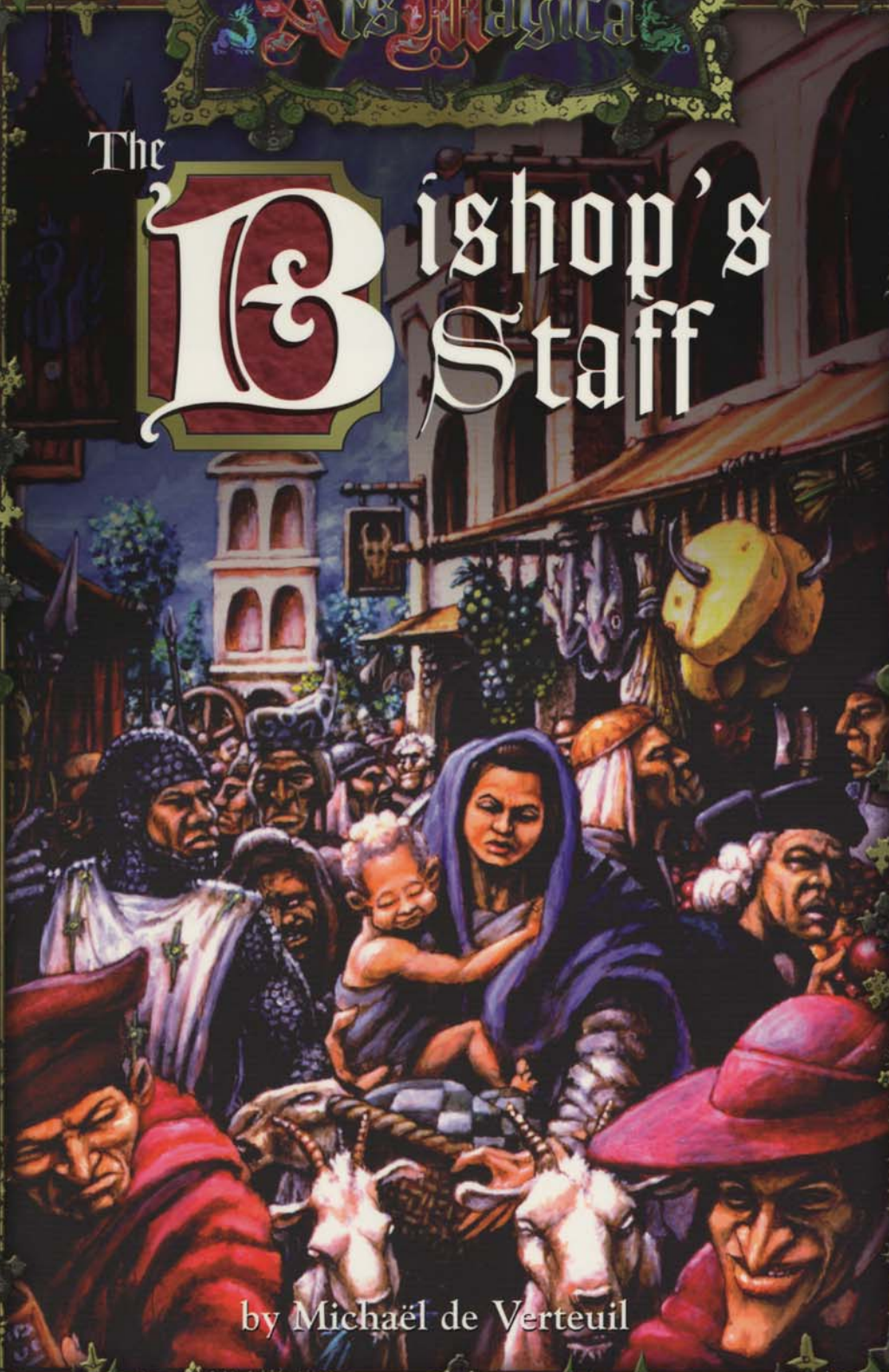


Ars Magica

The

# Bishop's Staff

by Michaël de Verteuil





# The Bishop's Staff

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# The Bishop's Staff

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“No bloodshed!” Anan had insisted unreasonably. Berthold could still hear the Karaite’s loud and nasally accented whine. And when had that been? It seemed like hours ago. Berthold punches another rioter in the forehead with a mailed fist. The man stops, goes cross-eyed, and keels over as Berthold ran to tackle another rioter just as he is throwing a burning brand over the compound wall.

This is getting cumbersome, not to mention tiresome. Houses all over the quarter are in flames, and drunk rioters are running in all directions hollering and shouting at the top of their lungs, competing with the roar of the burning thatch next door. Berthold wonders how his companions are doing, as he watches warily a cluster of young toughs of dubious sobriety. They are obviously trying to nerve each other up to charge him en masse.

Berthold backs up and pulls out his sword. The incipient charge stalls and dissolves as its lead elements recoil at the glint of steel in the torch light. The noisome cluster backs off and slowly edges past the knight under cover of fake bravado taunts and insults, all the while keeping well out of sword range, of course.

Let them attack another house, Berthold mutters to himself as he sheathes his weapon, only to be beaten about the head and shoulders from behind by an angry broom wielding crone who has somehow appeared out of nowhere, and who seems to be taking great exception to him in the unfathomable local dialect. He ignores her. He may have sold his soul to those damned wizards, but there was no way he was going to lower himself to fighting old women. At least they provided decent armor. He hardly felt anything.

By St. Catherine’s garters, if it had not been for that accursed chamber pot incident, he would still be riding the tournament circuit and making a decent living as a lordless knight should. Instead, he now finds himself owing more silver than he is likely to see in a lifetime, and has been reduced to earning his bread incognito as a hired sword for a mongrel clutch of bickering, over-educated spell mongers. And now they have him standing street guard duty for a household of damned usurers — the indignity of it all!

A loud rhythmic thumping catches his attention. Pushing “Granny” aside, Berthold looks around the corner at the front of the compound. That

drunken tavern crew is back again, trying to force the gate in with a heavy table.

There are too many of them now.

Unsure what to do, Berthold just stands there fingering his sword pommel. The gate doors seem to be resisting unnaturally well.

“Unnaturally” indeed, he smiles. Even sorcery has its uses.

The assailants seem undeterred at first by their lack of success. Possibly, because of the darkness, they seem unaware of how little progress they are making. Suddenly one of them points at Berthold. The improvised ram falls to the ground and the pack hightails it down the darkened street. At least he is beginning to earn some respect from this rabble. Turning around, however, he is quickly deflated. He spots a party of mounted knights making its way down the narrow street in full armor. Berthold is not sure whether this is good or bad, but hopes the magi will let him in in any case. This is getting to be far more than he is willing to handle by himself.

## What He Shuts No Man Shall Open

Isaiah 22:22



# Part 1 The Story

## How to Use this Adventure

Good published adventures are meant to be played and to this end should provide prospective storyguides with all the elements they need to offer their players a challenging and fun time. These elements normally include a strong but flexible plot line, with lots of surprises and twists and turns, an entertaining cast of non-player characters whose motivations are complex and believable, and appropriate rewards for effective role playing and problem solving. We hope you will find all of these within these pages.

A good published adventure can also serve other purposes. It can be read as a source of original ideas for possible situations with which to confront characters, for sample non-player characters, for new spells and unusual items, or even for interesting takes on rules or rule interpretations. We hope you will find such ideas within these pages as well.

This particular adventure, however, is also meant to be a good read. Superficially, it is a "whodunit," though the players will probably be kept busy trying to deal with "whatitdun." "Solving" the killings will be of secondary importance. The adventure is written in such a way that the first time

reader will share some of the initial confusion, puzzlement and sense of mystery which would confront a group of players.

The character profiles, including their backgrounds, roles and motivations, are all tucked away at the end in the *Dramatis Personae* section, though specific page references are offered each time a new non-player character is introduced. Readers may wish to resist the temptation to turn to the profiles until the end so as to get a feel for how players might interpret or react to the events and personalities they will encounter.

In the end it will all make sense (or will at least appear to to the players unless they have failed dismally), though much of what is contained here will remain obscure or barely touched upon in actual play. Patient readers, however, will be able to both enjoy the mystery and have all their questions answered by the time they turn the last pages. Indeed, prospective storyguides should read the adventure twice: once for their own enjoyment and entertainment, and once more to plan the actual running of the adventure and its integration in their saga.

Some of the non-player character profiles are relatively complete, but storyguides should feel free to add any spells or abilities that they feel may advance the story and make the characters more believable. Few actual combat statistics are offered as combat plays a rather secondary role in the adventure. Stock foes such as knights, guards, rioters and toughs can be used from

## The Letter

to our esteemed sodales of  
we send greetings.

through the kind assistance of our brother in hermes,  
alixos, we have been apprised of the establishment  
amongst us of your covenant, one of undoubted and

manifest youth and enterprise. as this is our first  
intelligence of your convention, we trust you will not hold  
it amiss of us that we, your seniors, have not heretofore  
proffered the customary salutations and benevolent wishes  
appropriate to such an occasion. we press you therefore to  
grace, at your convenience, our humble table with the  
welcome company of duly authorized members of your  
community, that we may amend for our past and  
unwitting neglect, exchange the kiss of brotherhood and  
peace, and discuss such matters as may prove to be of  
mutual interest and benefit.

dictated to our brother in hermes, alixos, on this,  
year of the founding of our order, and signed with  
our seal:



his arcane serenity, anan son of david,  
oecist and pontifex,

on behalf of the senate and council of sapientia aetatum.



other adventures or sourcebooks such as *Ordo Nobilis*. Pantos, the non-player mage the characters are most likely to deal with, should be treated a starting magus with whatever spells and Art scores the storyguide deems appropriate.

*The Bishop's Staff* also includes a new and esoteric magical tradition: Karaite magic. While nothing stops storyguides from making this tradition available to player characters, it was designed essentially with non-player characters in mind. As such, no great effort was made to balance the advantages and disadvantages inherent to this style of magic.

Some readers may find the ascribed powers unique to Karaite magi excessive. Others may find the restrictions on Karaite magic, and its effective incompatibility with its standard Hermetic counterpart, daunting or even crippling. The main pur-

pose in profiling the tradition in such detail, however, is to demonstrate what non-standard practitioners within the Order might look like, particularly some of those incorporated through House ex *Miscellanea*. Anan is the current heart and soul of the tradition, and his followers only enjoy some of his abilities and are not yet in a position to contribute anything of their own to Karaite magic. How the tradition might evolve after Anan's death is left to you as storyguide to decide.

## Synopsis

The characters receive an invitation to visit Sapiientia Aetatum, a not too distant Hermetic covenant heretofore unknown to them. Once there, the characters find the proceedings singularly unproductive, but they learn that one of the senior members of the covenant is missing. In fact, unknown to the characters or their hosts, Ambrosius is trapped in a *regio* accessible from the crypt of the new cathedral, which was built on the site of an ancient Mercurian temple.

On their way back their lodgings the characters spot a pair of fugitive arsonists who are subsequently secretly killed by one of the Sapiientia Aetatum's magi. The killings and the fire are widely blamed on the local Jewish community, and a pogrom is secretly organized by a shadowy criminal gang leader.

If the characters handle the situation well by pulling the pieces together, freeing the missing mage, brokering a resolution to covenant's internal strife, and appeasing the mob, they may emerge with friends and allies, a significant magic item, and a generous supply of Muto vis. If they fail dismally, they risk making Hermetic and mundane enemies and might even face charges before Hermetic justice as malicious meddlers and provocateurs.

## Intersections

Life is normally experienced as a seamless whole that can rarely be compartmentalized into discrete and disconnected episodes. Weaving non-players characters from previous adventures into the story can help strengthen the realism of a tale and give a more textured feel to a saga. Both the Silver Tusk (if they are traveling incognito or have fallen on bad times) and the Wild Rose are good places for the players to encounter previous friends or foes. These could include Doctor Mark, Myralys or Octave the Advocate from "By the Law of the Land," or Bernard le Savoyard from "A Bad Knight's Work" (both adventures published in *Ordo Nobilis*).

Whether these now act as friends, foes or allies may depend on how those earlier adventures turned out, or on their present circumstances. Fate has a way of creating alliances of convenience, and even the best of friends can have conflicting loyalties. Other possible previously encountered characters in search of adventure, on business, on a pilgrimage, or simply on the run, could include Sir Gilbert Montpalier from *The Broken Covenant of Calebais*, the soothsayer Jacques de Bray from "Tongue of Vipers" (in *Tales of the Dark Ages*) or the heretical and unwitting diabolist Father Tanchus from "The Ghoul of St. Lazare" (also from *Tales*, and reprinted in the 2nd edition of *Festival of the Damned*).

# Prologue

Two years ago in Vimes, an old Roman town not too distant from the players' covenant, the rebuilding project of a new cathedral dedicated to St. Ambrose was completed. To mark this solemn occasion, additional relics of the saint were translated to the new edifice with great pomp. No sooner were they installed in the crypt, than the assembled dignitaries witnessed a miracle. An eery light shined from behind the small altar. From this light a white dove (a symbol of St. Ambrose) flew into the crypt, and a bishop's crozier engraved with the saint's name fell to the floor. The crozier

has since become the cathedral's most prized relic.

## Scene 1: Come Now, Let Us Argue it Out

The characters' covenant is visited by the Alixos (or whoever is the usual Redcap in your saga), who hands over a scaled letter dictated to him by the Pontifex of Sapientia Aetatum a few weeks earlier. If



## The Karaites

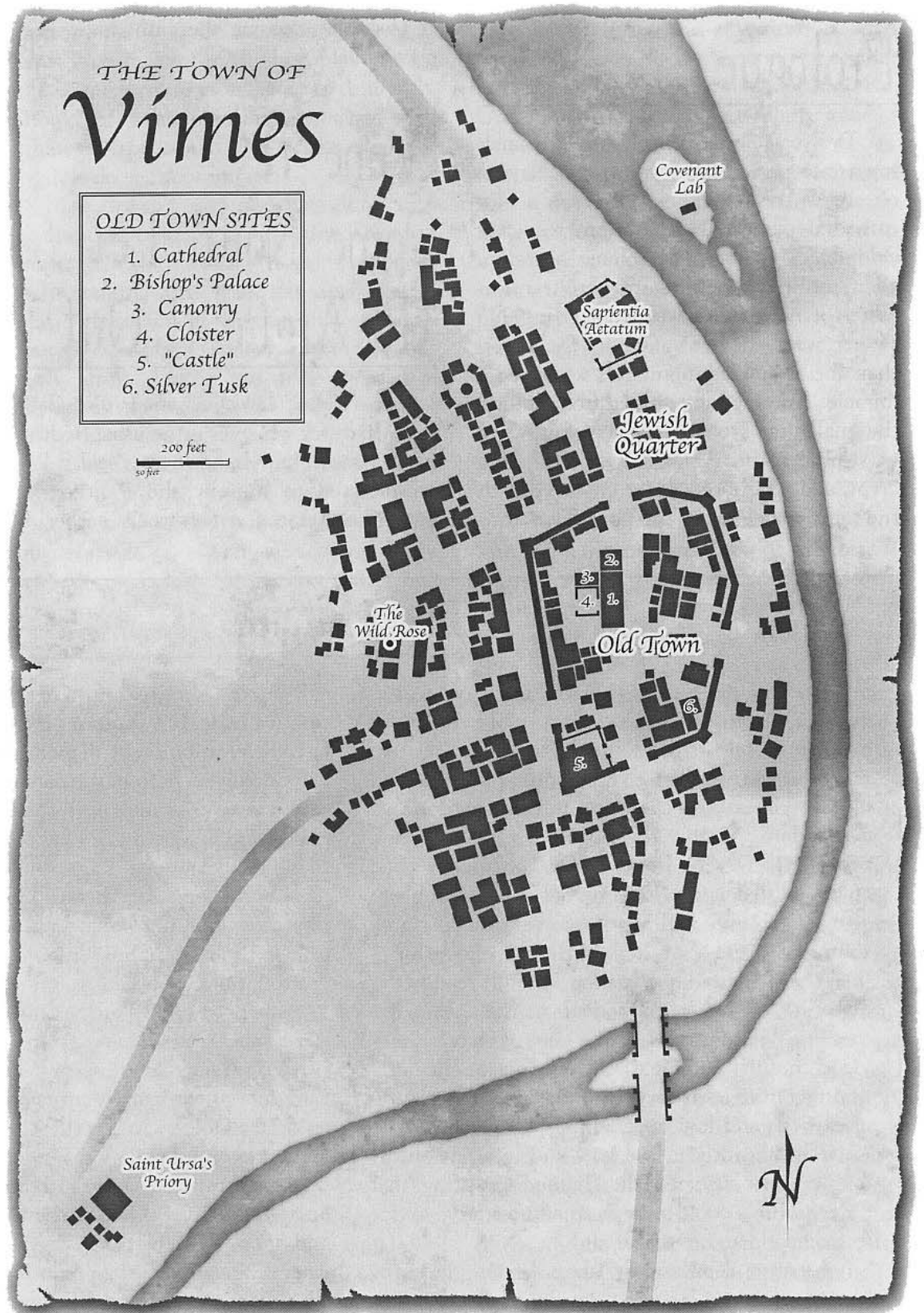
The Karaites form a distinct current of Judaism in the 13th century, and are considered heretical by mainstream Jews of the Talmudic tradition. The sect was "founded" in the late 8th century by Anan ben David (namesake of the Anan in this adventure), a descendent of the royal house of David and Solomon. Dissent from official "orthodoxy" had always existed within Judaism, but Anan was able to bring some unity and legitimacy to these disparate strains by virtue of his high birth and scholarship.

Anan argued for a more literal reading of Scripture, guided by individual insight and understanding. His master work, the *Book of Precepts*, provided the first complete and systematic scheme of non-rabbinite Jewish law built on a solid foundation of exegesis and logical reasoning. Using the motto "Search diligently in the Law and rely not on my opinion," he rejected the Talmud, insisting that only the Bible could serve as an authoritative source for dogmatic and practical faith.

As a result, Karaism (from *kera'im*, meaning "scripturalist" in Hebrew) developed its own distinct legal tradition. As the Law lies at the heart of Judaism, mainstream Jews consider Karaism heretical,

and the Karaites return the favor. The most distinctive features of Karaism include a 70 day yearly fast, the prohibition of all medical treatment, significant divergences from the conventional Jewish calendar, very strict rules against consanguineous marriages, and unique dietary laws. Unlike other practicing medieval Jews, for example, Karaites will eat meat and cheese together, as they take the injunction "you shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" only in the most literal sense.

Relations between Karaites and mainstream Jews are poor, and where Karaites are numerous, the two communities live apart. In Constantinople the two Jewish ghettos are separated by a gateless wall. Karaism was particularly strong in Palestine where it enjoyed a Golden Age in the 11th century until the massacres and population displacements associated with the Crusades. In the 13th century, Karaites can be found mainly in Iberia, the Crimea, the Balkans and most particularly in Egypt, especially Cairo where they are noted goldsmiths. The most famous 13th century Karaites are the poet Moses ben Abraham Dari in Cairo, and the liturgist Aaron ben Joseph in Constantinople.



asked for the location of Sapientia Aetatum, he tells the magi that it can be found by traveling to Vimes (an old Roman town) and asking for Anan the Karaite. If pressed further and offered comfortable lodging for a few days, and the possibility of a "parting gift" is alluded to, the redcap will offer the characters the information associated with a roll of 12+ below. Otherwise, each player character must make a Hermetic Lore roll of 6+ to have even heard of the covenant. On a roll of 9+ a character remembers rumors to the effect that Sapientia Aetatum had collapsed and ceased to function. A roll of 12+ confirms that the covenant does in fact still exist, and that it is the source of a relatively new and bizarre stream of House ex Miscellanea.

Storyguides may wish to make a photocopy of the letter (on p. 5) for the players' convenience. Before you hand it to the players, remember to fill in the name of their covenant and the appropriate year.

If the players' covenant is of long standing, the characters may be offended by the presumptuous tone of the letter. Senior non-player magi will willingly delegate such a diplomatic visit to the player characters. In fact, Anan knows virtually nothing about his neighbors, and has simply dictated a circular letter assuming that older and more powerful covenants will simply ignore his invitation. The Redcap will confirm this if the players think to ask.

The invitation provides the characters with the opportunity to gain rare insight into the workings of a sister covenant and possibly develop new allies. The exact location of Sapientia Aetatum is up to the storyguide to determine. As the covenant has slipped into Winter and has long since ceased to play an active role in Hermetic politics, placing it in the same Tribunal as

the player characters should pose few problems. It could, however, lie outside the boundaries of the characters' Tribunal. The town of Vimes is a fictitious one invented for the purposes of this adventure, easily replaced as your saga requires. There are suitable old Roman towns in all of western Mythic Europe except the Hibernian and Loch Leglean Tribunals. If the players' covenant is located in either of these, Sapientia Aetatum can be located in the Stonehenge or Normandy Tribunals.

Ideally, a storyguide should have this letter arrive when the player magi have spare time available, as the inducements are limited. It might also be a good idea to have a second adventure in hand in case none of the magi seem interested in following up Anan's invitation. As Anan is not prepared to offer anything of consequence (though the characters will not know this at this point) the players may feel that they were railroaded into the adventure against their better judgement if things turn out badly.

If the players appear reluctant to pursue matters, the storyguide can always assume that none of the other nearby covenants accept Anan's invitation either. Anan will then issue a second more specific invitation a year later offering tantalizing insights into his magical tradition (permanent healing without vis, for example) or anything that might on the surface interest the characters, but which upon closer on site examination will prove useless or of at best marginal benefit. Whether Anan hits upon this apparent inducement by chance or from intelligence acquired from the Redcap would be up to the storyguide. In any case, whether the player characters accept the first or the second invitation, theirs is the only covenant that responds and the events unfold as described in the following scenes.





## Scene 2: If Disaster Falls on a City

Once the party arrives at the town gate and ask for Anan the Karaite, the characters are directed to a compound on the edge of a large marsh in the Jewish quarter just outside the walls. On the way they encounter Mad Anna (see page 44). If any of the magi have active Parmas, Anna falls

to her knees and begins to scream at them as if deranged. She shouts very rapidly in the local language with little effort at clear enunciation. If one of the player characters speaks the language with a score of 5+ and makes a deliberate effort to listen to her ravings, or if the characters seek out a local interpreter, Anna can be understood to make any or all of the following random utterances (roll a simple die until the characters are out of earshot).

1-2 "My Lords (Ladies?), you have come as judges with the grace of the All-Mighty about you. Do not be deceived by our ignorance into finding us unfit, for we are good and faithful."

(Cont., p. 13)



## The Covenant

Sapientia Aetatum or "Wisdom of the Ages" (commonly abbreviated to "Sapientia") is located at the end of a muddy street on the edge of the Jewish quarter of a small Roman town. It is a wealthy but troubled and politically insignificant covenant, having proceeded directly to Winter from Spring. The covenant's resources are theoretically extensive. These include control of a rich source of Muto vis and, either directly or through intermediaries, much of the revenues from the surrounding urban and rural lands. The magi and Anan in particular are seen as bankers by their mundane neighbors. The covenant specializes as a lender of last resort. The loans are interest free but are made only against heavy security. The foreclosure rate is (predictably) impressive. Partly due to its wealth, partly to its money-lending activities, and partly to its religious nonconformity, the covenant is widely disliked by its contacts and neighbors, Jewish and gentile alike. Spasmodic and inchoate efforts at violence against the covenant never seem to reach any definitive end, however, and the town and the "Karaites" normally do their best to ignore each other.

The turb consists of a colony of about fifty Karaites, including women and children, plus six Christian guards (Jews are not allowed to bear arms in most Christian lands). The guards are essentially mercenaries and are unaware of the magical nature of their employers. The Karaites are a closed community, and keep their thoughts to themselves. The magi and the turb (excluding the guards) live in a walled compound. There are always at least two guards on



duty. The stone wall is about two arm spans in height. The covenant buildings were originally of moderate quality, but have not been adequately maintained. As such, the roofs are leaky and the rooms tend to be drafty and smoke filled in winter. A musty smell of urine pervades the compound despite the best efforts of the Karaite staff.

The covenant was founded by a group of magi intent on escaping the intense and distracting competitive politics of larger established covenants.

Sapientia is thus saddled with an elaborate and inflexible charter which essentially concentrates all authority in the hands of the six senior magi. Other magi may join the covenant freely if sponsored by one of the six, but may not speak or vote at Council meetings. Once a decision has been approved by the Council, it is reviewed by a Senate consisting of councillors who have been members of the Order for at least 50 years. The only current members of the Senate are Anan and the absent Ambrosius. Finally, decisions are reviewed by the Pontifex, the councillor with the longest tenure. Vacancies on the Council are filled by cooption, with first preference given to former apprentices of the departed mage, then to former apprentices of the remaining councillors, and finally to the remaining members of the covenant. Candidates must be present to be considered. Refusal is not definitive, and candidates may reapply at the next vacancy.

Council procedures are set and straightforward. A meeting is automatically summoned at dusk following a new moon. Each councillor may introduce one motion for discussion and the





Pontifex decides the order in which the items will be considered. Once a mage has introduced his motion, the other councillors may each speak in turn once in descending order of seniority. The mover may then call for a vote or speak again. If he chooses to debate the point further, each councillor may again speak in order. A vote automatically follows the second round of discussion. After a proposal has been approved, the majority of senators present and the Pontifex have until the next new moon to give their consent or the motion fails. In emergencies, the Pontifex may summon an extraordinary meeting of the Council, but its decisions have no validity unless all six members are present at the start of the proceedings. All decisions by the Council and Senate are by majority vote. The Charter is not technically subject to amendment, but its "interpretation" can be modified by unanimous consent of all members of the Council.

### *The Marsh*

Along one side of the covenant compound lies a large marsh. The part closest to the covenant has a weak magical aura of 2 on most nights when the Dominion subsides. A primitive Hermetic lab has been set up in a large wooden shed built on a patch of firm ground that is reachable with a small rowboat. This is where Barabas, Eo and Pantos conduct their research and experiments. (For reasons that are unclear to the other magi, Ambrosius hardly ever made use of the lab.) The covenant itself has the same Dominion aura of 2 as the rest of the Jewish quarter, which suits the Karaite magi fine as their magic is attuned to the Dominion.

Anan has made a point of securing all the customary rights to the marsh,

including hunting and fishing. Two of the covenant guards regularly patrol the waste to keep poachers and trespassers away. The reason for Anan's uncharacteristic outlay lies in the fact that the marsh is one of the richest sources of Muto vis in Mythic Europe.

On the first new moon after the Summer equinox, shy white tubular blooms found nowhere else appear in the magical part of the marsh. That night the Karaite women wade in abreast in a line. Each is armed with a lit candle and a tightly woven sack, and recites a short Hebrew prayer over every second bloom encountered before plucking the flower and placing it in the sack. Though magical, the flowers have no known arcane uses. Instead, what the Karaite women harvest are tiny magical insects that both pollinate and lay their grubs in the blooms. The prayer temporarily raises the ambient Dominion by 1, thus neutralizing the magical aura around the flower and preventing the insects from blinking away.

When ground up (with or without the blooms) and soaked in vinegar, the harvest can produce as much as a queen or more of Muto vis, which is distributed to the members of the covenant according to the following formula: one share to each member, one additional share to each councillor, one additional share to each senator, and one additional share for the Pontifex. Any left over pawns are auctioned off or sold to passing Redcaps. Access to this rich haul is the main reason Ambrosius, Barabas and Pantos have remained in the covenant and put up with Anan's machinations and authoritarian ways. Ambrosius' accumulated shares over the past two years amount to four rooks, which are being kept by Anan pending the missing mage's hypothetical return.

3-4 "We tremble before you. I see you for what you are and have witnessed how your kin smote down the evil Snake."

5-6 "Beauteous was your brother, his skin pearly white with the luster of the Lord's ire — mighty thews bending a holy bow, a blazing shaft impaling the vile serpent."

7-8 "I saw him fall, transfixed and gasping, his eyes glazing over with fear of Judgement day."

9-0 "His wings burst forth, and I was swept by a holy wind. I saw your brother ascend to our Maker. I repented in awe, the world made right by the Lord."

Anna will continue to scream, repeating herself in this light as long as the characters are disposed to listen to her. The reactions of the townsfolk vary. Most ignore her; some curse her for a mad fool; others laugh at her; yet others try to calm her down and reason with her. If the characters attempt to extricate themselves from her attentions, she pursues them on her knees, but can be easily distanced. If the characters ask any of the townsfolk for an explanation of her ravings, they are told that Anna is probably troubled from having witnessed the sudden death of "the Snake," a violent ruffian, who recently succumbed to a fit of apoplexy during a tense street argument with a rival thug.

## Scene 3: The House of Feasting

Once the characters have arrived at the covenant, they are greeted formally by Anan and divided into as many as three groups. As this is a formal occasion, only

the magi will dine in the main hall with the members of the covenant. Male companions and grogs will eat in a side hall with the menfolk, while non-magi female characters will eat in the kitchen with the women and children. At the start of the meal, Anan visits each group separately and gives the blessing before returning to his seat in the main hall. Most of the "action" will take place here, but the storyguide should take the opportunity provided at the other tables to share some of the basic information about Sapientia the magi might have missed.

Anan seats the senior visitor (the oldest looking male, unless the characters have made a big show of deferring to another mage) at his right. Otherwise the remaining magi can sit as they choose, though Pantos, the youngest resident mage, makes a point of sitting next to one of the guests. The other place next to Pantos is set, but will remain empty. The Sapientia magi present are the members of the Council (Anan, Barabas, Eo, Ibrahim and Yossouf) and the two junior magi (Benjamin and Pantos).

None of the magi except Pantos seem particularly sociable, but except for Eo they politely respond to any questions. Eo spends his time carefully dissecting a capon



### Invisibility and Second Sight

The *Ars Magica* rules state that the Second Sight Exceptional Talent grants the ability to see ghosts, demons, and other invisible spirits, with a Perception based Second Sight roll of 9+. At the storyguide's discretion, this roll can also apply to all manner of invisible objects, beings and phenomena. Anna, Corina, Begat or any of the player characters with Second Sight may gain strong clues as to Eo's role in the story. But Anna is mad, and Corina and Begat rarely talk about what they see, and then usually only to Anan.

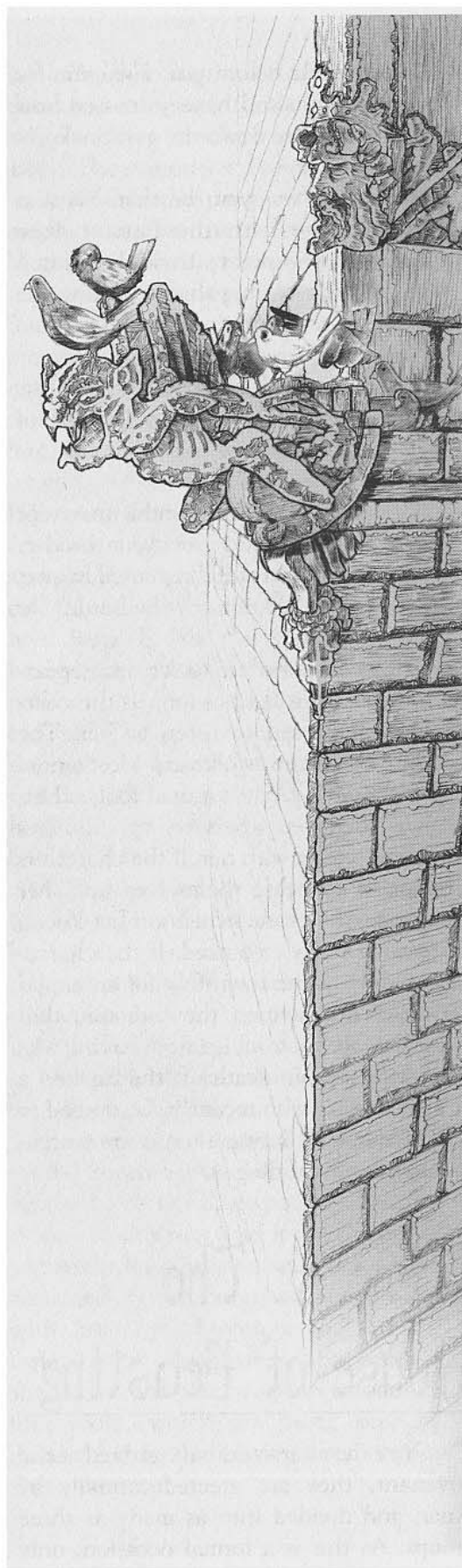


one-handed using only a knife, cleanly separating the flesh and bones into different piles before eating. He stares blankly at anyone attempting to engage him in conversation. Anan can only be drawn out if questioned about his Karaite magical tradition, in which case he will discourse at great length. The storyguide should make liberal use of the information provided on Anan's transcendences and on Karaite magic in general (see pages 30-31). Otherwise, most of the burden of communication will fall to the player magi and to Pantos, who converses freely, asking questions about his neighbor's interests and recent adventures.

During a lull, a white dove flies in through an open window and alights onto the table. It then proceeds to walk up and down, occasionally pecking at a dish or peering shyly into a character's face. Anan looks displeased, but says nothing until Yossouf makes to strike the bird. Anan then interjects with a stern "Yossouf, you forget yourself." Pantos then nervously coos to the bird and places a pile of crumbs in the dish next to him. The dove hops over, eats, and then flies off. If anyone asks, Pantos will indicate that the bird belongs to his parents, Ambrosius (see page 15). The lengthy dinner, punctuated by long pauses between removes, breaks up shortly thereafter and Anan invites the visitors to join him for "a more private discussion." Pantos will quietly suggest to his neighbor that they meet in the garden later in the evening, and then takes his leave with the other magi.

Meanwhile, in the side hall and kitchen, the remaining characters have quite a difficult time breaking the ice. The Karaite men can be drawn out with displays of singing and dancing (by men only as Karaites consider dancing by women to be lewd and offensive) and, after a few drinks, may become more sociable. In the kitchen, female characters might make a few shy and temporary friends by praising the food, and the beauty of the children.

The private negotiations between Anan and the visiting magi should not



prove particularly productive. His invitation was a belated and half-hearted response to Sapientia's political isolation. He senses that he must make alliances, but is too miserly to offer anything of substance in return. Sapientia has no arcane library to speak of, and little of interest to the characters. If Anan is made a particularly attractive proposal (such as a useful magic item), he might offer a small piece of gold jewelry imbued with one transcendence in return (see *Karaite Magic*, page 30); but otherwise, the best the characters can hope to achieve is a marginally interesting exchange of vis as Anan has more Muto than he can use. Whatever the outcome, there should be little profit for the visitors and they should seriously begin to wonder why they accepted the invitation in the first place.

The business over, Anan offers his apologies that lack of space prevents him

from sheltering the characters for the night. He indicates that accommodations for the party have been arranged in town at the inn of the Silver Tusk. Anan concludes by inviting the characters to visit Sapientia at any time during the remainder of their stay, but warns them not to cast any spells before the covenant guards, as they are unaware of the magical nature of their employers. He then bids the characters good night and retires to his sanctum. The characters are now free to gather their companions and leave, or join Pantos in the garden.

Pantos quite frankly asks for the characters' help in finding out what might have happened to Ambrosius, who mysteriously disappeared without a trace about two years ago. If Ambrosius has died, Pantos stands to inherit his seat on the Council. Because of this, Anan has refused to recognize a vacancy, hoping that Pantos will give up and go away. If Pantos were to leave and



## The Dove

Ambrosius' familiar would often join him in his meditations in the old crypt, and was sleeping on the steps when the magical regio collapsed, imprisoning the mage in the remains of the Mercurian temple which originally occupied this site. Alarmed by the sudden but subtle shifts in the regio's environment, Ambrosius broke out of his trance in time to attempt to hold open the boundary with his staff. But in this he ultimately failed, losing his staff and his familiar in the process. The rupture "freed" the dove by sundering the three standard Cords, but an Enigmatic Cord (see *The Medieval Bestiary*, page 13) lingers, tying the dove to the cathedral and to the covenant buildings near which it had spent most of its unnaturally long life.

### *What Does the Dove Know?*

Casting an *Intéllego* spell at the dove is technically a violation of the Code, but characters might still attempt to communicate magically with the bird. If they succeed (the bird has a Magic Might of

5) they will find that it has reverted to animal Cunning and has no precise recollection of Ambrosius. If asked why it remains near the cathedral, it will answer that it is waiting for a "flightless one," but it does not know why.

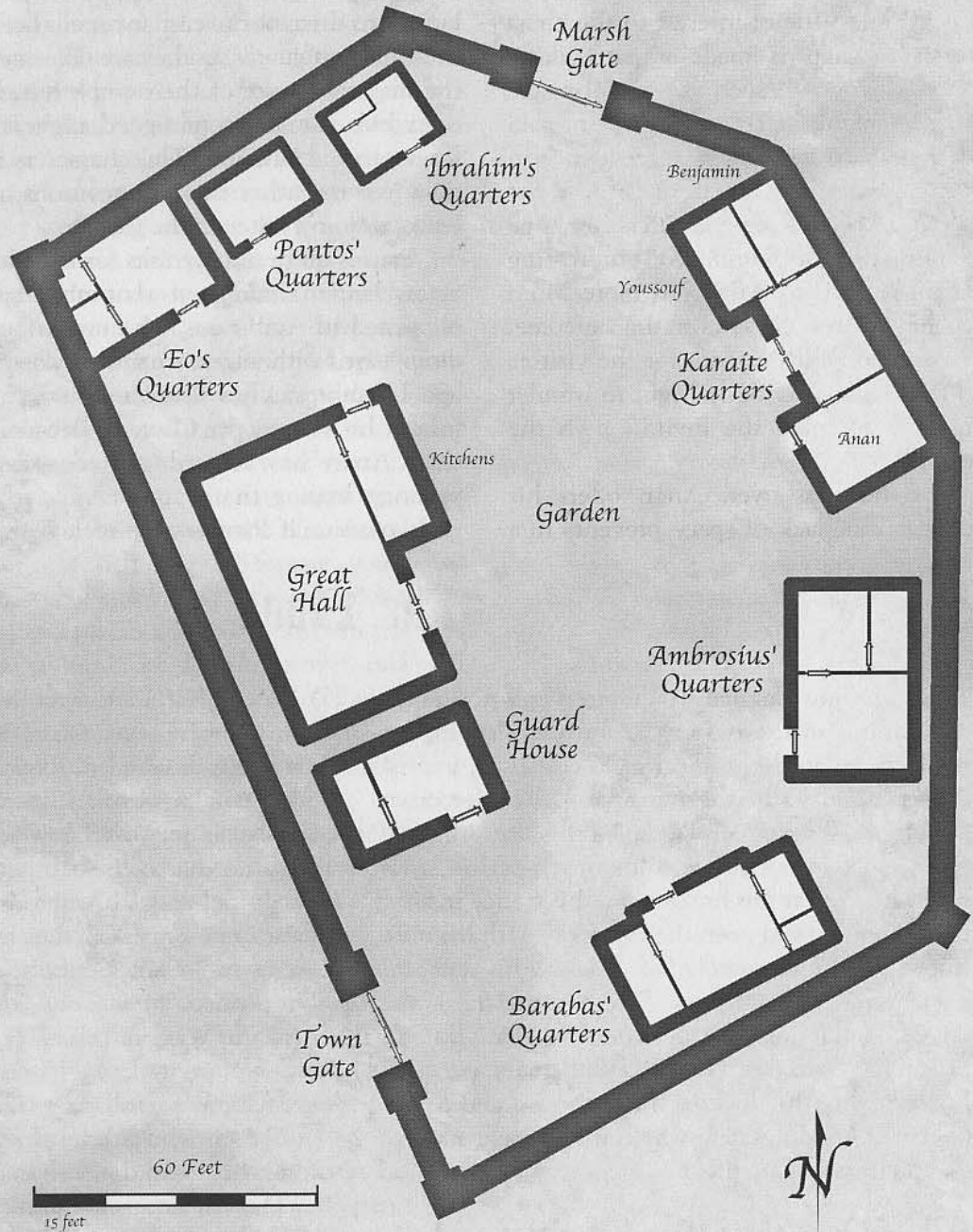
If the characters feel they have good reasons to suspect foul play in Ambrosius' disappearance (or if they are unscrupulous), they might attempt to use the dove as an Arcane Connection to the missing mage. The connection is very weak, however, and an Enigmatic Wisdom roll of 9+ is required to successfully exploit it. Even failure might provide some information, as a roll of 6+ yields the following riddle:

"Those who are freed hold onto their chains; those who chain themselves attain freedom."

The characters are unlikely to solve this riddle on their own (those who do should get a free experience point in Enigmatic Wisdom), but if they pose it to Ambrosius when they find him, he will see its meaning at once: it refers to Free Will. True freedom must be chosen to be genuine and cannot simply be given away.



# THE COVENANT OF *Sapientia Aetatum*



miss a Council meeting, Anan would be able to give the seat to Benjamin instead.

Pantos has no idea of Ambrosius' whereabouts, but notes that the white dove nests in the steeple of the newly completed cathedral, probably because its master would often spend the night there "in prayer." If questioned further, Pantos will admit to having been puzzled by this apparent piety as Ambrosius never gave any other indication of being a practicing Christian. He did seem to get along well with the local clergy, however, particularly with the archdeacon Deodat. Ambrosius always visited the cathedral alone, and the one time Pantos had gone looking for him there he had not actually been able to find him. If the characters later pay a daytime visit the cathedral, either alone or with Pantos, they will find the dove among a flock of pigeons.

If the characters decide to begin by checking out Ambrosius' sanctum, they will have to either sneak in or seek out Anan's permission. He will deny them such permission unless one of the characters is a Quaesitor or can prove he is operating under quaesitorial authority. If the characters nonetheless manage to explore Ambrosius' quarters, they will find it locked but without magical protections. It is musty after two years, but well ordered. Most of the mage's few Arcane texts were previously loaned to Pantos and so are not to be found here. Nonetheless, an exhaustive search of Ambrosius' papers will reveal uninteresting letters, coded and disorganized research notes, a well written and decoded copy of *Kiss of the Agape* (see Ambrosius, page 36) that has obviously been prepared for eventual publication, and a brief but clearly written description of various local regiones (including the crypt, see page 21) along with instructions on how to enter and exit them. Storyguides may wish to include some of those described in *Mythic Places* and *More Mythic Places* as future adventure seeds.

Decoding the notes after the adventure will not reveal much else except a consolidated lab text for Ambrosius' staff (see page 21), and more detailed background notes on local regiones which together amount to four small summae on Faerie Lore, Legend Lore, Occult Lore and Theology, each with a score of 1 and a quality of 3. The rest consists primarily of odd descriptive notes on Enchanting and mundane music written from a Hermetic perspective, but otherwise of no apparent utility to the characters.

## Scene 4: Fire Shall Burn Them up

When the characters leave the covenant it will be well after dark. Pantos or one of the guards will suggest that they hurry at full speed or they will be charged a heavy toll to get into the Old Town. Just as the characters turn the corner from the covenant compound and head for the nearest gate, two furtive figures run by at full speed, knocking one of the magi into a malodorous puddle in the process, before dashing down a side street into a dark alley. The characters now have three options: they can pursue the mysterious pair, swallow their offended dignity and hurry on to avoid the toll, or split up.

Unless pursuing the fleeing figures by supernatural means, the characters will soon lose them in the dark warren of narrow streets, alleys, partially closed off courtyards and lightly fenced gardens. Otherwise, after many confusing twists and turns, the pursuers eventually find two slumped bodies at the foot of a tall garden wall, and spot a third furtive figure hurrying away. Unlike the first pair, this fugitive is easily captured and is found to be in pos-





session of a bloody carpenter's knife. Further investigation reveals that the two dead bodies are those of Christian youths; that there is no apparent cause of death (see Eo, page 39) other than possibly a cross freshly cut skin-deep on their foreheads (see Jonas, page 44); that the high garden wall belongs to the rear of the covenant compound; and that the characters' captive is Jonas, an unprepossessing Jewish carpenter's assistant who is a deaf-mute. If the characters failed to pursue the mysterious pair, the mutilated bodies are found by passers-by the next morning with

dire consequences for the relations between the town's Jewish community and its Christian neighbors.

If the characters failed to pursue the two youths or, if having done so, they lost them and then returned to the main road, they can make Awareness checks against an ease factor of 9+ to notice that part of the thatch covering a two story house just outside the Jewish quarter is glowing. It was set on fire by the fleeing pair. Inside, should they care to break in, the characters will find Guy drunkenly passed out on his pallet. If they fail to notice the fire or hurry by without intervening, Guy is consumed in the blaze.

How the characters react to these various events may become subject to a number of unfortunate interpretations as their noisy movements in the dark and deserted streets will not have passed completely unnoticed. Various partial pictures will be open to misunderstanding. If they cast spells, someone will have secretly heard or spotted them performing sorcery. If they pursued the two youths, they could be later accused of having murdered them. If they paused by Guy's house as his roof burned, they could be accused of having set the fire. If they break in without first alerting the neighbors to the blaze, they could be accused of attempting robbery. If they ignore the youths and unwittingly hurry by the burning building, their behavior could be interpreted as a guilty attempt to flee the scene. The storyguide should keep these possibilities in mind as the repercussions of the night's events unfold and various parties attempt to throw off suspicion from themselves and onto convenient scapegoats. Given the stakes involved, pointing the finger at foreigners will be preferable to having the blame pinned on you by your enemies.

Unless the characters have ignored all these distractions and hurried to the gate, the cathedral bells will have rung complicity and the gate will be closed. For it to be reopened to let them in, the characters will have to pay a toll of one penny.

## Combat Encounters

Like many *Ars Magica* adventures, this one emphasizes mystery and intrigue at the expense of combat and is best resolved by a mixture of magi, companions and grogs, each offering different skills and abilities to the collective effort. As a result, players of characters stereotypically designed for combat may feel left out. As the main purpose of any *Ars Magica* adventure is entertainment, storyguides may wish to provide a break in the "action" by involving the characters in a drunken brawl at the Silver Tusk.

Alternatively, the Grip may have caught wind of the characters' investigations or of their movements during the previous night, and may wish to bring them in for questioning. This kind of encounter can easily side track the players from the main goal, however, and should be used with caution as it could also involve serious legal complications if it leads to bloodshed. The Grip's men are street thugs and not soldiers. They have leather armor at best, are armed with clubs and daggers and have Brawling and Athletics scores of 3 or 4. As such, they will not confront heavily armed characters toe to toe, but may attempt to lure them into night time ambushes using defenseless beggars or prostitutes as agents. Their aim would be to capture and not kill, and they would resort to appropriate tactics such as swarming or leaping onto foes and throwing nets from rooftops. Wounded thugs should turn tail and flee, and all attackers should be masked to avoid recognition. Unless the player characters make a point of applying deadly force or of hunting down the Grip's men without provocation, any prisoners the Grip captures will be blindfolded and released after a few hours' interrogation.

Alternatively they can repair to the Wild Rose, a comfortable but expensive inn a mere stone's throw from the gate. Should the characters choose to forgo Anan's arrangements at the Silver Tusk, they can find accommodations here at three pennies a day for a single occupancy room or two pennies a day per guest for double or multiple occupancy. If they fail to spend the first night at the Silver Tusk, but seek lodgings there subsequently, the innkeeper (as per Anan's instructions) will tell them that their rooms have been taken and will recommend that they stay at the Wild Rose instead.

If the characters make it to the gate before compline or pay the toll, they find the Silver Tusk in the poorest part of town. Conditions at this inn can be only generously described as "sub-standard." Their accommodations will have been covered for one night, but if they choose to stay longer they need only pay a total of one penny per four characters per night unless they expect food or drink, or arrange for the stabling of mounts. If they inquire, they will find out that Anan is the proprietor. Patrons of the Silver Tusk's common room will be regaled with stories of how Toni "the Grip" (see page 45) literally scared "the Snake" to death during a street brawl.

If members of the party opt to move to a better inn the next day, they can be directed to the Wild Rose instead. Here, the characters may learn that the town magistrates are considering fining the Karaites for letting their trained bear run loose in the streets again. At either inn, the party will learn of the townsfolk's resentment at the Karaites' refusal to sell the bear as entertainment for the fair. If the characters do stay at the Wild Rose, the storyguide should make sure they learn it also belongs to Anan, but only *after* they pay their hefty bill.

## Scene 5: In Whirlwind and Storm

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When the characters awaken the next morning, they find the town in an uproar. The "ritually" mutilated bodies of two "poisoned" Christian youths have been found in the Jewish quarter, and the house of a Christian carpenter has also been set on fire. If the characters failed to intervene in scene 4, Guy died in the conflagration.

The whole town is on edge, and rioting could break out with little provocation. Storyguides should use this opportunity to play up the role of companions and grogs, particularly those speaking the local language, in gathering information and passing messages. Unless they have the Gentle Gift, magi would be advised to lie low at the inn until they have a clearer picture of the situation. Given the mysterious nature of the deaths, overt evidence of sorcery could only attract unwanted attention to the characters, particularly given their (albeit marginal) role in the previous night's events.

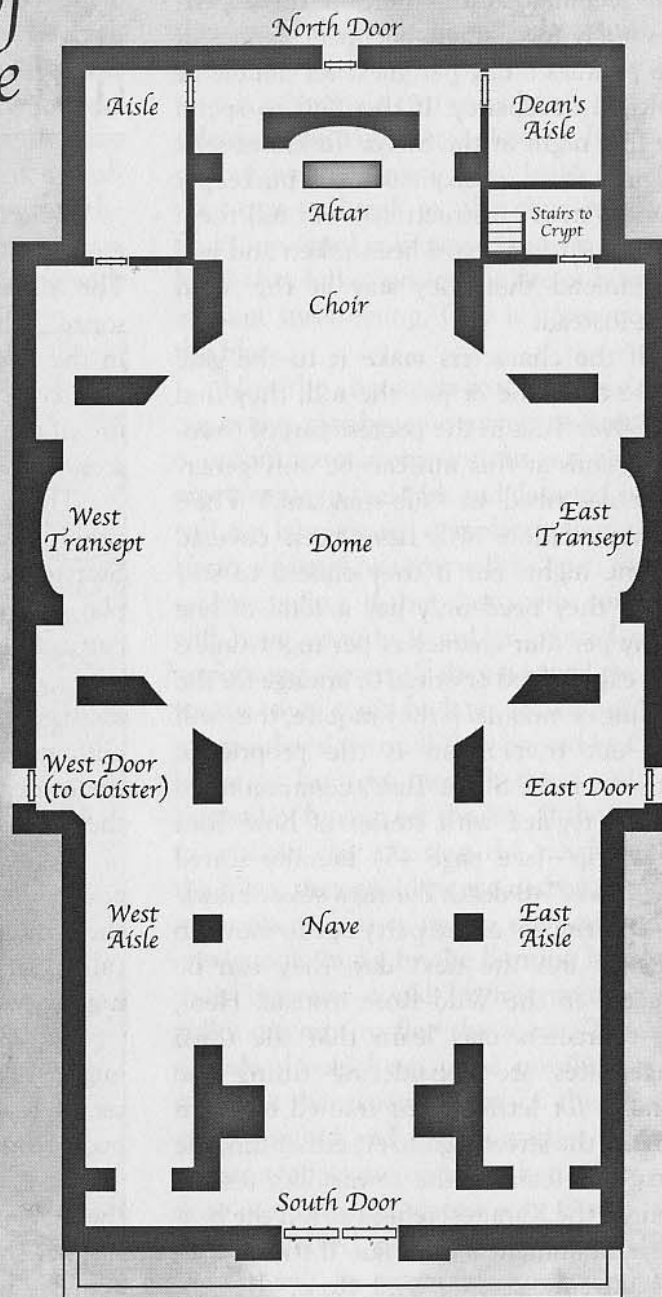
Scholars or clerical "investigators" might seek out clues at the cathedral chapter. Here they can learn that a Jewish suspect (Jonas) has been arrested for the killings (assuming the characters did not themselves make the arrest). Anan is also suspected of masterminding the arson aimed at a defaulting debtor (Guy, see page 45). Why Anan should be implicated in the killing of the two youths is not clear to the authorities at this time. But as the "murders" took place just outside the Karaite compound, Jonas is presumed to



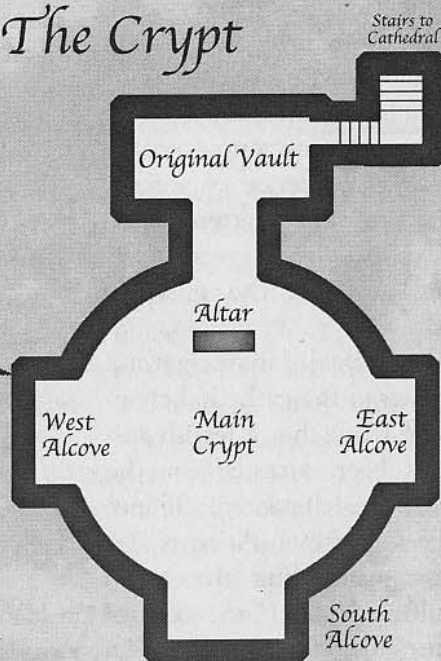
(Cont., p. 13)



## Cathedral of St. Ambrose



## The Crypt



## The Crypt

In its first three persecuted centuries, the Christian Church often held its services underground in catacombs beyond the prying eyes of malicious informers and surrounded by the earthly remains of those who had died in and for the Faith. In later times, after the Church emerged triumphant, public and imposing edifices dedicated to Christian worship were often built on the sites of torn-down pagan temples in a deliberate effort to deny pagans their habitual places of worship and induce them to follow the Word.

Both practices were incorporated in the foundation of the original cathedral, many times rebuilt and now dedicated to St. Ambrose. The first construction overlay the remains of a modest temple of Mercury. A small vault under the old temple was enlarged and dug out to create the crypt in which many of the cathedral's holy relics were stored and in which, over the centuries, a number prominent local Christians and churchmen were buried. The current cathedral has preserved the old crypt. It can be reached through a small and usually locked door to the right of the chancel. Behind the door is a short and narrow twisting staircase leading down into the crypt which thus lies beneath the main altar.

### The Regio

The Dominion aura extending from the main cathedral altar and reinforced by the smaller altar in the crypt has long since overwhelmed the original magical aura of the site. The heart of the old temple, however, where the Mercurian priests performed many of their secret magical rituals was a regio which until two years ago was still accessible from the original vault on most nights when the Dominion ebbs slightly. The regio has a

single level with a magical aura of 6. It consists of a small grove of cypress trees that surrounds the orderly and well swept marble ruins of an old Roman temple. This is where Ambrosius has set up his secret magical laboratory and stored his now almost depleted supply of Muto vis. Since the translation and storage of the new relics in the crypt, however, the Dominion aura never dips below 6, effectively sealing off the regio and Ambrosius with it.

### *St. Ambrose's finger bone*

Besides bearing one Faith Point, the bone of the finger with which the saintly bishop blessed the faithful and penned his epistles and sermons is responsible for raising the Dominion aura of the crypt, and thus accidentally trapping Ambrosius in the regio. This would only become apparent to the characters through lengthy experimentation, however, so they would be better off just treating the collection of relics as a single whole, except possibly for the "crozier" which any mage ought to be able to recognize as a magical staff. As none of the relics has been stored in reliquaries, they are of no material value to the characters. The older relics with precious settings are stored elsewhere under stronger guard.

### *Ambrosius' staff*

Ambrosius' magical shepherd's staff, now mistaken for a bishop's crozier, is kept in the cathedral's crypt as a holy relic of St. Ambrose. Ambrosius used the staff to facilitate his acquisition of vis, to travel in regiones, and for the detection of supernatural auras. The intricate carvings on the staff are the





consequence of the Jerbiton mage's experimentation. By meditating on the carvings, the holder of the staff gains a +1 on Enigmatic Wisdom rolls if he already has a score in this Knowledge. Other than Ambrosius' name, the carvings have no particular religious associations, but they are not particularly disturbing to Christians either. The cathedral chapter is considering encrusting the "crozier" with gems and precious metals which would cover the carvings (and possibly damage the magical properties of the staff), but has taken no action as yet, probably because Deodat does not think it would be appropriate.

#### Powers:

*Vibration of the Unsuspected Vis*, Constant, InVi1

R: Near, D: Constant, T: Small

The staff will vibrate slightly when placed in contact with a source raw vis.

*Scales of the Magical Weight*, 24/d, InVi5

*Sense the Nature of Vis*, 24/d, InVi5

*Feeling the Font of Power*, Unlimited, InVi10 [from *Mythic Places*, though there is a different spell of the same name in *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*]

R: Sight, D: Inst, T: Bound

Allows the caster to determine the realm to which a regio or an area of power belongs.

*Scales of Power*, 24/d, InVi15 [from *Mythic Places*, though there is a different spell of the same name in *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*]

R: Touch, D: Instant, T: Special

When cast at a regio level or an area of power, this effect gives a rough impres-

sion of the Aura's intensity (for example, weak, powerful, stronger or weaker than the last level tested). As a rule of thumb, the effect indicates whether the Aura is "weak" (1-3), "moderate" (4-6) or "powerful" (7-10).

*Seeing the Elusive Boundary*, 24/d, InVi15 [from *Mythic Places*]

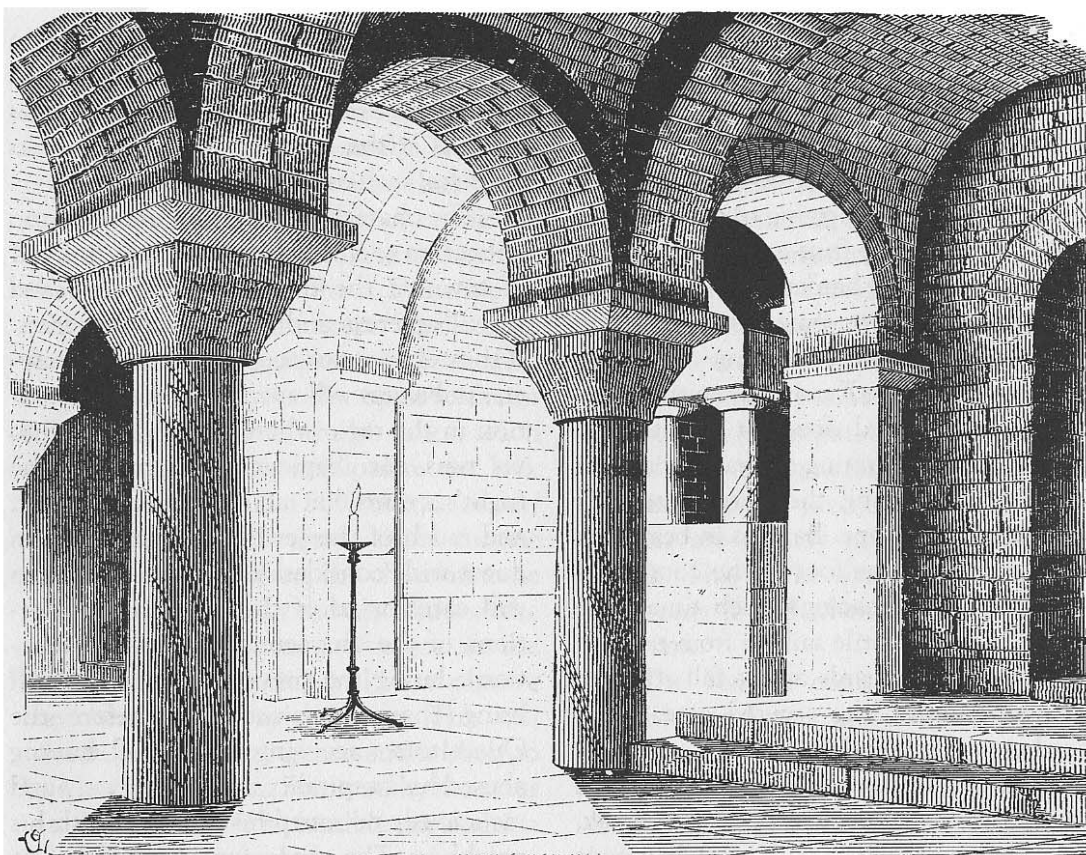
R: Near, D: Conc, T: Special

Allows the caster to see the boundaries of a regio or area of power as faintly glowing lines. Specifically, the effect detects boundaries between realms (including those with the Mundane realm) and to the next higher or lower level of a regio within the caster's normal line of sight. If this effect is used in a regio, the caster must first specify whether a higher or lower boundary is sought. If a regio boundary is observed, the caster may add +3 to future attempts to cross it.

*Tearing the Mystic Veil*, 24/d, InVi(Pe)25 [from *Mythic Places*]

R: Touch, D: Special, T: Special

This effect creates a temporary magical opening into a regio one level higher or lower than the one currently occupied by the caster. The caster actually reaches out and tears a hole in the fabric of the regio, so the width of the tear is limited by the caster's arm-span. The height of the tear is roughly twice the width. The opening must be physically held open by the caster and snaps closed one Round after released. Each Round the tear is held open, the caster must make a Fatigue roll of 6+. A failed roll simply indicates a lost Fatigue level. If the caster loses consciousness, the tear closes. It takes one Round for an individual to cross through the tear.



have acted in both cases on Anan's instructions. Just how Anan would have communicated such instructions to an illiterate deaf-mute does not seem to have been considered. Jewish community leaders have been ordered to pay a huge sum, part fine and part peace bond pending resolution of the case. The Jews are refusing to pay, however, arguing that the unpopular (and "heretical") Anan should be made to bear the burden alone.

Knights or other noble characters calling at the bishop's castle may learn that the garrison will be hard pressed to prevent serious disorder. Appeals for reinforcements have been sent out to the surrounding gentry but these could take a day or two to arrive. Not much help is expected from that quarter in any case, as much of the surrounding nobility owes money to Anan and other Jewish "usurers" and may insist on debt relief as the price of its intervention. The provost is reluctant to ask for help from the count who has a history of feuding with the bishop. The bishop holds nominal

lordship over the town but is currently away at court. The town notables back the provost in this as they fear creating a precedent and do not want to give the count an excuse for meddling in their affairs.

Characters, particularly grogs, can also make more discreet inquiries in seedier locales (such as the common room of the Silver Tusk!). Here they may learn that Toni "the Grip" is on the look-out for young toughs for a night-time "reprisal" raid on the Jewish quarter. Alerting the authorities to these plans or, better yet, finding and arresting the Grip (not an easy task) will help the characters gain credibility in official circles.

Obtaining all this information may involve greasing quite a few palms, but rumors, some true some false, can be obtained virtually anywhere. The characters will be running some risk in assuming a higher public profile, however. The more threatened various actors become (such as the Grip, the Jewish leaders, or even Anan), the greater the chances that more



sinister interpretations of the characters' motives and actions will surface.

The characters can also make inquiries at Sapientia, but efforts to contact the magi there will reveal a bewildered covenant under siege. Anyone trying to enter will be pelted with rotting fruit and vegetables or possibly something harder and heavier. The guards will also have some difficulty letting in any visitors while keeping the angry crowd outside. The Karaites are either huddled behind closed doors or chanting in their sancta, meditating on transcendences aimed at protecting their community or facilitating its escape. Barabas in bear form paces angrily at the foot of the compound wall growling menacingly each time some malodorous projectile sails in from outside. The mercenary guards are at full strength tensely manning the secured gate. Eo is nowhere to be found.

Pantos is initially the only mage with whom the characters will be able to speak, but he is at wit's end. He bemoans Ambrosius' absence at this time of crisis as the Jerbiton had always proven adept at soothing the covenant's difficult relations with its gentile and Jewish neighbors. Just as he voices his despair, Iksandra (see *Anan's Wives*, page 43) and Benjamin approach. Iksandra has had a premonition that horrible bloodshed and arson will occur tonight unless Ambrosius is found. If the characters had previously failed to discuss Ambrosius' disappearance with Pantos, they should do so now. If they remain baffled as to where to look, or are concerned about Sapientia's security, some or all of them may decide to stay the night and help defend the covenant.

At this point Anan emerges briefly from his sanctum, warning Barabas, the guards and (indirectly) the characters that bloodshed in defense of the covenant is to be avoided at all cost. Sapientia will not be able to coexist with its neighbors if they feel it owes them a blood debt. Barabas growls in frustrated disagreement but Pantos offers assurances. Anan then returns

to his quarters, his wife and Benjamin in tow. Whether or not any of the characters choose to seek out Ambrosius, Pantos remains at the covenant to coordinate its defenses, such as they are.

The characters, of course, are under no obligation to intervene. They can slink out of town at the first sign of trouble and leave Sapientia and its magi to their fates. If they choose not to get involved, however, Ambrosius will eventually die of starvation in the regio when his supply of Muto vis runs out. Sapientia will survive the night's events but at great material cost, and much of the Jewish quarter will burn down with considerable loss of life. Anan will catch wind of the darker interpretations of the characters' actions (or inaction) during the previous night, and will bring charges against them before the Quaesitors, accusing them of having abused his hospitality and deliberately and maliciously poisoned his relations with his neighbors. The charges may not stick, but the characters will have severely embarrassed their covenant and will gain a Reputation as incompetent and potentially dangerous meddlers.

## Scene 6: Out of the Belly of Sheol

If the characters enter the cathedral at night, they will find it largely deserted, with only one of the canonical vicars asleep at his vigil in the chancel. During most days the cathedral has a Dominion aura of 5 except around the main altar where it is 6 and in the crypt where the presence of St. Ambrose's finger bone also normally raises the aura to 6. At night, however, the Dominion declines by (1 outside of the crypt, where the relics now maintain constant vigil), at least when the bells and the choir are silent.

The door to the crypt is locked. If Father Deodat has not lent the characters a key, it can be picked (6+) or opened magically (note the Dominion aura!). The crypt is dark but because of a twist in the stairs it can be safely lit with torches or candles so long as the door is closed. Behind the small altar is a large wooden chest. There are no other furnishings in the crypt. The lock on the chest is somewhat more elaborate than on the door (9+). As the chest contains five Faith Points of holy relics, each attempt to magically manipulate the lock or the chest itself has a 50% chance of outright failure (roll after each casting attempt) and of making the chest immune to all further magic for the remainder of the scene. If the relics cannot be got at, the only reasonable solution will be to remove the chest itself from the crypt. This will take at least two strong men and is likely to be a noisy operation. Fortunately, the vicar is rather gullible. If a plausible explanation is offered and particularly if the characters have the archdeacon's blessing, he may even help remove the chest and stand guard over it while the characters complete their "work" in the crypt.

Without St. Ambrose's finger bone boosting the Dominion aura, the characters can search for the regio. Even if they fail to find it, however, Ambrosius senses the change in the supernatural environment. He soon emerges on his own and greets his saviors thankfully.

## Scene 7: The Grapes of Wrath

Late that night, whether or not Ambrosius has been freed or the Grip arrested, the gang leader's careful plan is put into operation. Christian houses and

shops adjacent to the Jewish quarter are set on fire. The garrison and the militia, expecting an attack on the Jewish quarter itself, are taken completely by surprise and hurriedly abandon their positions to respond to the unexpected threat. Arriving in small and disorganized numbers, they are overwhelmed by crowds of angry and distraught townspeople. The mob, primed by rumors spread by the Grip, and led by ruffraff fortified by wine and recruited from the town's less reputable watering holes, surges into the quarter. Mysteriously, the houses of several prominent Jewish money lenders are already in flames and under attack. This is the scene that awaits the characters if and when they emerge from the crypt.

The Karaite compound, being both Anan's residence and exposed to the oncoming mob, is the focus of the most concentrated and intense attack. For characters outside the covenant, getting in may be a problem as Pantos has magically sealed the gate because of attempts by some of the rioters to break it down using a heavy wooden table as a ram. The wall is being assaulted from all sides by angry townsfolk trying to clamber over using makeshift ladders, and the din makes it impossible to be heard by those within. Other than through magic, the easiest way for the characters to get in is to join those trying to scale the wall and hope to be recognized by the defenders.

As per Anan's instructions against the use of deadly force, the guards and the Karaite turb push the invaders back with long poles. Fortunately, few of the attackers have more than makeshift weapons. The few assailants who do manage to tumble over are run down by Barabas who bites them and then tosses them flying back over the wall with a mighty swing of his paw. More dangerous perhaps are the burning brands tossed over the wall from the street. With aid from the magi, the Karaites manage to knock most of these off the covenant





roofs before they can ignite the thatch. Nonetheless, it begins to smoke in places, and Pantos or the character magi will have to take vigorous action to prevent the buildings from going up in flames.

Knight characters outside the covenant can attempt to rally isolated members of the garrison and militia found wandering about dazed and leaderless. They can then try to break up clusters of rioters and looters. Such tactics prove particularly effective as the poorly armed assailants tend to back away and run when threatened with cold steel. With the rioters now spreading in smaller groups throughout the Jewish quarter, the characters are unlikely to have to face more than a dozen at a time.

Note that the storyguide should warn the player characters (possibly through NPCs) against turning the riot into a bloodbath. The mob is intent on burning houses in retaliation, not on murdering Jews. If the characters persist and start mowing down townspeople, as may as 30 knights from the surrounding area make a sudden appearance in response to the provost's earlier appeal and start returning measure for measure. The characters might still defeat them, but they should recognize that a fight on such a scale will mean the end of Sapiientia and Anan's undying enmity. As their lives will not have been directly threatened, the characters will have considerable difficulty explaining their actions at a hostile tribunal summoned by the Quaesitors. They may well be marched for gross and explicit violation of the Code.

If Ambrosius has been freed, he casts a *Clouds of Thunderous Might* causing the overcast sky to break out into heavy rain. This helps subdue and control the fires. Casting such spells as *Aura of Rightful Authority*, *Confusion of the Numbed Will*, *Enchantment of Detachment and Emotion of Reversed Intention*, he clears a path for himself and the characters and makes his way over the wall. Once inside, he seeks out an anxious Anan for the necessary vis, scoops up a cup of soil to act as an Arcane

Connection and asks to be rowed across the swamp to the magical laboratory. There he begins to cast his long ritual *Kiss of the Agape*. Thanks to Ambrosius' Special Circumstances +1 Virtue, his Concentration specialization, the use of booming voice and vigorous gestures, and the Magical aura of 2, he will have a casting total of 48+ and so will succeed unless he rolls a botch (but note: 11 botch dice!). After three hours of steady rain and increasingly desultory fighting, the riots break up and the now calmed townsfolk return to their homes. If Ambrosius has not been freed, the rioting and looting continue until dawn. While intervention by the characters may still mitigate the extent and intensity of the disorders, dozens of people (mainly innocent Jews) will have died in the fires and much of the Jewish quarter will be a smoldering ruin. Sapiientia will not have suffered irreparable damage, however.

In either case, if the characters managed to expose the role of the Grip in fomenting and orchestrating the riots, the authorities will hang him if they can find and hold him (unlikely!), and will limit themselves to exiling Jonas and extracting a minor fine from the Jewish community for the mutilations. (Can the characters make use of a carpenter's assistant?) If, on the other hand, the Grip's involvement and responsibility is not established, Jonas is executed for the murders and the Jewish community is forced to pay a heavy indemnity for having started the riots. As the other Jews have suffered greater losses than he and agree to blame him for the riots, an enraged Anan ends up paying a disproportionate share of the fine.

Whatever their knowledge or suspicions, the characters can take no action against Eo when he returns. Denouncing him to the authorities would be a violation of the Code. It would, in any case, be very difficult to prove his involvement without exposing all concerned as magi. Eo also has no case to answer before Hermetic justice as he merely executed arsonists whom he

## Article 4 of the Code of Hermes

I will not endanger the Order through my actions. Nor will I interfere with the affairs of mundanes and thereby bring ruin upon my sodalis...

caught in *flagrante delicto*. Eo's covenant mates will not betray him and will maintain solidarity with him against all outsiders. Nonetheless, Anan will assign to Benjamin the task of keeping a sharp eye on Eo's movements and activities in future.

Depending on their actions, Anan may see fit to reward the characters with as much as two rooks of vis (but no money) and a promise of the covenant's voting sigils for the next tribunal. If, on the other hand, their role was passive or their intervention disastrous, he will vent his rage against them and accuse them before Hermetic Justice for the attack on his covenant. If Ambrosius has been rescued, he rewards the characters with his staff (if it can be recovered) as he has had his fill of regiones. Profoundly affected by his two years of imprisonment and isolation, he feels a strong need to reconnect with his fellow man. He resigns from Sapientia, leaving Pantos to inherit his seat on the Council. Before leaving he also cuts the remaining Enigmatic Bond tying him to his former familiar. The dove lingers about the cathedral for a few weeks (possibly searching for the regio?) and then is never seen again. Alternatively, and at the storyguide's discretion, the former familiar may be transformed by the night's events into a

Dove of Virtue (see the *Medieval Bestiary* Revised Edition, page 52) to keep watch from the steeple and ensure that peace prevails in the town thereafter.

If the characters invite him to do so, Ambrosius may join them for a while before launching off on a long journey of exploration. He will be particularly interested in any character with Enchanting Music, though whether that character would be interested in acting as a subject for the Jerbiton's experimental research might be an issue. Anan is disappointed at losing his majority on the Council and at being unable to promote Benjamin, but comforts himself with the thought that it will be several more years before Barabas becomes a senator and is able to block his plans.

## Epilogue

A few years later, the characters may hear from Pantos again. There is new trouble brewing at Sapientia. Iksandra has given birth to Gifted male twins, but has awful premonitions of what the future will bring. Elijahbeth has had a vivid dream of two identical adolescent youths sitting on adjacent thrones. They embrace, but one of them holds a dagger behind his back.

Meanwhile, Anan is dying. Rebecca, taking advantage of Eo's confusion, Barabas' trip to Crintera for the Gathering, and Pantos' temporary absence, has pressured Ibrahim to move to have the senior mage expelled from the Council so he can succeed as Pontifex in his stead. Fortunately, Yossouf refused to back his rival in this highly questionable maneuver, and all Hell has broken loose. Can the characters come and help?





## Part 2

# Dramatis Personae

### Anan bin Daoud

**Characteristics:** Int +5, Per 0, Pre +2, Com 0, Str -1, Stm +2, Dex -1, Qik -2

**Age:** 106 (appears 70)

**Confidence:** 3

**Virtues & Flaws:** Inventive Genius +1, Prestigious Family +1, Social Contacts (Karaites) +1, Strong Willed +1, Well Traveled +1, Unstructured Caster -6, Noncombatant -2, Driving Goal -1 (begetting a Gifted heir), Driving Goal -1 (establishing magical tradition), Miser -1 (as per *Ordo Nobilis*)

**Personality Traits:** Miserly +6, Authoritarian +5, Taciturn +4

**Reputations:** Hard Master +3 (Karaites), Hedge Wizard +3 (Order of Hermes), Miser +3 (townsfolk), Son of the House of David +2 (Karaites)

**Soak:** +2

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

**Body Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Awareness (searching) 3, Bargaining (loans) 3, Certamen (Corpus) 5, Charm (prospective in-laws) 2, Concentration (reading) 3, Disputatio (teaching) 5, Etiquette (Karaites) 2, Folk Ken (townsfolk) 5, Hermetic Law (covenants) 2, Intrigue (plotting) 4, Karaite Law (marriage) 7, Karaite Lore (personalities) 5,

Leadership (Karaites) 5, Lectio (Torah) 2, Legend Lore (places) 3, Magic Theory (teaching) 2, Occult Lore (curses) 2, Parma Magica (Corpus) 8, Philosophiae (metaphysics) 2, Scribe Arabic (correspondence) 4, Scribe Hebrew (reading) 4, Scribe Greek (correspondence) 2, Scribe Latin (contracts) 2, Speak Arabic (bargaining) 5, Speak Greek (bargaining) 4, Speak Hebrew (prayer) 5, Speak Local Language (bargaining) 4, Speak Various Other Languages (bargaining) 2

**Karaite Abilities:** Aegis 5, Craft: Goldsmithing (brooches) 5, Peripatetic 5, Prophecy 5, Purity 8, Therapy 5

#### Arts:

Cr 11	In 0	Mu 0	Pe 0	Re 0
An 0	Aq 0	Au 0	Co 15	He 0
Ig 9	Im 0	Me 10	Te 0	Vi 0

#### Powers

Anan has only a few minor spells, but has researched a number of Karaite transcendences. All difficulty levels for transcendences are increased by +3 if applied to anyone other than Self, and by +3 for each additional subject. All transcendences must involve touching a conscious and willing subject.

*My thoughts went back to times long past,  
I remember forgotten years (Ps 77:5)*





This transcendence grants the subject a vision of the past as if through the Exceptional Talent Visions. The target time period must be determined before rolling Intelligence + Prophecy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against:

- 12+ for 1 year or less
- 15+ for 5 years or less
- 18+ for 20 years or less
- 21+ for 100 years or less
- 24+ for 500 years or less
- 27+ for 2000 years or less
- 30+ for anytime since Creation

*Darkness is no darkness for thee and night is luminous as day, to thee both dark and light are one* (Ps 139:12)

This transcendence grants perfect night vision. Roll Perception + Prophecy +

Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 12+.

*My heart is stirred by a noble theme, in a king's honor I utter the song I have made, and my tongue runs like the pen of an expert scribe* (Ps 45:1)

This transcendence grants the equivalent of the Exceptional Talent Enchanting Music. Roll Communication + Prophecy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 9 + 3 x the desired score.

*I know every bird on those hills, the teeming life of the fields is my care* (Ps 50:11)

This transcendence grants the equivalent of the Exceptional Talent Animal Ken. Roll Perception + Prophecy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 6 + 3

## Karaite Magic

Anan's system of magic is closely related to Karaite religious practices, and is affected by the different realms in the same way as Kabbalism (see *Kabbalah: Mythic Judaism*, p. 7). Karaite magic involves three features: transcendences, gold smithing and purity.

### Transcendences

By pondering deeply on a pertinent verse of the Psalms, a Karaite mage can bring about a transcendence of the mundane realm similar to those evoked by Ascetic hedge magicians (see *Hedge Magic*, pages 52-53). Unlike Ascetics, however, a Karaite mage can include others in a transcendence (this increases the difficulty factor by 3 for each additional person affected), and must research each transcendence separately before he can include it in his inventory.

Like Ascetics, Karaite mages can influence their success in performing transcendences by meditating:

24 hours	+2
6 hours	+1
1 hours	0
10 minutes	-3
2 minutes	-6
1 minute	-9
none	-12

Karaite transcendences fall into four categories, each linked to a specific Arcane Knowledge: **Prophecy** (knowledge or understanding), **Therapy** (healing), **Peripaticis** (travel, movement) and **Aegis** (shielding, protection).

Karaites consider all forms of illness (excluding wounds and injuries) to be divine punishments for transgressions against God's laws and commandments.

Karaites are forbidden from taking medication or otherwise benefitting from magical or mundane medical treatment. Note that this also includes longevity potions which are seen as particularly perverse. Use of a longevity potion by a Karaite mage results in an immediate and permanent loss of all Karaite magical abilities.

By concentrating over an ill patient and continually chanting the relevant verse, a Karaite mage can attempt to determine which transgression is responsible for the affliction. If he succeeds, he may then attempt to banish the Spirit of the illness through prayer and a commitment on behalf of the patient to abstain from the forbidden behavior. If a patient cured in this way recidivates, there is a +20% (cumulative) chance of succumbing to the same illness again in a few days. Karaite prohibitions are drawn from a literal reading of the Torah and not from Talmudic law. The casting of spells is one of many Karaite prohibitions. It is thus unlikely that a conventional member of the Order would seek out Karaite medical assistance.

## Goldsmithing

Karaites are famous throughout the East for their abilities as goldsmiths. Anan and his former apprentices can imbue a piece of jewelry they have crafted with "beauty" (as if made by a more skilled goldsmith) by rolling Dexterity + Goldsmith + Purity + Stress die against  $6 + 3 \times$  the goldsmith score desired; the ability to enhance the wearer's Presence by rolling Dexterity + Goldsmith + Purity + Stress die against  $12 + 3 \times$  the desired Presence (maximum +4); or with a single use of an already learned Karaite transcendence by rolling Dexterity + Goldsmith + Purity + Stress die against 3

+ the difficulty factor of the transcendence. The jewelry must be openly worn to have any effect, and this is the only form of magic item a Karaite mage can make. Imbuing a piece of gold jewelry with transcendence costs a Karaite mage one level of Purity. The time required to imbue a piece of jewelry is equal to the difficulty factor in days.

## Purity

Purity is used as a modifier in all feats of Karaite magic. Purity for Karaite magi is determined by the faithfulness of their adherence to the Karaite understanding of Divine law. Each time a Karaite mage transgresses a divine prohibition, he loses one level of Purity. Purity also affects a Karaite mage's aging rolls, in the same way as for Kabbalists (see *Kabbalah*, pages 84-86).

Karaite and Hermetic magic are based on completely different principles, though they are not strictly speaking incompatible. While it is possible for a Karaite mage to learn the Hermetic Arts, necessary habits of thought and practice acquired in childhood make it virtually impossible for a normally trained Hermetic mage to learn Karaite magic. Because of the religious prohibition against casting spells, Karaite magi rarely perform spontaneous magic, or even bother learning Hermetic spells and rituals. They may, however, learn Arcane skills such as Certámen and the Parma Magica. The Hermetic Arts are learned mainly with these two skills in mind. As such the Art and Magic Theory scores of Karaite magi tend to be low except for Cr, Co, Me and Ig. No prohibition exists against the use of magical devices, but Anan tends to discourage their use among his followers, preferring that they focus on their gold smithing.





Meditation Bonus + Stress die against  $6 + 3 \times$  the desired score.

*Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am weak; heal me, my very bones are shaken* (Ps 6:2)

This transcendence will permanently heal physical injuries. Roll Stamina + Therapy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against  $15 + 3 \times$  the total number of body levels to be healed.

*He pardons all my guilt and heals all my suffering* (Ps 103:3)

This transcendence will identify the subject's "transgression" and attempt to banish the Spirit of Sickness afflicting the patient. Roll Perception + Therapy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die to identify the transgression against 12+. If successful, roll Stamina + Therapy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against Might to banish the Spirit (see Hedge Magic, page 78).

*He has satisfied the thirsty and filled the hungry with good things* (Ps 107:9)

This transcendence permits the subject to go a whole day without food or drink without suffering any adverse effects. Roll Stamina + Therapy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 12+.

*The Lord restores sight to the blind and straightens backs which are bent* (Ps 146:8)

This transcendence permanently cancels the effects of a physical Flaw over a period of about a month. It can also reverse the effects of aging, but will not regenerate limbs or organs, or remove decrepitude points. Only one attempt can ever be made to remove a particular Flaw or affliction. If it is somehow regained it becomes permanent. Roll Stamina + Therapy + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against  $12 + 6 \times$  the point value of the Flaw (use the higher value if it is different for magi and

companions) or  $12 + 3 \times$  the level of the affliction.

*With thy help I leap over a bank, by God's aid I spring over a wall* (Ps 18:2)

This transcendence grants the equivalent of Gift of the Frog's Legs. Roll Strength + Peripaticis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 6+.

*He brought them out of darkness, dark as death, and broke their chains* (Ps 107:14)

This transcendence will free a bound or imprisoned subject. It will even unlock doors if this is the only means of egress. It will not prevent others from physically restraining the subject, however. Roll Dexterity + Peripaticis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 9+.

*Man, though he stands upright, is but a puff of wind, he moves like a phantom* (Ps 39:6)

This transcendence grants the ability to move through non-living physical obstacles. Roll Strength + Peripaticis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against  $9 + 3 \times$  the number of paces of obstacle to be traversed.

*I take flight to the frontiers of the morning and dwell at the limits of the Western sea* (Ps 139:9)

This transcendence instantly teleports the subject to any specified place to which he has an Arcane Connection (which must be held in the subject's hands). Roll Strength + Peripaticis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against:

12+ 1 day's journey

15+ 1 week's journey

18+ 1 month's journey

21+ 1 season's journey

24+ 1 year's journey

27+ 5 years' journey

30+ to any supernatural realm or regio except Heaven

Note that the distance is measured in terms of walking (or if over water, sailing) speed.

*Deliver my very self from the sword, my precious life from the axe (Ps 22:20)*

This transcendence provides complete immunity to physical damage from weapons or targeted spells. Roll Stamina + Aegis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 21+.

*I will reject all crooked thoughts, I will have no dealing with evil (Ps 101:4)*

This transcendence provides complete immunity to natural or supernatural attempts to influence or affect the subject's mind or thoughts. Roll Stamina + Aegis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 18+.

*The Lord will guard you against all evil, he will guard you body and soul (Ps 121:7)*

This transcendence provides complete immunity against all forms of magic or physical damage from weapons or natural accidents. It will not protect a subject who, for example, voluntarily throws himself off a cliff. Roll against Stamina + Aegis + Purity + Meditation Bonus + Stress die against 27+.

**Twilight Points:** 16

**Twilight Effects:** Exaggerated Personality Traits

## History and Personality

Anan was born in Cairo, the member of a prominent Karaite family which traces its descent back to King David of Israel. As such, Anan enjoys a form of princely status among Karaites. His Gift manifested itself early, and through genius and strength of will, he was able to give it a highly original form without the benefit of Hermetic or other magical training.

Anan's research led him to travel extensively throughout the East, acting as an itinerant spiritual guide to the various Karaite communities. He first encountered the Order in Constantinople in the form of a member of House ex Miscellanea. Eager to expand his abilities, Anan agreed to join the Order and exchange knowledge with his "sponsor," learning from him the rudiments of Magic Theory, Certámen and the Parma Magica. Unfortunately, Anan proved unable to teach anything valuable in return, and so he and his sponsor parted ways on less than friendly terms.

When Anan learned of a group of magi seeking to establish a new covenant, he petitioned to join, offering a valuable vis source he had discovered, along with the services of a local Karaite community as a turb. His offer was accepted and he became the junior member of Sapientia Aetatum's Council of Magi. Over time, the more senior magi died or moved on, and Anan eventually acceded to the position of Pontifex.

Anan's overriding ambition is to establish the legitimacy and prestige of his magical "tradition." In time he hopes to turn it into a major force within the Order. So far he has trained three Karaite apprentices discovered thanks to his network of contacts among his co-religionists. While he teaches them Karaite magic himself, he relies on the other senior magi to teach his apprentices the rudiments of Hermetic magic in exchange for additional Muto vis as his own knowledge is far from comprehensive. Through patience, good luck, and ruthless use of the covenant's charter he has been able to place two of them as members of the Council, and so now controls half the votes.

Anan takes his Karaite heritage and descent seriously, hoping to hand over the leadership of his "school" to a son of his own line. To this end, he takes as a wife any young Karaite woman who shows even the weakest signs of having the Gift. Thanks to his wealth, status and Karaite contacts





extending throughout Mythic Europe and the Near East, he currently has six wives ranging in age from 20 to 70, and a large brood of children and grandchildren. So far, however, only a daughter, Rebecca, has shown signs of having inherited the Gift. As Anan does not consider women suitable candidates for his teaching, he has not trained her, and has married her instead to Ibrahim, his eldest former apprentice. Should a Gifted boy result from this union, Anan will be prepared to recognize him as his heir, *faute de mieux*.

Over the years, and partly as a result of Twilight experiences, Anan has developed three exaggerated personality traits. He has a strong authoritarian streak, demanding absolute obedience from his family, former apprentices and Karaite dependents. They may not love him, but they respect and obey him unquestioningly. He also cannot bring himself to part with money (except for required bride-prices), and his miserliness verges on the pathological. He makes little distinction between his own funds and the covenant's treasury, but since he grudges every expenditure, it hardly makes much difference. Finally, Anan has a taciturn, unfriendly demeanor and is given to grunts and long, seemingly pointless silences. He is quite incapable of small talk.

## Ambrosius

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

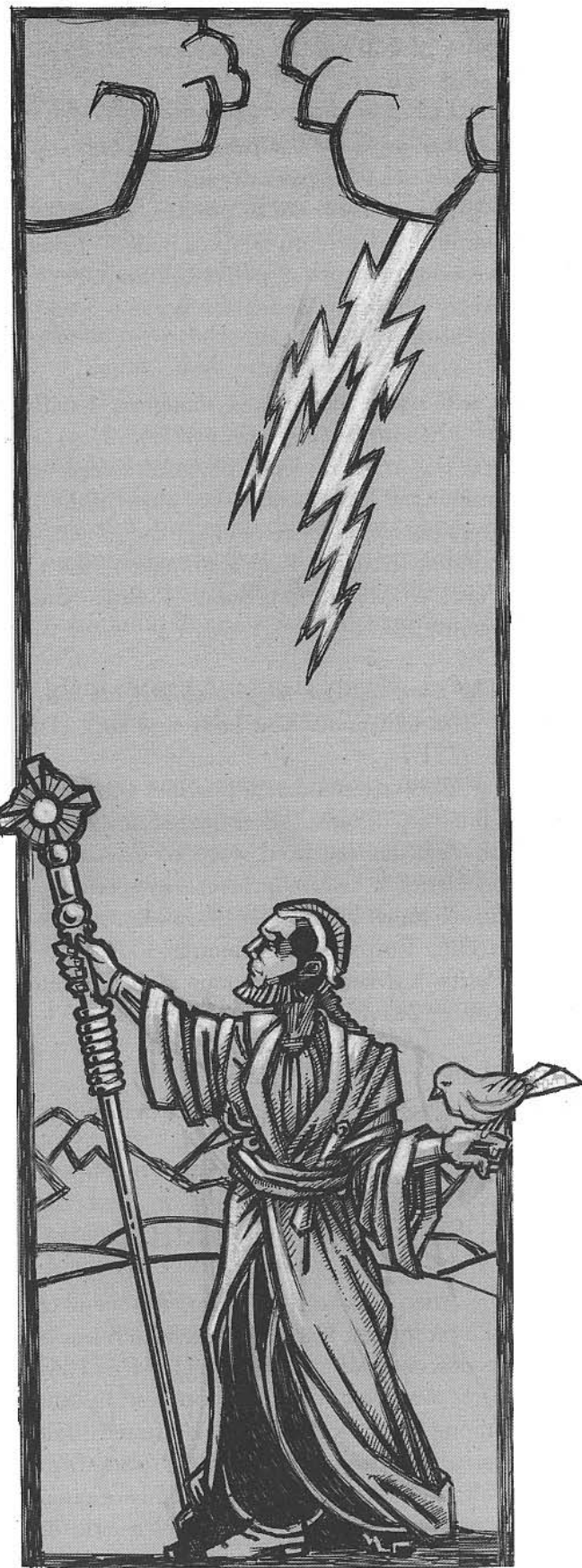
**Age:** 83 (appears 55)

**Size:** 0

**Confidence:** 3

**Virtues and Flaws:** Gentle Gift +1, Special Circumstances +1 (during storms), Noncombatant -2

**Personality Traits:** Curious +2, Gentle +1, Tolerant +1



**Reputation:** Rabbinical scholar (clergy) +1

**Soak:** +1

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

**Body Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,  
Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Artes Liberales (music) 2,  
Awareness (searching) 1, Certámen  
(Mentem) 4, Charm (clergy) 2,  
Concentration (casting spells) 1,  
Disputatio (teaching) 1, Etiquette  
(Church) 2, Enigmatic Wisdom  
(Twilight) 2, Faerie Lore (regiones) 2,  
Finesse (Mentem) 1, Folk Ken (clergy)  
2, Hermetic Law (mundane relations)  
1, Hermes Lore (House Jerbiton) 2,  
Legend Lore (regiones) 2, Magic  
Theory (inventing spells) 7, Occult  
Lore (regiones) 1, Parma Magica  
(Corpus) 4, Penetration (Muto) 1,  
Philosophiae (moral philosophy) 2,  
Scribe Latin (original composition) 5,  
Speak Latin (Hermetic usage) 5, Speak  
Local Language (court dialect) 5,  
Storytelling (epics) 3, Theology (bibli-  
cal knowledge) 2

#### Arts:

Cr 5 In 10 Mu 23 Pe 5 Re 6

An 10 Aq 5 Au 5 Co 9 He 5

Ig 5 Im 6 Me 17 Te 5 Vi 5

**Twilight Points:** 9

#### Spells Known:

*Soothe the Pain of the Beast* CrAn20 16+

*Full Health of Beast and Bird* CrAn20 16+

*Clouds of Thunderous Might* MuAu20 29+

*Circling Winds of Protection* ReAu15 12+

*Chirurgion's Healing Touch* CrCo20 15+

*The Inexorable Search* InCo20 20+

*Confound the Connection* PeCo25 15+

*The Gift of Vigour* ReCo20 16+

*Eyes of the Past* InIm20 (ritual) 19+

*Discern the Images of Truth and Falsehood*  
InIm25 17+

*Restoration of the Transformed Image*  
MuIm30 30+

*Gift of Reason* CrMe25 23+

*Return of Mental Lucidity* CrMe30 23+

*Perception of the Conflicting Motives* InMe15  
28+

*Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie* InMe20 28+

*Posing the Silent Question* InMe20 28+

*Thoughts Within Babble* InMe25 28+

*Peering into the Mortal Mind* InMe30 28+

*Enchantment of Detachment* MuMe15 41+

*Emotion of the Reversed Intentions* MuMe20  
41+

*Veil of Invisibility* PeIm10 12+

*Chamber of Invisibility* PeIm15 12+

*Aura of Rightful Authority* ReMe20 24+

*Coerce the Spirits of the Night* ReMe30 24+

*Wizard's Communion* MuVi30 28+

*Demon's Eternal Oblivion* PeVi20 11+

*Circular Ward Against Demons* ReVi20 12+

## New or Unusual Spells

### The Two-Faced Diplomat

CrMe15 23+ [from *The Wizard's  
Grimoire* Revised Edition]

R: Per/Eye, D: Conc/Sun, T: Ind

Spell Focus: A Snake's Tongue (+1)

Gives the target the ability to see both sides of an issue. This does not necessarily change his view on the topic, but it does allow him to see why others believe differently. If target's original belief is based on false premises, he might be able to realize this while under the influence of this spell, and thus change his view appropriately. This spell is most effective on the very stubborn or conservative, and less so on the open or liberal-minded.

### Spectacle of Abject Terror

CrMe20 23+ [from *The Wizard's  
Grimoire* Revised Edition]

R: Near, D: Special, T: Ind

Spell Focus: A Lion's Tooth (+3)

Inspires utter fear in the target of a specific object, person or place. On a failed Brave Personality Trait roll (against an ease factor of 9+), the target can do nothing but flee in terror until out of sight of, and at least a mile from, the feared thing. While





fleeing, the target does almost anything to get away. Use Personality traits to guide the specific actions taken by the target. If prevented from fleeing, the victim may cower in terror, curl up in a ball, or, if inherently violent, may turn and fight in a frenzy. Once the spell has expired, the target can again face the object of his fears, but without the fear. If the Brave roll botched, the target refuses to go near the thing for at least a month.

### *The Baker's Clay*

MuTe15 (ritual) 29+

R: Touch/Near, D: Permanent, T: Ind  
Spell Focus: A pocket full of rye (+1)

Makes up to 100 mud pies or loaves both nutritious and edible, though these will still actually taste of clay and dirt. If kept dry, the clay will harden and can subsequently be crumbled and eaten up to six months after the spell is cast if the clay is moistened with water, milk, oil or wine.

### *The Call to Contemplation*

MuMe40 (ritual) 43+

R: Arc, D: Sun/Moon, T: Ind

A ritual variant of *Enchantment of Detachment*, that permits the calming of an individual to whom the caster has an Arcane Connection, no matter where the target might be.

### *Kiss of the Agape*

MuMe55 (ritual) 43+

R: Arc, D: Sun/Moon, T: Boundary

An even stronger ritual variant of *Enchantment of Detachment*, affecting as much as a whole town.

## *History and Personality*

Ambrosius is a fairly conventional Jerbiton with a wide though fairly shallow interest in all forms of human knowledge,

extending even into Enigmatic Wisdom. His most recent interests involved the exploration and mapping of all the regiones within a few days' travel of Sapientia. The regio in the crypt was one of his earliest discoveries, and the one in which he set up his secret laboratory.

As the most senior member of the covenant after Anan, and holding one of the two seats on the Senate, Ambrosius has been able to thwart the Karaite's attempt to transform Sapientia into an extension of his esoteric magical tradition. As a former apprentice of one of the original founders, Ambrosius feels it is his duty to preserve the pluralistic nature of the covenant. He has long been tiring of the struggle, however, as it has interfered with his magical studies. Pantos, his own most recent former apprentice, appears willing to stay on and hold up the torch of resistance. As such, Ambrosius had been planning his retirement when the translation of the new relics to the crypt trapped him in his lab. Over the last two years, his carefully hoarded store of Muto vis is almost exhausted, and he will soon no longer be able to produce the food needed to stave off starvation.

If he ever escapes, Ambrosius intends to drop his study of regiones and pursue a new line of research involving the integration of Enchanting Music and Mentem magics similar to that which he has heard exists between Augury and Intéllego (see *The Mysteries*, pages 107-109). Unfortunately he does not have the Exceptional Talent himself nor, trapped in a regio as he is, does he have access to a subject who does. He hopes to pierce the mystery through a Twilight experience and as such has been spending the last two years practicing the flute and meditating on Enigmatic Wisdom to improve his chances.

Ambrosius' sigil is a distant rumble of thunder that can be heard each time he casts a spell. The more powerful the spell, the closer the thunder and the greater the chance a lighting bolt will strike harmlessly nearby.

# Barabas

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per 0 (+3), Pre +1, Com -2, Str +2 (+6), Stm +2 (+7), Dex -1, Qik +1

*Numbers in parentheses are for Heart-Beast form.*

**Age:** 64 (appears 40)

**Size:** +1 (+3 in Heart-Beast form)

**Confidence:** 3

**Virtues and Flaws:** Large +3, Heart-Beast (bear) +2, Quiet Magic +2, Subtle Magic +2, Affinity (self-transformation) +1, Personal Magic -6, Cyclic Magic -2 (late Fall, Winter and early Spring), Warped Magic -1 (sigil causes physical disorder and smudged and muddy paw prints within Reach), Weak Writer -1

**Personality Traits:** Bear +3, Protective of "den" +2, Home-body +1

## Weapon/Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling (fist)				
	+7	+4	+5	+3
Maul (Heart-Beast)				
	+7	+11	+4	+19
Tackle (Heart-Beast)				
	+7	+5	+1	+17

**Soak:** +3 (+28 for Heart-Beast)

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

(for Heart-Beast) OK, 0/0, -1, -1, -3/-3, -5, Unconscious

**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

(for Heart-Beast) OK, 0/0, -1, -1, -3/-3, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Affinity (self-transformation) 8, Awareness (ambushes) 2, Brawl (fist) 4, Certámen (Corpus) 4, Climb (walls and buildings) 2, Concentration (casting spells) 1, Disputatio (teaching) 2, Faerie Lore (Faerie animals) 2, Hermetic Law (Wizards' Marches) 2, Hermes Lore (House Bjornaer) 2, Magic Theory (inventing spells) 6,

Parma Magica (Corpus) 6, Scribe Latin (copying) 2, Speak Latin (Hermetic jargon) 4, Speak Local Language (local dialect) 4

## Arts:

Cr 14 In 5 Mu 17 Pe 5 Re 10

An 5 Aq 5 Au 5 Co 15 He 5

Ig 5 Im 5 Me 5 Te 9 Vi 9

**Twilight Points:** 3

## Spells Known:

*Gift of the Bear's Fortitude* MuCo(An)25 24+

*Stance of the Patient Tree* MuCo(He)35 32+ (including Affinity)

*Cloak of Mist* MuCo(Au,Aq)40 32+ (including Affinity)

*The Silent Vigil* MuCo(Te)45 36+ (including Affinity)

*Incantation of the Body Made Whole* CrCo40 31+

*Endurance of the Berserkers* ReCo15 27+

*The Gift of Vigour* ReCo20 27+

*Ward Against Heat and Flames* ReIg25 17+

*Aura of Rightful Authority* ReMe20 17+

*Tracks of the Faerie Glow* InTe25 16+ (divided by 2 if not cast on self)

*Aegis of the Hearth* ReVi25 (ritual) 23+ (divided by 2)



## New or Unusual Spells

### Form of the Avenging Beast

MuCo35 42+ [from *Houses of Hermes*]  
(unique to members of House Bjornaer)

R: Per/Touch, D: Sun/Year, T: Ind

The shape of the Heart-Beast becomes more powerful and deadly. A battle-worthy Heart-Beast receives +5 on Attack and Defense totals and +15 to Soak. If the Heart-Beast is not battle-worthy, it gains +3 to Attack and Defense totals and +10 to Soak. In addition, no penalties from wounds or fatigue apply until unconscious, incapacitated or dead. The appearance of the Heart-Beast becomes ferocious, fearsome, larger, and slightly distorted. Inert



forms, like trees or rocks, become more threatening in appearance, but they gain no combat abilities.

### *Form of the Wise One*

MuCo(An, Au)35 32+ (including Affinity) [from *The Wizard's Grimoire* Revised Edition]

R: Per/Touch, D: Sun/Perm, T: Ind

Transforms the target into an owl and acquires sight in non-absolute darkness, and a +2 bonus to Perception rolls to see at a distance at night. The target can resume human form at will, but doing so ends the spell.

### *Sense the Vis of the Beast*

InVi20 16+ (divided by 2)

R: Touch/Near, D: Inst, T: Ind

Detects whether or not a living target contains raw vis. A Perception + Vim/5 (rounded down) stress roll of 6+ gives impressions in the "a little/a lot" range, while a roll of 12+ gives the quantity of raw vis within five pawns. As the roll is stress, the storyguide might make it for players. If the roll botches, the caster assumes there is vis in the target when there is not. The spell has casting requisites appropriate to the Form of the target only (not the vis). The spell may be countered with Magic Resistance, but the caster knows if it has been successfully resisted.

## History and Personality

Sapientia's defenses do not appear impressive. Nonetheless, any attack would have to deal first with Barabas, a member of House Bjoernar with a large black bear as a Heart-Beast. Barabas takes an intense personal interest in issues affecting the security of his "den," specializing in trans-

formations and in spells which enhance his ability to spy and repel attackers.

The unusually large "trained" bear kept by the Karaites is an ongoing subject of discord between the covenant and the townsfolk. The "beast" is sometimes found loose wandering the streets without its "keeper" (Eo), and while it has never attacked anyone without provocation, the magistrates have threatened to fine the covenant if the bear continues to escape the compound. A recent failed effort at compromise has only made matters worse. The town attempted to buy the "animal" for use in a bear-baiting production that would have served as the prime attraction at the yearly trade fair. The generous offer met with a flat refusal, however, and the townsfolk still complain of the Karaites' churlish refusal to contribute to the hoped-for public entertainment.

Despite his protectiveness, Barabas takes little interest in the actual running of Sapientia. Nevertheless, he dislikes Anan's transparent efforts to become sole master of the covenant. As such, he systematically opposes the Karaite magi in the Council on every issue, but does not appear overly disturbed when he is out voted. Anan is sensitive to the need to keep Barabas content because of his contribution to the security of the covenant and because he is the last member of the covenant who can teach Anan's future apprentices Hermetic magic. As such, Anan ensures that the Bjornaer's few explicit wishes are respected.

Barabas' unconscious habit of marking his "den" while in bear form makes him widely unpopular with Sapientia's grogs. A former apprentice used to clean up after him by casting spontaneous *Perdo Aquam* spells (with an Animal requisite), but has since departed the covenant. No degree of scrubbing or cleaning has proven successful in otherwise fully removing the scent.



# Eo

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Str +1, Stm +1, Pre +4, Com -3, Dex +1, Qik +3

**Age:** 49 (apparent age 22)

**Confidence:** 2

**Virtues and Flaws:** Eternal Youth +?, Affinity (Perdo) +3, Contortions +1, Insanity -?, Chaotic Magic -4, Delusion -1

**Personality Traits:** Homicidally Insane +5

**Reputation:** Deranged (townsfolk) +2

**Weapon/Attack**

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bare handed (with Hose)	+10	+7 (+10)	+9 (+15)	+1 (+4)
Dagger (with Hose)	+12	+9 (+12)	+12 (+18)	+4 (+7)
Composite Bow (with Hose)	+9	+10 (+8)*	+9 (+15)	+9

\* Note: Eo gets an additional +4 bonus on long range archery while wearing the Hose if he is using the *Eyes of the Hawk* effect.

**Soak (with Hose):** +1 (+19)

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

**Body Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Affinity (Perdo) 5, Athletics (landing) 3, Awareness (eavesdropping) 2, Bow (Composite) 6, Brawl (dagger) 6, Contortions (break free) 2, Hermes Lore (House Tylalus) 2, Intrigue (plotting) 1, Jongleur (daggers) 1, Magic Theory (potions) 8, Parma Magica (Igm) 4, Scribe Latin (reading) 2, Speak Greek (poetry) 4, Speak Latin (poetry) 5, Speak Local Language (eavesdropping) 3

**Arts:**

Cr 0 In 0 Mu 15 Pe 17 Re 11  
An 5 Aq 10 Au 0 Co 15 He 5  
Ig 0 Im 0 Me 5 Te 5 Vi 0

**Twilight Points:** 12





**Twilight Effects:** Insanity, Eternal Youth, Delusion

**Spells Known:** (add +3 to Penetration totals if Eo is using the *Gift of the Second Wind* effect)

*Lungs of Water and Death* CrAq15 11+

*Pull of the Watery Grave* ReAq30 22+

*Grip of the Choking Hand* PeCo15 38+ (including Affinity)

*Clenching Grasp of the Crushed Heart* PeCo40 38+ (including Affinity)

*Gift of the Frog's Legs* ReCo10 27+

*Veil of Invisibility* PeIm10 23+ (including Affinity)

*The Black Whisper* PeMe35 28+ (including Affinity)

## New or Unusual Spells

### *Wings of the Soaring Angel*

MuCo40 31+

R: Self, D: Sun, T: Ind

Giant functional wings grow from the target's shoulder blades. About a month of continuous practice is required to master flight. Note that the effects of this spell on fully clad targets are likely to be painful and largely ineffective.

### *Cough of the Bleeding Lung*

PeCo45 38+ (including Affinity)

## Nemesis

Nemesis is the Greek personification of retributive justice. She is the daughter of Nox (night) and Erebus (darkness). One of Zeus' handmaidens, she tried to evade his advances by fleeing in the shape of a goose. Zeus, in turn, changed into a swan and caught her. Nemesis subsequently gave birth to Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world whose face "launched a thousand ships."

R: Touch, D: Moon, T: Ind

This spell inflicts a non-infectious, but incapacitating and usually fatal, lung disease on the target. The target suffers light wounds and must roll on the wound recovery chart the next day. Until the spell is canceled or expires, or the patient fully recovers, no benefits can be gained from Chirurgy or Medicine, and all rolls on the chart (but not the catastrophe sub-chart) are at -8. Magically assisted healing must first overcome the penetration roll of the spell to be effective.

### *The Invisible Archer's Friend*

ReAn(Te,He,Aq)25 17+

R: Arcane, D: Mom, T: Small

Permits Eo to summon to hand his composite bow or any other small object to which he has an Arcane Connection.

## Equipment

### *Eo's Enchanted Hose*

Eo normally wears black silk body-hose — a powerful invested device given to him by his parens (who was infatuated with her handsome apprentice) upon his initiation. It is laced up the front from the navel to the neck. Besides its many magical effects, the hose has also been strengthened with a permanent MuAn spell which makes it virtually invulnerable to damage associated with repeated use such as wear and tear. The hose is not invulnerable to deliberate damage done, say by a strong pair of scissors or a large fire. It also has a minor flaw: when the wearer botches while pushing his physical limits beyond his base Strength, Stamina or Dexterity, he rolls an additional botch die. The hose is invested with 18 pawns of vis, and the various effects are activated by complex manipulations of the laces. All the effects have range Self and duration Sun.

**Powers:***Gift of the Frog's Legs*, 24/d, ReCo5*Eyes of the Hawk*, 3/d, MuCo10

This effect changes the eyes of the wearer so as to gain the long-distance vision of a hawk. It grants a +4 bonus to Perception rolls at a distance.

*Eyes of the Cat*, 24/d, MuCo10*Whispering Winds*, 6/d, InAu15

*Gift of the Hero's Strength*, 1/d, MuCo(Cr)20 [from *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*]

This effect temporarily increases the wearer's Strength by +3, but not beyond +4.

*Gift of the Sure Hand*, 1/d, MuCo(Re)20

This effect temporarily increases the wearer's Dexterity by +3, but not beyond +4.

*Gift of the Second Wind*, 1/d, MuCo(Cr)20

This effect temporarily increases the wearer's Stamina by +3, but not beyond +4. Note that this affects both Soak and Formulaic spell casting rolls.

*Blessing of Antaeus' Fortitude*, 2/d, MuCo(Te)35 [from *The Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*]

While the wearer's weight rests upon the earth — buildings qualify, but standing on ice, treading water, or hovering in the air do not — he or she acquires the fortitude of a megalith. Soak is increased by +15, blows from weapons can be parried with bare hands (+6 to Defense), and any rolls (usually based on Size or Strength + Size) made to avoid being knocked over are at +8. For purposes of being lifted (whether by ReCo spells or physical strength), rather than being tackled or shoved, the wearer's weight remains normal. The effect is suppressed rather than broken, by breaking the wearer's connection to the earth, so resumes if the wearer is set down again. While the effect is active, the wearer suffers a -2 to all touch-based

Perception rolls and related activities, due to blunted tactile senses.

## *Eo's Magical Bow*

Eo's talisman is a composite bow, decorated with onyx inlay. Red coral is bound into the grip. It has room for 28 pawns of additional investments, and has been opened to Destroy at a Distance (+5) and Destroy Demons (+10). All the powers are restricted to Eo's use. If Eo does not have his talisman at hand, he can always summon it by casting *The Invisible Archer's Friend*.

**Powers:***Hunter's Lethal Arrow*, 6/d, PeAn30*Demon's Eternal Oblivion*, 6/d, PeVi30

*Clenching Grasp of the Crushed Heart*, 3/d  
PeCo40

## History and Personality

Eo is probably the most disturbing member of the covenant. Muscular, handsome and lithe (he can bend over backwards and grasp his Achilles' tendons), he is blessed with eternal youth as a consequence of an experiment gone wrong while analyzing a supernatural potion. While he is actually in his late-forties, he appears to be in his early twenties. Other magi might envy his youth (whether he has become immortal or not remains, as yet, undetermined), but it has come at a horrible price, as he is quite insane.

Trained as a Tylalus mage, Eo now believes he is the secret twin brother of Nemesis with a duty and destiny to met out deadly justice in the mundane sphere. All of Eo's faculties are now focused on the subtler arts of death. He is a master with dagger and bow, and spends long hours in exercise and in obsessive laboratory research into poisons and diseases. Anan has never confided to anyone his suspicions that one





of Eo's experiments might have been responsible for a deadly plague that swept through the town a few years ago.

Eo never initiates conversation, though he may respond to a direct question. His voice is warm and appealing, if somewhat distant, and he will swiftly lose interest in any subject which challenges his understanding of reality. On the other hand, his attention can be held through recitation of Greek mythological poetry. In spite of his silence, he is intensely aware of what is done or said in his presence, particularly as it relates to crimes past, present and future.

Eo usually wears his magically enhanced jet-black body hose beneath a variety of close-fitting black tunics or jerkins. Ambrosius, who pitied his disability, was the only friend he maintained after his accident. The mysterious departure of the senior mage has left Eo psychologically even more isolated than usual, and he has taken to following Barabas occasionally during his strolls through the city in bear shape. Because of Eo's peculiar dress and appearance (not to mention his compulsive habit of unconsciously juggling razor-sharp daggers), the townsfolk believe he is a slightly deranged professional entertainer and the "bear's" trainer. In fact, Barabas and Eo are largely indifferent to each other.

When on a "mission," Eo strips to his hose at night, or to his skin while invisible during the day. His sigil is an ethereal arrow which projects from him to his target when he casts a spell. The arrow appears imbedded in the target until the spell fades or expires, and can be seen clearly by those with Second Sight or, with greater difficulty (-6 on Perception rolls), by those with the Gift or Magic Sensitivity. While he knows a variety of death-dealing spells, his preference is for subtle effects that make it appear as if the target died of natural causes. He never confronts his victims with their "misdeeds," but merely observes, judges and executes.

## Ibrahim, Yossouf and Benjamin

Anan's three former apprentices appear to be largely colorless at first glance, their personalities having been worn down by Anan's overbearing leadership. They loyally follow his commands, keep his secrets and derive what joy they can from their religious, legal and magical studies. This is particularly hard on Ibrahim, who is also under the thumb of a domineering wife (Rebecca). As Anan's first apprentice and son-in-law, he could normally have expected to succeed his parens as head of the Karaite tradition. Unfortunately, Anan is obsessed with his ancient royal ancestry and refuses to recognize a commoner like Ibrahim as his successor. Even Anan's great wealth is beyond Ibrahim's reach as the elder mage intends to distribute his fortune amongst his ungifted sons after his death. Ibrahim will never discuss his troubles with the characters, but they might get hints from Pantos or other friends they might make at Sapientia.

As Anan's second former apprentice, Yossouf has subsumed his considerable natural aggressiveness in an intense dislike of Ibrahim. Jealous of the "favor" shown the elder mage, Yossouf is convinced he would have had no difficulty in begetting a Gifted son if Rebecca had been his bride instead of Ibrahim's. As such, he continuously needles the miserable Ibrahim, subtly questioning his manhood, learning and competence. Yossouf is impatiently waiting for Anan to father another Gifted daughter so he can marry her and displace a rival he despises. As he knows Anan would never let him marry one of his daughters as a second wife, Yossouf has remained single. He is both egocentric and xenophobic, and is most unlikely to befriend any of the characters.

Benjamin is the most recent of Anan's former apprentices. He is quiet, shy and introspective, free of Ibrahim's misery and Yossouf's bitterness. In fact, he has remained remarkably childlike and even-tempered. If the characters ever succeed in drawing him out, he could become a friend. Although devoid of any actual artistic talent, Benjamin is profoundly sensitive to beauty in all its forms (he can often be found in the garden admiring the blooms and quietly humming the Song of Songs to himself) and has a powerful Affinity with Imáginem. He has even invested a Hermetic magical device, which produces a single shimmering and translucent illusion he can reshape and manipulate at will, so long as he concentrates. Anan takes a dim view of this pastime, but expects Benjamin to grow out of it eventually.

Benjamin is endlessly amazed at Eo's physical perfection and can spend long hours watching the mad mage perform his graceful yet strenuous exercises. Sometimes he even summons up an illusion which mirrors Eo's appearance and movements in every way. Benjamin would very much like to marry, but is too closely related to all the single women at Sapientia. (Karaites are forbidden from marrying outside their faith or to those related to them within the third degree by blood or marriage.) He hopes Anan will find him a bride soon, but this is far down the senior mage's list of priorities.

## Pantos

Pantos is a young and amiable mage, trained in the mysteries of House Jerbiton by his parents Ambrosius. He is steeped in his covenant's history, and is quietly resentful of Anan's efforts to accumulate all authority in his own hands. Pantos believes it is his duty to step into Ambrosius' shoes and help draw Sapientia back into a new Spring. As a junior member of the covenant, however, he can only observe

from the sidelines. Pantos is unaware of Benjamin's indifference to Anan's plans. He thinks of the young Karaite mage only as a rival for Ambrosius' Council seat, and so avoids him. This is a pity as the two could become great friends.

## Rebecca

Brilliant and strong-willed, Rebecca would have been a fitting heir to her father if not for his stubborn misogyny and prejudice. The Gift wells up strongly within her and, untrained, has taken the form of the Hex, Entrancement and Healer Virtues with corresponding scores of 3, 2 and 2 respectively. Though she is resentful of her father's neglect, she identifies completely with his goals, harassing Ibrahim relentlessly into giving her a Gifted son. Ibrahim can only get any rest when she is pregnant. Rebecca usually hires a wet-nurse (Anan does not stint the expenditure) and so has had nine pregnancies in ten years. None of her children so far have had the Gift, but she is determined to succeed.

## Anan's Wives

Anan's wives have been chosen for their supernatural Virtues and nothing else. They are otherwise unremarkable. Once they have proven barren (like Elijahbeth) or passed child bearing years, Anan largely neglects them and they have to rely on their children for support. Miriam is Anan's first wife and is now old and frail. She has Enchanting Music 6, but her voice is now feeble and her hands palsied. No one has heard her sing or play the harp in years. Corina and Begat are sisters with Second Sight 4 and 5 respectively. Corina is Rebecca's mother but meekly obeys her domineering daughter. Elijahbeth is childless and maintains herself by telling for-





tunes for the town's womenfolk. She has Visions 5. Female characters might consult her, but she charges one penny per consultation, and often fakes or misinterprets her visions. Fatima is approaching the end of her child-bearing years, but fortunately has four sons to support her. She has Sense Holiness/Unholiness 3. Iksandra is Anan's newest bride on whom he showers most of his attentions. She has Premonitions 2.

## Mad Anna

Anna is a former beguine (a member of a lay religious order) who has become slightly deranged under the influence of her Second Sight (she has a score of 6). She comes from a noble but impoverished family. Her brother was killed by the Snake in drunken brawl. When the Snake was freed for lack of evidence (the Snake had bribed or cowed the witnesses) and unwisely bragged of his homicidal exploits during a confrontation with the Grip, Eo decided to take action on his own.

## Jonas

Born deaf-mute of Jewish parents, Jonas was orphaned at an early age. A carpenter's wife took him in as a menial, but his gift for mimic carpentry was soon discovered by his master and Jonas' labor was put to more profitable use. Though unable to practice carpentry directly, if the appropriate tools and supplies are at hand, he can uncannily reproduce exactly any single piece of finished wood including any carvings or engravings. In fact, he can often copy a piece in less time than it took to make the original. He is not a true carpenter, though, and cannot undertake a new work or even assemble a cabinet, for example, from its component pieces. He can, however, repro-

duce each individual component so accurately and perfectly that the assembly can be easily performed by others.

Thanks to his Gift, Jonas has become a valued assistant in the shop where he works. But he also suffers from the social penalties of the Gift. Because of this stigma he has no real friends, and is often the butt of cruel jokes from the carpenter's apprentices and family who never let him forget his status as an adopted menial. As he can neither read nor write, his isolation is complete. Theologians in Mythic Europe postulate that, as the original language of mankind from the Garden of Eden til the building of the tower of Babel was Hebrew, this must be the language deaf-mutes speak to themselves in their souls. Hermetic mind-probing magic has been unable to verify this as deaf-mutes normally think in pictures, symbols and images. But investigation might reveal that Jonas does appear to think in a unique dialect of Hebrew with a score of 3. Whether the theologians are correct or whether Jonas somehow picked up Hebrew from his religious environment by osmosis is up to the storyguide to decide (note, however, that in the 13th century most Jews in Mythic Europe no longer speak Hebrew).

While the carpenter shop in which Jonas works is Jewish, it has many gentile customers who appreciate its ability to produce identical matching furniture sets. In order to help distinguish orders, Jonas has been trained to mark finished pieces destined for Christian customers with a cross. When he came across the two youths killed by Eo, Jonas recognized them as Christians and marked their foreheads to ensure that were not buried in the Jewish cemetery by mistake, little understanding the broader implications of his act. If the characters investigate Jonas' background, they may learn of his unusual Gift. If they decide to claim Ambrosius' staff and replace it with an identical copy, Jonas is the man for the job.

## Guy

Guy lost his wife and children in a bizarre epidemic that swept through the town a few years ago (see Eo). He went deeply into debt, first to pay for their failed medical treatment, and then to cover their burial. Guy is teetering on the edge of losing his shop, tools and business. To make matters worse, his resulting depression has led him to heavy drinking and a progressive loss of custom. His back to the wall, Guy unwisely negotiated an unsecured loan from the Grip. Since Guy soon fell behind on his unrealistic repayment schedule, the Grip decided to cut his losses and make an example by driving the carpenter to utter ruin, hence the arson attack on his house.

That Guy is heavily in debt to Anan is widely known. Anan stands to foreclose on the carpenter's tenancy. That Guy is heavily in debt to the Grip is less so. If Guy survives the arson attempt and is questioned by the characters, he will not spontaneously admit that he owes money to the gang leader whom he now has valid reasons to fear. Without actually making any accusations, he prefers to have suspicion fall on Anan, whom he fears less. Besides, Guy does not know for a fact that the Grip ordered the attack. And if Anan is convicted of the crime, Guy stands to be freed of most of his debt.

## Toni "the Grip"

**Characteristics:** Int +2 (quick witted), Per +3 (intuitive), Str -1 (weak grip), Stm -1 (short winded), Pre +2 (intimidating), Com 0, Dex 0, Qik +1 (quick reflexes)

**Age:** 36

**Confidence:** 4

**Virtues and Flaws:** Magic Resistance +4, Charmed Life +3, Withstand Magic +2, Premonitions +1, Disfigured -1

**Personality Traits:** Arsonist +1, Cautious +1

**Reputation:** Untouchable (townsfolk) +2, Very Lucky (underworld) +1

**Weapon/Attack**

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling* (bare handed)	+7	+5	+6	+1

\* Note: Includes +2 damage bonus from using his claws, and +1 specialization.

**Soak:** -1

**Abilities:** Awareness (traps) 3, Bargain (negotiations) 2, Brawl (bare handed) 4, Charm (the powerful) 1, Disguise (provost) 3, Folk Ken (underworld) 1, Guile (authorities) 1, Intrigue (rumor-mongering) 2, Leadership (giving orders) 5, Premonitions (traps) 5, Speak Local Language (local dialect) 5, Stealth (hide) 3, Town Lore (hiding places) 4



## History and Personality

The Grip gets his name from the fact that the four fingers of each hand are fused though still opposable to his thumbs. This gives his hands the appearance of pincers which he hides by keeping them closed and wearing padded gloves. His disability makes it difficult for him to hold things firmly and makes fine detailed tasks like scribing impossible. In partial compensation perhaps, his nails have also fused, creating thick, horny claws which he keeps sharpened.

As ruthless and violent thugs go, the Grip is far from the worst. At least this is the view of his associates. Certainly his sins pale compared to those of the Snake who took actual pleasure in killing and inflicting pain on his victims. The local underworld is abuzz over the tense street confrontation that occurred recently between the two



gang leaders. It ended surprisingly suddenly when the Snake just keeled over and died right after having unwisely bragged about his long list of kills and his intention of adding the Grip to their number. The Grip, on the other hand, is not really into killings.

Ever since the death of his rival, the Grip's fortunes have gone from strength to strength, and he is now the undisputed lord of the town's underclass of beggars, thieves and prostitutes. Branching off into usury, he has been keen to claim a share of the market from the town's Jewish money lenders who are unable to resort to his unorthodox methods of ensuring repayment. The Grip had no idea Guy was in a drunken stupor when he sent two of his more recent recruits to teach the carpenter a lesson. It had never been his intention to kill the man. After all, dead carpenters cannot repay their debts.

The Grip is seriously concerned by the death of his two young arsonists. While he is unsure whether Anan is personally implicated, he is convinced that at least some of his Jewish competitors are behind the killings. He is stoking public anger against the Jews as a form of payback. While Toni has decided to lie low personally, he has instructed his agents to gather as many local and (preferably) foreign ruffians as they can recruit and stage arson



attacks against the residences of all the prominent Jewish usurers, Anan included. Even if the characters capture him, the die has already been cast.

If the characters are baffled as to where to find Ambrosius, they may fix on capturing the Grip as the solution to the adventure. Finding him will be no easy matter. He can almost always sniff out a trap before it is too late. He is also very skilled at disguises and also bears a passing resemblance to the provost. As such, he often favors this particular disguise at night. This could lead the characters to conclude that the Grip is none other than the provost himself (with humorous and embarrassing consequences). Finally, the Grip is also very careful about his own security and never informs his lieutenants fully about his plans and whereabouts. Instead of having them come to him, he goes to them when and where he thinks it is safe to do so.

Even in the unlikely event the characters were to find him, his charmed life and virtual immunity to magic mean that he will probably slip out of their clutches time and time again with daring escapes and bizarre coincidences being the order of the day. The storyguide should milk these situations as much as possible as sources of frustration and entertainment. If the characters do succeed capturing the Grip and in getting him to confess his plans, they will unfortunately still not have time to hunt down and neutralize all his lieutenants as these normally operate separately and are given scope for considerable initiative.

## Father Deodat

As archdeacon and dean of the cathedral chapter, Deodat is the ranking religious figure in the town after the bishop. The priest sees himself as a reasonably good

friend of Ambrosius, whom he believes to be a rabbinical scholar of some sort. While perceived religious differences precluded any genuine intimacy between the two, Deodat found their friendly theological and philosophical discussions both interesting and enlightening. He has not seen Ambrosius in two years, and simply assumes that he is off traveling on some private business. If the characters inform him that Ambrosius has been missing all this time, he will be concerned and will allow them to search the cathedral for clues if they think to ask, and may even suggest they search the crypt in particular.

What Deodat will not discuss with the characters is his near certainty that the "crozier" kept in the crypt as a relic of St. Ambrose is really Ambrosius' "walking stick." He had frequently seen his friend carrying it and had often joked about its passing resemblance to a bishop's crozier. He has no idea why Ambrosius might have left it in the crypt, and was quite embarrassed when the bishop declared its appearance as part of a "miracle". Deodat was not willing to contradict the bishop to his face, however, and has kept his peace. Nonetheless, he still has a very uneasy conscience.

If Ambrosius returns to claim the staff, Deodat will certainly return it to him. That would leave open the question of how to explain the disappearance of the missing relic. If the characters offer a substitute, Deodat will accept it with only mild reservations, one fake relic being as good as another. If no substitute is offered, the priest will just tell the bishop the "crozier" has gone missing. Perhaps the saint will have reclaimed it in displeasure at the townsfolk's persistent and incorrigible sinfulness.

FINIS



A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF POWER AND CONSEQUENCES

# UNKNOWN ARMIES

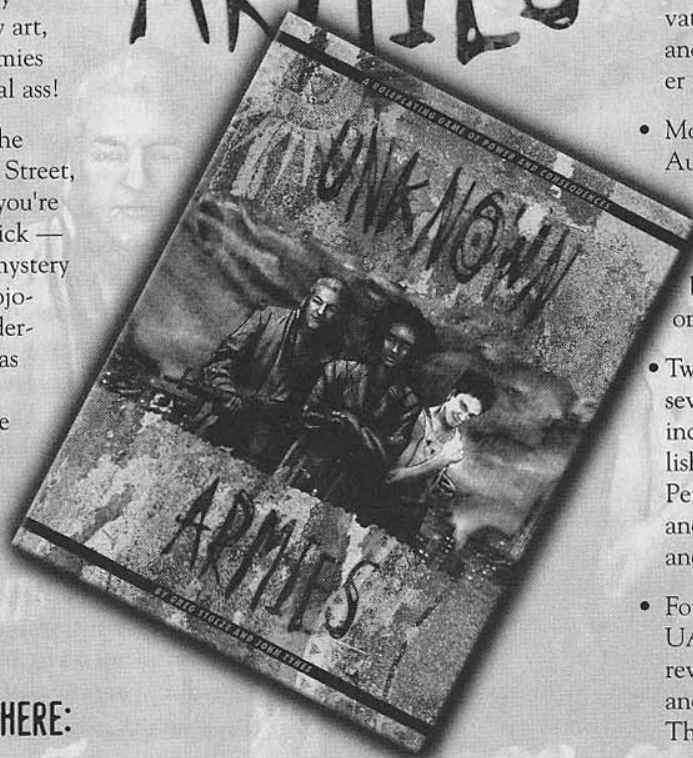
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