffering limb are said to be relieved of their affliction.

**9+:** The path to Saint Gaudemon's relics is one of the hardest. It meanders through high mountains and crosses areas inhabited only by eagles and bears. Reaching the sanctuary is a

victory against nature and the elements. Most people prefer easier pilgrimages, such as Santiago de Compostella.

**12+:** Saint Gaudemon has a pretty bad reputation within the Church. He is rumored to be a magician, a sorcerer who came out of the desert and preached the word of Jesus only to fool the first Christians. What can you expect of a "saint" whose name contains the word demon? An inquisitor named Jome the Black is known to seek the proof that the Order of Saint Gaudemon is founded on a deception.

## Le Moutier

Le Moutier is a small town located in the foothills of the Pyrenees. There is nothing of particular interest here, but the region is a crossroad for pilgrims from all over Mythic Europe. The city is organized around a central gathering square bordered by inns and taverns. Pilgrims carrying the scrip (pera), or leather pouch containing food, money, and documents, and the staff (baculum) are numerous here. They use signs and symbols to rally: the shell for Santiago de Compostella, four horse heads constituting a cross for Gaudemon, etc.

If calmed by magic (a spell, such as Calm the Motion of the Heart or Enchantment of Detachment, of third magnitude, even spontaneous, can do the trick momentarily), Brother Guillaume becomes immediately quiet, and then begs the characters to kill him, since the monks do not have the courage to do it. He just keeps repeating that the brotherhood has fallen into darkness. He sincerely believes he is possessed by demons and, though he seems lucid, he is visibly, hopelessly mad. Just before the characters leave, though, he whispers a mysterious warning: "beware of the werehorse!" The characters cannot learn more from him.

## The Codex of the Roads

Before the characters leave, Brother Azael gives them an exemplary, the **Codex of the Roads**, an illuminated book that describes in detail the way to the sanctuary of Saint Gaudemon, including the description of the convents where pilgrims stop and the monks who live there. In game terms, the Codex of the roads is an **Area Lore** (Saint Gaudemon's pilgrimage) summa of level 5 and quality 10. The book is available in Latin or in vulgar tongue, at the characters' convenience.

## Finding a guide

Make it clear to the characters that they cannot go on the pilgrimage without a guide. The mountain is treacherous, and even the grogs the magi may have with them do not know this particular region well. Lots of guides, dark skinned men wearing bear furs, speak loud on the city's central square, but the best guide in town does not stand among them. The characters can learn that by chatting with pilgrims of

Saint Gaudemon (and maybe with a **Communication + Carouse** roll of 6+). The only really good guide in the area is called

Imaginem will do the trick, but Mentem magic cast directly on the guide is likely to fail (see Malestrazza's stats).

**T**he mountain is treacherous, and even the grogs the magi may have with them do not know this particular region well.

Malestrazza, still according to pilgrims. He is so good he selects the people he takes on with him. He never chooses the easy trail in the mountain, but the harder the pilgrimage is, the more Saint Gaudemon is likely to hear the prayers!

Malestrazza does not show off on the square. On the contrary, he waits for pilgrims in a nearby inn. Then, he examines them carefully, feels the calf and back of each candidate, and decides who is going with him and who is not. Magi who are physically weak will probably want to cheat his examination with magic. They would better! **Corpus** or

Physically, Malestrazza is thin and tall. His face is deeply lined, though he looks young. His hair is a black and curly mane. Perceptive characters might notice he shows some resemblance with a horse (**Perception + Awareness** roll of 9+), but that is hardly a proof of anything. He wears a leather jerkin and tight breeches. His clear gaze is piercing and has a wild expression that commands respect. He apparently never smiles, and does not speak much.

It is quite important for the scenario, but not strictly essential, that the characters select Malestrazza as their guide. If they do not care and do not look for him, just have them choose him "by chance". If the players feel you drag them toward the guide or the characters get suspicious about him, you can try to replace their first guide by Malestrazza early in the scenario after an accident, or just have their guide be a fake monk (see below). Just do not impose him to the players if they do not want him.

## The journey

This section describes the characters' journey throughout the mountain, to a destination that is not the sanctuary of Saint Gaudemon. It is maybe the more delicate part of the scenario to

### Malestrazza

Malestrazza has been fooled by Noctus. He is in charge of selecting good candidates for the ark and taking them on the fake pilgrimage. However, though he is convinced by Noctus' vision, he is not a fanatic. If confronted to the evidence that Noctus is a sham, he may prove a precious ally for the characters.

Malestrazza was given a magical amulet by Noctus (a silver necklace), who wanted to protect his closest servants from magical inquiries. It grants him a +25 Magic Resistance.

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

**Size:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Wanderer, Piercing gaze, Famous, Well-Traveled, Curse of Venus

**Personality Traits:** Taciturn +3,

Insensitive +1, Holistic +1, Heretic +1

#### Combat:

**Fist:** Init -3, Atk +6, Def +5, Dam +0

**Long sword:** Init -1, Atk +8, Def +4, Dam +6

**Short bow:** Init -4, Atk +11, Def +7, Dam +6

**Soak:** +3 (Quilted armor)

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -(11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Athletics (Climbing)

5, Folk ken 2, Stealth 3, Bargain 4,

Survival (Mountain) 5, Area lore 6,

Leadership 2, Brawl 5, Single weapon 3,

Bows 7

storyguide, because it is as linear as the journey. It should be played at a steady pace, not to bore the players (and prevent them from realizing too soon what is happening), but not too fast either, so that they feel the atmosphere becoming darker and darker. The following sections describe the general timeline of the pilgrimage and various events designed to break its monotony.

## General Considerations

**Fatigue:** Walking in the mountain is an exhausting task, because of the slopes and altitude. Have the characters roll for Fatigue twice a day against a Ease Factor of 9+. A failed roll costs the character one Fatigue level, a botch two levels. Fatigue levels are recovered in a special way: one full night in a convent helps recovering two levels, while one night in the wilderness only bestows one Fatigue level.

**Aura:** Once the characters leave the normal trail of the pilgrimage (i.e., after day #1), they enter a +1 infernal aura. This aura is weak, but will probably make the characters uneasy. It also influences pilgrims and exacerbates sinful behaviors, gossips, etc. Of course, it can be detected by people who can Sense Holiness and Unholiness or bear similar powers.

## Timeline

**Day #1:** From Le Moutier to Les Saraires convent. Malestrazza does not take the straightest path, but he leads the pilgrims to the real convent. He prevents them from singing, making them save their breath, which appears to be a good advice. The company reaches Les Saraires after dusk and long after other pilgrims, who walk on the “easy” trail. The convent is a very simple building

that is barely comfortable. Pilgrims have to crowd in the attic and sleep on straw.

**Day #2:** From Les Saraires to Les Paturiaux. From now then, Malestrazza leaves the normal trail and leads everybody onto the fake pilgrimage’s way. However, this is extremely hard to tell since all the places where the company stops look exactly like their description in the Codex of roads. The inhabitants of each place also match those who are described in the book. The characters do not have a true chance to realize what is happening before they reach the Venzome convent (see **day #7**).

Les Paturiaux is actually not a convent, but a small cottage tended by a family of hunchbacks. They look very poor, but nonetheless offer bread and soup to pilgrims.

**Day #3:** From Les Paturiaux to a cave somewhere in the mountain. In the afternoon, a thick mist prevents the pilgrims from noticing the abyss they walk next to, which is a blessing, according to Malestrazza.

**Day #4:** From the cave to the Vauldoire convent. The convent is run by Brother Gilbert.

**Day #5:** From Vauldoire to a plateau where the pilgrims have



to camp.

**Day #6:** From the plateau to the Paragon convent. The monks of Paragon wear their frock in strict adherence to the Order of Saint Gaudemon's rule, i.e., they wear their hood pulled down on their face, like a cowl (and see through two holes). Furthermore, they also made vow of silence and only communicate with each other with hand gestures. One single monk is in charge of talking to the pilgrims. They adopted this behavior so that pilgrims do not recognize them, since they are the same gang who took the part of the hunchbacks of Les Paturiaux and the monks of Vauldoire!

**Day #7:** From Paragon to the Venzome convent. Run by Prior Mazolas of Caradoz, the (true) convent of Venzome is the jewel of Saint Gaudemon's pilgrimage. Its architecture is famous, especially a mezzanine decorated with fine marble statues that gives access to a great library containing thousands of sacred books. The fake Venzome is the weak point of the fake pilgrimage, since it was not possible to reproduce such a rich place as the original convent. The mezzanine is a wooden *trompe l'oeil* painting, and the library is filled with fake books made of painted wood. Access to the mezzanine is forbidden to pilgrims, who can only admire it from the ground floor. There is always a monk standing guard, even at night. It requires a roll of **Perception + Craft: Sculpture** of 12+ to notice the sham from below. Like in Paragon, the monks of Venzome (but not Mazolas of Caradoz) wear their hood pulled down on their face and do not speak.

**Sub Rosa**

## Pilgrims

Beside the player characters, a

### Brother Denunzio and the Inquisitor Monks

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

**Size:** 0

**Virtues and Flaws:** Mendicant Friar; Obsessed

**Personality Traits:** Fanatic +3

**Combat:**

*Fist:* Init -1, Atk +5, Def +4, Dam +1

*Quarterstaff:* Init +1, Atk +11, Def +10, Dam +3

**Soak:** +2 (Quilted armor)

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -(11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Latin 1, Church Lore 3, Brawl 3, Great weapons (staves) 5

dozen pilgrims follow Malestrazza. The most worthy of note, those who are the most likely to interact with the characters, follow:

**Andresis the bowman** is a barrel-chested chap with a thick mustache. He is undertaking the pilgrimage for an old brother-in-

help him recover from foot paralysis. He carries on his back a big box full of colored glass.

**Mahaut the laundress** is a solid countrywoman with a reddish face. She is walking for her son, whose legs have been broken by a lord's horse during a hunt. She looks easy-going, but is

**T**he mezzanine is a wooden *trompe l'oeil* painting, and the library is filled with fake books made of painted wood. Access to the mezzanine is forbidden to pilgrims, who can only admire it from the ground floor.

arms with a gangrenous leg. Although aging, Andresis still has a keen eye and may be helpful to the characters.

**Constance, Baroness of Huraut**, is walking for her husband, who came back from crusade suffering from leprosy. She is thin and stiff, invariably sad (for she is deeply in love with her husband), but a nice person.

**Jehan the glazier** is a young redhead apprentice who is making the trip to the convent of Venzome to repair the stained-glass window representing Saint Gaudemon, which has been broken during a tempest. His master hopes this good deed will

actually a shabby tongue of viper who is prone to jealousy and prompt at gossiping about anybody.

**Mario the sculptor** is a young, sturdy fellow with great paws. He has been sent on the pilgrimage by the monks of Saint Gaudemon, who expect him to sculpt a stone statue of their patron during the journey. The statue is destined to ornament the sanctuary. Mario works in a wagon Andressis has accepted to drive. It is the only way to carry the block of stone he is sculpting, but this raises a fair share of envy among other pilgrims, who have to walk. Furthermore, if this is

the first time Le Moutier monastery has been in contact with the characters' Covenant, Mario is supposed to observe the player characters' actions.

## Events

Most of the following events can be played in any order and in any location (you can even roll a die to pick them up at random). However, some events are related and/or tied to a given place. In that case, it is clearly indicated in their description.

**Event #1 The Vision:** If a character has Premonitions, he experiences the following vision. If no character does, have any of them (or maybe all of them) dream the scene:

**"You see the black horses. You are lying down, nude in the arena. Your back itches because of sand. Leather bonds on your wrists and**

**ankles immobilize you. You are quartered. Up there, on the terraces, the Roman plebs is heating up. They want blood. They scream. They just cannot get enough. The horses fidget, ready to leap forward. The groom, holding his whip, is ready too. When he hits the horses' rump, they will rush and tear your limbs apart from your body. You smell the animals' odor, you hear them neighing. You get ready to shout in pain. The whip cracks. The horses rush off."**

The character(s) then wake(s) up sweating.

**Event #2 Unicorns:** Mario's horse has been nervous all day long. Perceptive characters (Perception + Awareness roll of 9+) can hear stifled hoof noises in the distance. When dusk falls, the characters can learn from the hunchbacks or the monks (who

are the same people, anyway) that unicorns wander in the mountain. This is both true and false. A fake unicorn has been sold to the demon's followers and has escaped. It is actually a white mare with a narwhal horn glued on the head.

**Event #3 Silhouettes in the Mist:** Mist has been surrounding the company since the early morning. The characters have the feeling they are followed. A successful Perception + Awareness roll of 12+ helps them catch sight of silhouettes in the mist, behind them. If they investigate, they find nothing and raise Malestrazza and the other pilgrims' ire. They threaten not to wait for them.

**Event #4 First Slaughter:** With a Perception + Awareness roll of 9+, the characters notice vultures flying in circles above a rocky peak. When they arrive on



the spot, they discover ten dead goats. Vultures have begun to tear their skin, but the goats otherwise bear no trace of bites nor claws. Their neck is oddly torn, as if they had been hanged. A dozen paces away, their shepherd has encountered the same fate. He is lying on his back, his hair whitened in fear, his broken neck marked by a large human hand. Andresis, who has seen worse, will likely set the goats' meat apart, since it is not spoiled.

**Event #5 Public Confession:** At the Vauldoire or Paragon convent, pilgrims are encouraged by Brother Gilbert into public confession. He exhorts them to clean their soul before they carry on the pilgrimage, and indirectly threatens them, making it clear that confession is mandatory for the salvation of their souls. The first to talk is Constance of Huraut, who confesses she is not a loving spouse. Since her husband is back from the crusade, he fills her with horror. She feels ashamed, but cannot get rid of this feeling. All the other pilgrims are much less forthright, only confessing minor sins (**Perception + Folk Ken** roll of 9+). Now, what do the characters say? Are they sincere? Do they even confess? If they do not, they risk exasperating the other pilgrims... If the storyguide is in sadistic mood, he can call for a **Communication + Guile** roll.

**Event #6 Encounter with the Inquisition:** During another foggy day, menacing silhouettes suddenly come out of the mist (a **Perception + Awareness** roll of 9+ is required to hear them approaching). A dozen hooded monks armed with metal-tipped quarterstaffs surround the company. They actually look more like dirty thugs with tonsures than monks. The troupe leader, Brother Denunzio, acts in

the name of Jome the Black. He asks pilgrims whether they have seen anything strange. He talks about wandering devils, roads whose destination mysteriously change at night, and blames Gaudemon the sorcerer. He is very suspicious, and brutally

been asked by Mazolas of Caradoz to repair the library stain-glass window from the outside of the building, for he would disturb the copyists if he worked inside. The true reason is, of course, to prevent him from discovering the library is a fake.

**T**he pilgrims discover Brother Denunzio, lying in the middle of the path, his frock turned-up in a disgraceful posture, sticking out an enormous tongue, his eyes bulging

examines the pilgrims' hands. He is actually looking for the strangler (see **event #4**). Mario is the perfect suspect for him, as well as any grog with large, strong hands, so the characters would better convince Denunzio he is innocent. This event cannot be played after event #7, though event #7 may be played even if this event did not take place. After this encounter, the magi should be extra-cautious when casting spells. Any dubious behavior can raise the suspicion and anger of the other pilgrims.

**Event #7 Second Slaughter:** After a sharp turn on the trail, the pilgrims suddenly discover Brother Denunzio, lying in the middle of the path, his frock turned-up in a disgraceful posture, sticking out an enormous tongue, his eyes bulging. The characters can notice the bluish handprint of his murderer on his neck. All other monks also have their neck broken. Some seem to have faced their enemy, while others were obviously fleeing when they were killed. There is no survivor.

**Event #8 Jehan's Death:** This event takes place at the Venzome convent. Jehan has

After climbing on shaky scaffolding, Jehan realizes the glass elements he brought with him are not cut to the right dimension (because the fake Venzome is not an exact replica of the original). His window is one inch too wide. Hence, he has to work on the dangerous scaffolding to fit it in, at the risk of breaking a precious piece of colored glass. Later that day, Jehan is found lying of the ground. He apparently fell. The characters will not have much time with him before monks carry him in. He dies soon after... If the characters manage to hear his last words, they can catch a weak breath: "...ook...door...". Mazolas of Caradoz will claim Jehan was drunk when he fell. Of course, he had a look inside the fake library and was pushed.

**Event #9 Wagon Accident:** This event can occur at any time, but is best placed after the pilgrims leave Venzome (i.e., after **day #7**). A wheel of Mario's wagon suddenly breaks, and the characters may have to prevent it from falling down the cliff. A new wheel must be retrieved from the previous convent. This is a good excuse for characters to

walk back to Venzome with Mario and investigate the mezzanine. The convent will be totally empty, the fake monks having already moved on.

**Event #10 The Strangler:** Pilgrims, and especially the characters, are eventually confronted to the brutish strangler who is prowling about them since the beginning. It is actually a huge, male gorilla (large, strong hands...) that has escaped from the ark's menagerie, maddened by its female's death from cold. The encounter can occur in any number of ways, preferably when the characters are isolated from other pilgrims (alone near Venzome after **event #9**, for instance). They should be able to take care of the gorilla, especially if they use magic, but if they get badly hurt, the storyguide can have Malestrazza intervene with his bow. If given the opportunity, he and the fake monks will probably exploit their weakness to capture them.

## Mazolas of Caradoz

Mazolas is truly and totally faithful to Noctus. He has been his closest disciple for a long time now, has saved him a couple of times, and is totally corrupted. Like Malestrazza, he wears a silver necklace that grants him a +25 Magic Resistance. Furthermore, Noctus has given him a short, black wand instilled with an infernal power similar to the spell *Grip of the Choking Hand* (PeCo 25). It can be used 6 times a day. The effect is triggered when the wand is pointed at someone. Anyone who uses it temporarily gains the flaw Overconfident. The effect of regular or repetitive usage is left up to the Storyguide.

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

**Size:** 0

**Confidence:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Outlaw Leader; Arcane Lore, Inspirational; Delusion

**Personality Traits:** Overconfident +3, Heretic +3, Pompous +1

**Combat:**

**Fist:** Init -2, Atk +6, Def +6, Dam +0

**Dagger:** Init -2, Atk +8, Def +6, Dam +3

**Throwing Knife:** Init -2, Atk +8, Def +7, Dam +2

**Soak:** +3 (Partial leather scale armor)

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Charm 4, Folk ken 3, Guile 5, Carouse 3, Legerdemain 4, Leadership 3, Infernal lore 2, Brawl 6, Thrown weapons 7

## The End of the Trail

The end of the scenario is much more open than the journey. In the following paragraphs, I try to provide

elements of background that will help in storyguiding these events, though the storyguide will certainly have to improvise.

At this point of the journey, Malestrazza and the fake monks have to act. The next step in the

## Noctus Ira Melanox

Noctus is not the violent kind of demon, but he can become so if needed. His purpose on Earth is to convince mortals into heresy. The victim must be sincerely convinced so that Noctus wins the soul, but he is quite good at that. However, his appearance of wingless angel is not discreet. Noctus is constantly hunted down by the Inquisition and cannot remain in the same place for long. So far, he has always escaped the wrath of the Church.

**Infernal Might:** 35 (Mentem)

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per +2, Pre +4, Com +3, Str -, Sta -, Dex 0, Qik 0

**Size:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Personality Traits:** Subtle +3, Kind +4, Brave -1

**Combat:**

**Fist:** Init 0, Atk +5, Def +5, Dam -1

**Soak:** +4

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Folk ken 7, Guile 7, Brawl 5, Intrigue 5, Latin 5, Language 5

### Powers:

**Resistant skin,** MuCo 25, 0 point: grants +5 to Noctus' soak.

**Psychomachia,** CrMe 15, 0 point: Characters coming close to Noctus (Voice range) must make a Stamina roll of 9+ or temporarily gain the personality traits Pride +3, Compassion (for Noctus) +3 and Lust +1 as long as they remain in the demon's vicinity (Sight range).

**Comforting warmth,** CrIg 5, 0 point: The air around Noctus (Voice range) is always warm and comfortable.

**Whirlwind,** CrAu 20, 2 points: effect similar to the spell Circling Winds of Protection.

**Flight,** CrAu 30, 3 points: effect similar to the spell Wings of the Soaring Wind.

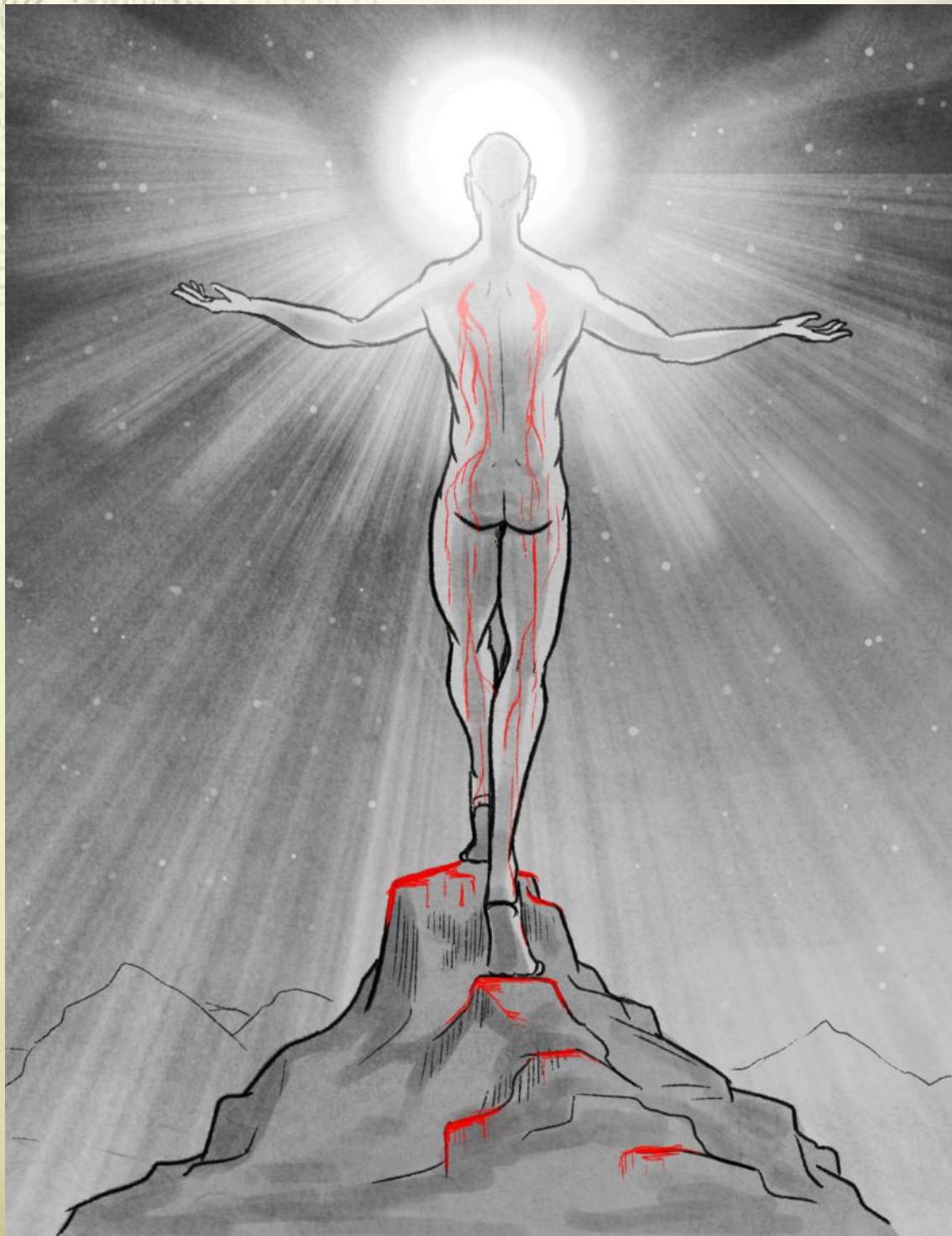
**Stinging warmth,** CrIg 40, 4 points: the temperature around Noctus brutally rises. Everyone in a radius of 15 to 20 paces suffers +20 damage (armor offers no protection against heat). Noctus can also center the heat zone up to 15 paces away from him.

**Vis:** If blood from Noctus' back wounds is gathered, it provides two pawns of Auram vis per season. Yet, it is not very wise to hold a demon prisoner as a vis source!

pilgrimage is normally the sanctuary of Saint Gaudemon, which is in reality pretty far away. Their normal course of action is

changes the deal. If a fight occurs and the characters win, they can make them talk and walk to the ark knowing what to expect. Of

apart from the company and follow the tracks of the fake monks. In case of a fight, adapt the number of fake monks to the



**Sub Rosa**

to turn on the exhausted pilgrims, capture them, and then take them to the ark. However, the characters' presence probably

course, if they lose the fight or pretend to lose it to see what happens, they will be taken there. It is also possible that they split

characters' strength.

## The Ark and the Camp

The true destination of the fake pilgrimage is an amazing sight. A huge, portly ark is being built between two mountain peaks, a ship of immense size supported within the valley formed by the peaks. The construction seems almost complete. Right under the ark, on the side of one peak, sits a small, antique fort surrounded by two or three big huts.

If the characters are prisoners, they are taken to one hut. It shelters former pilgrims like them, who work either on building the ark or feeding workers and the wild animals that are caged in the ark. Everybody here apparently follows the guidance of Noctus Ira Melanox, a wingless angel who prophesizes the Flood. Mazolas of Caradoz and his fake monks claim Noctus has been warned of the imminent cataclysm in his dreams. Thanks

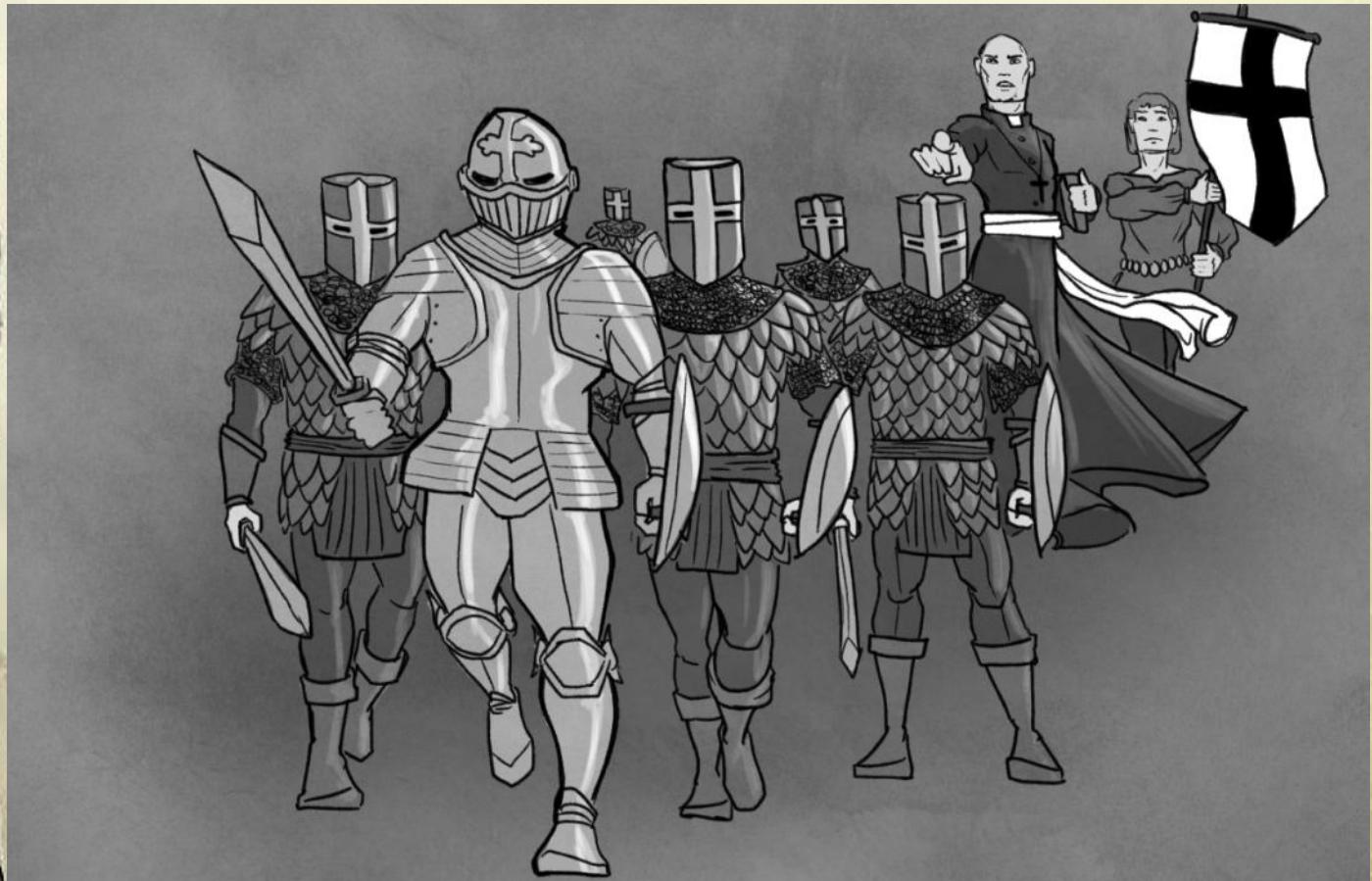
to him, some will survive while the valleys are submerged.

Nobody is forced to stay. Nobody is chained. However, no pilgrim knows the way back to the valley. Furthermore, lots of traps have been set up around the camp to catch game and feed the animals in the ark. Eventually, as soon as the characters arrive, it starts snowing hard (which means it rains a lot in the valley — indeed, the Flood is coming!). So, there is not much of a choice... The pilgrims stack up in the huts... The workers are divided into two groups: those who accept their fate because they simply cannot leave, and those who are convinced by Noctus' word and think they are the elect.

The ark is basically a huge, floating (hopefully), wooden structure. It is roughly divided into three areas. The lower deck is devoted to the animals that will repopulate the Earth (there is

normally a couple of each represented species). They are held in narrow cages, are not well fed and hence are perpetually hungry. This place is quite dangerous! The upper deck is made of the crew's living quarters (that are currently empty) and food stores (that are almost full). Eventually, the afterdeck is reserved to Noctus and his closest disciples. If they have any knowledge in carpentry (**Perception + Craft: Carpentry** roll of 6+), the characters may notice that the hull's wood is not dry. They can also learn this from Matthieu, the carpenter, who has to work fast. This is not very good from a shipbuilding point of view, but on the other hand, the big boat cannot be easily set on fire.

The fort is really small, the ceiling is low, and there is barely enough room for Noctus and his disciples. It has been excavated



from the rock, and though it is not in good repair, it is very hard to take by sheer force. A siege would be much easier, but a secret tunnel leads on the other side of the mountain peak.

The huts are very crowded, and men and women live together in total promiscuity. But this is not a problem here: Noctus and his disciples actually encourage them to leave in a state of sin. After all, the circumstances are exceptional and women will have to bear children soon to repopulate the Earth after the Flood! This will probably make the characters wonder about Noctus' true nature, if it is not already the case. Furthermore, the aura is particularly disturbing in the area: it is indeed a +3 infernal aura. Eventually, some characters may remember (**Intelligence + Theology, Church Lore or Area Lore** roll of 12+) the scandal of a false messiah who prophesized the wrath of darkness (*ira melanox*, in a mix of Greek and Latin) and was hunted down in three

## The Fake Monks

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

**Size:** 0

**Virtues and Flaws:** Branded Criminal; Well-traveled

**Personality Traits:** Heretic +2

**Combat:**

*Fist:* Init -1, Atk +4, Def +4, Dam +0

*Short Spear:* Init +1, Atk +7, Def +5, Dam +5

**Soak:** +3 (Quilted armor)

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,

Unconscious

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Guile 5, Athletics (Climb) 3, Brawl 3, Single weapon 4

provinces before escaping, a couple of years ago.

## Meeting the Angel

All newcomers are brought to meet Noctus, one by one. That is basically how most of them get converted to his doctrine. Noctus lives in the deepest cave of the fort (the secret tunnel starts there). When entering the tunnel leading to the cave, any character feels the temperature getting warmer and warmer. The ground is covered with white feathers,

and there are more of them as the character progresses. All this smells more like a hen house than anything else...

Noctus is an ageless creature. He looks genderless, his head is shaved, and his skin is white as a candle. He is nude and half buried in the feathers. The skin of his back is scarred by long, bloody wounds near the shoulder blades. His disciples claim he is an angel fallen from the sky during a storm. They also claim the Inquisition has cut his wings. Noctus always smiles lightly, moves slowly and gracefully. His presence is very comforting.

Noctus speaks about the world that is now too old, the need to break it and start anew. God will do it and drown the nasty beasts that propagate rabies. Water will clean the earth, and it is a good thing, a source of joy! The Flood. Purification by drowning. Noctus knows exactly what will happen. He dreams about it every night, and God sends him the images of the people he must save, the one who will bear the immense responsibility of repopulating the world. Now, if the characters do not realize Noctus is dangerously mad, I capitulate! However, he is so kind and convincing his speech dupes many people.

## Jome the Black

Jome the Black, as his nickname hints at, is preceded by a dreadful reputation. When they face him, heretics confess their sins, whatever the means. He has been hunting Noctus down for a while, and might not consider the connection with the Order of Saint Gaudemon as a random event...

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

**Size:** 0

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Faith Points:** 1

**Virtues and Flaws:** Priest; True faith; Inspirational; Infamous, Overconfident (major), Noncombatant

**Personality Traits:** Devout +3, Overconfident +3, Inflexible +2, Sadistic +2

**Soak:** +1

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -(11-

15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Folk ken 4, Artes Liberales 3, Leadership 5, Theology 6, Church Lore 5

## Jome's Fighters

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

**Size:** 0

**Virtues and Flaws:** Warrior

**Personality Traits:** Obedient +3, Brave +2

**Combat:**

*Fist:* Init -3, Atk +6, Def +7, Dam +2

*Long Sword & Round Shield:* Init -1, Atk +12, Def +10, Dam +8

*Short Bow:* Init -4, Atk +8, Def +6, Dam +8

**Soak:** +9 (Full metal scale armor)

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-5), -(6-10), -(11-15), Incapacitated (16-20)

**Primary Abilities:** Brawl 5, Single weapon 7, Thrown weapon 4

## The Gorilla

**Characteristics:** Cun +1, Per 0, Pre 0, Com -, Str +4, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik 0  
**Size:** +1

**Confidence Score:** 1 (3)

**Virtues and Flaws:** Ferocity (when wounded)

**Personality Traits:** Wild +3, Fierce +1, Maddened +3

### Combat:

*Fist:* Init 0, Atk +7, Def +6, Dam +4

*Bite:* Init 0, Atk +9, Def +6, Dam +5

*Thrown rock:* Init 0, Atk +4, Def +2, Dam +6

**Soak:** +4

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

**Wound Penalties:** -(0-6), -(7-12), -(8-18), Incapacitated (9-24)

**Primary Abilities:** Athletics (Climb) 4, Awareness 3, Brawl (Fists) 5, Thrown weapons 2

solution is to free the animals (especially the most ferocious and ravenous) and take advantage of the confusion to fight an escape. Another possibility is to somehow break the scaffolding that secures the ark (by triggering an avalanche or weakening the scaffolding itself), so that the big boat slides in the valley like a giant sledge. This is obviously very dangerous, and anybody in the ark will likely be wounded after the inevitable crash, but if the characters are crazy enough to attempt such a feat, have them succeed! It is also a good way to save as many people as possible.

## Saving Skin and Soul

Once the characters have uncovered the plot, they must act. They could simply leave, but they do not know the mountain either and the snow will endanger their enterprise. They would

managed to track down Noctus. They are not here to parley, but to destroy all evil and every heretic in the area, so they take quick action and simply and methodically attempt to slay anyone who crosses their path. With them comes the sun. Snow

**A**n armed troupe lead by Jome the Black has eventually managed to track down Noctus. They are not here to parley, but to destroy all evil and every heretic in the area, so they take quick action and simply and methodically attempt to slay anyone who crosses their path.

certainly have better chances to survive than the others, though. However, Diodore the Elder would be very disappointed by such a behavior. They can also lead a revolt or directly confront Noctus. This last option is certainly the most dangerous. In case of trouble, Noctus does not fight. He prefers fleeing. He wants to remain on Earth as long as possible to pursue his dark task of corruption somewhere else. However, if forced to fight, he resorts to all his terrifying powers.

The characters' plans will be complicated by the arrival of the Inquisition. An armed troupe lead by Jome the Black has eventually

stops, contradicting Noctus' prediction and instilling doubt in his followers (except in its true disciples).

At this point, the characters would better finish what they are up to and escape, preferably with all the former pilgrims they can take with them. The inquisitors block the way to the valley, but the secret tunnel in the fort is a possibility. A more dramatic and cinematic option is to barricade in the ark. It is only a temporary solution, since the inquisitors will besiege it, but it saves time. The ark cannot burn, but it will dry under the sun and the attackers flaming arrows will eventually set it on fire after a day or two. One

## Aftermath

If the characters succeed in driving Noctus away and saving many pilgrims of Saint Gaudemon, the reputation of the pilgrimage is partly restored, and Diodore the Elder is very grateful to the characters' Covenant. Pilgrims give evidence the order of Saint Gaudemon is not responsible, and Jome the Black has to reduce his pressure on the monastery —for now. If magi talked to Jome the Black or openly used their powers before him, he now suspects they live in the area, which should definitely be a concern to them. Eventually, if Noctus or Mazolas of Caradoz are still walking on this Earth, the Covenant has earned new enemies that might pop up in the far future...

# Mappa Mundi

This issue, Mappa Mundi takes a look at the wider world of supplements from different systems. **Ars Magica** isn't the only historical roleplaying game on the market, and there's a lot of material to be mined from similar settings from other companies. On the reviewing block are two recent purchases inspired by the [Google Community, History RPGs \(tabletop\)](#)—**Merrie England: The Age of Chivalry**, by Simon E. Phipp, and **Crusaders of the Amber Coast**, by Paolo Guccione. Both are from **Alephatar Games** for the Basic Roleplaying Game, otherwise known as the **Call of Cthulhu** system. These books, however, are anything but horrifying.

Set in the window from 1122 to 1247, **Merrie England** is the book on Mythic Europe you've always wished for. While it doesn't have the fantastic locales or exotic plotlines, this is a book offering up the mundane details you want in a single reference. Certainly, you will substitute out the mechanics for those in **Ars Magica**, but list of professions and their skillsets is useful, as is the overview of religions, the brief look at holy days, nobility, pilgrimages, and prices for common goods in England is priceless. The jousting results matrix is easily adjusted to your purposes, allowing knightly companions to shine in tournaments. My only quibble lies in the fact that the text fails to mention how tournaments were mostly banned in England during the timeframe (except for a very rare and select events with royal sponsorship) until a small and brief note at the very tail of the topic. There are twenty-six pages of material reviewing the rest of the world, the nations and the crusades, including several nice maps of England and the Crusader states of the Levant. A brief bestiary offers up some faerie

concepts divided by religion, which I liked and the comparative views of the different afterlives gave me good ideas on Divine and Infernal regiones, which is always useful. The series of adventure arcs are less useful, focusing on events either too early in the timeline, too mundane, or simply uninteresting. The only exception is the seventh scenario, featuring a necromancer and faeries. While a Storyguide might be able to twist or flesh them out sufficiently to make them useful, they're not the strength of this book. The real value lies in the fact that this book gives you bits of information you would need to scour through *Blood & Sand*, *City & Guild*, *Guardians of the Forests*, *Grogs, Heirs to Merlin*, *Lion & Lily*, *Lion of the North*, *Lords of Men*, *Realms of Power: (Divine, Infernal, and Faerie)*, and *The Church*. This is a "close enough" quick table reference that will cover your momentary questions well enough to continue play until you can go back to research a better source or reference in the appropriate supplement. You can find downloadable maps, errata, and links for purchase [here](#) (\$13.95 pdf only). Amazon shows this book available for \$23.49 and Amazon.co.uk shows it for £21.45.

For **Crusaders of the Amber Coast**, we get an indepth look at the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Guccione explains his reasons for the book, and then moves right into the things that a Storyguide would like. Character archetypes for the locals and the crusaders are offered, languages, calendars, and some excellent maps. The author acknowledges the paucity of historical source material, and helpfully notes where he needed to fill in the gaps with notes in the sidebar. This is especially useful for SGs who want to tailor the material further. There's room for a local hedge tradition or a solid representation of the Muspelli, replacing the pagan priesthood. The Pomeranian

Shapeshifters so reviled by Bjornaer could easily be implemented here, too, replacing the werewolf tribes interwoven with some of the local villages. The Brotherhood of the Sword receives solid attention, including their oath, which I found useful, and the author doesn't skimp on detailing its connection to the Christian bishop and his calls for the eponymous crusade, or the German merchants who facilitated their logistics. It offers easy hooks for a saga currently set in the Rhine Tribunal. The real gem, or should I say polished nugget of amber in this book, though, is the full campaign following crucial events in Livonia from 1234 to 1242, broken out by seasons with important NPCs, creatures, and what will likely be powerful faeries, trying to hold on to the last pagan stronghold. It might need a little massaging to suit the particulars of your troupe, but this is a very sturdy foundation to work from. And even if none of this entices you, but you're still interested in the region, the book has a solid list of eight sources to jumpstart your own research. The [website](#) offers a place to not only buy either the Book & PDF for €23.95 or just the PDF for €19.95, (Americans are directed to RPGNow.com with a \$14 link there) but there's a nice color map of the region with appropriate divisions available for free download. Really, if you're looking to transition out to the Novgorod Tribunal after an initial arc just about anywhere else (maybe using the time to complete the conversion of this material!), or if you just want to start your saga a little later, you won't go wrong with **Crusaders of the Amber Coast**!



# In the Next Issue

# The Thirteenth house

## Subscribe to Sub Rosa

Sub Rosa relies on subscriptions to continue and thrive. If you enjoyed this issue, encourage your friends to subscribe, or take out a troupe subscription. Check our website for details.

## Contribute to Sub Rosa

Sub Rosa is looking for articles and illustrations for future issues. All contributors receive a free copy of the magazine their work appears in. Unsolicited contributions are welcomed.

See our website for details on how to contribute.

## Check for Updates

The Sub Rosa website is updated regularly with news about the magazine and exclusive web-only content. You can also email Sub Rosa for more information.

[www.subrosamagazine.org](http://www.subrosamagazine.org)  
@subrosamagazine