

Core Rulebook



POTERIS · NIHIL · ROMANO · IMP



ERIO · VISERE · MAIUS ·

M. GALLICUS FECIT
ANNO MCCXXIX A·V·C



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PRELUDE

THE EMPEROR'S SPEECH

In the hot summer of the year 1229, from the foundation of the City, the Senators returned to Rome in haste from the leisure of their country villas. They found the capital of the Empire in turmoil: the news of an unexpected summoning of the Senate had spread quickly, and conflicting rumors about the content of a secret Imperial oration had filled the air with eager anticipation.

On the morning of August 28, the day of the convocation, a full cohort of Praetorians surrounded the Palace of the Senate—to discourage the curious and to let the Senators enter without interference. The seats were filled, quickly and early, allowing the three hundred Senators to share their opinions on what everyone knew—or thought they knew. The emperor Theodomir appeared in the crowded hall with perfect timing, ushered in by trumpets and richly dressed as Augur Maximus, according to the canon of a long-forgotten tradition. Without delay, he took off his red cloak and laid it on his seat in studied disorder, immediately beginning his historic speech:

"Conscript fathers,
You have certainly formulated worrying assumptions about the reasons for this summons: violated borders, rebel provinces, barbarian hordes raging across the plains of Gaul. None of these are correct,, Senators. The military and territorial supremacy of the Empire is still unchallenged.

It is something more serious instead, the nature of which goes far beyond your imagination. A sinister omen prompted me to consult the Sibylline Books and to question the oracle of Delphi, and the response was unanimous: an obscure design threatens the Empire's very existence!

I realize, conscript fathers, how much this statement may sound disturbing. To better understand the situation, I invite you to close your eyes for a moment and travel into the past. Recall the ancient triumphs of our legions, march with them across the Etruscan cities, and enter the palaces of Carthage and the villas of Egypt.

Now take a closer look: there, hiding in the shadows, another small army labors in the necropolises, in the temples, in the pyramids. It is an army of scholars, priests, and augurs, the true architects of the glory of Rome, greedy not for gold, slaves, nor jewels, but for goods infinitely more precious: books, parchments, inscriptions, secrets of magic, and knowledge. Their work has continued across centuries of conquest, until the times of Hadrian the Great, unequaled and unsurpassable master of Divination. In his wisdom, Hadrian decreed the raising of the Valla, sensing immense dangers hiding behind any further expansion.

With the passing of years and centuries, Hadrian's intent has been misinterpreted by lesser men, and the Valla were progressively transformed from defensive works into the impassable walls of our voluntary imprisonment. Since then, our society has vainly wallowed in prosperity, losing every dynamic impulse, and our magical knowledge has been stagnant for three centuries in the barren swamp of self-complacency. Unfortunately, we are reaping today the bitter fruits of this course of action, as we find ourselves ill-equipped to oppose the magic of barbaric shamans, Celtic druids, or Persian necromancers. Daily dispatches—issued by the legions stationed in the Valla—report mysterious and inexplicable phenomena. Ancient sacrificial cults claim new victims with ever-increasing frequency. Forbidden sects, unauthorized magical practices, and fanatics raving about the end of the world are multiplying like weeds. Like a flood wave, all of this is crashing against a building of profound fragility and whose foundations are damaged daily, in a more creeping but no less dangerous manner: by the scourge of corruption and malpractice, by the baneful trade of public offices, by the abuses of debt collectors, and by the greed of the rich and powerful.

It is to deal with this worrying situation, conscript fathers, that I ask you to approve the Lex Arcana, a law tasking the Praetorian Guard with the enlistment of six hundred Custodes. These men and women of the Empire will be given full autonomy of action, and they will constitute the first nucleus of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. The Custodes shall act in small groups, study the most inexplicable phenomena, investigate the dark alleys of our cities, infiltrate forbidden cults, and cross the Valla in search of the ancient sources of knowledge. They will be chosen from among the most promising young people of the Empire and recruited from every province or social class. They will receive specific training aimed at fully developing their natural aptitudes and predispositions. The power of the heroes of the past will be infused in their veins, and the magic of the Empire shall be at their service.

Thanks to the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana, we will once again collect the fragmented knowledge of the peoples and purify it, to create a consistent, universal system that will fully penetrate the secrets and mysteries of magic and reach its full dominion. We thought we had already completed our mission, but we were deceiving ourselves—today our mistake is clear: 'forms of magic hitherto unknown', recite the dispatches coming from the borders and the cities in turmoil. Rome cannot admit the concept of an unknown, therefore the Custodes shall act in the name of knowledge."



PART I

INTRODUCTION



PROLOGUE

Lex Arcana is a historical fantasy role-playing game, set in an alternative 5th century CE where magic exists. In this divergent timeline, the Roman Empire managed to steer away from the course of events which led to its historical collapse, thanks to the mastery of the arts of Divination. By being able to see beyond the barriers of time, the Roman Emperors have kept their enemies at bay for centuries, both outside the borders of the Empire and within.

In *Lex Arcana*, players take on the role of **Custodes** (sing. **Custos**) of the **Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana**—a special chapter of the Praetorian Guard appointed by Imperial decree to search out and study any supernatural phenomena. It has a singular mission: to identify and possibly stop all unauthorized magical activity. For behind the veneer of luxurious ostentation and military might of the Roman Empire, many threats of an arcane nature are constantly gnawing away at its foundations: forbidden cults make converts among the poor and dispossessed denizens of the great cities, while enemy sorcerers unleash frightening monsters against the legions stationed at the frontiers.

To accomplish their task, the Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana travel to the four corners of the known world, investigating mysteries and unusual occurrences among hostile populations. Far from the center of the Empire, the Custodes must intervene of their own accord, at the risk of throwing whole cities—even entire provinces—into turmoil should they fail. They must battle to complete their missions, facing most grave threats, ruthless assassins, and creatures risen from the depths of the underworld.

WHERE TO START

The core book contains all the information needed to play *Lex Arcana* for a long time. The first seven sections into which the volume is divided can be read freely by all the players, but from *Part Eight* onwards, information is instead intended only for the **Demiurge**, the person who will be running the game.

This is the introductory section of the volume, which will explain what role-playing games are and how they work. Next, there is the section dedicated to the true protagonists of *Lex Arcana*, the Custodes (*Part Two*), and the chapter that illustrates the core rules of the game (*Part Three*). The following sections teach players how to create and play their own Custodes (*Part Four*), the combat system (*Part Five*), magic (*Part Six*), and all the different ways that player characters grow in power and prestige (*Part Seven*). The key mechanics of the game are then discussed in depth (*Part Eight*), as well as the setting in which the characters will live their adventures: the Roman Empire (*Part Nine*). At the end of the book (*Part Ten*) there are two complete adventures, which will test the courage and the determination of the newly appointed Custodes.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

A role-playing game (RPG) is a tabletop game in which players assume the roles of fictional characters in order to live a life of adventure. All players, except one, design a character and get to describe their actions to the last player, who acts as a game moderator—the Demiurge.

Gameplay consists of a dialogue between the participants, who decide what to do, where to go, and how to defeat enemies, while the moderator adjudicates the outcome of these actions using a set of rules. The result of this interaction is the creation of a fiction, where the players are the main actors, with the power to influence the story with their choices and actions.

To fully enter the world of *Lex Arcana*, each player needs to step into their character's shoes and guide their actions, trying to think as the Custodes would think and react as they would react. It is a game of make-believe, driven by imagination and created in collaboration with the Demiurge.

But even if it takes place in the imagination of players, a role-playing game still relies on rules not so different from those of a traditional board game. In *Lex Arcana*, dice are used to determine the success or failure of the characters' most significant actions—simpler actions usually do not require dice rolls and are resolved through common sense. By combining the limits set by the rules and the creativity of all participants, the Demiurge and the players create a memorable story of bold heroes who confront deadly perils.

In a role-playing game, there is no competition between the participants, and there is no real winning or losing—at least not in the way other games are won or lost. Players are not adversaries, and they must cooperate to achieve their goals. Even if they sometimes fail, if everyone has fun and the story is exciting, it's a victory for everyone involved.

ADVENTURES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

The adventures of *Lex Arcana* are as diverse as the Roman Empire is vast. The Custodes can be sent to explore the catacombs of Rome looking for a lost relic, they can investigate the infiltration of a depraved cult spreading among the ranks of a border garrison in Britannia, they may find themselves fighting undead monsters in Syria, or they can be tasked with sailing to the snowy shores of Hyperborea—where the giants live and the sun never sets.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Imagine that we are attending a game session with four people around the table: Leo, Mark, Anna, and Mike. The game begins…

Leo (the Demiurge): *Last time you arrived in Sidolocus—a country town less than thirty miles away from Augustodunum, in Gallia—you started your investigations on your first official assignment as Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. Rumors tell of a band of brigands, active around Sidolocus, avoiding capture thanks to some form of supernatural protection.*

You lay your eyes for the first time on the town as the road emerges from amidst a copse. On your left, the sun is falling behind a series of tall, wooded hills; on your right, the land rolls gently in folds and undulations, colored green and yellow by plots of different crops. Right before you, the town lies in a wide valley floor, among wet pastures and marshes.

Anna (the Scholar): *Is there anything I might know about the town? Something I have read during my training in the cursus sapiens, or that I can deduce?*

Leo (the Demiurge): *You need to make a* ***De Scientia*** *roll with a difficulty of 9.*

Anna (the Scholar): *Does my* ***Investigation*** *specialty apply?*

Leo (the Demiurge): *Yes.*

Anna (rolling the dice): *I rolled a twelve!*

Leo (the Demiurge): *You have never heard of the town before, but by looking at it, you surmise that the settlement cannot be of ancient foundation: the disposition of the buildings follow the pattern of Roman construction, and the village has no ramparts or walls around it, a clear sign that Sidolocus must have been built after Gallia was pacified.*

When you start descending the slope, leading to the town, your eyes are caught by the shapes of four crucifixions erected alongside the road.

Mike (the Explorer): *Let's take a look at what happened here.*

Leo (the Demiurge): *As you get closer to the first houses, details color the scene in tragic tones: along the left side of the road a group of men and women mourn, praying to the many gods of the Gallo-Roman religion. On the other side, an armed soldier stands guard, before the crosses. Behind the guard four men hang in agony—stripped naked, their wrists and heels nailed to the wooden beams.*

Mark (the Augur): *Gross! I guess I should overcome my repulsion and examine the scene. Why were they executed?*

Leo (the Demiurge): *Around their necks hang the "tituli crucis", wooden panels indicating the cause for their punishment. Given the discontent for the seemingly uncatchable brigands in the countryside, you don't even need to read the tituli as you already suspect the cause for the execution: "receptatores", accomplices…*

476 CE: OUR WORLD

In the fifth century CE, the final collapse of the western Roman Empire closes a chapter of history that lasted more than one thousand years. The people forget the gods and heroes—and with them the dream of a nation that once unified the known world…

1229 AB URBE CONDITA: AN ALTERNATE WORLD

In the thirteenth century since the foundation of Rome, an Emperor still watches over twenty provinces and the diverse people inhabiting them. Ruling with the help of divinatory powers, the Emperor grants stability to a world threatened by supernatural phenomena and dark omens.

In the year 1229 AUC (Ab Urbe Condita, from the founding of the city), the streets of Rome, Alexandria, and Carthage find Greek philosophers mingling with astronomers from Babylon, while Germanic warriors enter service in the legions alongside Gauls and Sarmatian nomads. Every citizen of the Empire speaks Latin or Greek and is equal under common laws.

But the world of *Lex Arcana* is also fraught with danger, as within sight of the great walls of the Roman cities lie demon-riddled deserts and dark, impenetrable forests, inhabited by fantastical beasts and murderous folk who defy the rule of the Emperor.



PART II

THE CUSTODES



In *Lex Arcana*, the player characters (abbreviated as PCs) are Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana, members of a special corps recently established and headed by the Praetorian Guard. The Custodes are not just soldiers enlisted to fight or march: they count among their number mages, warriors, explorers, scholars, and diplomats, coming from the most distant provinces of the Empire and assigned with very special tasks.

THE COHORS AUXILIARIA ARCANA

The Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana numbers a few hundred highly specialized and gifted individuals, soldiers and civilians alike. They are selected from among the citizens of the Empire by officers appointed to the role of recruiters by the Praetorian Prefects. Upon selection, each recruit is evaluated by a commission and then assigned to one of five training courses.

Once admitted to the Cohors Arcana, all future Custodes enter a specific training program—the ***tirocinium***—to hone their skills and extend their expertise. At the end of the training, each Custos is initiated into the mysteries of the cult of a specific Roman god—or ***Numen*** (tutelary deity)—who grants divine protection and assistance to the Custos.

THE CONTUBERNIUM

Custodes from different courses are assembled in a ***contubernium***, a group usually numbering from 3 to 6 members, and they undergo training as a group. The Custodes in a contubernium are taught to work together and bring their personal expertise to the table, forming small, highly mobile and self-sufficient groups. They act unsupervised for most of the time and must always be prepared to face the unexpected.

In the words of their trainers and supervisors, the Custodes must think of themselves not as common soldiers, but as officers charged with the full authority of the Emperor; even better, they must fancy themselves kin to the heroes of verse and legend—Achilles, Ulysses, or Aeneas, chosen by the Fates for a greater destiny.

CHARACTER SHEET

All Custodes are defined in the game by several terms and numerical values. These terms and values influence how a character interacts with the game rules, so it is important that they are close at hand and easy to keep track of.

When they start playing, participants get a **character sheet**—a descriptive form (front and back) that is compiled during character creation and updated as a Custos grows in experience. A blank character sheet can be found at the end of this book, while a PDF version can be easily downloaded from www.qualitygames.eu.

Below, a description of the main entries on the front of the character sheet can be found (the entries on the back concern the character's advancement and are explained in *Part Seven*, from page 84).

PERSONAL DATA

These entries summarize the character's biographical details.

Name. The name of a Roman citizen can be composed of as many as three elements, depending on their social class and on the customs of their birthplaces. For a list of sample names and conventional Roman naming rules see *Part Nine*, page 228.

Province. The Province of origin specifies the place where the character was born and raised. There are twenty provinces in the Empire, gathered in four prefectures. See *Part Nine: The World of Lex Arcana* for additional details on the provinces.

Office. There are five Offices in the Cohors Arcana, based on the training course the Custos was selected for upon recruitment: Augur, Diplomat, Explorer, Fighter, and Scholar. Rumour has it that there is a sixth Office, kept secret by the Cohors Arcana for unknown reasons and accessible only to a limited number of aspiring Custodes…

FIGHTER

This is the title given to those Custodes who entered the *cursus bellicus* and were trained especially in the ways of war. The tutelary deity of all Fighters is the god Mars.

EXPLORER

This is the title given to those Custodes assigned to the *cursus exploratorius* and who were taught how to survive in a hostile environment, to track a quarry, and open the way for others to follow. The tutelary deity of all Explorers is the goddess Diana.

AUGUR

This is the title given to the Custodes assigned to the *cursus auguralis*, who were initiated to the study and practice of the art of Divination. The tutelary deity of all Augurs is the god Apollo.

SCHOLAR

This is the title given to those Custodes who entered the *cursus sapiens* and were taught to apply the many fields of scholastic knowledge to the successful achievement of a mission. The tutelary deity of all Scholars is the goddess Minerva.

DIPLOMAT

This is the title given to the Custodes assigned to the *cursus legatorius* and who now distinguish themselves for their interpersonal skills, their eloquence, diplomacy, and rhetoric. The tutelary deity of all Diplomats is the god Mercury.

Age. The current age of the character.

Languages. The languages and dialects known to the Custos, usually based on their Province of origin.

Tutelary Deity. Each Custos has a patron deity corresponding to their Office.

ATTRIBUTES

The physical, mental, and spiritual attributes of a Custos can be grouped into two distinct sets: ***Virtutes*** (Virtues) and ***Peritiae*** (Skills). All attributes are rated with a numerical value, expressing in game terms the capabilities of a character.

VIRTUTES

The *Virtutes* (sing. *Virtus*) are attributes quantifying the innate capabilities of an individual. They are employed during character creation to determine the ratings of the Peritiae and to resolve a set of specific actions (as listed under each Virtus' description). The Virtutes are grouped into three pairs, identifying them as virtues of the Body, of the Mind, and of the Soul.

VIRTUES OF THE BODY

***Coordinatio* (Coordination).** The capability of a character in terms of dexterity, swiftness, agility, and sense of balance.

Roll Coordinatio to dodge a falling rock, to reach for something before someone else does, or to balance on a windy ledge.

***Vigor* (Vigor).** The physical prowess of a character in terms of strength, stamina, and physical health.

Roll Vigor to bash open a locked door or lift a marble sarcophagus, resist the effects of poison, or endure pain and extreme conditions.

VIRTUES OF THE MIND

***Auctoritas* (Authority).** The force of personality of a character, their magnetism and self-confidence.

Roll Auctoritas to make a positive first impression, to charm a foreign dignitary, or to influence others through sheer force of presence.

***Ingenium* (Intellect).** It reflects aspects of intelligence, like wit, deduction, and memory.

Roll Ingenium to remember correctly the instructions read on a scroll, to recognize a face once seen in a crowd, or to spot a pattern in the symbols on an ancient mural.

VIRTUES OF THE SOUL

***Ratio* (Reason).** The capacity of a character for rational thinking, their resolve and force of will.

Roll Ratio to stand fast before a charging lion, to resist most enemy incantations, and to oppose other supernatural threats.

***Sensibilitas* (Sensibility):** it measures the awareness of a character, their capability for empathy, and their sensitivity towards magic and the unseen.

Roll Sensibilitas to become aware of someone approaching stealthily, to spot something out of the ordinary in the behavior of someone, or to discern an eerie presence.

PERITIAE

The *Peritiae* (sing. *Peritia*) are values quantifying the proficiency of a character in a certain field. They represent a level of knowledge achieved through study, experience, or training. Peritiae must be considered first whenever a character is attempting to achieve something through action, such as performing a ritual of clairvoyance, impressing an audience with a theatrical performance, or throwing a pilum into the flaming jaws of a Chimera.

SPECIALTIES

Each Peritia can also be associated with **Specialties**, further defining the capabilities of a Custos. The value of a Specialty can be added as a bonus to the associated Peritia when the character performs an action related to their specific field of application (see *Part Three*, page 23).

Note. *The character sheet features six empty lines underneath each Peritia, which can be used by players to write their characters' Specialties.*

- **De Bello (Combat).** It is a measure of the combat readiness and strategic cunning of a character. A high value in this Peritia is usually the mark of a Fighter. Roll De Bello when facing down gladiators in the arena or when peppering barbarians with arrows and spears, to field a contubernium with tactical savvy, or strike fear into the heart of enemies.

Pertinent Specialties. *Axes and Maces, Bows, Castra, Daggers, Missiles, Spears, Swords, Tactics, Threaten*

- **De Corpore (Physical).** It expresses the capability of a Custos to perform activities relying on their physical preparedness, hand-eye coordination, and athleticism. Most Custodes rely on a high value in this Peritia for their survival. Roll De Corpore to swim ashore in a stormy sea, to force open the locked door of a villa, to pass a guard post without being heard, or to become a champion of Pancratium (the Greco-Roman art of wrestling and boxing).

Pertinent Specialties. *Brawling, Carousing, Climbing, Jumping, Larceny, Marching, Running, Stealth, Swimming*

- **De Magia (Magic).** It measures the magical and religious lore of a character, including the art of Divination. A high value in this Peritia usually indicates the office of Augur. Roll De Magia to perform the right offices in an Imperial or foreign temple, to complete a ritual of clairvoyance, precognition, or retrocognition, to find a hidden meaning in dreams, or to read omens in the flight of birds or in the entrails of sacrificed animals.

Pertinent Specialties. *Clairvoyance, Favor of the Gods, Forbidden Cults, Imperial Cults, Interpretation of Dreams, Interpretation of Omens, Precognition, Retrocognition, Superstitions*

- **De Natura (Nature).** It is the measure of the skills developed by a Custos through travel across the Empire and survival in the wild. A high value in De Natura is the mark of an Explorer. Roll De Natura to find water and food in a desert, ride a camel or a horse, to pick the best location for an encampment, or to follow the tracks of a wounded beast or a fugitive.

Pertinent Specialties. *Beast Lore, Exploration, Foraging, Herb Lore, Hunting, Navigation, Riding, Sailing, Weather*



CREATING NEW SPECIALTIES

Players should not feel limited by the list of Specialties provided by the game but instead may allow their characters to excel in other unusual or exotic fields.

When creating a new Specialty, you should first make sure that the new discipline 1) is appropriate to the Peritia it belongs to, 2) doesn't replicate an existing Specialty, and 3) isn't excessively broad.

1) The scope of a new Specialty must be associated with the appropriate Peritia: **De Magia (*Acrobatics*)** is incorrect since acrobatic skills are not magical in nature and would clearly belong to the sphere of **De Corpore**.

2) The new Specialty must highlight an aspect of a Peritia that isn't already covered by another Specialty. For example, **De Scientia (*Calligraphy*)** or **De Magia (*Theurgy*)** are fine, as they do not replicate any existing Specialty; **De Societate (*Socialize*)** is probably not appropriate, as it could be considered already represented by **De Societate (*Performance*)**.

3) New Specialties that are overly broad are not allowed: **De Bello (*Weapons*)** or **De Magia (*Rituals*)** are too generic, as they do not possess the tight focus required to qualify as actual Specialties.

As a rule, customized Specialties are always subject to the approval of the Demiurge.

- **De Scientia (Knowledge).** I includes natural philosophy, medicine, astronomy, history, and the logic of Aristotle. A high value in De Scientia is usually the mark of a Scholar. Roll De Scientia to treat the injuries of a wounded Custos, build a siege machine, or to deduce the cause of death of an individual from state and position of the body.

Pertinent Specialties. *Architecture, Crafts, Machinae, Decipher, Geography, History, Investigation, Medicine, Philosophy*

- **De Societate (Social).** It gauges the capability of a Custos within the social sphere, allowing them to feel equally at ease pacing the halls of a foreign palace, walking the streets of the Suburra, or commanding a legion. A high value in De Societate usually indicates a Diplomat. Roll De Societate to make a public speech, to bargain prices with a merchant, to exchange greetings with a foreign dignitary or a crime lord, to tell believable lies, or even to draw up a centuria in battle order.

Pertinent Specialties. *Command, Deceit, Decorum, Negotiation, Oratory, Performance, Politics, Seduction, Streetwise*

HIT POINTS AND PIETAS

These scores represent two fundamental aspects of all Custodes: their resistance to physical harm and their spiritual strength.

HIT POINTS

This score represents the capability of a character to resist wounds suffered in combat or from other sources of harm. The higher the rating, the more punishment the character can endure before succumbing. Characters lose Hit Points as a result of damage sustained and recover them through healing. Hit Points can never exceed the rating's maximum score. A character reduced to zero Hit Points in combat—or due to other sources of injury—is at risk of dying (see *Part Five: Combat* for more details).

The ***Treated*** box below the Hit Points table should be checked if the character receives a First Aid (see page 67).

Example. Gaius Valerius has 27 Hit Points. If an opponent strikes and wounds him for 4 damage, Gaius's current Hit Points drop to 27-4=23.

PIETAS

This score represents spiritual strength and the favor that a character enjoys with the gods of the Roman pantheon. Pietas is spent, spent when characters perform Divination rituals or invoke the supernatural protection of the gods. Custodes lose Pietas if their actions offend the gods—for example, visiting places that are consecrated to hostile deities (see *Part Six* for more details). A character reduced to zero Pietas loses the favor of the gods.

Example. Gaius Valerius has 20 Pietas. If he performs a ritual that requires the expenditure of 6 Pietas, his current score is reduced to 20-6=14.

EXPERIENCE

In this box are scored the Experience Points obtained during the course of an adventure (see page 84**).**

EQUIPMENT

At the start of every mission, the Custodes are fully equipped with clothes, a set of standard gear (a leather satchel, waterskin, cooking equipment, etc.), and with their choice of armor and weapons.

WEAPONS

Based on their type, weapons can be used at close quarters or in ranged combat. Some weapons require only one hand, and therefore allow the use of a shield, while others require two hands to be used effectively. In game terms, all weapons are rated with a **Damage** value representing their efficacy in hurting an opponent, but also with a corresponding **Difficulty** for their use.

ARMOR

Armor worn reduces the amount of damage inflicted by a successful enemy attack. All armor has a **Protection** value, which indicates the amount of damage it can absorb.

SHIELD

Shields improve the chance of an incoming attacks missing the equipped character. Use of a shield prevents the wielding of two-handed weapons. All shields have a **Parry** rating based on their size and sturdiness.

See also *Part Four: Character Creation* for a detailed list of all the gear available to characters.



SAMPLE CHARACTER: GAIUS VALERIUS

Now that we have a better understanding of the Custodes' attributes, let's try to interpret the scores of one of the pre-generated characters: Gaius Valerius. He is a reasonably balanced character: from the physical point of view, he stands out by his Coordinatio (13), Vigor (12), and Sensibilitas (12). He is slightly lacking in the remaining Virtutes (8 in Ratio and Ingenium, 7 in Auctoritas).

He is agile and athletic (De Corpore 12) and an expert in the natural world in all its aspects (De Natura 15). He is fairly well trained in the military field (De Bello 12) and has some knowledge in both science and the magical arts (De Magia 8, De Scientia 7), while he certainly cannot be defined as a good diplomat (De Societate 6).

You might interpret such scores to say that Gaius Valerius lived for the most part of his life in the wilderness, learning the secrets of nature, developing his physique, and practicing with weapons, but he did not spend much time in book learning or dealing with people.

Gaius Valerius' Specialties tell us more about his specific proficiencies: a +2 Specialty in De Bello (*Swords*) means that he is particularly skilled with weapons like the Gladius, the typical short sword of Romans; the +1 Specialties in De Natura (*Exploration*) and in De Natura (*Hunting*) prove his considerable expertise in moving in unknown territories and searching for food; finally, the +1 Specialties in De Scientia (*Crafts*) and (*Medicine*) probably represent some notions on how to build makeshift tools or splint a broken bone or bandage a wound, as part of his survival skills.

Enter Gaius Valerius

Theodosius Antenor, the Legatus of a border encampment on Hadrian's Wall, meets a Custos for the first time, and the impression seems to be anything but favorable.

The young man in front of him is in his early twenties. He stares at the Legatus proudly and hands him a rolled parchment bearing the Imperial seal. It is a long report, written by the Prefect of the Praetorium of Rome, presenting a recruit from the province of Italia, admitted with full merit into the ranks of the Cohors Arcana. A recruit by the name of Gaius Valerius.

"Are you this Gaius Valerius?" asks the Legatus with ill-concealed mistrust.

The young man limits himself to a nod of agreement, which contributes to further annoy the Legatus, accustomed to being answered aloud by his soldiers.

Wiping the sweat from the palms of his hands onto his purple robe, Theodosius Antenor continues reading.

The full name of the Custos is Gaius Valerius Maximus, a native of Aquileia; he is 21 years old and an Explorer—a common pursuit of recruits from northern Italia. The young man had to pass very selective tests, which have fully shown his talents and abilities, and, apparently, he is perfectly aware of it. When he is done reading, the Legatus dismisses Gaius Valerius and assigns him a tent in the area reserved for members of the Pretorian Cohorts.

The young man finally has some time to rest and shake off the dust accumulated in long days of travel. While washing and arranging his baggage, the Custos thinks about the tasks that await him. His field of action will be the forests of Caledonia, and despite the sinister mist that rises from the woods, it seems to him that he will soon feel at home here. It won't be difficult to follow the paths crossing the woods here, learn to know the local animals, or cross a river. An Explorer, such as he, will certainly be more useful than a Diplomat accustomed to the comforts of the patrician palaces, or a Scholar, incapable of distinguishing the smell of a cat from that of an angry bear! Yes, he has the feeling that here, an Explorer is truly the right person for the task at hand.

GETTING STARTED

To start the game, players can either choose one of the **pre-generated characters** (page 96) or create one using the rules presented in *Part Four: Character Creation*.

The characters begin the game as freshly trained Custodes, united in a contubernium and about to start their first mission by order of the Emperor. They are going to be the protagonists of a tale yet untold, but only their actions will determine if they are destined to become great heroes, or if the Empire they have sworn to protect will eventually suffer from their failures.



PART III

HOW TO PLAY



In *Lex Arcana*, the game unfolds according to a simple pattern: the Demiurge sets the scene and describes the environment, playing the parts of all the people met by the Custodes; while the players describe what they want to do and they see their choices translated into actions undertaken by their characters. Sometimes a die roll is required to determine the outcome of an action.

How easy or hard an action can be, and its consequences, is adjudicated by the Demiurge, using the following guidelines.

DICE

Lex Arcana employs the classic polyhedral dice used in many role-playing games. Specifically, players need at least a set that includes dice with 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 20 faces (abbreviated as d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20, respectively). These dice can be found in most specialized game stores. The rules also reference d3s and d5s: when such dice are required, simply use a d6 or d10, respectively, and halve the result (rounded up).

Example. When the text indicates to "roll a d4", it means that a roll of a 4-sided die – a "d4" – must be made. If the die is preceded by a number, for example "2d8", it means that the die must be rolled that number of times and the results added together – in the case of 2d8, roll an 8-sided die twice. Of course, if the players have more than one set of dice, they can roll more than one die at the same time. When it is necessary to roll a different combination of dice, the text will indicate the type – "d10 + d3" indicates to roll a d10 and a d3 at the same time and add together the results.

DIE ROLLS

The Virtutes and Peritiae defining the Custodes, as well as their weapons and armor, are recorded on a character sheet with a number. During the game, these scores are translated into a corresponding die type or combination of dice. These combinations are to be used whenever the gameplay calls for a die roll—for instance, to adjudicate the outcome of an action.

When players roll, they take dice corresponding to the characteristic most appropriate to the task to be resolved. If they must roll more than one die, the result of the roll is equal to the sum of all rolled dice. The higher the result, the better.

Example. Gaius Valerius' De Natura score of 15 lets him roll – among other combinations – a d10+d5 (i.e. he rolls a d10 and a d5, adding up the two results) to resolve the outcome of all actions concerning nature and surviving in the wilderness.

THE FATE ROLL

The favor of the gods enjoyed by all Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana grants them a special benefit.

- Whenever a player rolls one or more dice and the roll scores the **highest possible score on all dice** (for example, rolling an 8 on a d8 or a 15 rolling d10+d5), the player then rolls the same die (or dice) again, adding the second roll result to the first. Should the second roll again score the highest possible result, then the player would roll again, always adding the result to the previous total.

The Fate Roll applies to all die rolls made by the Custodes, including Damage and Protection rolls (see *Part Five: Combat*), as long as **their current Pietas score is 1 or more**; should it drop to 0, the Custos will lose this important benefit until they recover at least 1 point of Pietas (see *Part Six* for additional information on how Pietas works).

Note. *Only the highest possible score on all dice is considered a Fate Roll. If rolling two or more dice only one gets the highest result, it is not rolled again.*

Example. Gaius Valerius rolls d10+d5 for his De Natura and gets 10+5=15, the highest possible score, so he rolls the same dice again and adds the result to the previous one: he obtains 7+5=12, for a final astonishing result of 15+12=27. Note that the second roll of Gaius Valerius wasn't a Fate Roll, even if a die of the combination (the d5) scored the maximum result: when rolling a combination of dice, only the highest possible result on all dice is considered a Fate Roll.

DICE POINTS

In *Lex Arcana*, the scores of attributes and equipment of player characters are not translated into a single die type or dice combination: instead, they represent the specified number as **Dice Points**.

CHOOSING A DICE COMBINATION

Given the opportunity to roll a single die or a combination of dice, what should a player do? From a statistical point of view, probability differs when rolling a single die corresponding to a given Dice Points rating, as opposed to rolling more dice equal to the same amount.

- On average, a roll made using two or three dice instead of one will result in a higher score but is less probable to obtain a Fate Roll.
- It could be said that rolling more dice is the safest option for a character to perform an action; while rolling a single die shows a more daring approach, with a high risk/reward strategy, more likely to yield spectacular results—but also dangerous failures!

Here are some other examples of dice combinations resulting from different Dice Points scores:

11 Dice Points correspond to the following combinations:
d8+d3
d6+d5
d5+2d3
2d4+d3

13 Dice Points correspond to the following combinations:
d10+d3
d8+d5
d6+d4+d3
2d5+d3
d5+2d4

Example. A De Magia score of 8 does not correspond only to a d8, but to 8 Dice Points, and a De Corpore rating of 12 does not correspond just to 2d6, but rather to 12 Dice Points.

- More specifically, a Dice Points value indicates every **combination of 1, 2, or 3 dice** whose highest possible roll result corresponds to that number.

For instance, 6 Dice Points correspond to a d6, since the highest possible score rolling a d6 is 6; but 6 Dice Points also correspond to 2d3 (i.e., rolling two d3 and adding up the results), because the highest possible score rolling 2d3 is still 6. In another example, 12 Dice points correspond to a d12, but also to d8+d4, 2d6 or 3d4, because each of these combinations' highest possible score is 12.

Note. *that the maximum number of dice that can form a combination is always 3—there is, for example, no combination of 4d3 to roll 12 Dice Points. However, in the case of values above 30 Dice Points, the Demiurge can grant players the use of more dice.*

Players are always free to use a die or combination of dice that corresponds to a lower value of Dice Points; for instance, a player with a De Societate score of 11 may decide to roll a d10, as it is easier to obtain the highest possible result on a single die and benefit from a Fate Roll.

USING SPECIALTIES

Specialties are recorded on the character sheet as numerical bonuses under each Peritia ("+1", for example). Acting as a modifier, Specialties are not rolled but increase the Dice Points rating of the corresponding Peritia when their field of application is considered beneficial to the attempted task.

- When they are about to make a roll using a Peritia, players should check on their character sheet as to whether they possess any Specialty related to the employed ability: if it is the case, the Specialty modifier is added to the Peritia to calculate the available Dice Points.

If in doubt, the Demiurge serves as the final arbiter on whether a Specialty is applicable.

Example. Gaius Valerius has a +1 Hunting Specialty under his De Natura score of 15. This means that he rolls 15 Dice Points to adjudicate the outcome of actions concerning nature and the wild unless they are related to hunting or somehow affected by the character's hunting skills: in that case, Gaius Valerius rolls with 15+1=16 Dice Points.

SPECIALTIES DESCRIPTIONS

The following is a brief description of the areas of application of each Specialty.

DE BELLO

Castra. The knowledge of life in military camps and their organization, and how to set up tents and defenses.
Tactics. A character's tactical acumen, strategic planning, or quick-thinking during battles.
Threaten. A character's skill in instilling fear, extorting information through threats, or appearing menacing.
Axes and Maces, Bows, Daggers, Missiles, Spears, Swords. A character's fighting proficiency when using specific weapons (see also *Part Five:* for more detailed descriptions of these Specialties).

DE CORPORE

Climbing, Jumping, Running, Swimming. A character's skill in specific athletic feats.
Brawling. A character's skill when fighting unarmed, with knives, or when handling improvised weapons.
Carousing. A character's capability to resist the typical excesses of Roman merrymaking, like eating too much and drinking oneself into a stupor.
Larceny. A character's skill when stealing, concealing objects, or performing acts of legerdemain.
Marching. A character's proficiency when walking for long stretches, without tiring or delay.
Stealth. A character's skill in hiding, sneaking, or tailing a target through crowds.

DE MAGIA

Imperial Cults. The knowledge of myths and religious practices of official and tolerated cults of the Empire (see also *Part Six: Magic*).
Forbidden Cults. The knowledge of myths and religious practices of illegal cults (see also *Part Six: Magic*).
Superstitions. The knowledge of folklore and popular beliefs (see also *Part Six: Magic*).
Clairvoyance, Favor of the Gods, Interpretation of Dreams, Interpretation of Omens, Precognition, Retrocognition. A character's skill when performing rituals intended to obtain a specific type of Divination (see also *Part Six: Magic*).

DE NATURA

Beast Lore. The knowledge of both the physical characteristics of animals and their habits, and the ability to safely interact with them.
Exploration. The ability to explore open territory, find a path, or locate shelter in the wild.
Foraging. The ability to find food and clean water in the wild, to preserve rations, and to manage food supplies.
Herb Lore. The knowledge of plants and their medicinal properties.
Hunting. A character's skill in following tracks, capturing or killing animals, fishing, and building or spotting traps in natural settings.
Navigation. The ability to find the right way in the wild or in the narrow alleyways of a sprawling city.
Riding. A character's skill when riding and handling horses, including driving wagons or chariots.
Sailing. A character's boating and general seafaring skill.
Weather. The ability to predict the climatic conditions of an area and avoid being caught unprepared by adverse weather pheonmena.

DE SCIENTIA

Architecture. A character's knowledge of building techniques for civil and military use, from improvised fortifications to palisades.
Crafts. A character's skill in manufacturing or repairing objects and structures (this Specialty does not include the engineering of complex machines, which is covered by the *Machinae* Specialty).
Decipher. A character's ability to grasp the meaning of inscriptions and symbols, distinguishing what looks like a dedication from a threat, a prayer, or a curse.
Machinae. A character's skill in the design, operation, or deactivation of any mechanical apparatus.
Geography, History. Academic specializations, derived mainly from lessons, books, parchments, and theoretical studies.
Investigation. A character's skill when searching for clues and linking them together, gathering information on a specific subject, and formulating deductions based on certain assumptions.
Medicine. The set of practical and theoretical lore related to medicine, including treatment of wounds, disease, and poisons, as well as general human anatomy.
Philosophy. A broad field of knowledge encompassing logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics, and the ability to debate upon them.

DE SOCIETATE

Command. A character's leadership skills, including the ability to show authority and dictate orders on a battlefield.
Deceit. A character's skills when lying, cheating, double-crossing, and spotting other deceivers.
Decorum. A character's knowledge of etiquette, and the wherewithal to be at ease in all social contexts.
Negotiation. A character's skill in bargaining terms and conditions, or when discussing prices with a trader.
Oratory. A character's public speaking skills, especially when convincing an audience instead of a single person.
Performance. A character's skills to entertain, including singing, playing instruments, acting, and recitation.
Politics. A character's ability to maneuver in the treacherous field of Roman politics, including its laws and bureaucracy.
Seduction. The ability to flirt, exchanging pleasantries and innuendo.
Streetwise. A character's ability to be at ease with plebeians, misfits, thieves, and other outcasts.



ACTION RESOLUTION

Players enter the world of *Lex Arcana* through the actions of their characters. The consequences of those actions are moderated by the rules of the game, which allow the Demiurge to determine the success or failure of an action.

It is not always necessary to use dice to determine the result of an action, since many of the tasks performed during a typical game session pose no challenge to the valiant Custodes and are therefore considered to be automatically successful: starting a fire to cook food, climbing a ladder, or following a well-tracked path are all automatic actions, and do not require any test.

A die roll is required whenever the outcome of an action is made uncertain by adverse circumstances or by direct opposition.

In these cases, the steps are the following.

I. CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE ATTRIBUTE

Most actions in *Lex Arcana* can be resolved by employing one of the six **Peritiae** defining the capabilities of the Custodes. At times, a **Virtus** can be more appropriate instead (see the descriptions of the various specific rolls listed under each attribute for guidelines).

If the action falls within the area of expertise of a **Specialty** possessed by the acting character, then the Specialty modifier is applied to the roll.

II. DETERMINING THE DIFFICULTY THRESHOLD (DT)

The difficulty of the action is quantified in game terms by the **Difficulty Threshold (DT)**. The DT is a numerical value that must be exceeded by the die roll result for the action to be successful.

The Demiurge may determine an action's DT in one of two ways:

Default difficulty. The Demiurge rolls **2d6** and uses the combined result as the DT. The Demiurge can set a random difficulty when they have no reason to make a task easy or hard to accomplish.

Set difficulty. In most cases, however, it is clear whether the action is more or less difficult. In these cases, the Demiurge chooses one of the six levels of difficulty listed below. *Part Eight* (see page 110) provides suggestions on how to set the difficulty of an action based on its nature and circumstances.

Many typical actions described in the core rules are given a set difficulty (to perform First Aid, for example, page 67).



DIFFICULTY LEVELS AND THRESHOLDS	
Difficulty level	**Difficulty Threshold (DT)**
Easy	3
Normal	6
Challenging	9
Hard	12
Very Hard	15
Extreme	18

Sometimes, depending on specific rules or the situation, the difficulty must be increased or decreased by one or more levels. In these cases, it means that for instance an action with DT 9 increases to DT 12 (if the difficulty is increased by 1 level) or decreases to DT 3 (if the difficulty is decreased by 2 levels).

III. MAKING THE ROLL

Once the relevant characteristic and the difficulty of the action have been set, the acting player rolls a dice combination corresponding to the challenged attribute's Dice Points (adding the modifier provided by a Specialty, if applicable).

- If the roll is greater than the Difficulty Threshold, the action succeeds; otherwise it fails.

Example. A Custos is trying to break into an enemy camp at night, avoiding the surveillance of a sleepy guard. The Demiurge has chosen a set difficulty with DT 6. The relevant attribute for the task is De Corpore. The character sheet of the Custos indicates a De Corpore score of 10, equal to 10 Dice Points. The player informs the Demiurge that the character also possesses a +2 bonus in the Stealth Specialty, which would let him add 2 Dice Points to the roll. The Specialty is considered applicable, so the final Dice Points total is equal to 10+2=12. The player could roll a d12, 2d6, 3d4, or 1d8+1d4 to perform the task. The player decides to roll 2d6 and gets 8: the result is greater than the DT of the action (6), so the character has managed to move past the guard.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

If the action is made uncertain by the direct opposition of another character (usually, a non-player character), the opposing characters roll the attributes that the Demiurge considers most relevant to the situation and whoever gets the highest score wins. In case of a tie, repeat the roll.

Close combat (see *Part Five*) exemplifies the use of an opposed roll in *Lex Arcana*.

DEGREE OF SUCCESS

Sometimes it is not enough to know that an action has resulted in success. Should the circumstances of a task require a finer quantification of its outcome, the Demiurge can subtract the DT of the action from the die roll result and refer to the table below to find the **degree of success**:

In the case of an opposed roll, the Degree of Success is determined by subtraction of the loser's roll result from the winner's result.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS		
Difference	**Degree of Success (DoS)**	**Description**
1 2 3	I	Marginal
4 5 6	II	Complete
7 or more	III	Exceptional

Example. A group of Custodes must reach a remote valley, lost in the mountains of Macedonia. The characters approach a local shepherd and ask him for directions. Since the valley has a reputation for being a cursed place, the shepherd is rather reluctant to speak, and convincing him requires a roll of De Societate with DT 9. The Diplomat makes the roll and gets 11: the action is successful, but corresponds only to the first Degree of Success (11-9=2, marginal) — the shepherd responds abruptly: "Take the old path just outside the village, then make do!", refusing to add more. If the roll had instead obtained a second Degree of Success (II), the shepherd would have given further indications, up to the third Degree of Success (III) which would have meant that the shepherd, in addition to telling the characters everything he knows about the road, would have offered to accompany them!



PART IV

CHARACTER CREATION



This chapter presents the rules necessary to create new characters for *Lex Arcana*. Using the guidelines shown in the following pages, and the many customization options, players can bring to life characters that are fully integrated with the gaming world, complete with strengths and weaknesses.

The next section outlines the steps necessary for character creation. Players must follow these steps in order, keeping the **worksheet** and the **character sheet** at hand. The Demiurge should assist the players throughout this process, providing insight into the rules when needed, or simply to advise them in making choices that are both true to the game's background and result in an exciting character to play.

Players are free to choose names for their Custodes at any time during character creation. They can use their imagination or find inspiration in *Part Nine: The World of Lex Arcana* (page 216) which gives a list of the common names that can be found in the various geographical areas of the Empire.

CUSTOS CREATION SUMMARY

Character creation is divided into two parts. During Part 1, each player uses a copy of the worksheet shown on page 34. This is a special form used to temporarily record the various numerical values generated during character creation.

When the process is complete, the final ratings of the new Custos are transcribed on the character sheet, and players continue the creation of their Custos with Part 2 of the process (the worksheet won't be needed anymore).

A copy of the worksheet and the character sheet can be found at the end of this volume; a PDF version can be downloaded from www.qualitygames.eu.

PART 1. USING THE WORKSHEET

- Step 1: Determine Basic Virtutes
- Step 2: Choose Province
- Step 3: Determine Peritiae
- Step 4: Determine Age and Final Virtutes
- Step 5: Compile the Character Sheet

PART 2. USING THE CHARACTER SHEET

- Step 1: Choose Background Specialties
- Step 2: Choose Office and Record Combat Ability
- Step 3: Choose Tirocinium Specialties
- Step 4: Calculate Hit Points and Pietas
- Step 5: Assign Multipliers
- Step 6: Choose Equipment

PART 1: USING THE WORKSHEET

STEP 1: DETERMINE BASIC VIRTUTES

The player starts by determining the **Basic Virtutes** of the character. These values are used only during character creation and will be modified during step 4 *(see Step 4: Determine Age and Final Virtutes)*.

To generate the Basic Virtutes, players choose one of two methods; then, they record the six scores in the square boxes located at the top of the worksheet (see the "I" boxes on page 34).

- **Random method.** The player fills the empty square boxes on the top part of the worksheet by rolling **2d6** six times and generating six scores from the total of each roll.

- **Standard method.** The player fills the empty square boxes on the top part of the worksheet assigning the following standard values to the six scores: **11**, **9**, **7**, **7**, **5**, **3**.

ASSIGN THE SCORES

Regardless of the generation method chosen, players now associate each of the six scores to one of their Basic Virtues, and transcribe them inside the corresponding square boxes on the circular diagram of the worksheet (see the "II" boxes on page 34).



MALE AND FEMALE CUSTODES

In *Lex Arcana*, there is no distinction between male and female characters in terms of game scores. All character creation steps are designed to be followed regardless of a character's gender.

However, this choice will have repercussions in the gameplay, especially considering the role of women in the ancient world (see also *Part Nine: The World of Lex Arcana*).

How the scores are distributed determines a great deal about the final character, so each player should consider assigning a high value to those Virtutes they think they will need the most. The player can allot the remaining lower values to those aspects that matter less to their concept, representing the Custos' weaknesses. See the descriptions of the Virtutes on page 15.

Players wishing their character to enter a specific Office in the Cohors Arcana should now consider that each Office benefits from a high score in some Virtutes more than others, as the table below illustrates:

OFFICES AND VIRTUTES

Office	Most important Virtutes
Augur	Sensibilitas, Ingenium
Diplomat	Auctoritas, Ratio
Explorer	Coordinatio, Sensibilitas
Fighter	Vigor, Auctoritas
Scholar	Ingenium, Ratio

Example. Anna has already chosen the name and the Office of her future Custos – Hypatia, a Scholar. She starts by determining her Basic Virtutes scores: she rolls 2d6 six times, obtaining 12, 8, 7, 7, 6, and 2. Anna records the six scores in the empty boxes at the top of her worksheet and begins to think how to distribute them among her Basic Virtutes.

Anna imagines Hypatia as very strong-willed, a feature that is well described by Ratio: since Ratio is also a critical Virtue for Scholars, she decides to write her highest score (12) inside the Ratio box in the circular diagram of the worksheet. She then assigns her next highest score, 8, to Ingenium, which is also crucial for Scholars.

Hypatia is studious and well-educated, but Anna decides that she is also quite graceful and charismatic, so she puts a 7 in both Coordinatio and Auctoritas. Anna wants her Custos to be decently athletic, despite being a bookworm, so the 6 goes to Vigor. The lowest score – the 2 – is assigned to the last remaining Virtue, Sensibilitas: a life of study has left Hypatia slightly undiscerning and not very perceptive, but hopefully her team members will make up for that!

Hypatia's Basic Virtutes are therefore as follows:

COORDINATIO: 7
VIGOR: 6
AUCTORITAS: 7
INGENIUM: 8
RATIO: 12
SENSIBILITAS: 2



LANGUAGES KNOWN BY CUSTODES

All Custodes speak Latin, enough to interact with comrades and officers. Depending on where they come from, they may be native speakers of Latin, Greek, or other languages. The languages and dialects spoken by the Custos are specified in the description of their Province of origin (see *Part Nine*, starting on page 234).

STEP 2: CHOOSE PROVINCE

The Roman Empire is vast, and the Custodes come from every corner of the known world, bringing with them their cultural aptitudes.

Players can choose their character's native **Province** from the list or roll a d20 on the Provinces table below. *Part Nine: The World of Lex Arcana* contains background information on each of the 20 provinces of the Roman Empire. Players should record the name of the selected province in the appropriate box at the center of the worksheet (see the "III" boxes on page 34).

Each province grants a Custos a set of Peritia score modifiers, as listed in the table below. Players copy their set of modifiers into the smaller, round boxes connected to the Province box of the worksheet (each modifier must be copied into the box featuring an arrow pointing to the appropriate Peritia).

PROVINCES							
D20	Province	Peritia Modifiers					
		De Bello	De Corpore	De Magia	De Natura	De Scientia	De Societate
1	Roma Urbe	1	2	3	0	6	6
2	Italia	1	3	3	3	4	4
3	Illyricum	5	4	1	3	2	3
4	Macedonia	2	3	4	3	3	3
5	Achaia	1	3	3	1	5	5
6	Gallia	3	3	2	3	4	3
7	Iberia	3	3	2	3	3	4
8	Britannia	3	3	5	4	2	1
9	Germania	6	3	3	4	1	1
10	Raetia	5	3	3	5	1	1
11	Thracia	4	4	3	4	1	2
12	Dacia	5	4	3	3	2	1
13	Asia	1	3	3	2	5	4
14	Armenia	3	4	1	5	3	2
15	Mesopotamia	3	3	5	2	3	2
16	Aegyptus	2	2	5	1	5	3
17	Syria	3	2	3	1	4	5
18	Arabia	2	2	4	2	3	5
19	Numidia	4	3	1	5	2	3
20	Mauretania	3	3	3	6	1	2

Example. Anna chooses Hypatia to come from Aegyptus, imagining that she grew up in the magnificent city of Alexandria. There, Hypatia had the opportunity to study in the Great Library, where she learned about science, medicine, and architecture. Anna records the name of the province in the central rectangular box, and the starting Peritiae scores of Aegyptus in the smaller circular boxes around it: De Bello 2, De Corpore 2, De Natura 1, De Magia 5, De Scientia 5, and De Societate 3.

STEP 3: DETERMINE PERITIAE

Observing the diagram in the central part of the worksheet, it can be noted that each Peritia box (the octagons) is connected to three smaller round boxes. Two of these round boxes are linked to two different Basic Virtutes boxes (squares), and one is connected to the rectangular Province box (see the "IV" boxes on page 34).

- The final score of each Peritia is found by adding up points coming from two different Basic Virtutes and the Province of origin Peritia modifier.

  Example. De Natura is connected to Coordinatio and Sensibilitas, while De Magia is linked to Sensibilitas and Ingenium. Both De Natura and De Magia are influenced by a Custos' Province of origin.

For the determination of the final score of each Peritia, the players must follow the procedure below:

- Split the score of each Basic Virtus, copying the two resulting scores in the two round boxes connected to the Virtus box.
- Then, find the final score of each Peritia by adding up the ratings copied in the three round box connected to its Peritia box. Copy the total in the final Peritia box (the octagon).

Players can divide the scores of the Basic Virtutes in the way they deem most appropriate.

To determine the final value of each Peritia, the only conditions to be met are:

- Each Peritia's final score may never be lower than **3** or exceed a score of **18**;
- At least one Peritia final score must match or exceed the value of **15**, the minimum score that allows a character to qualify for an Office.

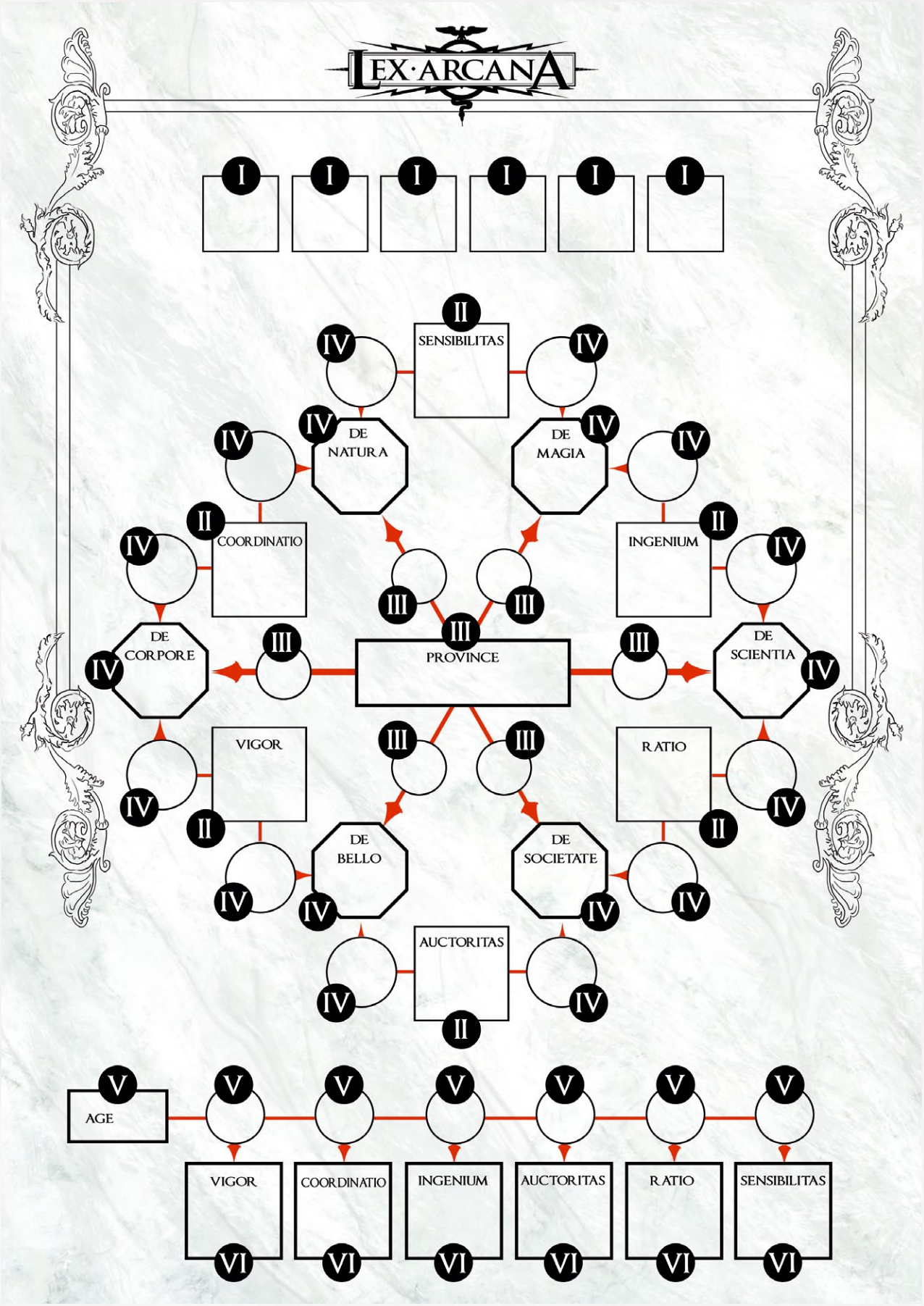
Example. Now Anna must decide what Hypatia has learned in her life so far, beyond her innate talents. In game terms, she must calculate her Peritiae. Keeping in mind that she aims to play as a Scholar, Anna starts from Ratio and decides to distribute her 12 points in this way: 6 points in the box connected to De Scientia and 6 points in the one linked to De Societate.

Then, proceeding clockwise, there is Auctoritas (7), which is divided by allocating 3 points to De Societate and 4 points to De Bello. Of the 6 points of Vigor, 2 are assigned to De Bello and 4 to De Corpore. Of the 7 points of Coordinatio, 2 go to De Corpore and 5 to De Natura. The 2 points of Sensibilitas are both attributed to De Natura (Anna writes 0 in the box connected to De Magia). Finally, of the 8 points of Ingenium, 1 goes to De Magia and the remaining 7 to De Scientia. In the end, the results are as follows:

*DE BELLO: **8** (2 from the Province, 4 from Auctoritas, and 2 from Vigor)*
*DE CORPORE: **8** (2 from the Province, 4 from Vigor, and 2 from Coordinatio)*
*DE MAGIA: **6** (5 from the Province, 0 from Sensibilitas, and 1 from Ingenium)*
*DE NATURA: **8** (1 from the Province, 5 from Coordinatio, and 2 from Sensibilitas)*
*DE SCIENTIA: **18** (5 from the Province, 6 from Ratio, and 7 from Ingenium)*
*DE SOCIETATE: **12** (3 from the Province, 6 from Ratio, and 3 from Auctoritas)*

Looking at these values, it is already possible to describe Hypatia in broad strokes: with a score of 18 in De Scientia – more than enough to qualify as a Scholar – she is extremely well-educated, probably the best in her class throughout all her apprenticeship. A De Societate score of 12 means that she is also well-spoken, a quality that has undoubtedly helped her to stand out among her classmates.

Despite her love for learning, Hypatia has not neglected the physical disciplines, and her scores of 8 in De Bello, De Corpore, and De Natura mean that she can handle herself outdoors and in a fight. With a score of 6, De Magia is her lowest Peritia, and it might imply that her rational and pragmatic nature, common among Scholars, has made Hypatia highly skeptical toward magic.


LEX·ARCANA
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II
SENSIBILITAS
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DE NATURA
DE MAGIA
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COORDINATIO
INGENIUM
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DE CORPORE
PROVINCE
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COORDINATIO
INGENIUM
AUCTORITAS
RATIO
SENSIBILITAS
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VI

STEP 4: DETERMINE AGE AND FINAL VIRTUTES

The choice of a character's Age influences the final ratings of their attributes, in the form of several bonuses to be added to the Basic Virtutes.

To calculate their character's **final Virtutes**' scores, players find the modifiers corresponding to their characters chosen Age on the table below; transcribe these modifiers to the appropriate boxes near the bottom of the worksheet. Then, the player adds them to the Basic Virtutes and writes down the results in the final Virtutes boxes.

Example. Anna decides that Hypatia is a young woman, no more than 25 years old, so she adds the Young score modifiers from the table to her Basic Virtutes ratings.

COORDINATIO: 7 + 3 = ***10***
VIGOR: 6 + 3 = ***9***
AUCTORITAS: 7 + 3 = ***10***
INGENIUM: 8 + 3 = ***11***
RATIO: 12 + 3 = ***15***
SENSIBILITAS: 2 + 3 = ***5***

STEP 5: COMPILE THE CHARACTER'S SHEET

The time has come for the players to copy the final data compiled in their worksheet onto their character sheet: the Province of origin, the Age, and the final scores of Virtutes and Peritiae.

After this point, the worksheet will no longer be used, and the new choices will be written directly on the character sheet.

PART 2: USING THE CHARACTER SHEET

STEP 1: CHOOSE BACKGROUND SPECIALTIES

When they entered the Cohors Arcana, the characters left their former lives behind: family, friends, jobs. But those experiences contributed to making them what they are today and possibly granted them several skills and abilities that may prove useful during their missions.

- To reflect their characters' past experiences and occupations, the players now choose **three Specialties** among those available in the game, assigning a rating of +1 bonus Dice Points to two Specialties, and a rating of +2 to the third (see the Specialties table below).

As they make their choices, the players should try to imagine the type of upbringing their characters had or the place where they were raised. Again, the material presented in *Part Nine: The World of Lex Arcana* can prove invaluable for a player looking to create a rich backstory for a character.

Note. *When a player chooses a Specialty, simply transcribe it under the corresponding Peritia in the first empty space from the top, with the corresponding bonus next to them.*

Alternate system. Players who wish to generate a background describing in detail what their characters were doing before they joined the Cohors Arcana may forego Step 6 and go to page 40 instead, to determine their characters' Specialties using the narrative system described there. The alternate method is recommended for players who would like to explore the setting of *Lex Arcana* even before the first session begins.

AGE MODIFIERS

Age	Vigor	Coordinatio	Ingenium	Auctoritas	Ratio	Sensibilitas
Young (16-30)	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3
Adult (31-45)	+2	+2	+3	+4	+4	+3
Mature (46+)	+1	+1	+3	+5	+5	+3

SPECIALTIES					
De Bello	De Corpore	De Magia	De Natura	De Scientia	De Societate
Axes and Maces	Brawling	Clairvoyance	Beast Lore	Architecture	Command
Bows	Carousing	Favor of the Gods	Exploration	Crafts	Deceit
Castra	Climbing	Forbidden Cults	Foraging	Machinae	Decorum
Daggers	Jumping	Imperial Cults	Herb Lore	Decipher	Negotiation
Missiles	Larceny	Interpretation of Dreams	Hunting	Geography	Oratory
Swords	Marching	Interpretation of Omens	Navigation	History	Performance
Spears	Running	Precognition	Riding	Investigation	Politics
Tactics	Stealth	Retrocognition	Sailing	Medicine	Seduction
Threaten	Swimming	Superstitions	Weather	Philosophy	Streetwise

Example. Anna imagines Hypatia as the only daughter of a high-level Roman functionary from the great city of Alexandria. As a young girl, Hypatia studied with a Greek tutor and spent much time in the Great Library of her city. When she wasn't studying books, she spent her time practicing her other two passions: music and the observation and cataloging of animals (like Pliny the Elder did in his Historia Naturalis, centuries before). In game terms, Anna attributes a +1 bonus to both De Societate (Performance) and De Natura (Beast Lore), and a +2 bonus to De Scientia (Investigation).

STEP 2: CHOOSE OFFICE

Each character now enters a specific *cursus*, one of the branches of the Cohors Arcana, which will assign them a specific **Office**. To find the appropriate Office for their characters, players must now consider their Peritia scores.

- If only one Peritia rating of the Custos reaches the value of **15**, the character's Office must be the one corresponding to that Peritia.
- If more than one Peritia matches or exceeds **15**, the player can choose between the Offices corresponding to those Peritiae (usually, it is better to select the one relative to the highest score).
- Check the table below for the correspondence between each *cursus*, Office, and the Peritiae (the last column also indicates the Combat Talent associated with each Office, see further).

Players record the chosen Office in the appropriate space on their character sheet.

Example. Looking at her character's Peritia scores on the character sheet, Anna realizes that the only cursus she is allowed to enter is the cursus sapiens: Hypatia will be admitted in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana as a Scholar.

COMBAT TALENTS

In *Lex Arcana*, belonging to an Office does not mean simply being identified as an expert in a Peritia. The Custodes are explicitly instructed on how to use their skills in combat in a unique and effective way:

- All Custodes learn the Combat Talent of their Office and record it in the appropriate space on the character sheet.

The effects of the various Combat Talents are explained below. In their descriptions, there are terms – such as tempus, engage, etc. – that will be clarified later.

AUGUR: BLESSED FORESIGHT

The Augurs of the Cohors Arcana are trained to harness their divinatory powers in combat, anticipating the blows of their enemies.

- Once per tempus, the Augur may force an opponent to repeat a De Bello roll made against them. The Augur must keep the second result, even if it's higher than the first one.

  Example. Pendaran the Augur is targeted at a distance by a Pictish warrior, who hurls an Angon at him, rolling a 10 with his De Bello. The player of Pendaran decides to force the Pict to re-roll his De Bello, which this time scores a 3, a failure. Catching a brief glimpse of the javelin thrown at him just an instant before the attack, the Augur easily dodges!

DIPLOMAT: CALL TO ARMS

The Diplomats are an inspiring presence on the battlefield, capable of guiding and coordinating their companions against a common enemy.

- Once per tempus, the Diplomat may choose an ally who has just made a De Bello roll: the ally may repeat the roll (and must keep the new result).

  Example. Zenobia the Diplomat, from the rearguard, spots a huge Berserkir brandishing an ax among the ranks of the German warriors engaged with her allies. She shouts to her companions to focus their efforts on bringing down the dangerous opponent, letting one of them repeat a De Bello roll made against him.

EXPLORER: HUNTER OF MEN

The Explorers of the Cohors Arcana learn to apply their survival skills to combat.

- The Explorer may use De Natura instead of De Bello to make ranged attacks when using a weapon with a base Damage rating of 6 or less. Any bonus Dice Points from a De Bello Specialty in weapons that would benefit from this ability still apply to the roll.

  Example. Gaius Valerius, an Explorer, has a De Bello score of 12 and a De Natura score of 15. When attacking with his Arcus (Damage 6), he rolls 15 Dice Points instead of 12. If in the future Gaius Valerius acquires the Bows Specialty at +1, he could add to the roll of De Natura the bonus granted by the Specialty, for a total of 15+1 = 16 Dice Points.

FIGHTER: A HERO'S DUTY

The Fighters of the Cohors Arcana are trained to engage multiple opponents at the same time, to protect their allies.

- During combat, at the beginning of each tempus, the Fighter can voluntarily engage one opponent in excess of the number of opponents that would usually be engaged, regardless of which group – the players or the opponents – is outnumbered. Also, the Fighter can always decide which enemies to fight. See also *Part Five* for more details on how these rules apply.

CURSUS AND PERITIAE

Main Peritia (15+)	Cursus	Office	Combat Talent
De Bello	Bellicus	Fighter	A Hero's Duty
De Magia	Auguralis	Augur	Blessed Foresight
De Natura	Exploratorius	Explorer	Hunter of Men
De Scientia	Sapiens	Scholar	Achilles' Heel
De Societate	Legatorius	Diplomat	Call to Arms

Example. A contubernium of four Custodes is facing an equal number of adversaries: three brigands and their leader. Elektra, the Fighter of the group, bravely decides to engage two of them – the leader and one of the other bandits – thus letting one of her companions stay disengaged or help two of the Custodes outnumber one of the remaining brigands.

SCHOLAR: ACHILLES' HEEL

The Scholars of the Cohors Arcana are trained to find the weak point in their opponent's defenses and to hide their own.

- Once per tempus, the Scholar may repeat a damage or protection roll. The Scholar must keep the second result, even if it's lower than the first one.

Example. Aulus the Scholar is fighting a Ram-Serpent with his companions and manages to hit the beast. He rolls for damage with his Sica (Damage 4), obtaining a 2, very unlikely to penetrate the tough scales of the monster: the player decides then to use his Custos' ability to repeat the damage roll, obtaining a 4. It's a Fate Roll, so he rolls again getting a 3 and adds up the results for a total of 7 points of damage. Noticing a soft spot among the scales in the beast's underbelly, the Scholar thrusts his weapon deep into the bowels of the horned serpent, which hisses in anguish.

DIVINE PROTECTION

The divine protection granted by the Roman gods to the Cohors Arcana doesn't manifest solely with the Fate Roll, but also with the possibility that the Custodes might invoke a tutelary deity of the Roman pantheon, using ancient sacred formulas called **invocations** or ***Indigitamenta*** (sing. *Indigitamentum*).

In game terms, each Office is associated with a Tutelary Numen, a deity dedicated to protecting all members of that specific cursus. The player transcribes the Tutelary Numen corresponding to the cursus of their Custos in the appropriate space of the character sheet.

- **Mars** is the tutelary deity of the cursus bellicus.
- **Diana** is the tutelary deity of the cursus exploratorius.
- **Mercury** is the tutelary deity of the cursus legatorius.
- **Apollo** is the tutelary deity of the cursus auguralis.
- **Minerva** is the tutelary deity of the cursus sapiens.

- Each Custos starts their career knowing a single invocation granted by their own numen, and later in the game they will have the opportunity to learn other Indigitamenta as part of their advancement in the Cohors Arcana, either from the same tutelary deity or even from other gods of the Roman pantheon (see *Part Seven: Advancement*). All invocations have a cost in Pietas.

Note. *Each invocation grants a significant advantage to the Custos who performs it, but there is an important limitation: once a tutelary deity has been invoked, a Custos* ***will no longer be able to use the same invocation again*** *until they go to one of the temples dedicated to the god to ingratiate themselves again: usually, this happens only at the end of an adventure.*

Below are the invocations each Office knows at the beginning of the game:

AUGUR: APOLLO PHOEBUS (APOLLO THE BRIGHT)

By spending **6 Pietas**, an Augur who has made a roll of **De Magia** can use this invocation to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

DIPLOMAT: MERCURIUS NEGOTIATOR (MERCURY THE BARGAINER)

By spending 6 Pietas, a Diplomat who has made a roll of **De Societate** can use this invocation to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

EXPLORER: DIANA OPIFERA (DIANA WHO HELPS)

By spending 6 Pietas, an Explorer who has made a roll of **De Natura** can use this indigitamentum to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

FIGHTER: MARS VICTOR (MARS THE VICTOR)

By spending 6 Pietas, a Fighter who has made a roll of **De Bello** can use this invocation to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

SCHOLAR: MINERVA INGENIOSA (MINERVA THE INGENIOUS)

By spending 6 Pietas, a Scholar who has made a roll of **De Scientia** can use this invocation to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

STEP 3: TIROCINIUM

All Custodes undertake a long period of training, called *tirocinium*, to refine their abilities—in particular, those related to the Peritia corresponding to their Office.

- To reflect the extensive training of the Custodes, the players choose **two new, unrated Specialties** among those listed under the main Peritia of their Office and assign them a rating of +1 bonus Dice Points.

Example. After choosing her character's Office, Anna attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties from the list of De Scientia. They must be unrated Specialties, so, for example, she cannot pick Investigation as she already rates +2 in that Specialty. Anna chooses Geography and Medicine.

STEP 4: CALCULATE HIT POINTS AND PIETAS

Hit Points and Pietas are the physical and spiritual resources of the Custodes. Their starting scores are based on the Virtutes of a Custos and modified by their Office.

- The Hit Points of a Custos are found by adding up the scores of **Vigor** and **Coordinatio**.
- The Pietas of a Custos is found by adding up the scores of **Ratio** and **Sensibilitas**.

The resulting ratings are modified, adding or subtracting points from either score, as shown in the table below.

OFFICE MODIFIERS

Office	Hit Points	Pietas
Fighter	+3	-1
Explorer	+2	+0
Diplomat	+1	+1
Scholar	+0	+2
Augur	-1	+3

After making these simple calculations, the player marks their Custos' maximum Hit Points by highlighting the corresponding box inside the Hit Points table on the character sheet (e.g., with a circle). Then, the player also marks the Custos' Pietas score in the Pietas' box (the smaller box will be used to mark the maximum Pietas' rating, and the bigger one to update the current Pietas score).

Example. Anna calculates Hypatia's Hit Points and Pietas scores as follows (Hypatia is a Scholar):
Hit Points: (Coordinatio 10, Vigor 9) = 19. Anna draws a circle around the '19' box inside the Hit Points table.
Pietas: (Ratio 15, Sensibilitas 5) +2 = 22. Anna writes '22' inside the round box of the Pietas.

STEP 5: ASSIGN EXPERIENCE MULTIPLIERS

The players must now choose the **Experience multipliers** of their characters, using the **Curriculum** box on the back of their character sheet.

- The Experience multipliers represent a Custos' capability to learn specific skill sets at different rates: the higher the multiplier, the faster the Custos will be able to improve in the related field (see *Part Seven*, starting from page 84).

To assign the multipliers, each player distributes **24 points** among the eight categories listed in the Curriculum box. Six categories are directly related to the Peritiae, while the others refer to different fields of advancement for the character: the *Mos Arcanorum* and the *Pax Deorum*.

Mos Arcanorum. It represents the progress of the Custos within the ranks of the Cohors Arcana. It grants the character with valuable rewards and allies to assist them in their endeavors (see *Part Seven*, starting on page 86).

Pax Deorum. Progress in this category allows the Custos to receive new and powerful divine invocations, in addition to that of the Tutelary Numen (see *Part Seven*, starting on page 87).

When distributing the 24 points in the eight categories of the Curriculum, the following criteria must be met.

- The minimum multiplier is **x 2**.
- The maximum multiplier is **x 10**.
- The highest multiplier must be assigned to the **main Peritia** of the Custos' Office (ties are allowed).

Players should assign their multipliers carefully, as they cannot easily change them (see page 85).

Example. Anna must assign a multiplier to her character's Peritiae, as well as to the Pax Deorum and the Mos Arcanorum. Hypatia is a Scholar, so Anna must associate the highest multiplier to De Scientia, the main Peritia of her Office: she decides to assign a x6 multiplier, ensuring her character a rapid growth in many fields of knowledge. She then decides to distribute the remaining multipliers as follows: De Societate x2, De Bello x2, De Corpore x4, De Natura x4, De Magia x2, Pax Deorum x2, Mos Arcanorum x2.



EXPERIENCE AND CURRICULUM

During the game, the Custodes earn knowledge and prestige whenever they complete a mission. In game terms, this is translated into a number of **Experience Points**. By way of a character's Experience multipliers, Experience Points are then transformed into **Curriculum Points**, to be spent to increase the values of Peritiae and Specialties and to advance in the Pax Deorum and Mos Arcanorum (for the full rules, see *Part Seven*, starting from page 84).

STEP 6: CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

The final step of character creation consists of choosing appropriate equipment for the Custos. Players must select items for their characters' **standard** and **war gear**, and write them on the character sheet.

STANDARD GEAR

All Custodes are equipped with a set of standard gear, supplied by the Pretorian Guard. They carry their belongings in leather bags and pouches, secured with straps to a stick, worn on the left shoulder (see page 220 for more details). The standard gear does not cause any Encumbrance.

WAR GEAR

The Custos' war gear consists of the weapons, armor, and shields with which they are equipped. The tables presented further in this chapter list the various types of war gear that are available to the Custodes at the start of the game, complete with their Damage/Difficulty, Protection, Parry, Encumbrance ratings, and any special features.

Full descriptions for each piece of war gear can be found in Part Nine, starting from page 221. Players choose their equipment and record it on their character sheets.

WEAPON DIFFICULTY RATING

Each weapon in *Lex Arcana* has a **Difficulty** rating, representing its maneuverability. This rating usually corresponds to a weapon's Damage value – the higher the damage of a weapon, the harder it is to use.

The Difficulty of a weapon is checked whenever a Custos is the attacker during a close combat sequence (see page 61) or uses a ranged weapon:

- If the De Bello roll of the Custos didn't exceed the Difficulty rating of the weapon used, the attack failed to damage the target (no damage roll is made, and the combat sequence skips to the next tempus).

Expertus. A Custos whose De Bello is equal to or greater than twice the Difficulty rating of the weapon is considered an *Expertus* in that weapon (include any bonus from a pertinent Specialty) and checks the relevant *Expertus* box on a character sheet.

- An *Expertus* Custos always ignores a weapon's Difficulty rating.

The *Expertus* status is not affected by conditions that temporarily reduce a Custos' available Dice Points (for example, *Fatigued* or *Cursed,* see further in this book).



ENCUMBRANCE

Players may not overburden their characters with gear, as they must take into account the total **Encumbrance** of everything they carry with them.

Equipment items have an Encumbrance value, a rating usually based on their weight and volume (see below). Players must add up the Encumbrance rating of every item their Custodes have selected and record the total on their character sheets as follows.

- Inside the Hit Points table, the player marks with a slash ('/') a number of boxes equal to the Custos' total Encumbrance, starting from the box on the bottom right (the '1') and going upwards.
- The total maximum Encumbrance a Custos can carry is equal to their maximum Hit Points, but accumulating too high an Encumbrance score may hinder the Custos and more easily lead them to the *Fatigued* condition.
- A character suffers the *Fatigued* condition if due to Encumbrance and any damage sustained all their Hit Points are marked either with an 'X' or a '/' (for more specifications see pages 66 and 127).
- In addition, if a Custos' total Encumbrance exceeds **half** of their maximum Hit Points (rounded down), all the character's movement actions have the difficulty increased by 1 level (the majority of **De Corpore** and **De Natura**'s actions are considered movement actions, but also others that the Demiurge considers as such according to the situation).

Note. *Whenever players decide to modify the equipment carried by their Custodes they should remember to update the total Encumbrance recorded on the character sheet.*

Example. Gaius Valerius has a De Bello score of 12 and fights using a Gladius (Difficulty 6). Since his De Bello score is equal to twice the weapon's Difficulty (the Custos is Expertus in the Gladius) the Explorer doesn't need to check for Difficulty.

Note. *Non-player characters ignore a weapon's Difficulty rating and never need to check their De Bello roll against it. See also Part Eight: The Demiurge (starting from page 110) for the complete rules regarding NPCs.*

WEAPON FEATURES

Many weapons have one or more features, characteristics that can make their use more straightforward or more complicated. Weapons and their features are listed in the tables on page 46.

- **Slow**. A ranged weapon categorized as Slow is challenging to maneuver and reload, and thus it can be used only once every two tempus and can never fire more than one *volley* at the beginning of a fight (see page 60).
- **Throwing**. Melee weapons that can be thrown can be employed to make ranged weapon attacks at Short range.
- **Two-handed**. Two-handed weapons are so large that they must be maneuvered exclusively using both hands (the weapon's Difficulty is not decreased).
- **Versatile**. A Versatile weapon can be maneuvered more easily when wielded with two hands: when this happens, the weapon's Difficulty is decreased by 2.

Example. It's time for Hypatia to gear up and prepare for her first adventure. First, she needs a weapon: a Sica (Damage 4) seems a good choice, since Hypatia's De Bello score (8) is high enough to let her use it without needing to check for Difficulty (Anna marks the Expertus box next to the weapon on her character sheet).

She also needs a ranged weapon to target enemies at a distance, and a Sling (Damage 3) seems a suitable weapon for that purpose.

Then, she needs some protective gear. Anna decides to equip Hypatia with a Clipeus, (a shield that gives her a +2 bonus to Parry), and a light Corium Lorica (Protection 3) so as not to sacrifice her mobility too much.

Now Anna calculates the overall Encumbrance value of her character, adding up the various values of the chosen gear. The total is 9 (since the total Encumbrance score is not greater than half of her Hit Points, Hypatia does not suffer any disadvantage). As a final step, she records it on her character sheet, marking with a slash the first nine boxes on the Hit Points table, starting from the '1'.

That's it! Hypatia is ready to join the rest of her contubernium in her first adventure and to test her skills on the field. Will she be prepared for the challenges ahead?

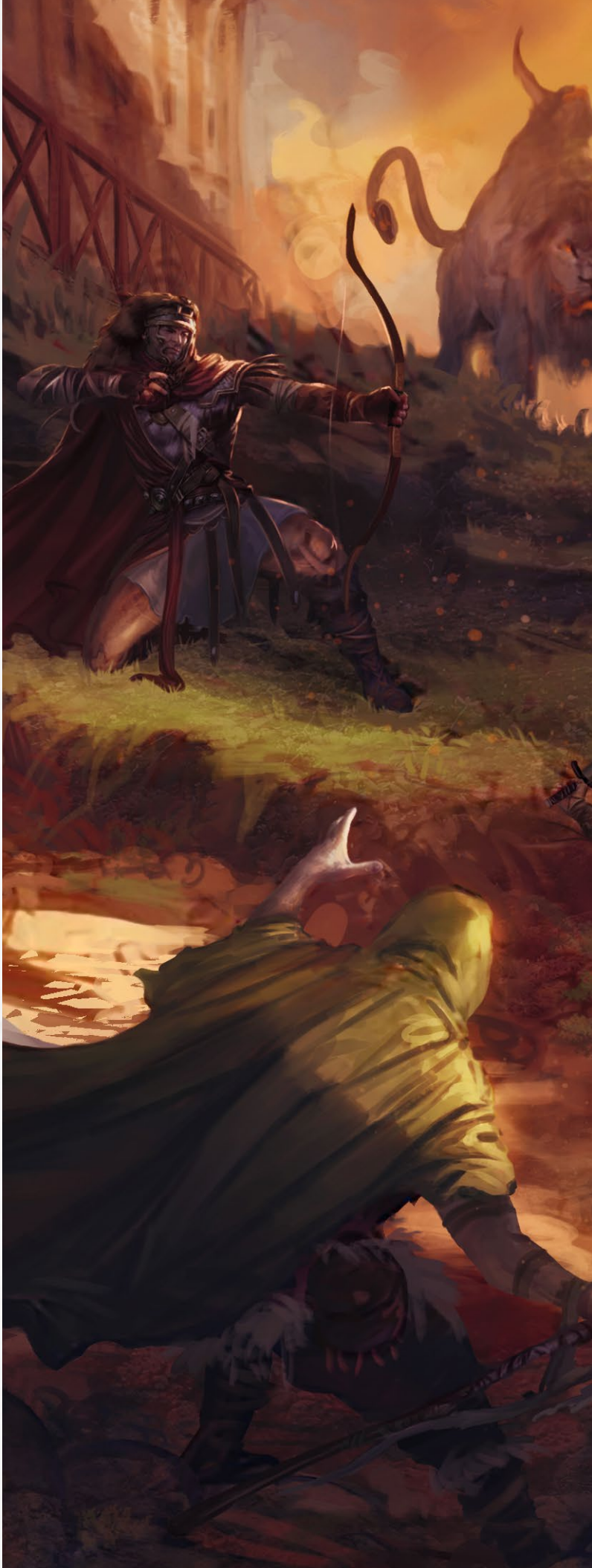


WEAPON SPECIALTIES (DE BELLO)

As described previously, in *Lex Arcana* characters may have Specialties in each Peritia that give them bonuses when performing specific actions. Combat is no exception, and Custodes may decide to specialize in the use of one or more weapons.

All weapon Specialties are used in conjunction with the De Bello Virtus. Each entry below includes which weapons supplied by the Cohors Arcana are comprised by each Specialty.

Axes and Maces. Bipennis, Cudgel, Malleus, Securicula, and Securis.
Bows. Arcus, Manubalista, and Toxon.
Daggers. Pugio, Sica, and Scramasax.
Missiles. Angon, Pilum, Plumbata, and Sling.
Spears. Hasta and Spear.
Swords. Ensis, Falx, Gladius, and Spatha.





Name _____ Age _____

Province _____ Sex _____

Languages _____ Office _____

_____ Rank _____

LEX·ARCANA

VIRTUTES

COORDINATIO ○	AUCTORITAS ○	RATIO ○
VIGOR ○	INGENIUM ○	SENSIBILITAS ○

PERITIAE

DE BELLO	DE CORPORE	DE MAGIA
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○

DE NATURA	DE SCIENTIA	DE SOCIETATE
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○

PIETAS

MAX ☐

HIT POINTS

40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

TREATED ☐

MULTIPLIERS

1	2	3	X1
4	5	6	X2
7	8	9	X3
10	11	12	X4
13	14	15	X5
16 OR MORE			X6

TUTELARY DEITY

_____

INVOCATIONS

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMBAT ABILITY

_____

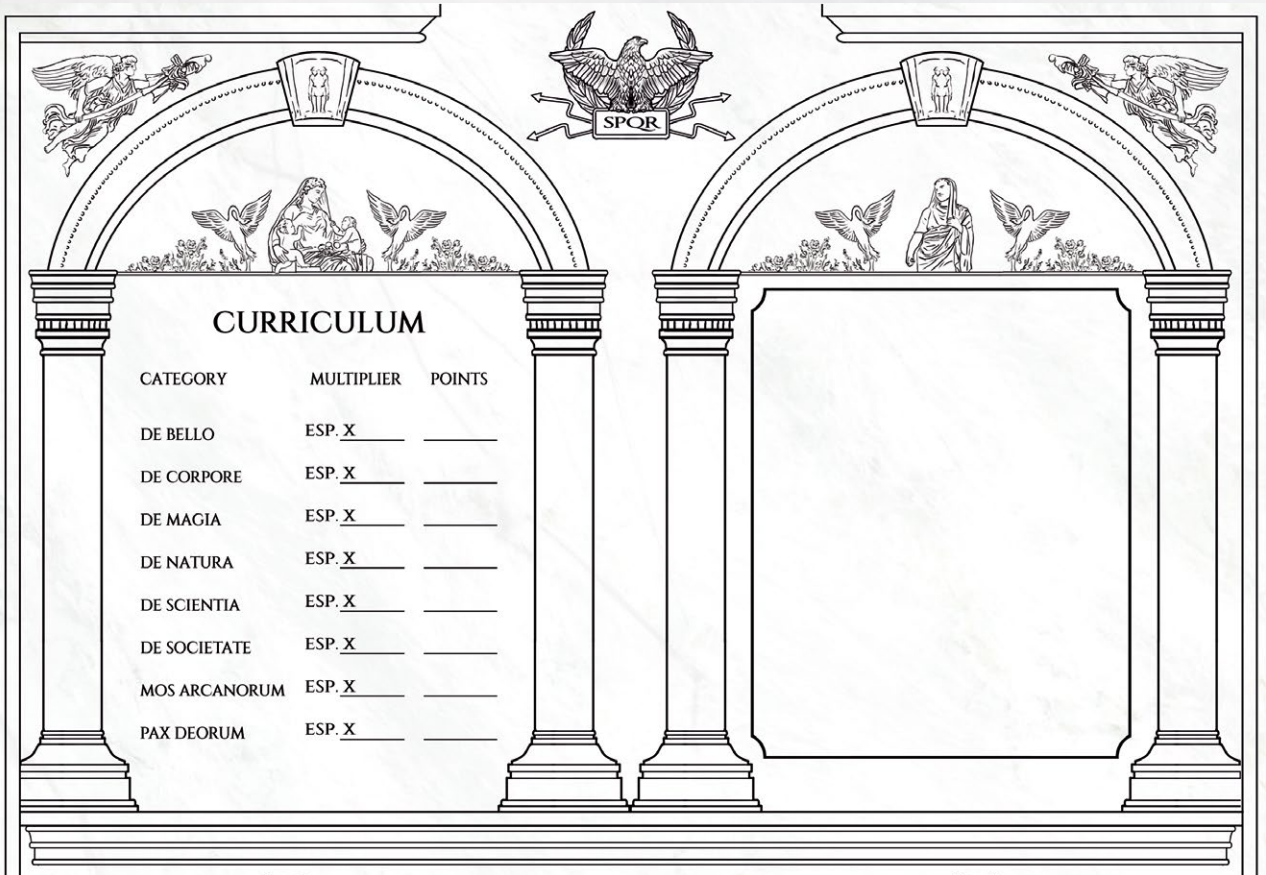
WEAPON _____ DAMAGE ___ ENC. ___ EXPERTUS ☐

WEAPON _____ DAMAGE ___ ENC. ___ EXPERTUS ☐

SHIELD _____ PARRY ___ ENC. ___

ARMOR _____ PROT. ___ ENC. ___

TOT ☐



CURRICULUM

CATEGORY	MULTIPLIER	POINTS
DE BELLO	ESP. X	
DE CORPORE	ESP. X	
DE MAGIA	ESP. X	
DE NATURA	ESP. X	
DE SCIENTIA	ESP. X	
DE SOCIETATE	ESP. X	
MOS ARCANORUM	ESP. X	
PAX DEORUM	ESP. X	

BENEFITS

INDIGITAMENTA

EQUIPMENT

NOTES

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Dam./Dif.	Enc.	Feat.
Pugio (Dagger)	3	0	–
Sica (Curved dagger)	4	1	–
Cudgel	4	2	Versatile
Scramasax (Long dagger)	5	2	–
Gladius (Short sword)	6	2	–
Spear	6	3	Throwing, Versatile
Securicula (Hatchet)	7	3	Sword
Ensis (Sword)	8	3	–
Malleus (Mace)	9	4	Versatile
Spatha (Long sword)	10	4	Versatile
Securis (Battle ax)	11	5	Versatile
Hasta (Heavy spear)	12	7	Versatile
Falx (Heavy curved sword)	12	5	Two-handed
Bipennis (Double ax)	13	6	Two-handed

List of abbreviations
Dam./Dif. = Damage/Difficulty
Enc. = Encumbrance
Feat. = Feature

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Dam./Dif.	Enc.	Range	Feat.
Sling	3	1*	Long	–
Plumbata	4	1**	Medium	–
Angon (Javelin)	5	2	Medium	–
Arcus (Short bow)	6	3*	Long	Two-handed
Toxon (Composite bow)	8	4*	Long	Two-handed
Pilum (Heavy javelin)	10	4	Short	–
Manubalista (Crossbow)	12/6	5*	Long	Slow, Two-handed

** Includes ammunition.*
*** The Encumbrance refers to 5 ammunition.*

ARMOR

Armor	Protection/ Encumbrance*
Corium Lorica (Leather armor)	3
Lorica Squamata (Light scale armor)	4
Lorica Hamata (Mail armor)	5
Lorica Plumata (Heavy scale armor)	6
Lorica Segmentata (Lamellar armor)	8
Lorica Musculata (Chest plate)	10

** The Encumbrance of any armor is always equal to its Protection value.*



SHIELDS		
Shield	**Parry**	**Encumbrance**
Parma (Small shield)	+1	2
Clipeus (Medium shield)	+2	4
Scutum (Large shield)	+3	6

OPTIONAL: BACKGROUND SPECIALTIES METHOD

During Step 1 of the Second Part of Character Creation, players choose several Specialties reflecting what their characters were doing before they enlisted in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. This chapter presents an **alternative method** allowing players to give their Custodes a detailed background.

To start, players must first look up their characters' Province of origin in the table on page 32, and then roll a d10 (or choose an entry) to find a character's **Birthplace**. The result identifies where the Custodes were born and spent most of their formative years before entering the Cohors Arcana, among the following:

- **Civitas (great city).** One of the great urban centers of the Empire
- **Colony.** A newly founded city, built by colonists
- **Vicus (village).** One of the thousands of smaller settlements of the Empire
- **Isolated Place.** A remote community, far from the main cities
- **Near the Limes.** A settlement on the frontier of the Empire

This chapter presents a separate section for each of the Birthplaces listed above, containing a general description of life in the area and listing the gameplay benefits associated with growing up in such a place: specifically, each Birthplace entry provides a Custos with a **+1 bonus to two Specialties**.

Then, players using this system are required to roll a d6, to determine the upbringing of the character, which will provide a Custos with a sample backstory and a **+2 bonus to another Specialty** (which must be a different one from those provided by the Birthplace).

BIRTHPLACE					
Province of origin	Civitas (great city)	Colony	Vicus (village)	Isolated Place	Near the Limes (Imperial border)
Roma Urbe	1-10	–	–	–	–
Italia	1-4	5-7	8-9	10	–
Illyricum	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-10
Macedonia	1-2	3-5	6-8	9-10	–
Achaia	1-3	4-6	7-9	10	–
Gallia	1-2	3-5	6-9	10	–
Iberia	1-2	3-6	7-9	10	–
Britannia	1	2-3	4-7	8-9	10
Germania	–	1	2-3	4-6	7-10
Raetia	–	1-2	3-4	5-7	8-10
Thracia	1-2	3	4-6	7	8-10
Dacia	1	2	3-5	6-7	8-10
Asia	1-3	4-5	6-8	9-10	–
Armenia	1	2	3-4	5-7	8-10
Mesopotamia	1-2	3	4-5	6-7	8-10
Aegyptus	1-3	4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Syria	1-3	4-6	7-8	9	10
Arabia	1	2-3	4-6	7-9	10
Numidia	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Mauretania	1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-10

LIST OF BIRTHPLACES

CIVITAS (GREAT CITY)

The *civitates* are the main political and economic engine of the Empire. All great cities, even those with a thousand-year history before the Roman conquest, seek to develop in imitation of the Eternal City. Many boast large squares and brothels, shrines, amphitheaters and dark alleys, open-air cloacae (sewers), refined patrician villas, and huge insulae (residential blocks) where most of the plebeians live in poor sanitary conditions. The heart of every city is the crowded Forum, surrounded by beautiful temples, courts, and government buildings, where the bureaucratic activities and the solemn sacrifices to the gods take place. With its markets, pungent smells, vendors' shouts, public hearings, and sacred processions, it is the perfect place to carry out any activity, legal or otherwise…

The *civitates* are centers of Roman culture, the major poles of knowledge of the Empire, and their inhabitants are at ease in public—be it in high society, the Forum, or the bustling streets of the slums. At the same time, their daily life is marked by a large number of rituals linked to official or tolerated cults.

- A character hailing from a great city attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties, chosen from the following: ***Imperial Cults***, ***Interpretation of Omens*** (De Magia), **Any Specialty** (De Scientia), ***Streetwise***, ***Politics*** (De Societate).

- Roll a d6 to determine the character's upbringing:

1. Family of slaves or liberti (freed slaves). Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Seduction*** (De Societate), ***Climbing***, ***Larceny*** (De Corpore).

> ***Example of family background.*** *You lived your childhood among the marginalized and the miserable of the city, who spent their days searching for the barest essentials. Your house, if you had one, was little more than a dump, and the members of your family (escaped slaves or liberti, freed slaves) did not take much care of you or your education, too busy begging or dedicated to their activities as jugglers and soothsayers, prostituting themselves in the lupanari (brothels), or wandering incessantly in the dusty surroundings of the Forum to cheat some naïve peasant fresh from the countryside. Things could have gone even worse if your relatives were real latrones—dedicated to theft, kidnapping, or murder, who ended their days in the darkness of a cell or nailed to a cross.*

2. Family of clientes of a patrician. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Threaten*** (De Bello), ***Brawling***, ***Running*** (De Corpore)

> ***Example of family background.*** *In Roman cities, there is not always a strict boundary between the elegant quarters and those of the shacks, between the patrician villas and the tall buildings where even immigrants, freedmen, priests of strange cults, and small-time outlaws cast out from neighboring countries find refuge. However, your family has always been considered lucky to have rented accommodation inside one of these huge insulae; cheaply built, like many others, with thin walls, ready to collapse in the first big storm or with the smallest earthquake shock. The proximity to the patrician districts helped your father to become one of the clientes (retainers) of an aristocratic patron, who paid the rent, and guaranteed food (the sportula) and a decent quality of life. In return, your father had to accompany him everywhere, even outside the city, give him his and his family's vote in public assemblies, and support him in instances of intimidation and scuffles with opposing political factions.*

3. Family of artisans or traders. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Crafts*** (De Scientia), ***Deceit***, ***Decorum*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your home was a collection of a few rooms in an overpopulated neighborhood where lenones (pimps), gladiators, prostitutes, and postulants lived together. Fortunately, your family did not have much in common with those people. During the day, every room and every member of the family was busy. Everyone supported your father's business—a craftsman or a merchant—producing and storing his goods in a room that served as both a workshop and store. Goods were then sold in the largest room, overlooking a narrow lane flanked by blind alleys and passages. In the worst moments, you were forced to look for customers and hawk the merchandise (whether it was slippers, fabrics, vases, jewelry, furniture, wigs, bread, cakes, fish, or meat) at celebrations or public meetings in the area of the Forum.*

4. Son or daughter of a low-level functionary. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Imperial Cults*** (De Magia), ***Investigation***, ***Machinae*** (De Scientia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your father was a minor municipal official, underpaid, and always busy. He acted as the secretary of some significant official, as a simple scribe in the service of a pontifice (a high-ranking priest), or was sent around the city to complete unsatisfactory assignments. Sometimes he had to accompany one of the Tresviri Nocturni in all-night street patrols and suffer the insults of the young drunken nobles returning from the brothels. He often had to make do with other work to keep the family in some semblance of decorum and dignity—work either strenuous, like that of teaching*

in ill-favored public schools, or dangerous, like accepting money in exchange for favors and helping in collecting money lent to usury.

5. Son or daughter of a high-level functionary. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***History***, ***Medicine***, ***Philosophy*** (De Scientia).

Example of family background. *Having a prominent Imperial official or a magistrate in the family has characterized your childhood. Whether he was the collaborator of a praetor (for civil or criminal cases), or the assistant of one of the comites (senior grades of army or administration), or one of the ediles (who dealt with the distribution of food and the urban growth of the city), or a quaestor, it did not matter: your quality of life and education was much higher than the average. You were able to attend some excellent private schools; and it was not unusual that while walking in the city your parents were greeted by representatives of the municipal institutions and members of the local curia, who invited you to large parties in beautiful buildings outside the city.*

6. Rich patrician family. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Command***, ***Decorum***, ***Oratory*** (De Societate).

Example of family background. *The villa of your noble family did not look out of place compared to the others: equally large and sumptuous, with dozens of slaves who took care of the work necessary for the feeding, clothing, and maintenance of the household. Your family lived in a sort of closed economy, with no need to turn to free workers like artisans and small traders: slaves were enough for every need. Throughout your childhood, you have been followed by a preceptor, who took care of your education; directing you to your future cursus honorum and to the desirable profession of lawyer or politician, so you could then access the most important magistracies of the city or the governorate of a province. Just as your father did, and his father before him.*

COLONY

A colony is generally an oppidum (a fortified outpost) that has developed during the colonization phase of the province; a settlement on the bank of a navigable river, on the sea coast, or more likely along one of the countless Roman roads, regularly trodden by travelers, caravans of merchants escorted by armed convoys, and messengers. In such places, smaller and less populated than the civitates, the presence of the Empire, its officials, bureaucrats, and soldiers is substantial and tangible; it is not unusual to find the comforts typical of larger cities such as theaters, markets, wide streets that cross at right angles and splendid thermae (baths)—supplied by colossal aqueducts visible from miles away. But there are also the postulant crowds of marginalized, miserable, pimps, charlatans, and scroungers.

Colonies are usually large commercial hubs, great crossroads for different peoples and cultures: their citizen are generally sociable and inquisitive, used to deal with strangers and to listen to all sorts of rumors from distant lands.

- A character hailing from a colony attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties, chosen from the following: ***Favor of the Gods***, ***Superstitions*** (De Magia), ***Architecture***, ***Geography*** (De Scientia), **Any Specialty** (De Societate).

- Roll a d6 to determine the character's upbringing:

1. Family of slaves or liberti. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Brawling***, ***Jumping*** (De Corpore), ***Machinae*** (De Scientia).

Example of family background. *Your father was a libertus, a freed slave. Unlike the fathers of your friends, he left the house every morning proud of his work. And he went out armed. He was one of the city's Vigiles, responsible for extinguishing fires, providing police service in the streets, and among the first to intervene in the case of riots. "We are too few," you heard him repeat all the time, and when he began to talk about his day, it was rarely a happy story: poor men beat up by other wretches, prostitutes and dancers slaughtered by untouchable nobles, people kidnapped or murdered for a handful of sestertii, horrible fires that destroyed—in mere hours—crumbling insulae or wooden sanctuaries of some strange religion. But at least he tried to change things, and you would like to do the same.*

2. Family of a laborers. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Climbing***, ***Swimming*** (De Corpore), ***Negotiation*** (De Societate).

Example of family background. *Great workers: this is the first thing you remember about your parents. Your mother took care of your upbringing and that of your brothers and sisters by herself, and, at the same time, she made small trinkets or embroidered fabrics for sale, repaired slippers, and stitched cloaks. On the other hand, your father and other family members spent most of the days going to sea, working at the market, or laboring upon construction sites, hired as masons. The food was never lacking, you also remember, and there was the love of relatives and the friendship of the neighbors, always ready to lend a hand when things were not going well.*

3. Son or daughter of a lenone or a lanista. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Larceny*** (De Corpore), ***Deceit***, ***Streetwise*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *When you were young, you did not realize that your family's profession was not one of the most respectable. Wandering through the streets of the city center in search of youngsters just arrived from the countryside and convincing them to get easy money if they were accompanied by wealthy clients certainly could not be defined as something to be proud of. Your family was hated by everyone, and you were also treated by your peers worse than the children of thieves, murderers, and self-styled priests of perverse cults. And it was not uncommon for groups of youngsters, including those willingly benefiting from the services offered by your family's business, to get drunk in the middle of the night and throw stones at your house crying, "Get the pimp!"*

4. Son or daughter of a priest of the Official Cult. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Favor of the Gods***, ***Imperial Cults*** (De Magia), ***History*** (De Scientia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *"The gods have softened!" This was the favorite phrase of your father, a priest of Jupiter Restitutor. He officiated celebrations and the making of sacrifices in a temple of ancient construction, which served as a reference point for the community. Everything was going fine, until the day when the development of a vast and splendid sanctuary of Isis and Serapis had begun. In a short time, it attracted huge crowds from the whole region, including those who until recently had gone to pray in the temple of Jupiter. Since then, your father has gotten angry more easily and longed for the past centuries when the gods did not allow foreign cults, barbaric and vulgar, to take root within the Empire. And if they tried, it was not long before their statues were thrown into a river, their self-styled priests fed to the lions, and their fanatical followers forced to live like mice in the catacombs.*

5. Patrician family. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Geography***, ***Philosophy*** (De Scientia), ***Performance*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your family was aristocratic, like many others in the city, but it stood out because not all its interests were directed towards politics or the magistracy. Your parents' large patrician palace was often host to philosophers, natural scientists, rhetoricians, and great doctors—many coming from distant places. On these occasions your house became an attraction for the intellectual elite of the entire province, turning into a cenacle of intellectuals and scholars: passages of great authors of the past were read aloud, and poems and orations were declaimed. You lived in a world distanced from reality, projected into a mythical past populated by gods, saints, and great philosophers, but it was not unpleasant at all. You have been instructed like the offspring of the noblest Senators of Rome itself.*

6. Rich patrician family. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Command***, ***Decorum***, ***Politics*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your noble family claimed to be related to some of the oldest aristocratic families of the province, including that of the governor—not that he ever showed up at your house, as far as you can remember. As per tradition, many members of your family continued their cursus honorum in the capital of the province and made a career in the magistracy, receiving important political or military offices. Then one of them was accused of corruption and embezzlement and was put on trial. Despite access to the services of the best lawyers, his assets were seized, and he was sent into exile, in a place far too close to those barbarian peoples who hated Rome. He sent many letters so that his sentence was suspended as soon as possible, but your parents told him to stay quiet and wait—and in the future, to be just a little more careful.*

VICUS (VILLAGE)

Large or small, rich or miserable, densely inhabited or depopulated, these rural aggregates of houses and land differ greatly from the civitates and the colonies. They may have developed in the country outside the borders of a larger city or stand distant from the main roads, and lack the typical Roman urban structure, following traditional customs of construction instead. The farms dotting the landscape are usually the houses of tenants who work the fields of a wealthy landowner, or of smaller landowners who live off the land and barely reach the census (income) necessary to enter the council of the nearby *vicus* (village).

Although there are artisans and merchants, it is the members of the tribes, the laborers, and the local folks that constitute the majority of the inhabitants, with their customs and traditions handed down from generation to generation. Imperial officers try not to interfere too much with local notables, but these villages are still within the Empire, and the law of Rome cannot be questioned. Or at least it shouldn't be.

The villages of the Empire are agricultural and manufacturing centers that survive through trade in products of the land and livestock, and many villagers maintain a strong oral tradition tied to old beliefs.

- A character hailing from a village attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties, chosen from the following: ***Forbidden Cults***, ***Interpretation of Dreams*** (De Magia), **Any Specialty** (De Natura), ***Crafts***, ***Decipher*** (De Scientia).

- Roll a d6 to determine the character's upbringing:

1. Son or daughter of a fugitive. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Marching*** (De Corpore), ***Hunting***, ***Herb Lore*** (De Natura).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Many villages are far from the power centers of the province, and the one you were born in was one of the most distant. It was not chosen randomly by your father, who for reasons he never wanted to explain to you had fled his land and come this far. Was he a slave escaped from his master? A patrician who had to disappear due to a scandal? A great poet who offended the Emperor with his verses? Then, he married your mother, a local girl, who helped him to become part of the community, to give him a new homeland and a new life. It took many years, however, before he stopped frequenting bad people, being haunted by horrible nightmares, or looking about and behind him when he walked the streets of the village.*

2. Family of artisans. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Carousing*** (De Corpore), ***Crafts*** (De Scientia), ***Negotiation*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *The handicrafts of this region were in high demand in the larger cities of the province, and the members of your family were among the most skilled at making them. After all, it is the same occupation in which your grandparents were masters, like their grandparents and generations before them, too. And the more years passed, the greater the number of merchants and curious who came to the village to buy and barter. Sometimes they brought with them family members, servants, and armed guards, filled the spartan inns that faced the central street, ordered food and drink, and sometimes caused trouble. But thanks to them the village prospered, and the young people had the desire to go and look for luck elsewhere.*

3. Family of musicians. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Performance***, ***Seduction*** (De Societate), ***Carousing*** (De Corpore).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your father could play various instruments well enough, but it was your mother and her sisters who knew how to dance with the grace of goddesses—they were in great demand from many nearby villages for special celebrations and parties. Work never lacked, even if your family had to learn which jobs to avoid—given that on some occasions the situation became very oppressive. They called them "Greek" parties, and they took place in the big houses or palaces of wealthy officials and settlers. More than feasts, they were parades of dancers and prostitutes who undressed on demand in front of young and old—clients who ate and drank until they lost their senses or become offensive, pestering, and violent.*

4. Family of farmers. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Beast Lore***, ***Weather*** (De Natura), ***Superstitions*** (De Magia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your family, like many others in the village, regularly participated in the celebrations of the Official Cult, sacrificed to the Roman gods, and lit a flame in front of the statues of the Lari every time a dear one married or left for a long journey. But in your family, children were not taught of the feats of Hercules or Jupiter. The heroes and spirits that populated your dreams in childhood were different, closer… You could sense their presence when the wind blew, and you saw them running in the form of animals just outside the village: they were the ones who made the tide rise or pushed the thick clouds down the valleys. But such things were wiser to be whispered than to be spoken aloud because the border between tolerated and forbidden cults has always been very, very thin.*

5. Noble local family. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Carousing*** (De Corpore), ***Foraging***, ***Hunting*** (De Natura).

> ***Example of family background.*** *It often happened that, during a celebration, the higher tribal authority of the region drank a little too much. He talked about his village and when, in the distant past, it was the most important in the area. At that time, sacrifices were offered to the ancient gods in front of thousands of faithful, and real armies went out to battle. They were not just rants: the stories passed down in your family found a depressing confirmation if you wandered around in the part of the town that was on the opposite side of the access road to the village. One could walk among the ruins of what was once a much larger and more populated village, of which only half-buried ruins remained, extending for dozens, perhaps hundreds of meters, to become almost indistinguishable from the landscape. The world had changed, and the ancient gods could no longer be seen…*

6. Patrician landowners. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Forbidden Cults***, ***Precognition*** (De Magia), ***Oratory*** (De Societate).

Example of family background. *Your father was a much-appreciated lecturer. He spent most of the year touring the great cities of the Empire, invited to give public lectures attended by large crowds. When he was tired, he would return here, to his lavish family estate, for rest and to write in his favorite room. In his orations, he spoke of Plato and Aristotle, but also of Pythagoreanism and of Orfism; of how to classify the spirits that stand between men and gods. He was often accused of being a magician—a theurgist—able to practice the telestiké, to imprison the divine essences and command them. You remember well his vehemence in answering to those infamous accusations, and in specifying that he was only a philosophus platonicus. But you also remember very well those rooms in the estate that were always closed, and into which none could enter.*

ISOLATED PLACE

You come from a remote and secluded place, far from busy roads or paths and encircled by nature—often ungrateful and hostile. Your village sits in the mountains, on the edge of a desert, in impenetrable forest, on top of a hill, surrounded by swamps, or on a tiny island. The Empire's presence feels remote here; life goes on marked by the rhythm of the seasons, the hunts, and the interpretation of natural forebodings.

The Imperial bureaucracy cannot rival tribal traditions and the cult of the ancestors, and Roman officials are rarely seen, only to collect taxes and enlist the young. Government is delegated to local authorities, whether they are clans, nobles, or descendants of great warriors of the past.

Those dwelling in remote places are used to lives in contact with nature and its portents, exposed to the unforgiving elements and far from the comforts of civilization. Their main concern is to provide food for themselves and their families.

- A character hailing from an isolated place attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties, chosen from the following: ***Daggers***, ***Missiles*** (De Bello), **Any Specialty** (De Corpore), ***Foraging***, ***Sail*** (De Natura).

- Roll a d6 to determine the character's upbringing:

1. Closed community. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Hunting*** (De Natura), ***Performance*** (De Societate), ***Superstitions*** (De Magia)

Example of family background. *You were born in a community that is part of an ethnic, linguistic, or religious minority. Your people had never been much appreciated in the region. They had to move to increasingly remote places, far from the hostility of other villages and the indifference of the Imperial authorities. The last few years were not good: deaths outnumbered births and many young people departed, tired of enduring isolation and the archaic traditions that prohibited certain occupations and mixed marriages. There were few children to play with, and the general atmosphere was that of a people destined to vanish. Your most cherished memories relate to the grand celebrations, during which the whole community gathered: everybody ate together, laughed, and knowingly avoided talk about the future.*

2. Family of exiles. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Interpretation of Omens*** (De Magia), ***Exploration***, ***Navigation*** (De Natura).

Example of family background. *Before moving here, surrounded by the wild beauty of nature, your parents lived in a great city. They could not have children and officiated rites to the gods with passion and humility. As the years went by, they could no longer see in the crowds praying to the gods of the Empire a true pietas, especially during the solemn holidays, which seemed an excuse for sacred prostitution and the collection of money. True devotion was found only in the prayers and rites of followers of false gods: the lamentations of women who worshiped Isis, the moving stories about the death of Christ, the ritual mutilations of the faithful of Cybele. One day, your parents chose to walk away from it all and left everything behind. In solitary and untamed places, they found their faith in Mars, Jupiter, Juno, and the other gods who made Rome great. And a sacrifice to Venus Genetrix was enough to herald your birth…*

3. Son or daughter of a priest of a tolerated cult. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Clairvoyance*** (De Magia), ***Marching*** (De Corpore), ***Decipher*** (De Scientia).

Example of family background. *Over the years, your father had become increasingly antisocial and taciturn. The only person he saw willingly was a kind of priest-philosopher, who had decided to spend old age as far as possible from the 'horrible temptations of the sordid sack of mud' that was his physical body. They say he was a gnostic, and that instead of the gods, he worshiped those he called the four great prophets: Orpheus, Abraham, Jesus, and Apollonius of Tyana. One morning your father left home and never came back. They told you that he walked for days until he came upon some ancient ruins: he climbed a high column and has not come down since. Every day a growing number of proselytes came to him and brought him food and drink and stayed for hours to worship him and to pray. Years later you went to see for yourself: your father was very thin, and he seemed to be a hundred years old. You like to think he recognized you, and that the grimace on his face was… regret.*

4. Son or daughter of a foreman. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Axes and Maces*** (De Bello), ***Climbing***, ***Running*** (De Corpore).

> ***Example of family background.*** *The inhabitants of your small village were all dedicated to the same occupation. Whether it was felling giant trees and leading them downstream, digging stone in an open quarry, or gouging tunnel walls for salt, it was exhausting work, more suitable to a slave than a free man. Your father was one of the few who instead spent his days sitting at a table because he knew how to write and count. His task was to record everything and compile weekly reports, such as the amount of material produced, the payroll distributed, the tools to be replaced, and the number who died in their work. The latter were not few, and he would never have allowed his children to end up doing such a job themselves.*

5. Family of healers. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Beast Lore***, ***Herb Lore*** (De Natura), ***Medicine*** (De Scientia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *The reason why this territory depopulated over the years was that people died, regardless of their age. Perhaps because of a malignant fever originating in the nearby swamps that disappeared for a few years and then returned more virulent than ever, or a contagious epidemic brought by slaves that horribly defiled bodies before killing them, or even phthisis and consumption, which passed from animals to men making them crazy first and then dying in agony. Many villages had been abandoned, and only rats and packs of stray dogs wandered the streets. But your family remained, because your father was a doctor and priest of Asclepius, and your mother assisted him. By day or night, they treated the sick and soothed the dying, trying to alleviate their suffering, without real hope of saving their lives. When they, too, got sick, they sent you away to distant relatives. You haven't heard of them since.*

6. Son or daughter of a functionary. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Spears***, ***Threaten*** (De Bello), ***Riding*** (De Natura).

> ***Example of family background.*** *You are the only child of the most important Imperial officer present in this remote settlement. Not that this meant much… in fact, your father had probably stepped on the toes of someone more important than him, since he had been sent here and not to a "real" city. To complicate matters, your mother—along with other local women—had converted to the worship of Christ; she took you along with her to pray, and as she cared for the derelicts. Your father accused her of wasting time and money, and of denying the gods of the Empire. In time, he repudiated her and sent her away. She left with true faith in her heart, secure in a reward in the afterlife. From what you knew, she spent the following years in a Christian community that lived alone, in peace with nature, men and the father in the sky that created every living being.*

NEAR THE LIMES

You were born in a settlement near the border of the Empire (the *limes*). These settlements—often built near a military camp (castra)—consist of a few isolated farmhouses or have developed into real towns. Thanks to legionaries, commanders, and officials who receive regular payment from the government, with time they also attracted a fair number of settlers: merchants, artisans, soldiers' concubines, and families in search of a new life, which have profoundly changed the martial features of the original settlement. In addition to the usual stalls and changing stations for trawlers, inside these fortified border villages one can find legionaries lazing in taverns, representatives of foreign populations traveling abroad, and fixers who offer unusual and shady services.

Those who live near the fortified castra on the border know how to defend themselves and avoid the frequent raids of roaming barbarians and usually travel for miles as army couriers, in logistics departments or simply to sell their products in more civilized areas.

- A character hailing from near the limes attributes a +1 bonus to two Specialties, chosen from the following: **Any Specialty** (De Bello), ***Swimming*** (De Corpore), ***Exploration***, ***Navigation***, ***Riding*** (De Natura).

- Roll a d6 to determine the character's upbringing:

1. Son or daughter of a former legionary. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Tactics*** (De Bello), ***Brawling***, ***Larceny*** (De Corpore).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your father was a former legionary, and he was used to being in command. In gratitude for decades of loyal service, the Empire had granted him a small, barren plot of land on the edge of the world. It did not take long before other resentful soldiers put themselves under his orders, to form a band that initially rustled cattle, but who then went on to kidnap, murder, and free slaves. Your hideout was beyond the limes, where you lived with the families of the other latrones. Everything changed when the governor of the province appointed a prefect to solve the problem. Hunted by the legionaries, one day your father sent away all the wives, concubines, and children, including you. Then, the bandits faced their last stand head on—their bodies were exposed along the roads for weeks, as a warning to everyone.*

2. Family of shepherds. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Jumping***, ***Climbing*** (De Corpore), ***Weather*** (De Natura).

> ***Example of family background.*** *As a child, they told you about borders crossed by caravans carrying precious goods and objects never seen before, exotic emissaries bearing messages of peace and war, or columns of legionaries on the way to export the Pax Romana. But your borders were very different… the lands that extended beyond the walls of your room, the great river or the blurring line disappearing in the sands, the high mountains or the infinite sea, they all seemed devoid of any trace of human beings. Nature dominated there, with its moors or deserts or impenetrable forests. As a child, you spent hours hoping to see an invading army coming to threaten the existence of the Empire, and shimmering Roman legions confronting it in a battle worthy of Homer or Virgil. Your father, a shepherd, and your older brothers sometimes waited with you, telling you incredible stories about gods and heroes.*

3. Family of refugees. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Castra*** (De Bello), ***Stealth*** (De Corpore), ***Riding*** (De Natura).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Those who would become your new parents took care of the health and training of horses from the nearby castra. They found you half dead in the middle of a desolate area where they led horses to run and graze, the only survivor of a small group of strangers who died of hardship, cold, disease, or being savaged by wild animals. They kept you and raised you as their child. It was not difficult to imagine what happened: some families of people beyond the limes had to escape, whether due to war, famine, or natural disaster, abandoning everything they owned. They crossed the border of the glorious and tolerant Roman Empire in secret and full of hope. But the authorities and villagers drove them out, insulted them, and denied them any help. Death must probably have been a liberation for those poor souls.*

4. Family of merchants. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Exploration***, ***Sailing*** (De Natura), ***Negotiation*** (De Societate).

> ***Example of family background.*** *It was exciting for you to live near important and bustling access to the limes. The people who populated the territories beyond had been at peace with Rome for centuries; they spoke the language of the Empire fluently, and adopted many of its customs and worship. The border did not represent an obstacle at all to trade, mutual visits, or mixed marriages. Even your parents, well-known merchants, often went to those foreign lands, and always took you with them. Sometimes you pushed yourself very far, partly for work and a desire for knowledge; you deeply admired the great creations of man and nature you saw in your journeys. Your mother loved to repeat that, at the end of the day, the border was just a frame of mind.*

5. Son or daughter to a member of a tolerated cult. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Retrocognition*** (De Magia), ***Architecture***, ***Investigation*** (De Scientia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Your family ran a large mansio with an attached tavern. Legionaries, explorers, and officers from the four corners of the Empire were happy to chat with your father, talking about the lands where the sun rises, of an ancient but eternally young god, of an immortal soul and atonement for sins. You remember like it was yesterday when your father first took you to a dark rectangular room in the basement of a big house, and how he initiated you into the secrets of the God Mithras in front of the statue of a boy who was killing a gigantic bull. In the half-light, you recognized the faces of soldiers, officers, and functionaries, but when you met them on the streets during the day, they would not even greet you. Later your father explained to you that it was an oriental mystery cult, recognized and tolerated by the Empire, widespread from the valleys of Britain to the great rivers of Mesopotamia, but which required secrecy and discretion.*

6. Son or daughter of a Tribune. Attribute a +2 bonus to a Specialty chosen from the following: ***Castra***, ***Tactics*** (De Bello), ***Machinae*** (De Scientia).

> ***Example of family background.*** *Those who arrived unprepared remained impressed and incredulous in front of the grand and powerful fortifications running for tens of miles in this area of the limes: ditches, watchtowers, embankments, high stone walls. The defensive works never seemed enough in front of the pressure of the cruel peoples who regularly tried to break through. A harsher winter than usual, a rainless summer, or a livestock blight were enough for hundreds of armed and desperate barbarians to rage against anything that represented the hegemony of Rome. Your father ran the military operations directly from the immense castra. He was not easily frightened, nor duped by the speeches of self-styled wise men or the weeping of women. If Rome was still standing, it was thanks, in no small measure, to him.*

SPECIAL: THE ASSASSIN

Unbeknownst to all in the Roman Empire, except for the Emperor himself and the highest ranks of the Praetorian Guard, there is a sixth Office in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana - a covert role kept secret to avoid arousing unnecessary concern among senators and citizens of the Empire: the Assassin.

Within the Cohors Arcana, the Assassins are in charge of the "dirty work" of the Emperor: spying on corrupt politicians or commanders suspected of treason, finding evidence of forbidden magical practices committed by high-ranking priests, infiltrating criminal gangs, even eliminating "inconvenient" targets. Acting from within the Cohors Arcana and enjoying its special privileges and protection, the Assassins specialize in neutralizing supernatural threats, especially when the utmost discretion is required.

Due to the particular nature of their typical tasks, Assassins are selected from among the most loyal subjects of the Empire, both men and women who showed a sense of duty even greater than that of many Praetorians: first, the Emperor cannot risk training in the arts of murder and infiltration individuals who are not totally faithful; second, the tasks that they are assigned to often require doing despicable things for "the greater good."

CREATING AN ASSASSIN

Assassin characters follow the usual creation rules, with the following specifications:

- Their cursus is the ***cursus interfectorius***, and the corresponding Peritia is **De Corpore.** To be admitted to the Cohors Arcana as an Assassin, a character must have a De Corpore score of at least **15**.

COMBAT TALENT

Deadly Strike
The Assassins of Cohors Arcana are trained to effectively use concealable weapons.

When the total Encumbrance of the Assassin is equal to or less than half their maximum Hit Points (rounded down), the Assassin may use De Corpore instead of De Bello to make close combat attacks using a weapon with a base Damage rating of 4 or less. Any bonus Dice Points from a De Bello Specialty in weapons that would benefit from this ability still apply to the roll.

Also, when the Assassin is using a weapon with a Damage rating of 4 or less or is fighting unarmed, their Damage multiplier is increased by 1.

TUTELARY DEITY

Pluto is the tutelary deity of the *cursus interfectorius*. The invocation granted to Assassins at the beginning of the game is the following:

***Pluto Mortis Thesaurus* (Pluto Source of Death):** by spending 6 Pietas, an Assassin who has made a **damage** roll can use this invocation to roll the same dice combination again and add the result to the previous one.

HIT POINTS AND PIETAS MODIFIERS	
Hit Points	**Pietas**
+1	**+1**

Note. To maintain their secrecy, all Assassins must choose another Office to act as a cover, including it even in their diploma as Custodes (they cannot declare openly that they belong to the *cursus interfectorius*). For this purpose, most Assassins choose the Office corresponding to their second-highest Peritia as their cover and will, therefore, present themselves to non-members of the Cohors Arcana as Fighters, Explorers, Augurs, Scholars, or Diplomats.

There are rumors that some Assassins prefer to maintain the utmost confidentiality of their Office even towards their companions of contubernium, but it seems more like hearsay than the truth. Yet, every time a Scholar shows exceptional athletic skills, a Fighter appears very good at ambushing, or a Diplomat wields a knife with notable dexterity, it is inevitable to have some suspicions…





PART V

COMBAT



The world of *Lex Arcana* is fraught with danger, and the Custodes must be ready for any threat. When facing the charge of a Sasanian prince in battle dress or the assault of a frenzied chimera, the characters won't have any choice but to meet them head-on with weapons drawn.

When gameplay transitions into a combat scene, time is divided into segments. Each segment is called a ***tempus***, an abstract amount of time, during which combatants may act and exchange blows.

- Combatants can face their enemies in **close combat**, using swords, knives, maces, and other hand-to-hand weapons, or in **ranged combat**, using missile and thrown weapons, like javelins, slings, and bows.



INITIAL VOLLEYS

It often happens that at the beginning of a fight, the enemies involved are separated by a certain distance to be covered before the characters enter close combat: therefore, there is time for a brief exchange of shots with ranged weapons (**volleys**).

- Characters armed with ranged weapons usually are entitled to one single volley at Short range.

Note. *If the two sides are separated by a greater distance and there are no obstacles interfering with the shot, then the Demiurge might allow characters using a Sling, an Arcus, or a Toxon to perform an additional volley at Medium distance before the one at Short distance; or even two additional volleys, one at Long distance and then one at Medium distance (see page 63 for range rules).*

Volleys are resolved using the rules for *Ranged Combat* (see page 63). Once all volleys have been resolved, proceed with the *Combat Set Up* step of close combat.

CLOSE COMBAT

All combatants fighting in close combat with one or more opponents are engaged; otherwise, they are disengaged.

- **Engaged** combatants can only fight the opponents they are currently engaged with using close combat weapons; they must remain engaged until their opponent is defeated or flees the battlefield (see *Escaping Combat*, page 62).

- **Disengaged** combatants are free to attack with a ranged weapon, flee the battlefield, or perform other non-combat actions.

COMBAT SET UP

When a fight starts, combatants may become engaged or disengaged based on the circumstances of the conflict and the number of opponents involved. The Demiurge can use the following guidelines to determine the consequences of combat set up. Players can always choose which enemy to engage unless the Demiurge says otherwise.

- I**f the number of enemies matches that of the Custodes**, each combatant becomes engaged in a duel with a single opponent.

- **If the Custodes are outnumbering their opposition,** the players can have all the Custodes become engaged with their enemies (with some enemies engaged with more than one Custos, see *Fighting Multiple Opponents*), or choose to leave disengaged some or all the Custodes in excess (to attack with a ranged weapon, for example).

- **If there are more enemies than Custodes**, then all Custodes end up engaged with one or more opponents. The Demiurge may choose to engage all combatants in close combat (with some Custodes fighting more than one enemy, see *Fighting Multiple Opponents*), or to leave some adversaries disengaged (to attack with a ranged weapon, for example).

ORDER OF ACTION

In each combat tempus, first the disengaged characters (of both sides) perform their actions, then combat between engaged characters is resolved.

The actions of all disengaged combatants are considered to be simultaneous, regardless of what order they are resolved in within the game (this means, for example, that a disengaged Custos who is knocked out by a ranged attack will still be able to act in the same tempus).

CLOSE COMBAT SEQUENCE

The following steps detail the sequence used to resolve a fight with one combatant facing a single adversary. The rules for fighting against multiple opponents and other special situations are presented as variants.

I. DE BELLO ROLL

In each tempus, both combatants roll their **De Bello** (applying any Specialty corresponding to the weapon used), and the two results are compared.

- The combatant who scored the highest result is the **attacker**, while the other is the **defender**.

In case of a tie, no one managed to land a significant blow, and the combat sequence skips to the next tempus (start again from step I).

Example. Gaius Valerius is facing a fierce barbarian warrior. Both the Custos and his adversary roll their De Bello scores. Gaius Valerius rolls a 7. The barbarian rolls a 9: the barbarian is the attacker and Gaius Valerius defender.

II. ATTACK POTENTIAL

The attacker's roll minus the result of the defender's roll determines the **Attack Potential (AP)**. If the defender carries a shield, its **Parry** value is added to the result of the defender.

- **If the AP is equal to zero or less**, the attack was blocked by the defender (skip to the next tempus).
- **If the AP is equal to 1 or more**, the attack was successful.

DAMAGE MULTIPLIERS	
Attack Potential (AP)	**Damage Multiplier**
1 2 3	x1
4 5 6	x2
7 8 9	x3
10 11 12	x4
13 14 15	x5
16 or more	x6

Example. The results of the attacker and the defender are compared, and Gaius Valerius adds the Parry value of his shield (+2) to the roll, for a total of 7+2 = 9, matching the result of the barbarian: the Attack Potential is reduced to zero! The Custos parries the blow; the tempus is over.

III. DAMAGE MULTIPLIER

If the AP is equal to or greater than 1, check the table above to find the **Damage multiplier** corresponding to the AP obtained.

Example. In a later round, the barbarian managed to be the attacker again, rolling a 10 versus Gaius 4. Gaius' shield is not enough to parry the enemy's blow, but its value reduces the AP nonetheless: the AP of the barbarian warrior is equal to 4 (10-4-2), corresponding to a x2 Damage multiplier.

IV. DAMAGE ROLL

The attacker applies the Damage multiplier to the **Damage** rating of the weapon used. The result is a Dice Points value that the attacker rolls to determine the amount of damage inflicted on the defender.

The defender can reduce the damage received rolling the **Protection** value of any armor or protection worn. (For the Custodes, the Fate Roll rule applies to both rolls.)

- The difference between the damage and the protection roll equates to the Hit Points lost by the defender.

See the chapter on *Characters' Health* for the effects of losing Hit Points (page 66).

Example. The barbarian's weapon has a Damage rating of 5. Applying the x2 multiplier, the attack results in 10 Dice Points. The Demiurge rolls 2d5, for a result of 6. Gaius Valerius rolls the d3 corresponding to the protection of his armor and gets a 2, resulting in a loss of (6-2) 4 Hit Points.

FIGHTING MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

When a combatant is engaged in melee with multiple opponents, close combat is resolved using the standard rules for fighting a single adversary (the duel), with the difference that the outnumbered character must face all opponents at once. In that tempus, a number of opposed rolls equal to the number of characters enjoying the advantage is resolved; the order of the rolls is determined by the side enjoying the advantage.

- During the combat sequence, the outnumbered character opposes each adversary with a separate roll of De Bello.

The outnumbering opponents enjoy a substantial bonus. The first opponent in order rolls De Bello normally, then:

- Each combatant after the first adds the roll **result** of the previous character as **bonus Dice Points** to their roll.

Note. *Each outnumbering combatant only adds to their De Bello the result of the roll obtained by the character who immediately preceded them (for example, the second combatant only benefits from the result of the first combatant, while a third combatant would benefit only from the result of the second combatant).*

Example. Gaius Valerius is engaged in close combat with a sinister druid and two bodyguards. In the starting tempus, Gaius is first attacked by a bodyguard: the Custos rolls a 6, while the warrior gets a 7. The bodyguard is the attacker, but the Custos parries the blow with his shield (Parry +2). Now it's the turn of the second bodyguard to attack the Roman! Gaius Valerius rolls De Bello normally, while the bodyguard rolls his own De Bello, augmented by a number of Dice Points equal to the result rolled previously by the other bodyguard (a 7). When the druid's turn comes around to attack, he will roll his own De Bello, augmented by the result of the second bodyguard.

ESCAPING COMBAT

If a fight takes a turn for the worse, a combatant engaged in close combat may try to flee the battlefield—but escaping can be dangerous.

The combat sequence is played following the standard rules, but any combatant seeking escape must roll their **De Corpore** in place of their De Bello.

- If a combatant is facing a single opponent, the escaping character's roll to flee must beat the adversary's De Bello roll.

- If the combatant is engaged by multiple adversaries (see *Fighting Multiple Opponents*, above), then the outnumbered character must oppose each adversary with a separate roll and must beat each of them to successfully escape.

If the character succeeds in the action, they disengage and is free to escape.

Otherwise, the character remains engaged and suffers the consequences: the normal rules of close combat apply, comparing the character's roll of De Corpore with the opponent's roll of De Bello (the character can still enjoy the benefits of a possible shield). The character can try to escape again in the following tempus.

- However, due to the failed escape attempt, the character suffers the following penalty: all Damage multipliers against him are increased by 1 in that tempus.

Example. After both his warrior bodyguards have been slain by Gaius Valerius, the surviving druid tries to escape. The combat sequence is resolved with the druid roll-



SIZE

During close combat, a human-sized creature can be engaged by up to 3 human-sized foes at the same time, and a larger creature can be attacked simultaneously by 4 or more (see *Part Eight* for details on the Size rules, on page 138).

ing De Corpore in place of De Bello, opposed as usual by the De Bello of the Custos. The druid rolls a 7 and Gaius Valerius a 9: the druid is unable to evade the blows of Gaius, and the Custos' Damage multiplier against him is increased by 1.

ESCAPING IF DISENGAGED

If a character is disengaged at the start of a tempus, no roll is required and the combatant may freely leave the battlefield at the end of the tempus (based on the circumstances, disengaged characters attempting to flee may still be targeted by ranged weapon attacks before they get away – see *Ranged Combat*, below).

RANGED COMBAT

To make a ranged attack, a character must be disengaged and have a target in sight, within the range of the weapon used (see *Ranged Weapons* table, page 46).

The procedure is the same, whether the attacker is using a ranged weapon during combat (while disengaged, of course) or under different circumstances, for example, to shoot at a guard from a hidden position.

- The attacker rolls **De Bello** against a **Difficulty Threshold** determined by the range (see the table below) and other factors. Add to the DT the Parry rating of the target if carrying a shield.

The combat sequence is then resolved as for close combat, calculating the AP and damage using the standard rules.

RANGE DTs			
Range	**Short**	**Medium**	**Long**
SD	3	6	9

RANGED ATTACK MODIFIERS

To assess the difficulty of using a ranged weapon, the Demiurge should take into account the circumstances of the attack, as it is more difficult to hit a target hiding behind a wall or at night, rather than a still, unaware target, by day and in the open.

For each applicable modifier, the Demiurge increases the difficulty of the roll by 1 level.



DISTANCES AND WEAPON RANGES

Distances in combat and weapon ranges (see table on page 46) are classified as Short, Medium, or Long.

- A **Short** distance may indicate from a few steps away to a few tens of meters and is the typical range of throwing weapons.
- A **Medium** distance indicates several tens of meters and corresponds to the range of more aerodynamic, muscle-powered weapons, expressly designed to be thrown.
- A **Long** distance indicates a distance up to and over a hundred meters. Only bows, slings, and the powerful Manubalista may reach this range.

Example. Aulus Gabalus has been spotted by a small group of desert raiders, who are now running in his direction, screaming and shouting war cries. The Custos organizes his defense on the top of a rocky hillock; taking advantage of the distance that separates him from the raiders, he hopes to let loose several volleys using his Toxon. The Demiurge tells the player that the raiders are at a Long range with good visibility: Aulus Gabalus is allowed three volleys (the first at Long range, the second at Medium range and the third at Short range).

Some examples of DT's modifiers follow:

- The target is aware of the attacker, is moving fast, or is engaged in close combat.
- The target is tiny (a small animal, an apple, a small window).
- The target is partially obscured (hiding behind a corner or a tree trunk).
- The visibility is low—the area is poorly lit or covered by a thin mist.

In absolute darkness, any ranged attack is impossible, regardless of the distance or other modifiers.

Example. Aulus Gabalus has spotted an enemy lurking behind rocks and wants to neutralize him using his Toxon. The Demiurge tells the player that the archer is at Medium range (base DT 6) and the rocks give him partial cover, which increases the difficulty by one level. The final DT for the ranged attack then goes from 6 to 9.

UNARMED COMBAT

If a character is engaged in close combat and is unarmed, they roll **De Corpore** instead of De Bello (the ***Brawling*** Specialty is always applicable).

You should also consider the following modifiers:

- Unarmed strikes are considered to have a Damage rating of 3 (and no Difficulty).
- The Damage multiplier of a successful unarmed attack is always reduced by 1.
- Conversely, armed combatants fighting against unarmed ones see their Damage multiplier increased by 1 - it is rarely a good idea to face armed opponents with your bare hands.

Example. Titus Flaibanus has been ambushed in a tavern by a fanatic armed with a Sica (Damage 4). The young Custos is unarmed and must defend himself. In the first tempus, Titus Flaibanus rolls De Corpore against the opponent's De Bello, obtaining a 9 against the enemy's 5. The Custos is the attacker with an AP of (9-5) = 4, which would correspond to a x2 Damage multiplier, but the unarmed strike is reduced to a x1 multiplier. Titus rolls 1d3 for the damage, obtaining 3, a Fate Roll: he rolls again and scores 1, for a total of 3+1 = 4 damage. The young Custos lands a powerful punch in the face of the fanatic!

In the second tempus, the fanatic rolls an 8 and the Custos a 4. This time the fanatic is the attacker: with an AP of (8-4) = 4 he would enjoy a x2 Damage multiplier, but since Titus Flaibanus is unarmed, the multiplier is increased by one to a final x3 Damage multiplier. The fanatic rolls 3d4 for the damage and gets an 8, seriously injuring poor Titus, who starts to reconsider his decision to face the adversary without weapons!



THE PANCRATIUM

Every Custos in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana receives some training in the *Pancratium*, the Greco-Roman art of wrestling and boxing, along with their formal weapons training. Pancratium originated in ancient Greece, developed as both a sport and as part of hoplite training. In mythology, stories tell how Heracles and Theseus invented it as a result of confrontations with their legendary opponents: Theseus is said to have utilized his extraordinary hand-to-hand fighting skills to defeat the dreaded Minotaur in the Labyrinth, while Heracles used it to subdue the Nemean lion. Whatever the real origin of this brutal fighting discipline, the Romans adopted and developed it; they integrated *Pancratium* into the training of their legionaries and, ultimately, of the members of the Cohors Arcana.

SURPRISE ATTACKS

Surprise attacks occur when one or more characters are not aware of the presence or aggressive intent of one or more assailants. For example they are sleeping, socializing at a tavern, walking down a crowded street, and so forth. In these cases, the characters may be **surprised** (see below the rules on how to make a surprise attack and how to avoid it).

When surprised by the attack, a character cannot normally perform any action against their attackers; if the surprised character is also the target of an attack, they suffer the following disadvantage.

- **If the surprised character is engaged in close combat by the attacker**, in the first tempus they cannot roll De Bello; the attacker's De Bello roll is directly compared to a **DT 0** (in other words, there is no opposed roll of the Bello: to calculate the AP, the attacker simply rolls De Bello against DT 0). No Parry rating is subtracted from the attacker's roll, but armor may still reduce the damage.
- **If the surprised character is the target of a ranged attack**, the attack is resolved as usual, considering the target as unaware (the attacker does not suffer the relative negative modifier; see *Ranged Combat*, page

63). No Parry rating is subtracted from the attacker's roll, but armor may still reduce damage.

Starting from the tempus following the attack, the victim will be fully aware of the danger and will no longer suffer any disadvantage (see also the *Surprised* condition, page 64).

MAKING A SURPRISE ATTACK

If the Custodes wants to set up an ambush, they roll **De Corpore** against a set Difficulty Threshold based upon the enemy's alertness. The table on the right summarizes a few typical circumstances:

- If more than a single Custos are trying to surprise the enemy, then all the Custodes participating in the ambush must succeed in the roll of De Corpore.

If anyone fails the roll, the ambush fails, and combat begins as normal. Otherwise, the opponents are considered surprised for the first tempus.

Note. *In some cases, the Demiurge may allow Peritiae other than De Corpore to be rolled. For example, in the wilderness, the use of De Natura may be permitted instead; while in a crowded street or tavern, a roll of De Societate can get the same result.*

Example. Aulus Gabalus is trying to sneak into the fortified village of a hostile tribe under cover of darkness, but an armed sentinel stands guard over the most favorable access point. The Custos decides that the only way to break in is to make a surprise attack against the guard, hoping to neutralize him before he can alert the rest of the tribe. The Demiurge tells the player that to surprise the guard Aulus must pass a De Corpore roll against DT 6, as the guard is quite watchful, even if he's not expecting an attack. The player rolls 8, a success: the sentinel is surprised! Aulus proceeds to attack the unaware guard, rolling De Bello against a set DT of 3.

SPOTTING AN AMBUSH

If the Custodes are being ambushed, they must make a roll of **Sensibilitas** against a set Difficulty Threshold, depending on their alertness.

- Each Custos who fails the roll is surprised for that tempus.

For each Degree of Success beyond the first, a successful Custos may warn a surprised companion (their choice), allowing them to act normally.

Adversaries are...	Difficulty Threshold
Completely unaware and unprepared	3
On guard, but without expecting an attack	6
Alert or forewarned that an attack is coming	9
A group	+1 level to difficulty
In a favorable position (open field, higher ground, etc.)	+1 level to difficulty

Example. Three Custodes are traveling in a narrow mountain gorge. A horrible Chimera approaches silently, threatening to catch them by surprise by plunging onto the group from above. The Demiurge requires a roll of Sensibilitas from each of the players, setting the DT at 6: the Custodes had previously been warned that the half-devoured remains of many travelers were found in this gorge and that they should be especially careful when crossing it. The players get 10, 7, and 5, which means that one of them (the one who got 5) would be surprised by the attack. Fortunately, the Custos who rolled a 10 can warn him of the danger, having scored two Degrees of Success. The Custodes draw their weapons and get ready to fight, while the Chimera dives on them from above, roaring and breathing fire…

The Custodes are...	Difficulty Threshold
Completely unaware and unprepared	12
On guard, but not expecting an attack	9
Alerted or forewarned that an attack is coming	6
Ambushed by more than a single enemy	-1 level to difficulty
In a favorable position (open field, higher ground, etc.)	-1 level to difficulty

CHARACTERS' HEALTH

As a result of damage suffered during a fight or other undesirable events, Custodes lose Hit Points (HP); players must always keep updated their character's current HP score. The loss of Hit Points can cause the Custos to become *Fatigued* or even *Dying*.

LOSING HIT POINTS

Players keep track of their Custodes' current Hit Points by using the Hit Points table on the character sheet.

- Each time a Custos suffers damage, the player marks an equal number of boxes with an 'X,' starting from the box on the top left indicating the current Hit Points of the Custos.

Note. *If the boxes marked with an 'X' (damage) reach the boxes marked with a '/' (Encumbrance), the Custos suffers the Fatigued condition (see below). If the Custos receives enough damage to mark with an 'X' boxes already marked with a '/', the latter are transformed into 'X'. When the Custos heals these wounds, the 'Xs' are cancelled, but the Encumbrance needs to be calculated again to keep it up to date with the equipment.*

FATIGUED

A Custos suffers the *Fatigued* condition for two reasons:

- The Custos falls victim of a harmful effect that causes this condition.
- All their Hit Points boxes are marked with an 'X' (damage) or '/' (Encumbrance).

Note. *The second situation usually occurs if, as a result of the damage suffered, the player marks with an 'X' all the boxes above those already marked with a '/' (in other words, when the boxes with an 'X' "meet" the boxes with a '/'). For example, if a Custos with 20 maximum HP and 8 Encumbrance suffers 12 damage, the character becomes Fatigued.*

- Whenever a ***Fatigued*** Custos attempts an action that requires the roll of any **Peritia**, they cannot roll a number of Dice Points higher than their current Hit Points, down to a minimum of 3 Dice Points (1d3).

Note. *Custodes who have lost so many Hit Points that they can no longer act efficiently may wisely decide to lower their Encumbrance—dropping or changing some of their equipment.*



DYING

A Custos is considered ***Dying*** when the box indicating 1 Hit Point on the Hit Points table is marked with an 'X' (the Custos is therefore at zero Hit Points). Damage inflicted by the same hit that would cause additional boxes to be crossed out are not recorded.

- A Dying Custos collapses to the ground, unconscious; the character perishes if they subsequently receive any damage or do not receive First Aid that allows them to recover at least 1 Hit Point within a short time (see *First Aid*, below).

As soon as a *Dying* character recovers at least 1 HP thanks to First Aid, they are not *Dying* anymore.

Note. *In Lex Arcana, the death of a Custos means the end for that character, and the player will have to create another one, losing all the privileges and experience gained by the Custos who passed away. Depending on the circumstances of death, the deceased's personal property is lost or stolen and lost irreparably, donated to the State, inherited by the family, or cremated with the body.*

UNCONSCIOUS

A character who is made *Unconscious* collapses to the ground. Unless subjected to more grievous conditions (like *Dying*) the character regains consciousness after a few minutes.
Although it is not a dangerous condition by itself, *Unconscious* Custodes are obviously at the mercy of their enemies and can be captured—or worse, killed—without any resistance.

RECOVERING HIT POINTS

Combat often ends with one or more Custodes in need of recovery from fatigue and wounds received. Whatever the cause of the damage suffered, characters usually recover lost Hit Points through immediate medical care (**First Aid**) and the reaction of their bodies (**Natural Healing**).

FIRST AID

Characters who have been wounded may recover lost Hit Points if they receive a successful First Aid.

The character who performs the First Aid (who can be the wounded character themselves) washes and dresses the wounds, or straightens a dislocated limb or joint. This action requires at least several minutes (and thus cannot be performed during combat).

- To administer First Aid, the healer rolls **De Scientia** (the ***Medicine*** Specialty is always applicable) against DT 6, or against DT 9 if the injured Custos is *Dying*.

If the roll is successful, the character recovers a number of Hit Points equal to the Degree of Success obtained (1 HP with a I Degree of Success, 2 HP with a II Degree of Success, and 3 HP with a III Degree of Success) and the player checks the *Treated* box on the character sheet (in this way, natural healing will be more effective, see below).



DEATH OF A CUSTOS

When a Custos dies, whether in the performance of their duties or in other circumstances, a solemn ceremony is performed in private, in the presence of family members, companions of contubernium, and one or more public officials (usually, the Magister of the cursus of belonging).

If they wish, players can take the opportunity to interpret this important moment in their character's story as part of the proceedings (in this case, the Demiurge may consider the celebration of the deceased as an *exceptional experience*, see page 67).

Particularly heroic or popular Custodes might receive a public funeral, with a *laudatio funebris* (a funeral eulogy) spoken in the Forum by a relative or a notable individual (even by the Emperor himself, if the actions of the Custos were genuinely extraordinary). Before cremation, the deceased's eyes are opened again, and the body placed upon the pyre, with their belongings. Those present intone the name of the deceased as torches light the pyre.

Finally, the ashes are collected in a cinerary urn of different workmanship and value depending on the rank of the deceased. The urn is then placed in a niche carved in a collective tomb reserved for members of the Cohors Arcana, the Custos' name engraved in eternal memory of their actions.

To record the Hit Points recovery on their character sheet, the player simply deletes the 'Xs' in the corresponding number of boxes, starting from the lower ones.

If the roll fails, the Custos recovers nothing, does not mark the *Treated* box and no additional First Aid attempts can be made on them in the same day.

***Treated* box.** If the *Treated* box has been checked, a Custos cannot be healed any further by a First Aid roll and must rely solely on natural healing (see below). When the current Hit Points of an injured character reach their maximum value, the character is considered to have been restored to full health, and the *Treated* box on the character sheet is unchecked. The *Treated* box is unchecked also if the Custos suffers additional damage: in that case, the Custos can benefit from a new First Aid roll, even if it is performed in the same day.

Example. After fighting, Gaius Valerius decides to bandage and dress his wounds. The player rolls Gaius Valerius' De Scientia against DT 6, obtaining 7 (I Degree of Success): the Custos recovers only 1 Hit Point, but at least the player marks the Treated box on the character sheet.

NATURAL HEALING

Injured Custodes heal a number of lost Hit Points at the end of a night's sleep—or half a day spent resting—based on whether they are resting in the open—for example, sleeping on a camp bed while traveling—or in a real bed, in a comfortable and reasonably sanitary location.

- A character **resting in the open** recovers 3 Hit Points if the *Treated* box is checked, or no HP if it isn't.
- A character **resting in a comfortable place** recovers a number of Hit Points equal to their Vigor score if the *Treated* box is checked, or 3 HP if it isn't.

Natural Healing does not benefit a Dying character; as mentioned above, if not in receipt of a successful First Aid soon, the character dies.

Example. Aulus Gabalus has been wounded and remained with 10 Hit Points after a particularly tough fight against a tribe of desert nomads. The Scholar of the contubernium administers him First Aid and rolls De Scientia against DT 6, getting 14 (III Degree of Success): the injured Custos immediately recovers 3 HP, going up to 13, and the player marks the Treated box on the character sheet. Aulus then sleeps at the camp; in the morning he finds himself restored for additional Hit Points equal to his Vigor rating.

OPTIONAL RULES: MOUNTED COMBAT

Mounts have been used in battle since ancient times, and both the Romans and their opponents employ horses during fights.

They are always specifically trained animals: in fact, the loud noises and confusion of battle inevitably end up scaring untrained horses, which will not be able to maintain their position or even just obey their rider. This is what distinguishes a warhorse from a common riding horse: a proper training allowing a rider to benefit from the advantages provided by a good mount. Draught horses, racing horses, mules, and pack camels are useless in a fight—except, perhaps, to flee from it—and do not provide any martial advantage in game terms.

HORSES AND THE COHORS ARCANA

All Custodes of the Cohors Arcana know how to ride a horse (see page 114) and travel with common mounts regularly (not war-trained), when moving from one castra to another, or to reach the destination of a specific mission. Such mounts are either borrowed from a castra or a local authority or requisitioned by exhibiting a diploma.

Unlike common mounts, war-trained animals are difficult to find, and a simple request of the Custodes to their superiors may not be enough.

- **Inside the castra.** To obtain a warhorse the Custodes must pass a roll of **De Societate**, with a difficulty proportionate to the remoteness of the castra where the request is made (but never lower than 9).
- **Outside the castra.** A warhorse can only be bought in a large market—such as that of a provincial capital or from a member of the local nobility. In any case, a warhorse can only be purchased at the price of at least two month's salary and can never be requisitioned through the exhibition of a *diploma*, as the owner likely occupies too high a position to submit to the authority of the Custodes.

SPECIAL MOUNTED WEAPON: THE CONTUS

The *Contus* is a huge wooden spear almost 4 meters long, ending in a blade like a short sword. Due to its disproportionate size, it can only be used effectively while mounted.

It can be held under the arm or used with both hands. It is a weapon used with terrible efficacy by the cataphracts of the Sasanian Empire.

Weapon. Contus
Damage/Difficulty. 14*
Encumbrance. 9
Feature. Versatile

** If the weapon is used on horseback, the Difficulty is decreased by 2.*

MOUNTED COMBAT

The following rules must be used if at least one combatant is riding a war mount (whether a light or heavy warhorse or a war camel).

Higher Position. Riders successfully hitting human-sized combatants on foot in close combat using long enough weapons (usually all the ones longer than a Gladius) increase their Damage multiplier by 1.

Lower Position. Human-sized combatants on foot successfully hitting a mounted opponent reduce their Damage multiplier by 1, unless they are using a Spear, Hasta, or any Two-Handed weapon. The Damage multiplier decrease is ignored if the attacker chooses to inflict damage upon the mount instead of the rider.

Charge. Charging is undoubtedly the most effective and deadly way to use a war mount in a fight. The rider must be disengaged, at least at Medium range from their opponent, and using a long enough weapon. In the combat tempus when the charge is performed, the rider's Damage multiplier increases by 1, or by 2 if the rider is wielding a Spear, a Hasta, or a Contus. These increases are cumulative to the one due to *Higher Position* (see above).

> *Example. A Frankish rider armed with a Spatha launches himself into a charge against a Custos on foot, equipped with a Hasta. The Frank enjoys a double increase to his Damage multiplier thanks to the charge and the Higher Position, while the Custos does not suffer any reduction thanks to his long Hasta.*

- **Wounding the Mount.** Characters on foot can choose to direct their blows at the mount, instead of the rider (see *Lower Position*, above). Every time that a mount suffers damage, its rider must succeed in a roll of **De Natura** against DT 6 or fall to the ground (with the consequences described on page 114). If the horse dies, the rider falls automatically.

- **Wounding the Rider.** A mounted character who receives damage risks being knocked out of the saddle. The rider must pass a roll of **De Natura** against a DT equal to the damage suffered. If the roll is successful, the fight usually continues; otherwise, the rider falls off the mount. In the following tempus, a fallen Custos may try to get back on the mount if disengaged, by rolling De Natura against a difficulty set by the Demiurge, based on the circumstances (NPCs typically lose their mounts for the rest of the fight).

Escaping Combat. If a mounted character wants to escape the fight, the standard rules for fleeing combat apply (see *Escaping Combat*, page 62), rolling **De Natura** in place of De Corpore.

Using Ranged Weapons. Using missile weapons from horseback is a specialized technique, made difficult by the necessity of maneuvering the mount while targeting enemies.

- While performing a ranged attack, the Dice Points rolled by of mounted characters can never exceed their **De Natura** score (plus any Dice Points from the ***Riding*** Specialty).



PART VI

MAGIC



Since its foundation, Rome has focused its interest in magic upon the study of Divination—ritual practices committed to foretell the future, descry past events, read portents, and interpret the favor of the gods.

DISCIPLINES AND RITUALS OF DIVINATION

The Art of Divination is divided into six **disciplines**: each discipline allows the Custodes to access a specific field of divinatory magic.

Precognition – predicting the future.
Clairvoyance – seeing, or locating, places or individuals far away.
Retrocognition – knowing the past.
Interpretation of Omens – interpreting the meaning of signs and omens.
Interpretation of Dreams – interpreting the hidden meaning of dreams.
Favor of the Gods – perceiving the favor or disfavor of the gods themselves.


ARS FULGURATORIA

Each discipline is associated with one or more **rituals** of Divination; at the beginning of their careers, Custodes are taught the following eight rituals (the corresponding discipline, or disciplines, are listed in brackets):

Ars Fulguratoria (Favor of the Gods)
Auspicium (Interpretation of Omens)
Haruspicina (Favor of the Gods)
Omen (Interpretation of Omens)
Oraculum (Clairvoyance, Precognition, Retrocognition)
Sideratio (Clairvoyance, Precognition)
Somnii Interpretatio (Interpretation of Dreams)
Speculum (Clairvoyance, Precognition, Retrocognition)

- To perform any Divination, characters must complete one of the rituals listed above, specifying which discipline they will use among those applicable (if more than one).

  For example, if a Custos wants to perform an Oraculum ritual, they must specify which discipline to apply between Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Retrocognition.

All rituals require elaborate ceremonies, a quiet place, enough time to be completed, and the full concentration of the celebrant. Most of the rituals have further requirements, each listed in their description (see list of Rituals, starting on page 75).

PERFORMING A RITUAL

The Custodes do not take magic lightly and perform a ritual only when they have a clear goal in mind.

In game terms, the acting player must pose a question to the Demiurge pertaining to a specific person, place, event, or object; then, they associate the query with one of the six disciplines, and indicate which ritual they intend to perform (starting from page 75, the descriptions of the rituals indicate the different modes of employment and examples of legitimate questions).

- Then, the Custos who performs the ritual spends the required Pietas and makes a roll of **De Magia** against a Difficulty Threshold based on the employed discipline (see the table below).

Note. *A Custos can only attempt a ritual if they have enough current Pietas to pay its cost.*

If the De Magia roll is a success, the officiant receives a response based on the performed ritual (a vision, an enigmatic sentence, etc.). Generally, the higher the Degree of Success, the more definite the answer.

DISCIPLINE AND DIFFICULTIES	
Discipline	**DT**
Clairvoyance	9
Favor of the Gods	6
Interpretation of Dreams	6
Interpretation of Omens	6
Precognition	12
Retrocogntion	9

If the De Magia roll fails, the officiant receives a response corresponding to the first Degree of Success but must pay additional Pietass points equal to the difference between the outcome of the roll and the required DT for the ritual. If the Custos cannot pay the cost, the ceremony returns an incomprehensible response or no response at all (and the Custos' Pietas is reduced to zero, see page 22).

Note. *A failed De Magia roll may have further negative consequences that are left to the Demiurge's improvisation, or a published adventure may detail the unwelcome outcome. Such outcomes usually link to the object of the attempted ritual or to the place where it was performed. Perhaps the person the Custodes seeks understands that someone looks for them, an event they are inquiring about has an unexpected complication, or the Custodes attract the attention of a powerful supernatural creature or divine entity...*


AUSPICIUM

DIVINATION ETIQUETTE

When performing a ritual, a Custos glimpses what lies behind the veil between the material and supernatural worlds. But the divine world contains the past, the present, and the future mixed together: to make sense of any response, the officiant must look for something specific among the immense vastness of possibilities, focusing on a place, a particular event, a well-known person, and so on.

For these reasons, if the question asked by the players is not specific enough, the Divination will fail, regardless of the roll. As a rule, questions that can be answered with a single word (ex. "yes", "no", "never", etc.) are typically considered valid, as are those aimed to confirm or deny something that is already known by the officiant (ex. "*Was it the Praetor who killed Gaius?*").

For additional examples of legitimate questions, see also the descriptions of each discipline of Divination.

Note. *No more than one ritual can be performed per topic, even if the officiant intends to investigate different aspects of the same subject.*

DISCIPLINES OF DIVINATION

This section describes all disciplines known to the Custodes at the start of their careers; this includes examples of legitimate questions they might ask.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Clairvoyance concerns events currently occurring somewhere else, concerning an object, an individual, or a location. The information that can be obtained from Clairvoyance has regard to the area where the sought object can be found, or the place where the wanted person is currently staying, etc.
Legitimate Questions: *Where is Gaius now? Where is the Gladius of the Praetor? What's going on now at the temple we visited yesterday?*

RETROCOGNITION

Retrocognition concerns events that occurred in the past in the same location occupied by the officiant. The information coming from Retrocognition reveals something relevant only if the recent events are tied to something the Custodes are currently inquiring into.
Legitimate Questions: *What happened here, in the room where Gaius died? Was Gaius killed with a Gladius? What happened here, in the inner sanctum of the burned temple?*



HARUSPICINA

THE GODS AND THEIR FAVOR

The world of *Lex Arcana* is populated by gods of varying importance and power. These entities not only observe the actions of men from far away, but can intervene physically and influence the lives of mortals with subtle manifestations or great miracles, all according to their unfathomable will.

The Custodes of the Cohors Arcana gain the favor of the gods of the Roman pantheon through special rites of consecration, which allow them to benefit from two key advantages:

- The Fate Roll (see page 22), by virtue of the divine protection of the whole Roman pantheon.
- The invocation of a Tutelary Numen (see page 38, but also page 88), a specific god of the Roman pantheon.

The Custodes must seek always to maintain the favor of the gods: disobeying the will of a deity or disrespecting a sacred place dedicated to one are reasons that can cause their indifference or even their hostility. The consequences can be severe—such as the loss of Pietas and the cancellation of the advantages mentioned above (for the consequences of the indifference and hostility of the Roman gods, see page 135).

PRECOGNITION

Precognition is the most challenging and powerful discipline of divination a Custos may attempt. It allows the perception of events that are likely to occur in the near future. The information discerned from Precognition regards something relevant only if the officiant asks a question aimed at removing doubt about something that the officiant already knows or suspects will happen.
Legitimate Questions: *Will the man who killed Gaius return here soon to recover his weapon? Will the Praetor leave town tomorrow? Will someone soon come here to perform a ritual in the temple?*

INTERPRETATION OF OMENS

The Custodes can try to find meaning in unusual natural events, considered by augurs to be expressions of the twisted designs of Fate or of the whimsical will of the gods. Whenever the Custodes witness a phenomenon they think might be the supernatural manifestation of divine power (for example, a lightning strike, an animal with unusual colored fur, a blood moon, etc.), they can interpret the omen to gain insight into the events they are investigating.

INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS

Many consider dreams to be the most common means of communication between the mortal world and the divine. Whenever the Demiurge describes an unusual dream, the Custodes can interpret it and possibly gain a response concerning recent events.

FAVOR OF THE GODS

Perceiving the favor of the gods entails a ceremony that allows the officiant to infer whether the gods are looking favorably upon the Custodes' actions, if they are indifferent to them, or if they witness their deeds with hostility. A successful roll gives the Custos a clear response (favor, indifference, or hostility), while a higher Degree of Success may allow identification of the motivation.

RITUALS OF DIVINATION

This section describes all rituals known to the Custodes at the start of their careers. This includes the procedures, duration, and the form of response to expect.

ARS FULGURATORIA

Discipline. Favor of the Gods (DT 6)
Cost. 3 Pietas
Duration. Short (a few minutes)
Procedure. If a Custos observes a lightning bolt of a particular color or shape, or that strikes a specific object or place, they can try to draw a response on the favor or disfavor of a deity.
Response. A I Degree of Success allows the officiant to perceive if one or more gods are favorable or unfavorable; a II Degree of Success enables the Custos to understand which of them; while a III Degree of Success affords the Custos with an understanding as to why.

Example. A group of Custodes takes a shortcut through a thick grove. Suddenly, the sky grows clouded and a lightning bolt, of an unusual reddish color, strikes not far away from the contubernium. The Augur of the group tries to understand the Favor of the Gods using the Ars Fulguratoria. The Augur gets a II Degree of Success: it's clear that the Goddess Diana is angry at the group, but not why. Suspecting that the forest is sacred to the goddess, the Custodes consider it wiser to retrace their steps and take another path.



AUSPICIUM

Discipline. Interpretation of Omens (DT 6)
Cost. 6 Pietas
Duration. Short (a few minutes)
Procedure. When a Custos notices the passage of a flock of birds behaving unusually, they can recognize it as an omen and try to interpret it. The response is based on the pattern of flight, the direction, and the general behavior of the birds, allowing the Custos to receive a favorable or unfavorable response concerning a person, a fact, or an imminent or recently happened action.
Response. Favorable (*fas*) or unfavorable (*nefas*). There is no differentiation based on the Degree of Success.

Example. A group of Custodes is about to set up camp for the night among the ruins of an ancient fortress. In the late afternoon, they notice three birds flying strangely over the ruins, and then disappearing to the west. The Augur interprets the portent using the Auspicium and succeeds in the roll of De Magia with a III Degree of Success: the birds' flight gives an unfavorable response, but no other indication. Disturbed by the event, the characters decide to camp elsewhere.



HARUSPICINA

Discipline. Favor of the Gods (DT 6)
Cost. 3 Pietas
Duration. Long (a few hours)
Procedure. The ritual consists of interpreting the entrails of animals, usually by analyzing the liver of a freshly hunted animal, to draw a response about the favor or disfavor of one or more deities.
Response. A I Degree of Success allows the Custos to perceive if one or more gods are favorable or unfavorable; a II Degree of Success allows understanding which gods are favorable and which unfavorable; a III Degree of Success affords the Custos an understanding as to why.

Example. The Custodes have just had a fierce clash with brigands, during which they had the impression that they did not enjoy the Fate Roll. The Augur, to understand the Favor of the Gods (DT 6), decides to perform a ritual of Haruspicina, examining the liver of an animal recently hunted by his companions. The roll of De Magia yields a II Degree of Success: the character realizes the Custodes lack the favor of Mars, as he suspected, but does not know the reason why. The Custodes decide to seek out a temple at the earliest opportunity to offer libations and pay homage to the God of War in hopes of mending the grievance.

OMEN

Discipline. Interpretation of Omens (DT 6)
Cost. 6 Pietas
Duration. Short (a few minutes)
Procedure. When the Custodes witness the manifestation of a very unusual, possibly supernatural, or otherwise ominous event, they can try to interpret it. The response obtained from the interpretation gives a warning about a person, fact, or action that is imminent or has just occurred.
Response. Favorable (*fas*) or unfavorable (*nefas*). The higher the Degree of Success, the greater the detail of the warning.

Example. The Custodes reach a city, outside the borders of the Empire, to witness the coronation of a local prince allied with Rome. As soon as they arrive, they hear of an extraordinary event: from the stories of passers-by, they learn that at noon one of the statues in the main square began to "cry" blood, a phenomenon that lasted for more than an hour. The Augur tries to interpret the portent using Omen: he succeeds with a I Degree of Success, thus understanding that something bad will happen to the prince. Fearing an assassination, the Custodes head immediately to the palace to warn the prince and offer him their protection.

ORACULUM

Discipline. Clairvoyance (DT 9), Precognition (DT 12), Retrocognition (DT 9)
Cost. 9 Pietas
Duration. Average to Long (one or more hours, depending on the complexity of the question)



Procedure. The ritual must be performed in a quiet place, away from any source of confusion. The officiant falls into a state of trance and gives an answer to a question concerning the past, present, or future, providing sibylline answers or rhyming sentences (that may require the players' interpretation).
Response. The higher the Degree of Success, the more detailed and articulate the response, or the more sentences (usually, one sentence per Degree of Success, up to a maximum of three).

Example. The Custodes reach a country villa. From a distance, they spot some armed figures heading inside, while others remain on guard. The characters move away and decide to perform a ritual of Oraculum to learn what's happened (Retrocognition, DT 9). The Augur gets a II Degree of Success. One of the other Custodes asks him who the men in the villa are: with a low, lyrical tone the Augur replies, "... the reflections of the sun on the steel are so many that they dazzle my eyes...". Another Custos asks if the intentions of the armed figures are hostile: the Augur answers, "... two glasses of wine were broken, and they spilled their crimson contents on the floor...". The characters decide to intervene, suspecting that robbers—probably present in large numbers—have killed two people, possibly the inhabitants of the house.

SIDERATIO

Discipline. Clairvoyance (DT 9), Precognition (DT 12)
Cost. 6 Pietas
Duration. Long (a few hours)
Procedure. The officiant observes the stars during the night, which must be clearly visible, and obtains a favorable or unfavorable response regarding the present or the future.
Response. Favorable (*fas*) or unfavorable (*nefas*). Higher degrees of success may make the response more detailed.

Example. An Augur performs a ritual of Sideratio to verify if the information possessed by the Custodes is reliable and something sinister is effectively going to happen in the city where the contubernium is headed (Precognition, DT 12). He obtains a II Degree of Success. The officiant receives an unfavorable response (nefas) about the city; also, the matter seems to concern a mysterious female figure. The next day, the group enters the city, watchful of all the women they will meet…

SOMNII INTERPRETATIO

Discipline. Interpretation of Dreams (DT 6)
Cost. 6 Pietas
Duration. Short (a few minutes)
Procedure. When a Custos has a strange and symbolic dream or hears a sufficiently detailed description of the dream of another character, they can draw a response that usually refers to the adventure in progress.
Response. The higher the Degree of Success, the more detailed the response is, and the clearer the understanding.

Example. A group of Custodes is spending the night in a quiet village on the edge of the desert. During the night, a Custos has a strange dream: a palace full of motionless people, with strange deformed shadows lurking outside. The next morning, the Custos tries a ritual of Somnii Interpretatio to interpret the dream (DT 6) and gets a I Degree of Success: the interpretation seems to suggest that the village is anything but quiet, and yet no one talks because they are afraid of something. With great caution, the characters begin to investigate.

SPECULUM

Discipline. Clairvoyance (DT 9), Precognition (DT 12), Retrocognition (DT 9)
Cost. 12 Pietas
Duration. Average (one hour)
Procedure. The officiant must be blindfolded in front of a mirror, a pool of clear water, or an open fire. If the ritual is successful, a vision appears—in the mirror, on the water, or in flames—that only those performing the ritual can see.
Response. The greater the Degree of Success, the more explicit, longer, and more detailed the vision.

A COMPLETE EXAMPLE OF DIVINATION

Gaius Valerius is tracking a group of enemies in the thick of the forest. The traces are lost in the dense undergrowth, and twilight is approaching; soon, he will no longer be able to continue the chase, and the next morning it will be too late to reach the fugitives. The young Custos has one last chance to reach his enemies before darkness falls: he will try to perform a Clairvoyance Divination, to uncover the path taken by the fleeing group.

Gaius Valerius chooses a ritual of *Speculum* and makes all the necessary preparations over the next hour: he selects the most suitable place, traces complex symbols on the ground, and recites lengthy formulas, while blindfolded, in front of a fire.

His question is simple: *"Where are the enemies I seek?"*

A roll of De Magia (Clairvoyance, DT 9) is required, as well as an expenditure of 12 Pietas: since the Custos has only a score of 8 in De Magia (and no Specialty bonuses in Clairvoyance), only a Fate Roll would grant him a success, but even with a failure he would still receive a response, albeit at the price of a higher expense of Pietas—and perhaps of further complications.

The player notes the Pietas score reduction on the character sheet and rolls 1d8, getting 7 – a failure, as expected. The player notes an additional expense of (9-7) 2 Pietas, for a final cost of the ritual equal to (12+2) 14 Pietas.

Images dance within the flames: Celtic warriors enter a clearing; a prominent mountain in the background, the shape of which Gaius recognizes. In the middle of the clearing stands a majestic oak tree of a thousand years that makes the wood around it seem like nothing more than twigs. However, since the Custos has failed the roll, the vision reveals something else: the warriors stop for a moment as if they had sensed their watcher…

The vision ceases as quickly as it arrived. Now, Gaius Valerius knows which direction to take—but he also realizes that his enemies are aware that they are being chased and that the hunter could soon become the prey!



Example. The Custodes reach a temple dedicated to Venus, finding it devastated: the statue of the goddess has been defiled and the priests massacred horribly. The group's Augur performs a Retrocognition (DT 9) using a ritual of Speculum: He gets a I Degree of Success. In front of his blindfolded eyes, clear images are formed; he relives the slaughter of the priests by monstrous beings that broke into the temple.

LOSING AND RECOVERING PIETAS

Players keep track of their Custodes' current Pietas by updating the score inside the corresponding box on their character sheet.

LOSING PIETAS

Custodes voluntarily spend Pietas to perform rituals (see earlier in this chapter) or for invocations – the Indigitamenta that the Custodes learn upon taking their Office, and as part of their advancement in the Pax Deorum. In the course of their adventures, the Custodes may also lose Pietas for the following reasons:

- If they attend ceremonies, read texts, listen to the teachings, or perform rituals belonging to forbidden or tolerated cults.
- If they enter or cross places consecrated to hostile deities (the loss is greater if the Custodes are outside the boundaries of the Empire).
- If they are subject to magical effects capable of affecting the soul of the victim instead of their mortal bodies, like the supernatural attacks of certain demonic entities and the malignant spells of enemy sorcerers.
- If they voluntarily or involuntarily offend the Roman gods. The more serious the offense, the more significant the loss (see the table below):

OFFENDING THE ROMAN GODS

The Custos…	Pietas loss
Does not pay homage to the gods of the Roman pantheon with offerings and sacrifices at least once a month	1d6
Does not honor the main sacred holidays (*Feriae*) of the Empire with the traditional rites and customs	2d6
Curses or swears against the Roman gods	3d6
Converts to any other cult (either a tolerated cult or a forbidden cult)	All*

** If Custodes convert to a cult other than the Roman pantheon, they automatically lose all their Pietas and cannot recover it until they have carried out an appropriate rite of atonement.*

In some situations, the Custodes can avoid, or at least reduce, the loss of Pietas if they succeed in a roll of **Ratio** (Difficulty Thresholds and consequences are usually specified in the text of the adventures, or set by the Demiurge)—except when they willingly offend the Roman gods or perform rituals that do not belong to the Official Cult: in which case the loss is automatic and cannot be averted with any roll.

RECOVERING PIETAS

Usually, Custodes can recover Pietas only at the end of an adventure, when they have all the time necessary to pray to the Roman gods and perform the required rites to regain their favor.

- At the end of an adventure, all the Custodes restore their Pietas to its maximum value (no roll needed).

However, there may be situations during their adventures in which the Custodes may encounter the divine, be it through signs, omens, or by entering places consecrated to the gods of the Roman pantheon.

- When this happens, each Custos makes a roll of **De Magia** (the **Imperial Cults** Specialty is always applicable) against DT 6: if the roll is successful, the Custos recovers Pietas equal to the difference between the roll result and the Difficulty Threshold. If the roll is failed, the character recovers nothing.


SPECULUM

This form of "divine assistance" should be rare, and guaranteed by the Demiurge only when it is genuinely needed by the Custodes – usually, in the course of medium or long adventures, where the player characters are at risk of depleting their resources well before the mission is over.

THE CURSED CONDITION

In *Lex Arcana*, the Custodes may face dangers that could make them cursed. The causes are usually profaning a cursed place, owning a cursed object, being subject to the power of a curse cast by demonic creatures, or because of the hostility of the gods.

- When attempting any kind of action involving the use of a **Peritia**, a ***Cursed*** Custos can never roll a number of Dice Points higher than the character's current Pietas, down to a minimum of 3 Dice Points (1d3).

  For example, a Custos who has suffered the Cursed condition must make a roll of De Natura. The character has a score of 15 in that Peritia, but his current Pietas is equal to 8; the Custos can only roll 8 Dice Points.

Note. *If a Custos is both Cursed and Fatigued (see page 66), they may not roll a number of Dice Points higher than the lowest current score of either their Hit Points or Pietas.*

- Places, objects, or creatures that cause the *Cursed* condition may be perceived with a roll of **Sensibilitas**. Custodes can usually avoid becoming *Cursed* if they succeed in a roll of **Ratio**.

In most cases, the *Cursed* condition has a limited duration specified in the text of the adventure, or in the description of the opponent or object that causes it. Usually, it only takes effect as long as the Custos remains in a cursed place or owns a cursed object.

Sometimes, the condition may have instead a fixed or recurrent duration (seven years, a specific day each year, only at night, etc.) or it may automatically disappear at the end of the day or if the character defeats the enemy who cursed them.

In the most unfortunate cases, however, to get rid of rare and powerful curses, the Custodes will have to perform specific feats, which could lead to some exciting adventures.



CULTS AND SUPERSTITIONS

As described in *Part Two*, the Custodes may acquire one or more Specialties in De Magia, gaining bonus Dice Points when performing a ritual of the corresponding discipline of Divination (in case of *Clairvoyance*, *Interpretation of Dreams*, *Favor of the Gods*, *Interpretation of Omens*, *Precognition*, and *Retrocognition*) or when they perform a task requiring a thorough knowledge of myths and religions (in case of *Forbidden Cults, Imperial Cults*, and *Superstitions*).

The following Specialties are used when the Custodes need information related to cults and superstitions:

- **Forbidden Cults.** This is applicable to get information regarding cults forbidden by the Imperial doctrine, such as that of Celtic druids, Egyptian necromancy, the Greek Orphic rites, the cult of Zalmoxis in Dacia and Thracia, that of Ahriman in Mesopotamia and of Satan among the Christians, and the sects of Baal-Moloch. This Specialty is applicable to seek information about altars, temples, inscriptions, and sacred texts belonging to one of these cults, as well as to identify most demons and supernatural creatures related to practices of forbidden magic.

- **Imperial Cults.** This is applicable to get information about the Official Cult (the Roman Olympic religion), and also about the tolerated cults within the Empire, such as the Etruscan religion, the ancient Egyptian doctrine and magic, the cult of Cybele and that of the god Mithra (of Persian origin), Judaism and Christianity, the religions of the Celtic peoples, and of course the never-ending heritage of myths and deities from the Greek world. As with the Forbidden Cults, this discipline makes it possible to identify places, creatures, and divine manifestations linked to these cults.

- **Superstitions.** This is applicable to get information about the set of knowledge that covers the vast world of popular beliefs, folklore, and oral traditions related to magic. It is especially helpful when looking for information about ancient legends, local myths, and most supernatural creatures from folklore.





PART VII

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT



By taking on missions and adventures, Custodes have the opportunity to improve their abilities, more or less quickly, deepen their knowledge, and learn new skills. In short, acquire **experience** to become better Custodes.

EXPERIENCE AND CURRICULUM

To track the advancement of their Custos, players must refer to the **Curriculum** box on the back of the character sheet. This box contains spaces in which the players keep score of any points accumulated by experience in the 8 categories of advancement (6 categories refer to the Peritiae, one to the Mos Arcanorum and one to the Pax Deorum).

- At the end of each adventure, all Custodes receive **Experience Points (EP)**, which originate from two sources: 1) the **Adventure Value** itself and 2) the result of two rolls: one of **Ingenium** and one of **Auctoritas**.

1) EP based on Adventure Value. Each Custos receives the number of EP specified in each published adventure (under the heading *Adventure Value,* at the end of the *Introduction* paragraph; for example, *Adventure Value: 8 EP*).

- The players immediately transform the EP received into **Curriculum Points (CP)** by applying the multipliers they have in all 8 advancement categories (the multipliers were assigned during character creation, see page 39). The players transcribe the CP obtained in the relative spaces of the Curriculum box (updating the totals if necessary).

2) EP based on Ingenium and Auctoritas rolls. Each player now makes one Ingenium roll and one Auctoritas roll. These rolls are made with a DT equal to 3; no powers, skills, or invocations can be applied.

For each Degree of Success yielded in the rolls, the player receives an equal number of EP (maximum 3 EP with a III Degree of Success). EP obtained in this way are transformed into CP as per the previous step, but with the following limitations:

- EP obtained with an Ingenium roll are only applicable to the 6 Peritiae categories;
- EP obtained with an Auctoritas roll are only applicable to the Mos Arcanorum and Pax Deorum categories.

The players transcribe the CP obtained in the relative spaces of the Curriculum box (updating the totals if necessary).

For example, a Custos has just taken on their first adventure. Given that the Custos had never previously received any EP, their Curriculum box currently contains only the multipliers assigned to the eight categories during character creation:

Category	Multiplier	Curriculum Points
De Bello	Experience x 2	–
De Corpore	Experience x 4	–
De Magia	Experience x 2	–
De Natura	Experience x 6	–
De Scientia	Experience x 2	–
De Societate	Experience x 2	–
Mos Arcanorum	Experience x 4	–
Pax Deorum	Experience x 2	–

The number of EP received by the player thanks to the Adventure Value is 8. The player multiplies 8 by the various multipliers they possess in all the advancement categories. Their sheet therefore looks like this:

ADVENTURE VALUE: 8 EP

Category	Multiplier	Curriculum Points
De Bello	Experience x 2	16
De Corpore	Experience x 4	32
De Magia	Experience x 2	16
De Natura	Experience x 6	48
De Scientia	Experience x 2	16
De Societate	Experience x 2	16
Mos Arcanorum	Experience x 4	32
Pax Deorum	Experience x 2	16

The player then makes an Ingenium roll (DT 0), which-yields a II Degree of Success. The result corresponds to 2 EP, to be applied only to the 6 Peritiae categories. The player updates the CP only in those categories.

INGENIUM ROLL: 2 EP

Category	Multiplier	Curriculum Points
De Bello	Experience x 2	20
De Corpore	Experience x 4	40
De Magia	Experience x 2	20
De Natura	Experience x 6	60
De Scientia	Experience x 2	20
De Societate	Experience x 2	20
Mos Arcanorum	Experience x 4	32
Pax Deorum	Experience x 2	16

Lastly, the player makes an Auctoritas roll (DT 3) and obtains a I Degree of Success. The result corresponds to 1 EP, to be applied only to the Mos Arcanorum and Pax Deorum categories. The player updates the CP only in those categories.

AUCTORITAS ROLL: 1 EP

Category	Multiplier	Curriculum Points
De Bello	Experience x 2	20
De Corpore	Experience x 4	40
De Magia	Experience x 2	20
De Natura	Experience x 6	60
De Scientia	Experience x 2	20
De Societate	Experience x 2	20
Mos Arcanorum	Experience x 4	36
Pax Deorum	Experience x 2	18

HOW TO USE THE CURRICULUM POINTS

At the end of an adventure, players can use the CP accumulated in the various advancement categories to increase their Peritia and Specialty values and advance in Pax Deorum and Mos Arcanorum.

- Curriculum Points are spent to increase the Peritiae and Specialty values (the totals are therefore updated after each spend) but are simply accumulated to advance in Pax Deorum and Mos Arcanorum.

The Curriculum Points of Peritiae, if not used straight away, are not lost: the players can accumulate them and use them after completing other adventures.

***Note**. Some EP may be granted to Custodes also during an adventure (see page 129). The players record these points in the relative box on the front of the character sheet as a reminder. They will then be added at the end of the mission to those of the Adventure Value (and are therefore valid for all 8 advancement categories), and then cancelled from the box.*



ADJUSTING THE MULTIPLIERS

Once a Custos has received and eventually spent Curriculum Points, they can redistribute up to **2 Multiplier points** between the Advancement categories as they prefer (for example, they can take 2 Multiplier Points from De Corpore to add 1 to De Bello and 1 to Mos Arcanorum).

***Note.** The redistribution of Multiplier Points cannot increase a multiplier score to more than the Custos' main Office score (for example, an Explorer Custos with a x8 multiplier in De Natura cannot increase any other multiplier to more than x8).*

INCREASING PERITIAE AND SPECIALTIES

Players can increase their Peritiae and Specialties' scores by spending Curriculum Points accumulated in the relative section.

- **Increasing a Peritia by 1** costs 100 Curriculum Points, +20 CPs for each point above 20 (for example, increasing Peritia from 20 to 21 costs 120 CPs; from 21 to 22 costs 140 CPs).
- **Increasing a Specialty by 1** costs 20 Curriculum Points multiplied by the score to be achieved (for example, increasing a Specialty from +3 to +4 costs 80 CPs).

ADVANCING IN THE MOS ARCANORUM

Custodes begin their career in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana with the rank of *Gregarius.* They can increase their rank and acquire special skills (called Benefits) by accumulating Curriculum Points in Mos Arcanorum.

- When the Curriculum Points in Mos Arcanorum reach or exceed certain thresholds (see table below), the Custos increases in rank, receives 1 **Benefit**, a bonus to their **resistance rolls** following.

BONUS TO RESISTANCE ROLLS

By advancing in rank, the Custos is able to more effectively oppose supernatural powers and effects, and receives a bonus to all their resistance rolls (see page 140), to be added directly to the dice result. For example, a Custos with the *Beneficiarius* rank adds +2 to the result of all their Resistance rolls.

BENEFITS

Each time a Custos advances in rank, they receive a Benefit of choice from among the following.

TRAINING

The Custos receives targeted training and can choose to increase a **Virtus** of choice by 1 point (up to a maximum score of 20) or increase their maximum **Hit Points** by 3 (up to a maximum score of 40).

MOS ARCANORUM ADVANCEMENT

Total Curriculum Points	Rank**	Title	Bonus to resistance rolls	Benefits
0	I	Gregarius	–	–
100	II	Duplicarius	+1	1
210	III	Beneficiarius	+2	1
330	IV	Veteranus	+3	1
460	V	Decanus	+4	1
600	VI	Electus	+5	1
750*	VII	Protector	+6	1

** For every 150 Curriculum Points above 750, the Custos automatically obtains +1 in a Virtus of choice (up to a maximum score of 20). They do not obtain any other Benefits, or resistance roll bonuses, nor does their rank increase.*

*** For the effects of advancing in rank, see page 128.*

Note. *This Benefit can be selected several times and is cumulative, that is, a Custos can increase the same Virtus or different Virtutes several times or increase their maximum HP multiple times. The increase of a Virtus implies the increase of all related ratings (Hit Points in the case of Vigor and Coordinatio, Pietas in the case of Ratio and Sensibilitas).*

PRESTIGIOUS EQUIPMENT

The Custos receives one item of perfectly crafted equipment, selected from among the following:

- **Tempered Weapon.** A weapon of choice obtains +2 Damage (the Difficulty remains the same).
- **Reinforced Armor.** An armor of choice obtains +2 Protection (the Encumbrance remains the same).
- **Reinforced Shield.** A shield of choice obtains +1 Parry.

Note. *The same Benefit cannot be selected more than once for the same equipment item.*

ASSISTANT

The Custos is assigned a young assistant, either male or female, who follows them everywhere as an aid (a scholar, priest, philosopher, etc.). The assistant can perform small tasks on behalf of the Custos (in general any action that doesn't require rolls) and follows them everywhere except into battle (during combat they either stand aside or hide). An Assistant also guarantees the following advantage:

- The player selects **2 Specialties** from among those available to the Assistants. Each time the Custos performs an action linked to one of these Specialties, the difficulty of the action is reduced by 1 level.

***Note**. Each Custos may have only one Assistant, but the Assistant's Benefit may be chosen more than once. In this case, the Assistant provides a bonus to 2 additional Specialties; however, their own ability to carry equipment does not increase.*

ASSISTANT SPECIALTIES	
Peritia	**Available Specialties**
De Bello	*Castra, Tactics*
De Corpore	*Climbing, Larceny, Marching*
De Magia	*Forbidden Cults, Imperial Cults, Superstitions*
De Natura	All except *Hunting, Exploration* and *Riding*
De Scientia	*All*
De Societate	All except *Command, Oratory* and *Seduction*

TRAINED ANIMAL

The Custos is assigned a trained animal, selected from among the following. The animal guarantees the Custos two advantages.

- **Hawk or Owl.** The Difficulty of all **De Natura** rolls linked to ***Hunting*** and ***Exploration*** is reduced by 1 level. In combat, at the start of each tempus, the Custos can send the bird to hinder an adversary. If the adversary is making a ranged attack, the difficulty of their roll increases by 1 level. If the adversary is engaged, their Damage multiplier is reduced by 1. At the end of each tempus, the hindered adversary makes a **De Bello** roll with DT 9: with a I Degree of Success the animal is out of action (it recovers after one day); with a II Degree of Success or higher, the animal is killed (the Custos can receive another one at the end of the adventure).

- **War Dog.** The difficulty of all **De Bello** rolls linked to ***Threaten*** is reduced by 1 level. In combat, at the start of each tempus, the Custos can order the dog to fight by their side against an adversary with whom they are Engaged. The Damage multiplier of the Custos increases by 1. At the end of each tempus, the Custos' opponent makes a **De Bello** roll with DT 9: with a I Degree of Success the animal is out of action (it recovers after one day); with a II Degree of Success or higher, the animal is killed (the Custos can receive another one at the end of the adventure).

- **Hunting Dog or Wolf.** The Difficulty of all **Sensibilitas** rolls to avoid ambushes and **De Natura** rolls linked to ***Hunting*** is reduced by 1 level. In combat, at the start of each tempus, the Custos can order the wolf to engage any disengaged adversary (size 4 or smaller). At the end of each tempus, the engaged adversary makes a **De Bello** roll with DT 9: with a I Degree of Success the animal is out of action (it recovers after one day); with a II Degree of Success or more, the animal is killed (the Custos can receive another one at the end of the adventure).

***Note.** Each Custos can have only one Trained Animal (the Trained Animal Benefit cannot be selected more than once).*

ADVANCING IN THE PAX DEORUM

The Custodes start the game with one invocation the one linked exclusively to their Office (see page 31). They can learn additional invocations (Indigitamenta) by accumulating Curriculum Points in the Pax Deorum.

- When the Curriculum Points reach or exceed certain thresholds (see table below), the Custos learns **1 Indigitamentum** and increases their **maximum Pietas**.

PAX DEORUM ADVANCEMENT		
Total Curriculum Points	**Maximum Pietas**	**Indigitamenta**
0	–	Indigitamentum of Office
100	+3	1 indigitamentum
210	+3	1 indigitamentum
330	+3	1 indigitamentum
460	+3	1 indigitamentum
600	+3	1 indigitamentum
750*	+3	1 indigitamentum

** For every 150 Curriculum Points above 750, the Custos automatically creases their maximum Pietas by 3. They do not obtain other indigitamenta.*

The Custodes can learn two types of indigitamenta: those of the **gods of the Official Pantheon** and those of the ***Di Indigetes*** (ancient Italic deities). For each type, specific rules are provided at the start of the dedicated section. (For a description of the gods connected to the indigitamenta, see page. 231).

INDIGITAMENTA OF THE OFFICIAL PANTHEON

To cast one of the following Indigitamenta, a Custos must invoke a specific god (automatically, no roll is needed) and spend a certain amount of Pietas. An Indigitamentum can only be cast once per adventure. Unless otherwise specified, an Indigitamentum may be cast at the beginning of any tempus and does not prevent performing any action.

Note. *When an Indigitamentum begins its effect, each other Indigitamentum active at that time is completely canceled.*

- All the Indigitamenta of the Official Pantheon can be learned by any Custos (with the exception of that of Vesta, reserved only for female Custodes). Each indigitamentum has two effects, a normal one a more powerful one; the stronger effect can be used only if the invoker belongs to a certain Office (specified in each indigitamentum).

For ease of consultation, the relevant table lists all the indigitamenta of the Official Pantheon; it also specifies which Office benefits from the possibility of using the invocation in its most powerful form.

APOLLO ARTICENENS (BOW BEARER)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Immediately after the character has made an attack roll using a bow (an Arcus or a Toxon).
Effect. The arrow inevitably hits the target, even if the roll is a failure (it automatically obtains a x1 Damage multiplier or a I Degree of Success). If the roll is successful, the Damage multiplier or Degree of Success increases by 1.

ANCIENT AND MODERN INDIGITAMENTA...

Since their beginnings, the *Indigitamenta* have represented, in Rome, the most common means of contacting the deities, used by the highest offices of the State and the humblest of laborers alike. They are sacred formulas with which it is possible to invoke and propitiate a specific deity, calling it by its real name, seeking to induce an act or event, whether public or private, personal or collective. The deity is invoked by pronouncing its name (preceded or followed by one or more epithets) and secret words. The indigitamenta most commonly used by all citizens normally invoke minor deities useful in elements of everyday life. Other indigitamenta, on the other hand, are used to invoke major deities to trigger devastating and superhuman effects. The secret words are jealously guarded by the highest priestly offices of the Empire.

***Di Indigetes* and Official Gods of the Pantheon**

The Indigitamenta take their name from the *Di Indigetes*, the original Italic and Latium gods, who accompanied the Eternal City through its first unstoppable period of expansion and conquests. Several of the most ancient of these are obscure and powerful entities, those "*whose name cannot be divulged*". With the passing of time, the level of devotion to these gods has slowly but inexorably waned... They are in fact gods linked to the land, Italic soil, and once Rome had expanded beyond the Alps and to the other side of the *Mare Nostrum*, much of their utility was lost. They are still remembered and honored in various festivals in some of the oldest temples, but only in Italia: very few people know of them or offer sacrifices in their name beyond the provincial borders. The Di Indigetes were effectively excluded from the Official Pantheon, which for centuries now has been dominated by the "new" gods, which are also known by other names in many provinces throughout the Empire, especially in the Hellenized world: Jupiter/Zeus, Juno/Hera, Venus/Aphrodite, etc. These are the new gods most commonly worshipped by the majority of believers. But in the Cohors Arcana, the Di Indigetes have not been forgotten, and the indigitamenta taught to the Custodes include several from the past, in which their name appears. These are more unpredictable invocations, which are not always heard, but the power of which is never questioned.

Augurs only. If the invoker themselves makes the roll, the Custos automatically gets a x2 Damage multiplier or a II Degree of Success, even if the roll was a failure. If the roll is successful, the Damage multiplier or Degree of Success increases by 2.

APOLLO PAEAN (HEALER)

Cost. -
Requirements. -
Effect. The invoker recovers 3+1d3 Pietas.
Augurs only. The invoker recovers 6+1d6 Pietas.

DIANA LYCEA (SIMILAR TO A WOLF)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Invoke at sunset, lasts until sunrise.
Effect. The difficulty of all De Corpore and De Natura rolls made by the invoker is reduced by 1 level.
Explorers only. Additionally, the invoker may roll De Natura for any action normally resolved with De Corpore,, including unarmed combat (bonuses in relevant De Corpore Specialties apply).

DIANA SILVARUM (OF THE WOODS)

Cost. 9 Pietas
Requirements. Invoke at sunrise inside a forest or wood, lasts until sunset.
Effect. As long as they remain inside the forest, the difficulty of all non-combat actions performed by the invoker is reduced by 1 level.
Explorers only. The effects apply to all members of the contubernium.

HEKATE PROPYLAEA (LADY OF THE THRESHOLD)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. The invoker is standing near a corpse or its burial place, after sunset.
Effect. The invoker performs an *Oraculum* ritual (paying the cost of the invocation instead of the ritual) and will speak with the voice of the deceased. The difficulty of the ritual is reduced by 1 level. If the question posed to the deceased concerns the causes and dynamics of their death, the difficulty is reduced by 2 levels.
Augurs only. Additionally, at the end of the ritual the deceased recites a dark prophecy regarding a danger that will be encountered by a Custos (unspecified) during the adventure. Any Custos can remember this prophecy after making any roll to avoid or reduce damage, or to avoid a condition. This Custos can repeat the roll (they must keep the new result).

Indigitamenta of the Official Pantheon	Privileged Office
Apollo Articenens	Augur
Apollo Paean	Augur
Diana Lycea	Explorer
Diana Silvarum	Explorer
Hekate Propylaea	Augur
Hercules Invictus	Fighter
Jupiter Defensor	Fighter
Jupiter Fulgurator	Augur
Jupiter Predator	Explorer
Jupiter Territor	Assassin
Juno Moneta	Scholar
Juno Veridica	Diplomat
Mars Gradivus	Fighter
Mars Paciferus	Fighter
Mercury Acacetus	Diplomat
Mercury Viator	Diplomat
Minerva Ambularia	Scholar
Minerva Armipotens	Scholar
Neptune Deus Immensi Maris	Explorer
Proserpina Cereris Filia	Assassin
Pluto Arcanus	Assassin
Pluto Rex Stygis	Assassin
Venus Verticordia	Diplomat
Vesta Ignifera	Female Custodes only
Volcanus Mulciber	Scholar

IUGX (OR HEKATE'S WHEEL)

After one day, one week, or one month from the consecration and from having learned the *indigitamentum* of *Hekate Propylaea*, the Custos will wake in the middle of the night from a terrible nightmare. The next morning they will find an *iugx* among their things: the so-called 'Hekate's Wheel'. The object is a golden sphere or prism containing a sapphire, made to spin like a spinning top with a leather strap. The sphere is engraved with words in unknown letters and emits an otherworldly sound when it's made to spin.

- If the owner of the *iugx* activates it before performing a ritual, rather than spend Pietas they lose an equal number of Hit Points (in this case, if the *Treated* box is checked, it must not be unchecked).

HERCULES INVICTUS (INVINCIBLE)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. After the invoker makes a De Corpore roll.
Effect. The invoker can roll again and add the result to the previous one (as in an invocation of a Tutelary Deity).
Fighters only. The invoker can choose to benefit from the same effect for Vigor rolls (instead of De Corpore).

JUPITER DEFENSOR (DEFENDER)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. -
Effect. An invisible shield appears before the invoker. For 3 tempus, the invoker benefits from a +3 Parry bonus (which is added to that of any shield).
Fighters only. Alternatively, the Fighter can spend 6 Pietas (instead of 3) and benefit from a +6 Parry bonus for 3 tempus (which is added to that of any shield).

JUPITER FULGURATOR (FULMINATOR)

Cost. Variable (see description)
Requirements. A visible target.
Effect. The invoker spends from 3 to 15 Pietas to hit the target with a bolt of lightning falling from the sky (even if it is completely clear). The target is set on fire (if flammable) or receives damage in Dice Points equal to double the Pietas expenditure (armor does not protect it).
Augurs only. The lightning strikes up to three targets: each target suffers the full amount of damage (a separate damage roll must be made for each target).

JUPITER PREDATOR (PREDATOR)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. After rolling for an ambush attempt.
Effect. All Custodes are considered to have automatically rolled a success.
Explorers only. Additionally, the Damage multiplier inflicted by the Custodes in the first tempus of combat is increased by 1.

JUPITER TERRITOR (WHO TERRORIZES)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. In combat with animals or creatures having a Ratio score, with DV8 or lower.
Effect. The invoker assumes divine and terrifying features: all animals flee away, while enemies engaged with the invoker must pass a Ratio roll (DT 6) or be paralyzed by fear and be considered *Surprised* in that tempus.
Assassins only. As above, but the engaged enemies can have DV10 and the DT of their Ratio roll increases to 9.

JUNO MONETA (WHO WARNS OF DANGER)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. After a Sensibilitas roll to notice an incoming threat.
Effect. All Custodes are considered to have automatically rolled a success.
Scholars only. Additionally, the Custodes halve (rounded down) any damage received from that threat (for example, in the first tempus of combat after an ambush attempt).

JUNO VERIDICA (WHO TELLS THE TRUTH)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. After asking a specific question to an individual.
Effect. If the NPC decides to lie, they can't speak in complete sentences and blather completely meaningless words. The individual doesn't realize or forgets as soon as they have answered.
Diplomats only. The invoker can ask three questions (instead of one).

MARS GRADIVUS (WHO MOVES IN BATTLE)

Cost. 3 Pietas.
Requirements. In combat, engaged against more than one adversary.

Effect. The invoker is able to foresee the blows and fight efficiently against several opponents. For 3 tempus, the invokers' adversaries are deprived of the advantages of fighting in superior numbers.
Fighters only. The effect applies to all members of the contubernium.

MARS PACIFERUS (PACIFIER)

Cost. 9 Pietas
Requirements. In combat, engaged in combat against an enemy with DV10 or lower.
Effect. An enemy engaged with the invoker will stop fighting and become stunned, unable to perform any actions. The effect ceases after 3 tempus or else immediately if they are attacked (in this case, they act and fight normally).
Fighters only. The previous effect is applicable for up to three enemies with DV10 or lower selected by the Fighter, or a single enemy with any DV.

MERCURY ACACETUS (WHO CAN DO NO HARM)

Cost. 9 Pietas
Requirements. In combat against an enemy with DV10 or lower.
Effect. If the invoker has received any damage by an opponent with DV10 or less, they can cancel all the damage received by that enemy in that tempus.
Diplomats only. As above, but the enemy can have any DV.

MERCURY VIATOR (MESSENGER)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Invoke at sunrise, lasts until sunset; or invoke at sunset, lasts until sunrise.
Effect. The invoker understands, speaks, reads, and writes in any language, known, unknown, or even dead.
Diplomats only. Additionally, the invoker can send a message (a short phrase) able to immediately reach a specific individual within the Imperial borders. The recipient receives the message in the form of a dream or vision, and unless they have a specific reason to obstruct the work of the Custos, they will be strongly motivated to act as suggested or ordered by the message.

MINERVA AMBULARIA (WHO STRIDES)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Invoke at sunrise, lasts until sunset; or invoke at sunset, lasts until sunrise.
Effect. For the duration of the effect, a Custos chosen by the invoker (invoker included) is immune to the consequences of the following conditions: *Debilitated*, *Fatigued, Sick, Poisoned*.
Scholars only. The effect applies to all Custodes of the contubernium.

MINERVA ARMIPOTENS (POWERFUL IN ARMS)

Cost. 9 Pietas
Requirements. In combat.
Effect. Until the end of the battle, the invoker enjoys a bonus of +2 to the Damage rating of their weapons and to the Protection of their armor.
Scholars only. In addition, for the duration of the effect the invoker gains a bonus of +4 Dice Points to their De Bello.

NEPTUNE DEUS IMMENSI MARIS (GOD OF THE IMMENSE SEA)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. Near the sea, a lake or a river.
Effect. The invoker can summon a body of drinking water; swell the waters in a section of the sea or river to make them impassable, or otherwise make them easy to cross; unleash a storm in the open sea or otherwise calm it; draw water from below the earth's surface to extinguish a fire or transform dry land into a swamp.
Explorers only. Additionally, the Explorer can command a body of water to form a wave that violently strikes only nearby enemies, inflicting 2d6 damage (armor does not protect them). The victims can make a De Corpore roll with DT 9 to halve the damage (rounding up).

PROSERPINA CERERIS FILIA (DAUGHTER OF CERES)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. During autumn or winter months, or during spring or summer months (at the invoker's choice).
Effect. Upon learning this invocation, the Custos chooses one of two effects, applicable only in a certain time of the year (once the time has been chosen, it cannot be changed). In autumn or winter, a terrible storm strikes the area for 3 tempus, seriously hindering movement and visibility: each tempus, all enemies present suffer 1d3 damage (armor does not protect them) and the difficulty of all their ranged attacks increases by 1 level. In spring or summer, the vegetation around the invoker protects and aids them: the ground under the enemies' feet becomes muddy and unstable, branches and tree roots obstruct attacks, etc. For 3 tempus all Damage multipliers obtained by the Custos are increased by 1, while all those against them are reduced by 1.
Assassins only. The Assassin can use the invocation at any time of the year, obtaining the corresponding effect.

PLUTO ARCANUS (HIDDEN)

Cost. 9 Pietas
Requirements. The invoker is partially obscured.
Effect. If the sun has set, or the area is scarcely lit, if there are animate or inanimate objects obstructing the line of sight, dark corners, or sudden turns, the invoker seems to be disappearing. They may decide to either move away or remain unseen, either in the same place or in the immediate vicinity. If engaged in

combat, the Custos can escape combat without making any rolls.
Assassins only. In combat, in addition to the previous effect, the invoker can reappear in the next tempus of combat and attack any adversary of their choice (who is considered *Surprised*).

PLUTO REX STYGIS (KING OF THE STYX, RIVER OF THE UNDERWORLD)

Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Invoke at sunset, lasts until sunrise.
Effect. The invoker sees or perceives spirits and ghosts of any kind. They are neither scared nor suffer the effects of any magic powers of *Undead* creatures. The invoker can attempt to communicate with the shadows of the dead with rolls of De Magia or Sensibilitas.
Assassins only. Additionally, if the invoker fights against *Undead* creatures, their De Bello and De Corpore are increased by 6 Dice Points for the entire duration of the battle.

VENUS VERTICORDIA (WHO CHANGES HEARTS)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. In combat.
Effect. The invoker cannot be attacked by any enemies for 3 tempus or as soon as they voluntarily attack an enemy.
Diplomats only. The effect applies to all members of the contubernium.

VESTA IGNIFERA (BEARER OF FIRE)

Cost. 6 Pietas
Requirements. The invoker is a woman.
Effect. Regardless of the weather conditions, the invoker lights a medium-sized fire. For an entire day or night, the sacred fire heats more than normal fire (in its proximity, ... any rest is considered in a comfortable place) and cannot be extinguished in any way except by the invoker herself. Additionally, the invocation can be used to create a circle of fire to protect her location (encampment, home, cave entrance). Anybody who passes through the circle without the invoker's permission immediately receives 2d6 damage (armor does not protect them).

VOLCANUS MULCIBER (WHO MELTS)

Cost. 6 Pietas.
Requirements. In combat.
Effect. Until the end of the battle, the weapon used by the invoker becomes incandescent like lava, increasing the Damage multiplier by 1. Additionally, if the invoker is the attacker, they automatically destroy the opponent's shield.
Scholars only. Additionally, the Damage multiplier of the invoker increases by 2 (instead of 1).

INDIGITAMENTA OF THE DI INDIGETES

These concern invocations to Italic gods, which are more primitive, more closely tied to the land, more unpredictable and resentful: once a Custos has invoked an Indigitamentum of one of the Di Indigetes, that same god will not respond to any other invocations by the same contubernium until the end of the adventure (it is therefore not very useful to have 2 Custodes with the same Indigitamentum). All Custodes can nonetheless learn these Indigitamenta.

- Unlike the ones of the Official Pantheon, these Indigitamenta **require a roll on one Virtus** (specified in each Indigitamenta), in addiition to spending a certain amount of Pietas.

Unless otherwise specified, an Indigitamentum may be cast at the beginning of any tempus and does not prevent performing any action.

Note. *When an Indigitamentum begins its effect, each other Indigitamentum active at that time is completely canceled.*

VIRTUS ROLL

The difficulty of the roll is based on the distance from Italia (the further the distance from the borders of the Italic peninsula, the greater the difficulty):

Location	Difficulty
In Italia (including Rome)	DT 3
Within the Greco-Italic Prefecture	DT 6
Within the Imperial borders	DT 9
Beyond the Imperial borders	DT 12

- A failed roll implies the Custos nonetheless obtained the effect corresponding to a I Degree of Success, but is also forced to spend additional Pietas equal to the difference between the yielded result and the DT. If the Custos cannot pay the additional cost, they lose the remaining Pietas and the indigitamentum has no effect.

For easier consultation, the following table lists all the indigitamenta of the Di Indigetes; the Virtus on which the roll must be made is also specified.

Di Indigetes	Virtus
Bellona Alala	Auctoritas
Janus Bifrons	Sensibilitas
Fortuna Respiciens	Ingenium
Quirino Pater	Ratio
Tellus Mater	Vigor
Saturno Exsul	Coordinatio

BELLONA ALALA (WHO SHOUTS THE WAR CRY)

Virtus. Auctoritas
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. In combat.
Effect. The invoker sees a war chariot appear on the battlefield, driven by the beautiful, savage goddess Bellona, who shouts a terrifying war cry. For a number of tempus equal to the Degree of Success rolled, all Damage multipliers obtained by the invoker are increased by 2, but all those of the adversaries engaged with the invoker also increase by 1.

JANUS BIFRONS (TWO-FACED)

Virtus. Sensibilitas
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. Before the invoker makes a ritual of *Speculum*.
Effect. The invoker can interact with the vision summoned by the ritual, taking a number of 'actions' equal to the Degree of Success obtained with the roll of Sensibiltas**.** 'Actions' include moving by a few meters, observing or listening to something or someone, or reading a page, but not touching or moving objects (open doors, drawers, etc.). The invoker cannot be seen by individuals or creatures in the vision.

TELLUS MATER (MOTHER EARTH)

Virtus. Vigor
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. In combat.
Effect. The earth around the invoker shakes violently for a number of tempus equal to the Degree of Success obtained with the roll of Vigor. Combat is interrupted, as everyone in the area can only maintain their balance or look for shelter. The tremors cause the collapse of ceilings, walls, columns, trees, or rocks, which seem to fall onto the enemies of the invoker with ruthless malice: for each tempus of the earthquake, all enemies in the area receive 2d6 damage (armor protects them as normal). Moreover, if the tremors last for 2 tempus, they cause houses and small buildings to collapse; if they last for 3 tempus they also cause large buildings, temples, limited woodlands, or rock faces to collapse.

A contubernium is fighting amid the harsh and desolate hills of Illyricum. A Custos invokes Tellus Mater: they must make a Vigor roll with DT 6 (Illyricum is in the Capitalis Prefecture). The Custos rolls a III Degree of Success: for 3 tempus, the enemies are struck by falling rocks and stones, plummeting mercilessly with unbridled force: they each receive 2d6 damage in each tempus.

INDIGITAMENTUM: SATURN EXSUL (EXILE)

Virtus. Coordinatio
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. The invoker is engaged in combat with a single opponent.
Effect. The invoker and the opponent are suddenly enveloped by a mist. For a number of tempus equal to the Degree of Success obtained with the roll of Coordinatio, the De Bello value of the invoker is considered equal to that of the opponent.

FORTUNA RESPICIENS (WHO REMEDIES PAST ERRORS)

Virtus. Ingenium
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. After the Custos has rolled any attribute.
Effect. The invoker may repeat the roll a number of times equal to the Degree of Success obtained with the roll of Ingenium, and keep the result they wish.

QUIRINUS PATER (FATHER)

Virtus. Ratio
Cost. 3 Pietas
Requirements. At the end of an Audience (see page 117).
Effect. Regardless of the number of successes obtained, the Audience is considered resolved in favor of the Custodes (with a Degree of Success equal to that yielded in the Ratio roll).



PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS



AETIUS (ASSASSIN)



Vigor 12
Coordinatio 13
Sensibilitas 7
Ingenium 8
Ratio 8
Auctoritas 12

De Bello 10, Missiles+2
De Corpore 15, Larceny +1, Stealth +1
De Natura 6
De Magia 6
De Scientia 10
De Societate 13, Deceit +1, Seduction +1

Hit Points 26
Pietas 16
Equipment Pugio, Manubalista, Lorica Plumata
(Total Encumbrance: 11)

Aetius, whose name is almost certainly an alias and means "eagle" in Latin, is a sociable and charming fellow, with a weakness for wine and women and a curriculum of more than a few broken hearts, both within and without the Cohors Arcana. This notwithstanding, the Custos is a reliable companion, as an **Assassin** with versatile skills and an uncanny aim. Yet, no one seems to really know Aetius – judging by his courteous manners and good education, one can assume a patrician upbringing, and a possible Italic provenance. His cover Office is that of Diplomat.

LIX (ASSASSIN)



Vigor 9
Coordinatio 15
Sensibilitas 11
Ingenium 11
Ratio 9
Auctoritas 5

De Bello 9, Daggers +1, Missiles +1
De Corpore 17, Jumping +1, Running +1
De Natura 12, Poisons* +2
De Magia 8
De Scientia 8
De Societate 6
** This Specialty applies whenever LIX handles, treats or extracts poisons of any kind.*

Hit Points 25
Pietas 21
Equipment Sica, Plumbata, Parma, Corium Lorica
(Total Encumbrance: 7)

The woman simply known as LIX is an **Assassin**. Her name, which she rarely uses in public, means "59" in Roman numbers, as marked on a tattoo on the back of her neck, perhaps indicating a previous life of slavery. If she has – or ever had – another name, no one knows. Under most circumstances, LIX uses aliases and reveals nothing of her past, not even to her closest companions of contubernium, adopting a very simple tactic: she rarely speaks. If there is any truth in the rumors circulating about her in the Cohors Arcana, LIX comes from somewhere in the Eastern Prefecture, as her oriental features seem to suggest, and she's gifted with an almost supernatural grace and agility. Her cover Office is that of Explorer.

PENDARAN MAB ELAD (AUGUR)



Vigor 7
Coordinatio 7
Sensibilitas 15
Ingenium 11
Ratio 13
Auctoritas 7

De Bello 8
De Corpore 8
De Natura 12, Herb Lore +2
De Magia 17, Interpretation of Dreams +1, Interpretation of Omens +1, Favor of the Gods +1
De Scientia 9, Medicine +1
De Societate 6

Hit Points 13
Pietas 31
Equipment Cudgel, Pugio, Sling (Total Encumbrance: 3)

Your name is Pendaran, son of Elad. Many years have passed since you were a child, scurrying around in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall, in northern Britannia, but one thing hasn't changed: dream visions come to you at night, and you can see what others can't in the flight of birds, or in the barking of dogs. When the Praetorians first came to your village, you already had a reputation for being close to the gods. They took you with them to Londinium, and from there you boarded a ship headed for Rome. In the centre of the Empire you studied the art of Divination, integrating the knowledge of a Roman **Augur** with the ancient wisdom of your own folk.

THEODORA ALEXIS (AUGUR)



Vigor 12
Coordinatio 8
Sensibilitas 13
Ingenium 8
Ratio 12
Auctoritas 7

De Bello 10, Spears +2
De Corpore 10
De Natura 11, Hunting +1
De Magia 15, Clairvoyance +1, Precognition +1, Retrocognition +1
De Scientia 8
De Societate 6

Hit Points 19
Pietas 28
Equipment Pugio, Spear, Angon, Clipeus (Total Encumbrance: 9)

Your name is Theodora Alexis and you're 20 years old. You were born in a remote village at the foot of the cold and wooded mountains of Macedonia, and since you were a little girl you demonstrated a deep interest in practices traditionally reserved to men, such as hunting, fighting, and the magical art of Divination. Despite the mockery of your peers who stubbornly refused to take you seriously, you were able to fulfill your dream and you have been accepted in the Cohors Arcana as an **Augur**. Now, your fierce, penetrating eyes and long, jet-black hair inspire more fear and awe than smug looks in your companions.

CUMAR NABATEUS (DIPLOMAT)



Vigor 11
Coordinatio 7
Sensibilitas 8
Ingenium 7
Ratio 14
Auctoritas 13

De Bello 10
De Corpore 8
De Natura 7, Riding+1
De Magia 9, Superstitions +1
De Scientia 10, Investigation +2
De Societate 16, Negotiation +1, Streetwise +1

Hit Points 19
Pietas 23
Equipment Scramasax, Angon, Parma, Corium Lorica (Total Encumbrance: 9)

Your name is Cumar, and you're 33 years old. When you were just a young trader from Gaza, in the province of Arabia, you spent many hours conversing with merchants headed for mysterious Mesopotamia, with caravan drivers on their way to the Negev deserts, and with legionaries from every corner of the Empire. They told you stories of their countries, and in time you were able to learn bits and phrases of their strange languages, avid for any information. Thanks to your ambition and hunger for knowledge, mixed with a marked aptitude for intrigue, you have become a **Diplomat** of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana.

ZENOBIA EUERGETES (DIPLOMAT)



Vigor 9
Coordinatio 9
Sensibilitas 5
Ingenium 11
Ratio 11
Auctoritas 15

De Bello 8
De Corpore 10
De Natura 6
De Magia 7, Forbidden Cults +1, Imperial Cults +1
De Scientia 12, Geography +2
De Societate 17, Decorum +1, Oratory +1

Hit Points 19
Pietas 17
Equipment Sica, Plumbata, Lorica Squamata (Total Encumbrance: 6)

Your name is Zenobia. You were born 24 years ago in Pergamum, in the province of Asia, not far from the ruins of the ancient city of Troy. Your parents were wealthy merchants, and you spent your childhood traveling along the trade routes of your land, to visit the rich Greek cities of the coast. You have seen hundreds of different folks and heard the speech of a thousand lands, dreaming one day to visit each and every one of them. And maybe you might, now that you have entered the Cohors Arcana, invested with the office of **Diplomat**, the cursus protected by the god Mercury, where you have proven to be one of the best in your field thanks to your strong personality and unquestionable charm.

CLOELIA JAMBALE (EXPLORER)



Vigor 10
Coordinatio 12
Sensibilitas 14
Ingenium 10
Ratio 6
Auctoritas 8

De Bello 11, Missiles +1, Spears +1
De Corpore 10, Marching +2
De Natura 17, Navigation +1, Riding +1
De Magia 10
De Scientia 6
De Societate 6

Hit Points 24
Pietas 20
Equipment Pugio, Sling, Spear, Parma (Total Encumbrance: 6)

Your name is Cloelia Jambale and you're 19 years old. You were born and raised in a nomadic tribe, constantly moving from the barren slopes of the Atlas mountains to the deserts of the sunny province of Mauretania. You have never backed down in the face of the harsh responsibilities that nomadic life demands, spending weeks in the only company of the rustle of the sand raised by the wind, and the scorching sun. One day, you have been given the opportunity to enter the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana as an **Explorer**, and you accepted. Despite your lack of scientific and diplomatic skills, your new companions have soon learned to value your exceptional knowledge of the natural world and its secrets.

GAIUS VALERIUS (EXPLORER)



Vigor 12
Coordinatio 13
Sensibilitas 12
Ingenium 8
Ratio 8
Auctoritas 7

De Bello 12, Swords +2
De Corpore 12
De Natura 15, Exploration +1, Hunting +1
De Magia 8
De Scientia 7, Crafts +1, Medicine +1
De Societate 6

Hit Points 27
Pietas 20
Equipment Gladius, Pugio, Arcus, Clipeus, Lorica Squamata (Total Encumbrance: 13)

Your name is Gaius Valerius. You were born 21 years ago in Aquileia, a thriving town in the northern part of the province of Italia. You spent your early years in the countryside surrounding your town, and the memories of those hills and woods never leave you, even when you are far away. One day, you decided to try and join the Praetorian Guard, and you traveled many miles to Mediolanum. There, you underwent many tests, and your remarkable aptitude towards the wilderness made you stand out from the others. It didn't come as a surprise when the officers of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana enlisted you to be trained as an Explorer.

ELEKTRA ZIAIS (FIGHTER)



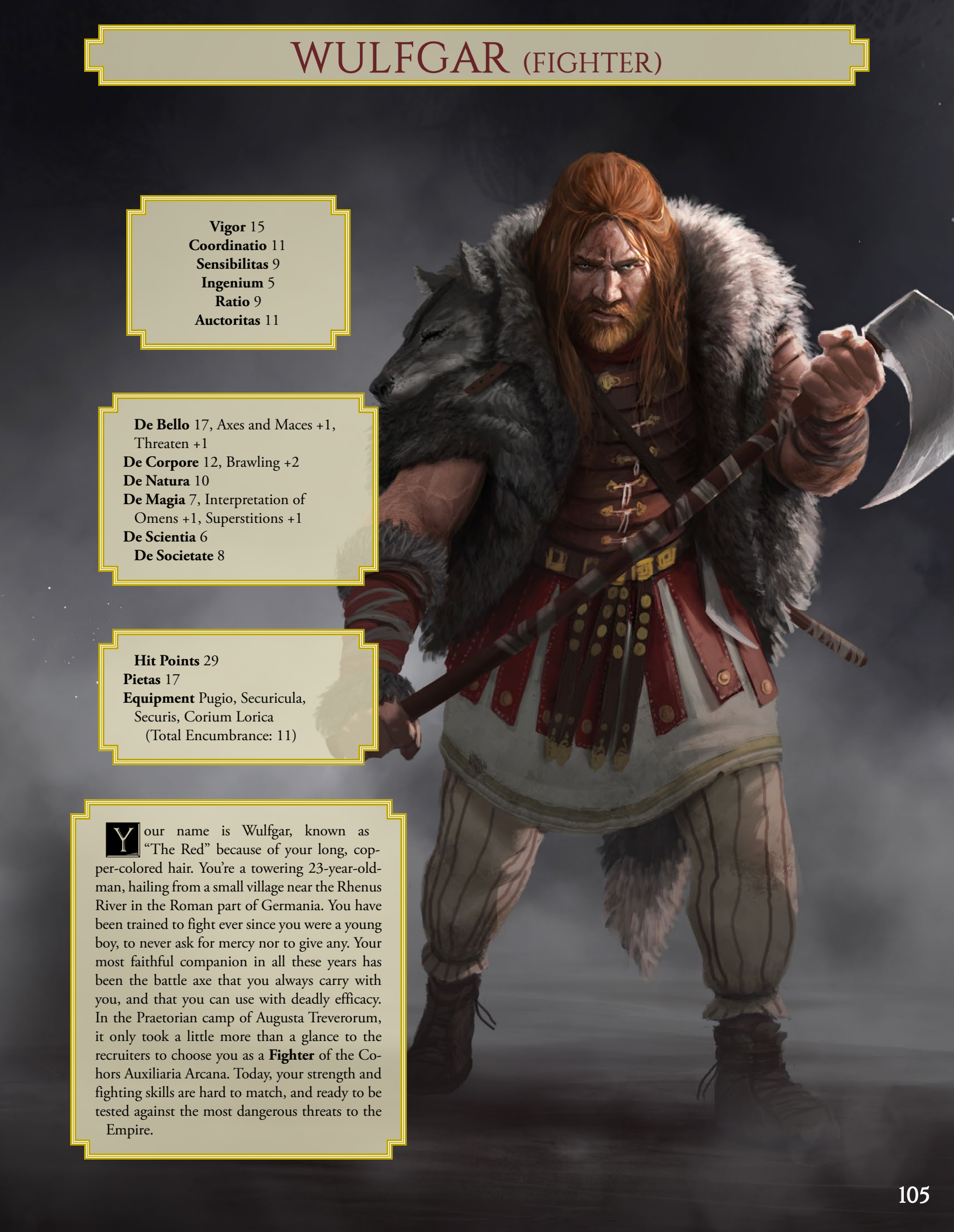
Vigor 13
Coordinatio 12
Sensibilitas 8
Ingenium 7
Ratio 8
Auctoritas 12

De Bello 15, Swords +1, Missiles +1
De Corpore 13, Brawling +1, Climbing +1
De Natura 8, Hunting +2
De Magia 8
De Scientia 8
De Societate 8

Hit Points 28
Pietas 15
Equipment Ensis, Pugio, Toxon, Scutum (Total Encumbrance: 13)

Your name is Elektra, and you are 23 years old. Your father was a rebel chieftain, hunting Romans in the mountains of Dacia, and the first time you drew a sword was to fight the legionaries of the Empire. Then, your tribe accepted the terms offered by the Caesars, and your mountains became part of the Roman Empire. The wisdom of the Roman diplomats impressed you, and you decided to see with your eyes the land they came from. You reached the province of Italia as part of a traveling ludus, a company of gladiators. Your prowess in the arena of Capua attracted the interest of the Praetorian Guard, and they enlisted you as a **Fighter** for the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana.

WULFGAR (FIGHTER)



Vigor 15
Coordinatio 11
Sensibilitas 9
Ingenium 5
Ratio 9
Auctoritas 11

De Bello 17, Axes and Maces +1, Threaten +1
De Corpore 12, Brawling +2
De Natura 10
De Magia 7, Interpretation of Omens +1, Superstitions +1
De Scientia 6
De Societate 8

Hit Points 29
Pietas 17
Equipment Pugio, Securicula, Securis, Corium Lorica (Total Encumbrance: 11)

Your name is Wulfgar, known as "The Red" because of your long, copper-colored hair. You're a towering 23-year-old-man, hailing from a small village near the Rhenus River in the Roman part of Germania. You have been trained to fight ever since you were a young boy, to never ask for mercy nor to give any. Your most faithful companion in all these years has been the battle axe that you always carry with you, and that you can use with deadly efficacy. In the Praetorian camp of Augusta Treverorum, it only took a little more than a glance to the recruiters to choose you as a **Fighter** of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. Today, your strength and fighting skills are hard to match, and ready to be tested against the most dangerous threats to the Empire.

AULUS ANTILOCHUS (SCHOLAR)



Vigor 8
Coordinatio 6
Sensibilitas 10
Ingenium 12
Ratio 14
Auctoritas 10

De Bello 8
De Corpore 8
De Natura 6
De Magia 10, Forbidden Cults +1
De Scientia 18, Architecture +2, Decipher +1, Machinae +1
De Societate 10, Decorum +1

Hit Points 14
Pietas 26
Equipment Pugio, Sling, Lorica Plumata (Total Encumbrance: 7)

Your name is Aulus Antilochus, and there aren't many who believe that you are only 26 years old. The reason for such incredulity is that it took you only a few years to rise as one of the best engineers of your generation. You have worked on some of most spectacular works undertaken in the magnificent city of Alexandria, and your skill has been praised by the governor of the province of Aegyptus himself. But two years ago something happened during the return trip from the city of your family, ancient Ptolemais: you witnessed the aftermath of an attack against a village of colonists, a massacre that could have been perpetrated only by a supernatural creature. A week after, you volunteered to enter the Cohors Arcana, putting your knowledge to the service of the Empire as a **Scholar**.

JULIA PLACIDIA (SCHOLAR)

Vigor 8
Coordinatio 7
Sensibilitas 12
Ingenium 13
Ratio 12
Auctoritas 8

De Bello 10
De Corpore 8
De Natura 7, Herb Lore +1, Weather +1
De Magia 12, Precognition +2
De Scientia 15, Crafts +1, Medicine +1
De Societate 8

Hit Points 15
Pietas 26
Equipment Plumbata, Pugio, Scramasax, Corium Lorica (Total Encumbrance: 6)



Your name is Julia Placidia, and you're 21 years old. You spent your youth working in the smoky *fabricae* of the city of Calpe, in Iberia, learning the basics of metal-working. In the evening, you listened with keen interest to the tales of your father, once a medic serving in the Roman legions. He and the other members of your family were proud of you when you were summoned to the Praetorian camp in Tarraco, to become a **Scholar** of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. Since that day you have never stopped learning, widening your scientific knowledge, and also discovering the art of Divination, a field in which you have reached a level worthy of note. You trust that your unusual mix of scientific and magical skills will prove useful in your contubernium during the course of your adventures.



PART VIII

THE DEMIURGE



The Demiurge is the person that moderates and manages the events of the game. This section of the volume is reserved for them, and should be read by them alone. It contains information and rules which the players don't necessarily need to know, and often shouldn't.

WHAT DOES THE DEMIURGE DO?

The Demiurge plays a very delicate role with respect to the other players, who simply need to interpret their own characters. The Demiurge must in fact **manage the entire world of play**: describe the places visited, control the actions of non-player characters (NPCs) and make the events in the adventure occur. The Demiurge is responsible for supervising all game sessions. Over the course of the adventure, the Demiurge requests the pertinent die rolls, describes the results of the Custodes' actions, and slowly evolves the plot of the adventure based on what the characters do, discover, and understand.

One of the most important tasks of the Demiurge is to always remember the world in which the game is set: the Roman Empire and the countless cultures of the ancient world contained within its borders. There's no need to be an historian or scholar to provide players with plausible descriptions of their Custodes' surroundings: countless books and films have created a consolidated imaginary world from which to draw inspiration. Nor does the Demiurge need to worry about 'historical consistency', given the game is not based on the real world of the past and many things may be (and effectively are) very different.

THE ROLES OF THE DEMIURGE

When preparing for an adventure to be played, the Demiurge can be compared to a **screenplay writer**: they select and arrange the elements of the 'stage' on which the characters will recite in the next game session.

Most of the time, the Demiurge will play the role of **narrator**, using words to describe what happens to the group of Custodes: the Demiurge in fact represents the eyes and ears of the players in the world of play, the primary source of information for the group's collective imagination. Their descriptions focus the attention of all players and encourage their interaction.

The Demiurge must also be a versatile **film director**, ready to follow the players' improvisations when they travel an unexpected road. A good Demiurge organizes a plot around a series of events that can be handled in lots of different ways. The last thing a Demiurge should do is narrow down the available choices to players, thus obliging them to conform to the Demiurge's own idea of how the story should proceed: the players must proceed in the knowledge that their Custodes can attempt any action, no matter how scarce their chance of success. It is therefore best not to try and plan every last detail in advance, but rather allow the plot to develop naturally, one session after the other. It is in fact easier, and probably wiser, to set up each session as if it were a single episode of a television series, which follows a general plot but also has its own meaning if taken separately.

The essential game mechanics regulating the majority of situations encountered by players require the presence of an impartial **moderator**. This is the Demiurge of course, who must be ready to evaluate the application of certain rules, striving not to take sides and to remain unbiased. The events of the plot in an adventure should be conceived to create interesting and captivating challenges, not for the sole purpose of placing the players in difficulty.

Finally, the Demiurge also plays the role of **entertainer**, thus making sure the rules don't ruin the fun: for example, forcing the players to roll the dice for every action made by the Custodes quickly becomes boring, taking away from the dramatic impact of the tests, which are what really count. Similarly, structuring an adventure in such a way that discoveries or key events are all hinged on the result of a single die roll is a guarantee of potential frustration. There should always be another way to get on with the story, always.

MANAGING THE ACTIONS OF CUSTODES

HOW MANY ACTIONS AND HOW MANY CUSTODES

During the adventure, the players perform many actions. An action can be attempted by one Custos only or by several Custodes, either simultaneously or one after the other: this will depend on the circumstances and the situation, and the Demiurge obviously has the last word.

One Custos performs the action. On many occasions, one Custos only will be charged with an action. The reasons are varied: if more than one character were to try and perform the action, there may be too much confusion or noise, or perhaps all things considered it would be more risky than helpful, or maybe there isn't enough space or too much time would be lost, or perhaps it might embarrass or anger a counterpart, etc.

During the tirocinium the Custodes were specifically trained not to overlap their skills, to ensure the most qualified Custos is in charge of carrying out a certain action, without the risk of hindering them in an attempt to do better. The Custos in charge is normally the one whose Office corresponds to the Peritia to be used for the action: the reason being that Custos most likely has the highest value, and perhaps even a few other special skills. Essentially, a Custos is generally considered the highest authority of the contubernium in their Peritia.

While chasing a fugitive, the Custodes stumble upon a landowner's estate at night. The players, who suspect the fugitive is inside, pretend to be troubled wayfarers in an effort to convince the armed guard to let them in. Only one Custos is charged with making the De Societate roll; several Custodes all talking at once would be inappropriate. Luckily, one of the Custodes is a Diplomat...

Several Custodes perform the action. There may be situations where it is possible or obligatory for several Custodes to attempt an action. This obviously depends on how many Custodes are or may be involved in what's happening, or whether there is enough time for more than one Custos to engage in the action.

- Normally, each Custos can attempt the action once only (on this topic, see also the rules on *Repeated, Prolonged* and *Cooperative Actions,*, further ahead).

A few examples: Something important is found on the opposite bank of a river. Each Custos can obviously make a De Corpore roll to reach the other side. This is even more obvious if the Custodes need to cross a rope bridge over a gorge: each Custos must make a De Corpore or Coordinatio roll if they wish to cross to the other side. The Custodes are in search of certain items for sale in the stalls of a large market. They decide to split up to search more efficiently: each of them can make a Sensibilitas roll to identify the items. If, on the other hand, they are riding along a road and an exceptional event causes the horses to become agitated, they must all roll De Natura so as not to fall out of their saddle. A strange casket is proving impossible to open: a Custos makes a De Scientia roll but fails; another Custos can try if they wish, the only thing lost will be more time.

THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF ACTIONS

The majority of actions performed by the Custodes during an adventure don't need to be verified, that is, the outcome is obvious. These actions, called *automatic*, are those performed in the certainty that they will succeed, for example walking up to a certain place or climbing up a ladder; once the player has expressed their intentions, all the Demiurge needs to do is describe the outcome.

When an action is not automatic, the Demiurge must autonomously determine the **difficulty level** (if not already stated by the adventure), assigning a numeric threshold to the action that needs to be passed (abbreviated by the initials DT). To facilitate this task, actions are classified into *easy*, *normal*, *challenging*, *hard*, *critical,* and *extreme*; a different DT corresponds to each of these.

Easy actions (DT 3). These are actions which the majority of Custodes complete without any issues. The outcome is uncertain only when the attribute used has a very low value. They also include actions to convince an easily impressionable person (Auctoritas or De Societate roll), climb 1.5 meter high walls (De Corpore roll), and so on.

- When a Custos' attribute has a value equal to or greater than 10, the Demiurge can consider these actions equivalent to automatic ones without requesting a roll, thus speeding up play. On the other hand, a roll is always needed if a player or the Demiurge wishes to determine the Degree of Success of the action (see page 27).

Normal actions (DT 6). These are actions which, in order to be successful, require a certain level of familiarity in a specific field, which corresponds to a Peritia or Virtus value equal to or greater than 10. These are actions such as hiding a small object in one's clothing without being noticed (De Corpore roll), distinguishing a poisonous herb from a medicine (De Natura or De Scientia roll), or performing an Interpretation of Dreams ritual (De Magia roll).

Challenging actions (DT 9). These are actions which in order to be carried out require specific knowledge, above-average abilities, or in any case special attention and concentration. Finding a well-hidden trap, deciphering an enigmatic script (De Scientia rolls), and practicing a Clairvoyance ritual (De Magia roll) are all examples of challenging actions.

Hard actions (DT 12). These are actions that represent a genuine obstacle to those not in possession of exceptional abilities or in-depth knowledge. These are actions such as defusing a particularly clever trap (De Scientia roll), obtaining the collaboration of a declared enemy (De Societate roll), and performing a Precognition ritual (De Magia roll).

Critical actions (DT 15). These are actions that are normally only successful if carried out by those who use their own primary Peritia, or by characters whose Virtues place them miles ahead of average people. Critical actions include jumping over a 6-meter wide crevice (De Corpore roll), looking for tracks in the dirt after a downpour (De Natura roll), or making a favorable impression on a hostile prince in Rome with one's own appearance (Auctoritas roll).

Extreme actions (DT 18). These are actions so difficult that they are almost beyond the realm of human possibility, to the point where often they can only be completed with a Fate Roll or by invoking an Indigitamentum. Breaking thick iron chains (Vigor roll), translating an ancient script published in a forgotten language (De Scientia roll), and avoiding the effects of an enormously powerful curse (Ratio roll) are just some examples of extreme actions.

The above actions are to be intended as guidelines and not strict limitations; the Demiurge can use them as preferred, but can also choose other criteria, for example **roll two or three d6**, especially if the outcome of the action performed by the Custos is particularly unpredictable.

Note. *The Demiurge should nonetheless consider the Custodes' attributes when determining the difficulty of an action in order to avoid an excessively high level of difficulty and therefore almost certain failure. In particular, critical and extreme levels should be used very carefully and constitute a rarity.*



OPTIONAL RULE: PREDESTINED

Each Custos is destined to do great things. If a player, during any Virtus or Peritia roll obtains a result that is **exactly equal to the Difficulty Threshold** of the action (DT), they can spend 1 point of Pietas and succeed in the action with a I Degree of Success (otherwise the action is a failure). This rule also applies to opposed rolls.

Example. A Custos is looking for the secret entrance to an ancient passageway (DT 12). They roll De Scientia and obtain 12; the action would have failed, but thanks to the 1 Pietas point that was spent, the failure is transformed into a I Degree of Success.

THE DEGREE OF SUCCESS OF ACTIONS

When a Custos performs an action, in many cases the success or otherwise of the die roll is sufficient to determine the consequences. For example, jumping over a ditch: if the roll is successful, the character lands on the other side of the ditch, if the roll fails, the character falls in the ditch.

Other types of actions, however, require a differentiated reading of the result. The most typical example is that of **combat**, where the consequences are quantified by the table of Damage Multipliers in order to determine the damage inflicted (see pag. 61).

Other actions may require similar quantification for the sake of greater likelihood and plausibility: this quantification is known as the **Degree of Success**. In these cases, the Demiurge considers the difference between the result and the DT based on the following table:

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

Difference	Degree of Success (DoS)	Description
1 2 3	I	Barely successful
4 5 6	II	Completely successful
7 or more	III	Extraordinarily successful

If, for example, the DT is 6 and the roll is 11, the action is successful with a II Degree of Success (11 – 6 = 5). The greater the Degree of Success, the higher the success of the action. In published adventures, the effects of the different Degrees of Success are often described for more significant actions.

None of this constitutes an actual rule, rather it is simply an example of how a Demiurge might choose to manage certain situations, ensuring players are rewarded for their best rolls and essentially increasing the fun of the game.

Another area in which the concept of the Degree of Success proves very useful is **magic**. A vision or response obtained by a ritual may in fact reveal differing levels of detail, be more or less confusing and comprehensible. Indications in this regard are normally already included in the published adventures.

For example, the Custodes fear that somebody will try and steal a book from the Alexandria library. They go to the library and perform a Speculum ritual for a Precognition (DT 12). The roll is successful with a III Degree of Success: the vision that follows is very clear and full of detail, so much so that they manage to identify both the potential thief and the book in question. If, however, the Custos had obtained a I Degree of Success, the ritual would have been successful, confirming the eventual theft, but the vision would not have been as clear, revealing little more than a shadow roaming through the corridors of the library for just a few seconds.

TYPICAL ACTIONS

Following are descriptions and examples of **typical actions**, activities the Custodes often need to perform during the course of an adventure. Should the Demiurge be faced with first-time players, it is best to illustrate these beforehand and suggest them throughout the course of the game.

ESCAPE/CHASE

If the Custodes are being chased by someone or something, or vice versa, if they are the ones chasing, the rules for opposed actions apply (see page 27). The outcome of the pursuit is normally determined by one or more opposed rolls of **De Corpore**.

GATHER INFORMATION

To search for information on things or people of relevance to the mission under way, the Custodes will have to roam through crowded forums, wander along the dark alleys of slums lurking with outlaws, pose questions to the slaves and servants of a large patrician villa, knock on the door of scattered farmhouses in rural areas, and shepherds' huts in the mountains, and much more still.

The important thing is to always ask the right questions, depending on who is being asked. The Peritia of reference is normally **De Societate**, but **De Scientia** can also prove useful, especially in more intricate situations (see page 120).

GIVE A SPEECH

It may happen that Custodes need to try and convince someone by giving a long speech: to save their lives if they've been accused, to convince those present to do something specific, or to obtain a permit that isn't easily issued. The attribute to be used in these cases is **De Societate**.

A successful roll means the Custos was convincing and managed to win over the listener, who within certain limits will do what the player desires; a failure on the other hand will have the opposite effect.

HIDE/LOSE TRACK

If the Custodes are followed, and wish to hide or throw their pursuers off track, the skill to be used is normally **De Corpore**. In natural environments (for example, running away in a forest) **De Natura** can also be used, while to blend in the crowd of a city the Demiurge may allow a roll of **De Societate**.

INTERPRET/DECIPHER SYMBOLS

During their adventures, the Custodes may try to interpret or extract any type of useful information from symbols or mysterious inscriptions carved into columns, tombstones, ancient sepulchers, or special objects (such as weapons and amulets).
In the case of ancient inscriptions, hieroglyphs, or Sibylline engravings, the Peritia to be used is **De Scientia**. If the symbols, writings or inscriptions are of a magical or religious nature, the Peritia to be used is **De Magia**.

INTERROGATE

To interrogate a suspect or prisoner, the Custodes can choose a soft and almost friendly approach, using the **De Societate** Peritia.

Alternatively, the Custodes can decide to forget about diplomacy and use a more brusque approach, raising their voices and threatening unpleasant consequences should the interrogated person fail to oblige. In this case, the Peritia to be used is **De Bello**. If the characters go so far as to torture the interrogated person, the difficulty level of the De Bello roll is reduced by 1, but there will be consequences (see the corresponding box).



TORTURE

Throughout the entire Empire, torture is generally not very tolerated and has been scarcely practiced since the era of the great Syrian jurist, Ulpiano, who avidly affirmed in his writings, *"Torture is a fragile and risky tool, often unable to lead to the truth: many are in fact able to withstand torments thanks to their strength of mind or physical build, such that there is no way of extorting the truth from them; others, to the contrary, fear suffering to such an extent that they are willing to lie just to avoid it."*

Any form of torture is strictly prohibited within the Cohors Arcana. If it is practiced by the Custodes and they are found out, there may be very serious consequences. Torture is also frowned upon by the gods that protect and favor the Cohors Arcana. If one or more Custodes actively collaborate in torturing someone or know about it, but don't do anything to stop it, they immediately lose 1d6 Pietas.

OPEN/BREAK (DOORS, TRAPDOORS, CASKETS)

Exploring abandoned crypts, patrician villas dedicated to obscure cults, ancient temples half-buried in the sand... exciting tasks, harbingers of great danger and great knowledge. But first you need to get inside! It is very unlikely for villas, crypts, and temples to be without a securely locked gate or door, which will need to be forced open, preferably without attracting any attention or making too much noise. The same can be said for breaking into trapdoors, caskets, or any type of chest.

- In these cases, the Peritae to be used are normally **De Corpore** (for simple doors and locks that can be forced open) or **De Scientia** (to pick more complex locks). The DT varies depending on the importance or secrecy of access. A simple locked door has a DT 6, while the door to a secret underground sanctuary can have a DT of 12 or even higher.

- Alternatively, a Custos not too concerned about ruining the object or attracting the attention of any local folk could even turn to brute force, and roll **Vigor**.

RIDE

In many adventures, the Custodes can use horses or carts to speed up their movements. All Custodes know how to ride and drive carts and don't need to make any rolls to perform these actions, provided they're traveling by day along roads, well-marked trails, or in the countryside, given their training included the basics of horse riding (they are therefore considered automatic actions). In regards to NPCs, who normally haven't received the same training as the Custodes, a De Natura of 10 can be considered sufficient to make the character able to ride without any major issues.

Rolls are needed on the other hand when the characters come up against something a little more challenging: chasing a fugitive at a gallop, riding or driving a cart on rough terrain, climbing up or down a slope, or riding after sunset.

- To check the success of these actions, the Peritia of the **De Natura** is used with a DT of 6, or 9 if the terrain, weather conditions, or light is particularly unfavorable.

If the character is riding in precarious conditions for a prolonged period, the Demiurge can ask for additional rolls.

A failed roll will normally force the character to slow down their riding pace or the cart; the animals become agitated and force their rider to waste precious time. The consequences are determined case by case depending on the situation: whether a simple delay in the character's schedule, losing sight of the NPCs that were being pursued, or otherwise being caught up with by one's pursuers, etc. A very serious failure while the character is on horseback (a roll that yields less than 3) causes a disastrous fall to the ground.

Fall from a horse. The character is unsaddled and receives 2d6 damage; however, the player has the opportunity to reduce the damage by rolling a **Coordinatio** or **De Corpore** with DT 9: if the roll is successful, the character halves the damage inflicted (rounding up).

> *For example, a Custos on horseback is chasing enemies afoot in the middle of the night, on rocky terrain. The De Natura roll fails, obtaining 2. The Custos is unsaddled and falls to the ground: they must roll 2d6 damage. They therefore make a Coordinatio or De Corpore roll with DT 9 (the terrain consists of bare rock): the roll is successful, and the damage is therefore halved.*

SEARCH/FOLLOW TRACKS

When the Custodes go in search of something or someone, or want to follow tracks or signs that something or someone has passed through the area, they normally make a **De Natura** roll.

Of course, this must be feasible, considering the terrain and environment: following the footprints of a large creature up until its den in the forest is a plausible action, while searching for a suspect's footprints through the streets of a populated town is not.

SEARCH FOR TRAPS/ HIDDEN PASSAGEWAYS

It is not uncommon for the abodes of disreputable characters or the ruins of ancient buildings to be guarded by insidious traps such as snares, trapdoors, or mechanical devices. A certain level of circumspection is always advised. Even secret passageways and entrances are more common than one would think, and finding them is not always that simple.

- If traps or secret entrances are searched inside or in the basements of buildings, the Peritia to be used is normally **De Scientia**.

- If the Custodes are instead searching for traps laid outside in natural areas, the Peritia to be used is **De Natura**.

SWIMMING

All Custodes know how to swim in the calm waters of rivers and streams without needing to make any rolls (automatic action); they either learned how to in the past or were taught during their training. However, if the current is very strong, depending on the distance that needs to be swum, they will need to make one or more **De Corpore** rolls with DT 6, or 9 if the waters are particularly dangerous and turbulent.

- If a Custos fails the roll, they start to drown (see *Suffocation*, page 128).

If a Custos rolls a success yielding a Degree of Success greater than I, they can help one or more of their comrades: for each extra Degree of Success, they can transform the failure of another Custos into a success of I Degree.

REPEATED ACTIONS

When a character is unable to perform a certain action, the Demiurge may find themself in the position to decide whether to grant additional attempts to perform the same action. There are no general criteria, therefore the decision will normally be based on the Demiurge's own personal judgment, taking the plausibility of the situation into account above all, as well as the following generic indications.

An action cannot be repeated when a failure on the first attempt leads to specific consequences, or when it is presumed that the Custos that failed cannot do any better (or when this is specifically stated by the rules of the adventure). It would be very difficult to repeat the action *jump over a ravine*, if it were a failure; the *hire a guide* action cannot be repeated if the guide has already stated their categorical refusal; the *First Aid* action cannot be repeated because a failure indicates that the administration was performed as well as possible (there is a specific rule that limits the use of this type of action, see page 67).

The Demiurge can, on the other hand, grant a repeated attempt when a failure on the first attempt doesn't result in any significant consequences, and the situation is compatible with the likelihood of another attempt; the Demiurge must nonetheless consider the time available to the Custodes to determine the number of attempts to grant (also based on the duration of a single attempt).

The action *climb the city boundary wall without being seen by the soldiers on patrol* can be repeated a number of times compatible with the time it takes the soldiers to return; the action *find the book of interest in a library* can be repeated a high number of times if the Custodes have sufficient time available and the adventure doesn't involve any specific events (in cases like these, the Demiurge can also consider this an *automatic action* and simply keep count of the hours that pass).

COOPERATIVE ACTIONS

The actions described until now (and relative levels of difficulty) are intended as carried out by characters individually. As stated above, the majority of actions can in fact only be carried out by individual characters. For example, if 3 Custodes need to jump over a ravine, each of them must succeed in a De Corpore roll: they cannot help each other in any way. There are, however, types of actions where the likelihood of success increases if carried out in cooperation with other characters. These include two distinct types.

Actions made simpler if performed by two or more characters together. In this case, the level of difficulty of the action is reduced by 1 (each participant will therefore need to perform the action with a lower DT). For example, if climbing over a boundary wall has a DT 9, but the Custodes help each other, the DT drops to 6 for all those who contribute to the action.

Actions in which the skills of several characters can contribute. In this case the level of difficulty remains unaltered, but in order to succeed, the results of all the participating characters' rolls are added together. For example, a heavy boulder needs to be rolled into a narrow gorge (difficulty 18) to block the enemies' pursuit. If the boulder is pushed by four Custodes, each rolls their own Vigor and the results are added together. This type of action is normally correlated to the Virtus of Vigor.

This last category is for those actions normally beyond the possibility of a single Custos, regardless of their attributes: for example, stopping a chariot drawn by four horses, or breaking down the main door of a large building. If we compare the levels of difficulty, these actions should have a very high threshold (well above the intended maximum, DT 18) and only with the coordinated intervention of several characters could there possibly be any real chance of success. In these cases it is the Demiurge who establishes an overall Difficulty Threshold (for example DT 30) and who determines the outcome by adding the results of all the participants' rolls.

Remember it is the Demiurge who makes the necessary decisions, depending on the situations that arise: the game system is flexible and designed to be modeled to suit the needs of the players.

PROLONGED ACTIONS

Prolonged actions are those which, in order to be carried out, require more than one successful roll against a certain difficulty. For example, *pick a very elaborate lock,* may require 3 successes. Of course, prolonged actions fall into the category of actions for which it is plausible to make more than one attempt. In these cases, each success is added to those obtained up to that moment; moreover, each Degree of Success beyond the first is worth as an additional success (for example, a III Degree of Success is worth 3 successes).

One circumstance in which the Demiurge may opt for this type of action, if it is worth taking into account, is the **graduality of success**, that is, when each successful roll represents one step toward the total fulfillment of the action (for example, *barge a door*: the door yields a little more with each good shove). In this case, a prolonged action allows an interpretation of the event that is more plausible with respect to a normal action requiring a single roll.

The Demiurge can also use this type of action when the situation calls for a particularly arduous test, but an elevated level of difficulty would be inappropriate; rather than a single success against a DT of 15 for example, the Demiurge can request 3 successes against DT 12. If the level of difficulty is too high in certain cases, players may be condemned to a series of frustrating failures, or otherwise succeed too early if they land a particularly lucky roll. For example, a secret passageway that's difficult to find but essential in order to continue the mission could remain forever hidden, or a complex trap set by a powerful enemy could be blocked by a single outstanding roll.

Obviously, especially in the case of prolonged actions, the passing of time must also be considered. A lot of time may mean the character is granted a higher number of attempts to achieve the necessary number of successes; on the other hand, a time restriction may be adopted by an expert Demiurge as a tool to create a tense atmosphere: for example, 3 successes are needed and there are only 4 available tempus...

A conventional action can be transformed into a prolonged action at the discretion of the Demiurge, who will obviously take the circumstances into account.

- Generally speaking, it is recommended to reduce the difficulty of the action by 1 level when 3 successes are required, by 2 levels when 6 successes are required, and by 3 levels when 9 or more successes are required.

The allowed tempus in which to obtain the necessary number of successes depends, as stated above, on the contingent situation in which the Custodes find themselves.

In published adventures, negative events are sometimes specified, which occur based on the number of **failures** obtained (before reaching the number of successes needed to complete a prolonged action). The Demiurge may adopt the same principle when deciding to transform a conventional action into a prolonged one.

For example, a group of Custodes fleeing from a throng of enraged Babylonian demons, has reached a dead-end corridor, blocked by an enormous, solid Damascus iron door. Breaking through the door requires a Vigor roll with DT 15. Instead, the Demiurge decides that in order to knock down the door, the Custodes can accumulate 6 successes with DT 9. The demons catch up within a few minutes, just enough time for five attempts at most. As the shrill screams of the demons are heard approaching in the distance, the strongest Custos prepares to break down the door...

SPECIAL PROLONGED ACTIONS

Following is an introduction of various special prolonged actions. These concern more specific situations in which the Custodes may often find themselves, and which are explored here in further detail: *Set up Camp, Audience, Explore an area, Investigation, Travel, Forced March,* and *Find Food and Water*. The Demiurge may also use these to resolve unexpected events.

SET UP CAMP

During a mission, it is not uncommon for a contubernium to sleep in remote and dangerous places, or simply spend the night under the stars. The Custodes therefore need to set up camp to spend a few hours in peace and recover from the accumulated stress and fatigue (benefitting from a rest in the open).

- **Setting up temporary camp** is always considered automatic (the players don't have to specify it each time and don't need to make any rolls).

This is not the case when Custodes wish to set up a more stable camp able to accommodate a greater number of people or for a longer period of time (several days or entire weeks).

- **Setting up stable camp** is a prolonged action that requires 6 successes in order to be fulfilled. The Peritiae to be used are **De Bello** and **De Natura**; the DT is equal to 6**,** or 9 if the weather conditions are particularly unfavorable, or if the location is unable to provide the necessary materials. After each hour spent setting up the camp, a Custos can make 2 rolls. The construction of the camp is interrupted at sunset (therefore the number of attempts available depends on the number of daylight hours available to the Custodes).

Thanks to the construction of a stable camp, the Custodes can also rest in a comfortable place (see page 68).

Organize sentry duties. If the Custodes are sleeping in potentially dangerous areas, sentry duties are organized each night (this action is always considered automatic; it doesn't need to be specified by the players).

For the entire period that the contubernium is sleeping or resting, one of the Custodes acts as a sentinel: their job is to stay awake and raise the alarm in case of danger. The Custodes have been trained not to wake their resting comrades for the slightest noise, but rather only in the case of real and imminent danger (therefore, they can sleep peacefully). If needed, the Custos on sentry duty at that time is randomly selected. (See the rules on *Surprise Attacks*, page 64).

AUDIENCE

During their adventures, the Custodes will have the opportunity to meet and speak with a large number of people. For many of these meetings, no dice need to be rolled (for example, the Custodes ask and speak about things that the counterparts have no reason to hide), for others, the Demiurge can ask for a De Societate roll (see also *Gather information*, page 113).

This is not the case, however, when Custodes need help, confidential information, or a permit or authorization and therefore need to request an audience in order to make their requests: this occurs before an important individual in the community of which they are part, who enjoys prestigious standing or has a high-ranking position in a certain field, or who is simply the only person in the village who knows how to read and write. In this case, the following rules apply.

- The **Audience** is a special prolonged action, split into 2 stages that must be carried out in order: *Presentation of Custodes* (in which only one Custos makes a single roll), and the actual *Exposure of requests* (during which different Custodes can roll).

1) Presentation of Custodes stage

A Custos makes a roll to present themself and the other Custodes to the individual and their collaborators. Depending on the Degree of Success obtained, a bonus is determined on the total number of rolls the Custodes can make during the subsequent *Exposure of requests* stage (at the start, this number is equal to exactly the number of successes required to succeed in the Audience, see further ahead).

- The Custos rolls **Auctoritas** with DT 6.

Result of Auctoritas roll	Number of rolls allowed for the next stage
Failure	Equal to the required number of successes
I Degree of Success	Equal to the required number of successes +1
II Degree of Success	Equal to the required number of successes +2
III Degree of Success	Equal to the required number of successes +3

2) Exposure of requests stage

One or more Custodes rolls to expose their requests to the individual.

- The Peritia to use is **De Societate** (to use different Peritiae, see the box below).

The number of successes required to succeed in the Audience depends on the general attitude of the counterpart toward the Custodes (see table further ahead).

The maximum number of rolls the Custodes can make to complete the action is equal to the number of successes required plus a bonus eventually obtained thanks to the previous Presentation roll (see above).

The difficulty for all rolls depends on the plausibility and feasibility of the Custodes' requests (see table further ahead).



USING OTHER PERITIAE INSTEAD OF DE SOCIETATE

During the Exposure stage, a Custos can ask the Demiurge whether they can roll a Peritia other than De Societate in the event the requests or related topics concern specific or more technical issues (for example De Scientia, if the request concerns the health of the local inhabitants, or De Bello if the request is to organize defenses in view of an imminent attack, etc.)

- If a Peritia other than De Societate is used, in the event of a successful roll the Custos **adds only one success** to the total (regardless of the Degree of Success obtained), and in the event of a failed roll, **deducts one success** from the total.

The Custodes fear that vindictive spirits have infested the sacred burial place of the inhabitants of a remote village. The local folk threaten retaliation if foreigners were to profane the sacred place, so the characters turn directly to the village leaders for official permission. During the Exposure, one of the Custodes proposes to roll De Magia in order to explain in detail their fears regarding the supernatural infestation. The Demiurge approves.

Just as in a normal prolonged action, the successes obtained in the various rolls are added together and each Degree of Success greater than I guarantees an additional success.

A failure in a single roll does not lead to further negative consequences apart from using up the available rolls and the additional passing of time (unless specified by the adventure).

NUMBER OF SUCCESSES REQUIRED FOR THE ACTION TO BE A SUCCESS

The counterpart...	Successes required
is loyal to Rome and willing to help the Custodes	3
has doubts regarding Roman authority and/or is neither friendly nor helpful	6
is clearly hostile: toward Rome or the Custodes or that which they represent	9

DIFFICULTY FOR DE SOCIETATE ROLLS (OR OTHER PERITIA)

The Custodes' request is...	DT
reasonable and easy to satisfy	6
demanding and/or places the counterpart in a difficult spot	9
demanding and may entail negative consequences for the counterpart	12
invasive and/or will definitely entail negative consequences for the counterpart	15

If the Custodes achieve the required number of successes within the number of attempts at their disposal, the action is a success: within the limits of their possibilities, the counterpart satisfies their requests, helps them and provides information or helpful indications. Otherwise, the action is a failure: the counterpart neither satisfies the requests nor provides any help (unless otherwise specified by the adventure). The encounter ends and the Custodes are dismissed.

Duration of Audience. The total number of rolls made is also an indicator of the time spent in discussion: from a couple of hours (2-3 rolls) to an entire day including eventual interruptions (8 or more rolls).

The Custodes manage to be heard by the elderly leader of an Arabian desert nomad tribe, renowned for his unwillingness to submit to Imperial authority. The characters would like to have free rein in speaking with the tribe's members, as they believe several of them are plotting something very, very sinister. In order for their request to be satisfied, the Custodes must succeed in an Audience. During the Presentation, a Custos rolls an Auctoritas and achieves a I Degree of Success (bonus +2 rolls). During the Exposure, the DT for all rolls is 9 (the request is reasonable but places the tribe leader in a difficult spot). Given the tribe leader is an anti-Imperialist, the number of successes required to succeed in the action is 6 (with 8 available attempts: 6 of the required successes + 2 thanks to the success in the Presentation roll).



OUTCOME OF AUDIENCE

The Demiurge, if they wish or if specified by the adventure, can determine the outcome of the Audience in more detail. At the end of a particularly important Audience, there are four possible scenarios: failure and a successful action with either I, II, or III Degrees of Success. To determine the Degree of Success of the Audience, the Demiurge simply needs to compare the number of rolls that were available to the Custodes with those that were effectively used. Each 'saved' attempt is equivalent to one Degree of Success obtained by the contubernium (in addition to I).

The Custodes manage to curry favor with the tribe leader, obtaining the necessary successes to succeed in the action in just 6 attempts (out of 8 available). Given the number of unused attempts is 2, the action is considered successful with a III Degree of Success (two additional degrees above the first).

EXPLORE AN AREA

The Custodes find themselves exploring an area immersed in nature, quite likely to be scarcely inhabited, such as a stretch of scorched desert land, an intricate forest, or the hilly shores of a lake. They'd like to become more familiar with the area, or are searching for something that might take time and effort: a secret rebels' hideout, a horrific creature's den, the continuation of an ancient trail suddenly interrupted, the camp site of a group of traveling colonists, or the legendary ruins of a forgotten city.

NUMBER OF SUCCESSES REQUIRED FOR THE ACTION TO BE A SUCCESS			
Size of area	**Type of terrain**	**Examples**	**Successes**
The area to be explored is circumscribed	Flat and/or simple to travel across	A rural area, the slopes of a hill, the surrounds of a village, a woodland area, a small river course	3
	Arduous or difficult to travel across	Mountainous or rocky area, a small thick forest, an infested area	6
The area to be explored is vast	Flat and/or simple to travel across	The slopes of a hill, the countryside separating two nearby settlements, a large non-thick forest	9
	Arduous or difficult to travel across	The slopes of a rocky hill, a long stretch of winding river, a large thick forest, a swamp	12

DIFFICULTY FOR DE NATURA ROLLS (OR OTHER PERITIA)		
Scope of exploration	**Examples**	**DT**
To gain a better idea of what's contained in the area	To gain knowledge of the different types of terrain, the presence of villages, farms, possible hideouts, animals and creatures, and any potential sources of danger	6
The Custodes look for something or someone that is not secret or hidden, but which is nonetheless difficult to find	Animal dens, settlements or constructions that are isolated or concealed by vegetation, a ruin, a specific individual or group of people on the move	9
The Custodes look for something or someone that is secret, hidden, or is trying not to be found	An outlaws' or enemies' refuge, a fugitive creature or individual that doesn't want to be found or discovered, a secret sanctuary	12

- **Explore an area** is a special prolonged action for which several Custodes can make an unlimited number of rolls (more time simply passes).

The Peritia to use for the rolls is **De Natura** (to use different Peritiae, see the relative box).

- Each Custos can make **two rolls for every day** the contubernium dedicates entirely to the exploration. If the atmospheric weather is bad or the days are short (extreme north, winter), only one roll is allowed.

The difficulty for all rolls depends on the scope of the exploration (see table further ahead).

The number of successes required to succeed in the exploration depends on the vastness and type of terrain in the area to be explored (see table further ahead).

Just like in a normal prolonged action, the successes obtained in the various rolls are added together and each Degree of Success greater than I guarantees an additional success.

A failure in a roll does not lead to further negative consequences apart from the additional passing of time (unless specified by the adventure).

- If the exploration takes place in *unfavorable weather conditions*, the Custodes may suffer unfortunate consequences (see the dedicated paragraph on page 123).



USING OTHER PERITIAE INSTEAD OF DE NATURA

Depending on the area to be explored and the situation, a Custos can propose to the Demiurge to roll a Peritia other than De Natura (for example, De Corpore, because to reach certain areas it is necessary to climb, or De Magia if the aim of the exploration is to find an ancient temple, etc.).

- If a Peritia other than De Natura is used, in the event of success the Custos **adds only one success** to the total (regardless of the Degree of Success obtained), and in the event of a failure, **deducts one success** from the total.

The Custodes find themselves in the Carpathian Mountains in search of an outpost of the Fifth Macedonian Legion dating back a few centuries. Fortunately they have a few documents allowing them to narrow down the forest area to be explored. The DT for the De Natura roll is 9 (the ruins of the outpost have been overgrown by vegetation); the number of successes needed is 12 (the territory is arduous, and despite the information, the area to be explored is nonetheless vast).

INVESTIGATION

The Custodes analyze and investigate the site where a noteworthy event took place, about which they'd like to know more: a theft, a homicide, an apparently unexplainable or perhaps supernatural event, the place of a massacre, a disappearance, or bloody sacrifice.

- An **Investigation** is a prolonged action for which several Custodes can make an unlimited number of rolls (more time simply passes).
- The Peritia to be used for the rolls is **De Scientia** (to use different Peritiae see the relevant box).
- Each Custos can normally make **two rolls for each day** dedicated entirely to gathering clues (the Demiurge can increase or reduce this number at their discretion): search the location, examine any corpses or objects, listen to testimonies, etc...

The difficulty for all rolls depends on the time spent since the events, whether other people have already been to the site, and whether the site itself has been voluntarily or involuntarily contaminated (see table further ahead).

The number of successes required to succeed in the Investigation depends on the quantity of information and clues that can be gathered at the crime scene; by accumulating the number of successes required, the Custodes will be able to reconstruct the course of events in extensive detail (see table further ahead). Until such time as the Custodes obtain the number of successes required, the collected information is considered useless, unreliable, or in any case insufficient to formulate an accurate idea about what happened.

Just as in a normal prolonged action, the successes obtained in the various rolls are added together and each Degree of Success greater than I guarantees an additional success.

A failure in a roll does not lead to further negative consequences apart from the additional passing of time (unless specified by the adventure).

Complete example of an Investigation. *Wandering around near a forest, halfway through the day a contubernium of four Custodes stumbles across a wooden house built near a stream. The door of the house has been knocked down; inside lay the mauled bodies of two adults and two youths, all with improvised wooden weapons ei-*



USING OTHER PERITIAE INSTEAD OF DE SCIENTIA

Depending on the situation and that which has occurred, a Custos may propose to the Demiurge to roll a Peritia other than De Scientia (for example De Natura if there are outdoor areas that need to be searched or potential tracks that need to be followed, or De Societate if there are survivors, witnesses, or persons informed about the facts with whom to speak, etc.).

- If a Peritia other than De Scientia is used, in the event of success the Custos **adds only one success** to the total (regardless of the Degree of Success obtained), and in the event of a failure, **deducts one success** from the total.

NUMBER OF SUCCESSES REQUIRED FOR THE ACTION TO BE A SUCCESS		
Crime scene	**Examples**	**DT**
Simple	The investigation of a corpse in an unpopulated area leads to a discovery that the victim was stabbed and the assassin, most likely a woman, fled west.	3
Elaborate	The investigation inside a wildly desecrated temple leads to the discovery of two sacrificial victims with claw marks across most of their bodies. A testimony by a priest speaks of terrifying winged creatures that fled during the night toward an isolated villa.	6
Very elaborate	The investigation into a homicide perpetrated in a narrow lane leads to the discovery that the victim, a high-ranking nobleman and devotee of the Cult of Isis, was killed with a knife, but also that the wounds were inflicted by many different types of blades. A slaughtered pigeon was found a short distance from the body.	9

DIFFICULTY FOR DE SCIENTIA ROLLS (OR OTHER PERITIA)	
Type of Investigation	**DT**
The event occurred only recently, and the Custodes are the first on the scene	6
The event is not recent and/or the site has already been visited by many	9
The event occurred a long time ago and/or the site has been contaminated	12

ther nearby or still clasped tightly in their hands. The Custodes start an Investigation that takes the rest of the day (we are already halfway through the day, therefore each Custos can make only one roll for the Investigation). The DT for all rolls is 6 (the events are recent and nobody visited the scene before the characters); the number of successes required is 6 (the crime scene is elaborate). A couple of Custodes roll De Scientia to examine the bodies and the room (with the help of the Medicine and Investigation Specialties): both are successful, obtaining a total of 4 successes. Another Custos rolls De Natura to identify any of the attackers' prints outside the home, succeeds in the roll and adds 1 success (one only, even if they achieved a II Degree of Success). The last Custos opts to roll De Magia, to investigate the potential superstitious meaning of the wooden weapons used by the unfortunate folks, and is successful (1 success). Before sunset, the Custodes have accumulated a total of 6 successes and therefore succeed in their Investigation. The Demiurge gives the following information: the dwelling was savagely attacked by a single large creature, which broke down the door and killed the inhabitants in just a few minutes. The victims knew something about the nature or weaknesses of the aggressor, given that they didn't use normal weapons, but rather opted for the wooden type. A third son managed to escape.

TRAVEL

Although the Empire has been at peace for centuries and most of the provinces are equipped with a dense main and secondary road network, for most ordinary people, traveling by foot through villages located in different mountain valleys, by horse or cart from one Imperial city to another, or reaching a faraway coast by ship, is by no means fast, easy, and entirely risk-free. Fortunately, the Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana are anything but ordinary people...

Travel in peace. For the Custodes, traveling from one part of the Empire to the other does not represent an adventure or feat normally characterized by any type of danger. If the Custodes set off toward a more or less important destination within the Empire, they are perfectly trained and equipped to do so without any issues: they have sufficient supplies and enjoy the privilege of being able to sleep and swap horses at inns and staging posts, or jump on the next departing ship, benefiting from the help and assistance of local Imperial officials.

- If the journey is made within the boundaries of the Empire, it does not entail any dangers or unexpected events and the Custodes are able to complete the journey without any difficulty: they therefore do not need to make any rolls.

The Demiurge can limit themself to determining more or less how many days the Custodes take to reach their destination, taking into account that it is much faster to travel by sea than it is by land, and without needing to invent something to make each journey memorable or special. Some examples of travel times are provided further ahead.

If, however, the Demiurge decides to insert an interesting event during a journey, or if specified by the adventure (an unexpected attack, an encounter with an interesting person, an unusual event), they can limit themself to playing out those episodes only.

DAYS OF TRAVEL FROM ROME TO A PROVINCIAL CAPITAL (AND VICE VERSA)

Provincial capital	Days
Alexandria	14
Antiochia	18
Augusta Treverorum	33
Augusta Vindelicorum	27
Babylonia	46
Byzantium	21
Carthago	4
Corinthus	9
Ephesus	13
Londinium Augusta	27
Lugdunum	17
Petra	23
Sirmium	21
Tarraco	8
Thessalonica	15
Tigranocerta	50
Tingi	15
Ulpia Traiana	35

OTHER EXAMPLES OF TRAVEL TIMES

from...	to...	Days
Antiochia	Palmyra	11
Augusta Treverorum	Augusta Vindelicorum	16
Byzantium	Gerusalemme	11
Lugdunum	Londinium Augusta	23
Mediolanum	Sirmium	22
Tarentum	Corintum	5
Tarraco	Carthago	9
Tingi	Alexandria	28

The Custodes find themselves in Antiochia when they receive instructions to go to Petra, where an important scholar, an expert in natural phenomena, is waiting for them. The journey, which lasts about 12 days, does not in itself represent a problem: the roads are safe and the provinces of Syria and Arabia are at peace. The Demiurge may simply state that in 12 days or so, the Custodes reach their destination. But something more interesting is in store: at sunrise on the fourth day of travel, in the distance, not far from the road, the Custodes see a long procession of people wearing light robes and heading toward the ruins...

Travel by night. Traveling when the sun has set is not recommended and is not a common choice. Plausible motivations may be the need to reach a certain location or safe refuge, intervene in an event that is about to occur, or make it in time to block someone or something that is escaping. Even if the Custodes decide to travel or continue traveling during the night, they must nonetheless rest for a few hours in order to be alert the next day, unless they have properly rested during the day.

- Traveling for a few hours during the night allows the Custodes to cover a distance equal to half that normally traveled during an entire day. Additionally, when traveling by night, all **De Natura** and **Sensibilitas** rolls made by the Custodes have their difficulty increased by 1 level.

Remain without supplies. If they can, a Custos must eat and drink every day. If the Custodes on the mission deplete their food and water supplies and have no way of replenishing them (they are found in isolated, inhospitable, or hostile places), they

must find their own food by hunting or foraging (see *Find food and water*, further ahead).

- At the end of a day without drinking any water, or after three consecutive days without food, the character automatically assumes the ***Debilitated*** condition (see page 127). If the Custos was already *Debilitated*, they suffer 1d3 damage (armor does not protect them).

Every additional day spent without drinking or eating will cause a relapse of the *Debilitated* condition (and therefore another 1d3 damage).

UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS

If the Custodes spend entire days outdoors (for example, traveling, exploring, making a forced march or doing other activities that require continuous effort) in unfavorable or extreme weather conditions (for example continuous rain and hail, walking under the scorching sun without finding any shelter, below-zero temperatures), at the end of each day, after making any exploration or other rolls, they must make a **Vigor** roll.

- If a Custos fails the Vigor roll, they suffer the *Debilitated* condition (see page 127).

The roll is not necessary if at the end of the day the Custodes can spend the night in a peaceful, safe, and sheltered location (therefore in a settlement, a stable camp or as guests in somebody's home). The difficulty for Vigor rolls depends on the weather conditions.

DIFFICULTY FOR VIGOR ROLLS*

Weather conditions	DT
Unfavorable (very hot or very cold, rain, humidity, mosquitoes...)	6
Extreme (scorching heat, freezing cold, extremely infested area...)	9

** Both the Difficulties are lowered by 1 level if the Custodes travel prepared and are wearing suitable equipment for the climate (see below).*

FORCED MARCH

If the Custodes want to arrive at their destination faster, or if they need to get away from a catastrophic event about to strike the area, or if someone or something they don't want to confront is on their trail, they may want to proceed at a Forced March.

- When they take a **Forced March**, the Custodes advance without stopping too long in the same place or even resting, unless they are exceptionally tired, and proceed with fewer hours' sleep. The Custodes' speed increases until halving the normally stated travel times.



CLIMATE AND EQUIPMENT

If the climate or weather is particularly unfavorable, it is recommended to wear suitable equipment.

Particularly hot or humid climate. Requires lightweight and fresh clothing, therefore the absence of any armor (shields are allowed).

Cold climate. Requires the use of standard winter equipment (Encumbrance 2), avoiding the use of armor with Encumbrance equal to or greater than 8 (armor with lots of rigid metal parts in almost direct contact with the skin, rather uncomfortable in the case of extreme cold).

Each day they proceed at a Forced March, the Custodes make a **De Natura** roll if traveling by horse or a **De Corpore** roll if proceeding on foot.

- If a Custos fails the roll, they suffer the *Debilitated* condition (see page 127).

The difficulty for these rolls depends on the type of terrain.

DIFFICULTY FOR DE NATURA OR DE CORPORE ROLLS

Type of terrain	DT
Flat or hilly, well-trodden paths or trails in the mountains or in arduous territory	6
Arduous, infested, mountainous terrain, without any paths	9

For as long as the Custodes proceed in forced stages, they cannot treat any wounds or heal in the normal way: the contubernium has neither time nor the opportunity to provide First Aid or any type of rest without slowing down and isn't even able to set up a comfortable camp (temporary or stable) when sleeping out for the night.

The ways in which the Custodes can be caught by potential pursuers, stumble upon new threats, or suffer additional negative consequences are normally specified in the adventures.

During the night, many fires are suddenly lit along the walls of the valley, almost forcing the Custodes' outpost into a vice. A Precognition ritual provides two specific indications: leave as soon as possible and avoid the beaten paths. The Custodes declare their intention to leave immediately, proceeding in forced stages. The Custodes advance through woody, very steep territory, avoiding beaten paths, with the aim of reaching a populated village past the mouth of the valley, as soon as possible. They shouldn't be very far, perhaps a few days' walk, and luckily the weather is on their side. Every day, the Custodes must make a De Corpore roll with DT 9 (mountainous terrain without any paths). For as long as they proceed in forced stages, the characters cannot benefit from any treatment or natural healing (the wounds they suffer or previously suffered cannot be healed).



FORCED MARCH IN UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS (AND PERHAPS DEPLETED SUPPLIES...)

If the Custodes are proceeding at a Forced March in unfavorable or extreme weather conditions and there is nowhere safe and sheltered for them to spend the night, at the end of the day they must make 2 rolls to avoid suffering the *Debilitated* condition: the normal De Natura or De Corpore roll due to the Forced March, and one Vigor roll due to the weather conditions (see also *Unfavorable weather conditions*, previous page). Both rolls, in case of failure, cause the *Debilitated* condition.

As already stated in the paragraph *Remain without supplies* (see page 122), if the Custodes are also without food or water, the *Debilitated* condition will be automatic after each full day spent without drinking or 3 days without eating.

As usual, each time a *Debilitated* Custos would assume the same condition again, they suffer 1d3 damage (armor does not protect them).

FIND FOOD AND WATER

When on a mission, the Custodes will always have enough food and water to last a week (unless it is specified at the start of the mission that they'll need to travel through desolate territories for longer). When they stop in any settlement, it is automatically assumed that they replenish their supplies (this doesn't need to be specified).

If the Custodes need to remain in hostile, wild, or deserted lands for more than one week and this event was not planned, they will need to procure whatever they need to survive by hunting, collecting edible fruits and vegetables, and looking for springs or streams (see also *Remain without supplies*, page 122).

- **Find food and water** is a prolonged action for which several Custodes can make an unlimited number of rolls (more time simply passes)
- The Peritia to be used for all rolls is **De Natura**.
- Each Custos can normally make **two rolls for every day** the contubernium dedicates entirely to replenishing its supplies. If the weather is bad or the days are short (extreme north, winter), only one roll is allowed.

The difficulty for all rolls depends on the area in which the Custodes are found (see table further ahead).

The number of successes required to resupply the contubernium with sufficient food and water depends on the total number of Custodes: each success allows one Custos to have enough food and water for one day. Just as in a normal prolonged action, the successes obtained in the various rolls are added together and each Degree of Success greater than I guarantees an additional success.

A failure in a roll does not lead to further negative consequences apart from not collecting what is needed and the additional passing of time (unless specified by the adventure).

DIFFICULTY FOR DE NATURA ROLLS

Weather conditions	DT
The season is favorable, the area is swarming with vegetation, animals and waterways	3
The area's vegetation consists of shrubs and a few trees, rainfall is scarce or seasonal, and there are few animals	6
The season is unfavorable, the area is particularly arid, without any vegetation and very little game, unsuitable for life	9

MANAGING ADVENTURES

INEXPERIENCED PLAYERS

First-time players might get the idea that it is they themselves creating the world around them or determining the outcomes of their actions; however, these tasks are in the hands of the Demiurge, assisted by the rules. A player might, for example, instead of saying *"in this room I search for a hidden treasure"* and waiting for the Demiurge to inform them as to whether or not it was found, say *"I search this room for a hidden treasure; I find it and there's also a beautiful magic sword."* Or, instead of saying *"I stop and speak with the servant to find out whether his master is home,"* say *"I speak with the servant, who says that his master is in and waiting to speak with me."* That's not how things work, at least until the play group becomes a little more expert. Especially in the first few games, players must state what their characters intend to do, but it is the Demiurge who establishes what happens and informs them accordingly.

Another typical error to which inexperienced players are prone is the excessive genericness of attempted actions. The Demiurge should encourage them to be more precise and should know how to transform their every intention into specific actions. For example, the player cannot say *"I enter the city and look for the spy that was reported to me,"* but must indicate where or how they intend to search for that spy; perhaps by starting to gather information in the taverns of the slums.

With a bit of practice, however, players will soon be able to interact with the environment, sometimes even bringing it to life. Let's imagine, for example, a crowded oriental city. The text of the adventure cannot go into a long and elaborate description of each person, one by one, who happens to be walking by, or of the stores lining the streets. So how should one behave if the players declare their intention to enter one of the local artisan workshops? The presence of an atelier is perfectly compatible with the setting, so the Demiurge can allow the players to fulfill their desire. In this case the players have helped the Demiurge in their task of creating a complex setting, such as a crowded city, thus making it more credible. The creative input of players should be encouraged, not thwarted.

PLAYERS AND CONTUBERNIUM

Especially in the case of novice players, it is strongly recommended that the Demiurge not allow the group of Custodes to split up. Being separated from the contubernium would constitute a serious problem, because the Demiurge would need to inform each group of what's happening, without being heard by the others, thus making the game sessions particularly long and difficult to manage. Only once the Demiurge is more experienced can they allow, if they deem appropriate, characters to split into two or more groups, when and if this would be useful or necessary.

Other problems that may arise relate to the issue of communication between the players and the Demiurge regarding what they wish to do: it may be that they speak continuously all together, or else some might silently hang back while another player speaks in their place, preventing them from actually playing. A good Demiurge should try and stop this from happening, imposing a certain degree of order and making sure all players have the possibility to express themselves, even encouraging them to do so.

To avoid confusion, it may be helpful to elect a spokesman for the group, who after having heard everyone's opinions officially communicates the characters' decisions to the Demiurge. Of course this doesn't mean the spokesman decides on the other players' behalf, rather they must help to identify the solution preferred by the majority and present it to the Demiurge. In order to adapt the organization of the players with that of the characters, the spokesman should eventually play the role of Diplomat in the group. Likewise, the eventual Scholar should be in charge of tracing out the maps of the places described by the Demiurge, especially if they are labyrinths of complex vaults.

ADVENTURE TIME

During the adventures, it is important that the Demiurge keep track of time. Villains will normally have a set period of time in which to carry out their obscure schemes, and some events envisaged by the adventure should preferably occur on a certain day or at a specific time. Moreover, characters should always have a good perception of the passing of time, not only to better identify with the situation, but also to help create an atmosphere of **limited time** during critical moments. In general, it is best for the characters not to feel like they have all the time in the world to complete their mission.

Of course there's no need to specify that the Demiurge must not confuse real time with fictional game time: during an adventure, many days or entire weeks may pass for the characters, especially if, for example, they need to travel from one part of the Empire to the other. In actual fact, it may often be useful for the purposes of the game, provided there are no imminent events of any particular importance, for the Demiurge to make the game time pass very quickly, limiting their speech to just a few phrases, quickly moving on to a more interesting part of the adventure (see also *Travel*, page 121).

> *For example, a group of Custodes in Rome are commissioned to contact a Sasanian diplomat in the city of Palmyra, in Syria. To reach the city, the characters must embark on a journey that takes about one month, over*

sea and land. The adventure doesn't specify any particular encounters during the trip; the Demiurge simply says: "You board a ship placed at your disposal, and after a long journey across the Mediterranean, you reach the Syrian coast. From there, after a number of days spent riding along the sun-bathed, safe roads of Rome, you finally reach the city of Petra. 28 days have passed since you left."

The situation is different in cases where the characters are performing specific actions and the time passes more slowly both in reality and in the fictional game. During a battle for example, between rolling the dice and calculating the damage, time generally passes slower than it would in a real exchange of blows. These situations can be likened to a scene in slow motion, necessary to perfectly assess what's happening.

THE DIVISION OF TIME

For the purposes of the game, time is calculated just as we're used to, in terms of hours, or days, or even weeks and months. But how much time does a character need to perform a certain action? How long does a battle last? These are questions that should be considered by a Demiurge during the course of an adventure. Much depends on the type of action the character is performing, and the Demiurge must rely on their own common sense and knowledge of the adventure being played.

Generally, the most common actions should take a few, or a few dozen, minutes. If several characters are performing various actions of this type at the same time, the Demiurge will have all the actions performed in the same time span, in order to then resume play with the entire group of characters.

A normal battle, except in a few exceptional cases, will normally last 10 to 20 minutes, which covers the various combat tempus, the time it takes to clean weapons, recover equipment, etc.

In cases where even the seconds count, for example when different things can happen to characters based on what they do and how quickly they react, the minutes can be further divided into **tempus**, similarly to that which occurs in combat. The tempus is a unit of measure that corresponds to a handful of seconds; during a tempus, a character can move from one side of a room to the other, turn the corner of a corridor, draw or switch a weapon, hide behind an item of furniture or bush, close a door, leap over an obstacle or ravine, etc. If the Demiurge decides that time needs to be divided as such, the players are warned and asked to each declare the action their character intends to make in the next tempus.

For example, a contubernium is in the basement of an ancient construction in Dacia. The characters exploring the area find a room with some broken furniture and a blood-splattered altar sitting exactly at the center. A Scholar Custos states their intention to analyze the altar to look for some kind of special mechanism; a Fighter Custos, on the other hand, stands near the door through which the Custodes entered, keeping watch of the area; the others say they wish to carefully explore the room. After making the various rolls, the Demiurge states that within a few minutes the Scholar finds a mechanism that causes the altar to rotate, revealing a staircase leading downward. Shortly afterwards, the Fighter hears noises coming from one of the corridors, catching sight of a few hunched, half-decomposed figures advancing toward the room; the other Custodes have found nothing interesting among the broken furniture. At this point the Demiurge, in view of the situation, asks the players to declare the action their characters intend to make in the next tempus. The Fighter says they will immediately close the door providing access to the room, another two Custodes move an item of furniture in front of the door to block it, while the rest head down the dark steps of the newly discovered staircase. Given these are automatic actions, the Demiurge doesn't ask the players to roll and says, "After ten seconds or so the door is blocked; the Custodes walking down the staircase notice that it seems very long; after another few seconds you hear something slam heavily against the door as if trying to knock it down, along with terrifying screams that sound anything but human." All characters still in the room declare their intention to quickly join their comrades on the staircase.

IMPROVISATION

During the adventures, the Custodes may perform actions not foreseen either by the rulebook, or by the adventures themselves. This is one of the fundamental characteristics of a role-playing game: the absolute freedom of characters to do what they like. This is how every adventure slowly takes shape as the game is played, with the interaction of the Demiurge's and players' creativity. And it is precisely in these moments, in their ability to resolve every situation in a logical and entertaining way, that the true skill of a Demiurge is revealed. Indeed, the Demiurge often has to rely on their own imagination to identify with the situation the characters are currently living, as well as find the best solution, all the while safeguarding the narrative logic of the adventure.

For example, the characters are in Athens and must go to Thessalonica to complete a mission. The Demiurge, who has already read the entire adventure, knows that it is important for the characters to make the journey by sea, because on the ship they are expected to meet with two very important characters. Unexpectedly, and despite the inconvenience, the Custodes decide to travel by land, making the journey much longer and far more tiring. Instead of forcing the characters to change their plans by inserting some kind of implausible hindrance, the Demiurge will need to improvise different solutions, which guarantee the players' freedom of choice but at the same time don't ruin the main plot of the adventure. If you think about it, there's nothing strange about two curious fellows spending the night in the same inn where the Custodes stop for the night...

A well-planned adventure will have already considered the majority of the important choices the players might make, leaving the Demiurge with the task (and fun) of improvising the secondary plots and events.

> *For example, the Custodes are in the underground chambers of an ancient Hittite temple in ruins. Around midnight, the Custos on duty hears the sound of many footsteps getting closer and decides to wake the others. The adventure provides the values for the battle that may follow, but the characters prefer to hide in the shadows of the large hall, spy on those who enter and possibly follow them. The players' proposal has no effect on the plot, rather it enriches the story with one or even more episodes, which are far more interesting than a trivial battle.*

In both examples, perfectly acceptable actions are proposed, even if not specifically envisaged by the adventure. The Demiurge must respect the players' decisions, trying to find a balanced solution that doesn't make them feel like simple pawns in a rigid and predetermined plot.

WAYS TO LOSE HIT POINTS

Custodes and sometimes NPCs can be wounded and therefore lose Hit Points not only in battle, but also in other circumstances: following a disastrous fall from a horse, a collapsed ceiling, burns caused by a fire, etc. These are situations that often occur during the course of an adventure and which risk placing the Custodes in serious difficulty.

- In some of these cases the loss of Hit Points is not reduced by armor or other protections. If a character has suffered wounds, they can normally receive *First Aid* (see page 67).

Following is a brief list of the possible ways to lose Hit Points, which most frequently occur during the game.

FALLS

Factors that need to be taken into account are height and the surface onto which the character falls. For every 6 feet of height, the character suffers 2d6 damage. It is nonetheless possible to roll **De Corpore** against a DT of 3 for every 6 feet fallen (6 for 12 feet, 9 for 18 feet, etc.); if the roll is successful, the character halves (rounding up) the damage received, otherwise they suffer all of the damage. The difficulty can be modified at the discretion of the Demiurge based on the surface upon which the character falls (it increases, for example, in the case of rocky terrain, or is reduced in the case of sandy terrain, straw, mud, etc.).

FIRE

If the characters are in a place that has caught fire, they can be wounded by the flames (generally 1, 2, or 3d6 damage based on the force and spread of the fire) and asphyxia (see *Suffocation*, next page). The text of the adventure provides details of the consequences and rolls that can be made to reduce or cancel the wounds received (in general, to resist against asphyxia and heat, **Vigor** rolls are needed, while **Coordinatio** rolls are used to avoid flames and collapses).

TRAPS

The Custodes can run into many types of traps, including more traditional ones (trapdoors that give way under your feet, collapsing walls or ceilings, etc.) and more complex and unusual ones (enormous rolling masses activated by a mechanism that is accidentally triggered). Normally, the adventure describes in detail how the traps can be avoided or discovered in time and all the consequences they provoke, as well as the rolls that can be made to reduce any inflicted wounds (see also *Search for Traps/Hidden Passageways*, page 114). In general, to reduce the damage, it may be particularly useful to roll **De Corpore** or Coordinatio.

POISON

Detailed rules on the effects of poison can be found in the section dedicated to *Special Abilities* of NPCs (see page 138).

HEALTH CONDITIONS

Following is a list of the main negative consequences and worsened health conditions that characters (Custodes and sometimes NPCs) may suffer during the game. Some of the conditions have already been explained in detail in other sections of the rulebook, but for ease of consultation a complete list is provided here in alphabetical order.

BLINDED

A *Blinded* Custos automatically reduces by 2 the Degree of Success of every action based on sight (transforming a success of I or II into a failure). In combat, a *Blinded* character is also considered *Surprised* (see below), unless **Sensibilitas** (DT 9) is successfully rolled at the start of each tempus.

CURSED

When making a roll in any Peritia, a *Cursed* Custos can never roll a total number of Dice Points greater than their current Pietas. If their current Pietas fall below 3, the Custos can nonetheless roll 1d3.

DEBILITATED

A *Debilitated* Custos cannot recover Hit Points in any way, not even if the *Treated* box has been checked, until the cause of the condition has been eliminated. In the majority of cases, to free themself of this condition a Custos must rest in a comfortable place. When an already *Debilitated* Custos assumes the same condition again, they suffer 1d3 damage (armor does not protect them).

DYING

A Custos suffers this condition when box 1 of their Hit Points is crossed out due to a newly inflicted wound. A *Dying* Custos falls to the ground unconscious, or in any case unable to perform any type of action; if they don't get treatment, they can die (for more details, see page 67).

FATIGUED

When any Peritia is rolled, a *Fatigued* Custos can never roll a total number of Dice Points greater than their current Hit Points. If the current Hit Points drop below 3, the Custos can still roll 1d3. Moreover, for a *Fatigued* Custos, all movement actions have the DT increased by 1 level (the majority of De Corpore and De Natura actions are considered movement actions, but also others that the Demiurge considers as such according to the situation).

POISONED

A *Poisoned* Custos immediately makes a **Vigor** roll against the force of the poison (specified in the NPC sheet or in the description of the poison itself). If the character has the upper hand, the poison is absorbed without any consequences. If they get the worst of it, the Custos loses a number of HP equal to the difference between the rolls; moreover, the roll will be repeated every 8 hours until the character dies, their body reacts (higher Vigor roll), or the Custos is healed. Once per day, the Custos can in fact be healed (a De Scientia or De Natura roll against the *force* of the poison): a success will cease the effects of the poison.

Note. *A poison can also have further negative effects, which end the moment the Custos is healed from the Poisoned condition.*

SICK

A *Sick* Custos is considered both *Debilitated* and *Fatigued* and their maximum HP are considered halved. Every 8 hours, they must make a **Vigor** roll against the force of the disease: if the character has the upper hand, the disease is defeated; otherwise, the condition persists and may worsen, causing additional effects and conditions depending on the disease.

Note. *Wounds previously suffered by the character are counted in full. Therefore, if the Custos has already lost at least half of their Hit Points when they get Sick, they immediately suffer the Dying condition as well (given their Hit Points are down to zero).*

SUFFOCATION

If a character is no longer able to breathe for any reason (they are drowning, they have inhaled smoke from a fire, somebody is strangling them or due to a magic power), at the start of each tempus they must roll **Vigor** (with DT 6; or based on the situation or force of the magic power). If the roll is a success, there are no consequences. If it is a failure, the character is inflicted with a damage (armor does not protect them) equal to the difference between the DT and the result of the Vigor roll. Regardless of the damage suffered, if a character remains completely exposed to the source of suffocation for a prolonged period (a few minutes), they die.

SURPRISED

A *Surprised* Custos or NPC does not fight and cannot make any die roll; any close combat attacks made against them have a set DT of 0. This condition normally ends after the character has been attacked (regardless of whether or not the attack was a success).

UNCONSCIOUS

The character falls to the floor, senseless or in any case unable to perform any type of action. An *Unconscious* character's life is not at risk due to the condition itself, but rather because they are at the complete mercy of those around them.

ALLOCATION OF EXPERIENCE POINTS AND CURRICULUM POINTS

After every adventure, the Demiurge always allocates to each Custos the number of Experience Points (EP) indicated by the adventure itself, plus those earned thanks to the Ingenium and Auctoritas rolls made by the players (as explained in *Part VII*, starting from page 84).

The Demiurge is nonetheless free to increase or decrease the number of EP indicated by the Adventure Value, based on how quickly they want the characters to accumulate experience and increase their power.

Some of the criteria used to increase the EP allocated at the end of an adventure include:

- An adventure is concluded in a particularly positive way (+2 EP) or negative way (-2 EP);
- The role played by the Custodes in an adventure was important in safeguarding the Empire against a serious threat (+2 PE);
- Any number of Custodes died heroically or sacrificed themselves for the group (+4 EP); the player of the dead character can use these 4 EP for their new Custos at the end of the creation process.

The Demiurge can also allocate Experience Points or Curriculum Points during the course of the adventure itself, if particularly significant episodes or situations occur; in particular for *memorable actions* and *exceptional experiences*.

Memorable actions. The Demiurge can singularly reward characters who, during the adventure, performed particularly significant actions using a Peritia (not a Virtus), allocating points to them that are added directly to the Curriculum Points of the Peritia used for the action (without applying the multiplier).

A classic example is represented by a Custos that obtains a Fate Roll while performing a particularly important action (a critical attack against a very powerful monster or an acclaimed public speech that led to the unmasking of a criminal): this action is always considered memorable.

- The number of **Curriculum Points** to be allocated to the Custos is equal to 10, or in truly exceptional cases, 20 (for example a result more than double the value of the Peritia used).

  For example, a Fighter Custos engages in a Precognition ritual (DT 12). The player rolls a d10 for their De Magia value and it yields 10, therefore a Fate Roll; they re-roll and it yields 6. They have totaled a remarkable 16, thus succeeding with a II Degree of Success. The Demiurge, deeming the action to be memorable (thanks to the ritual, something very important was revealed), allocates 10 Curriculum Points to the Custos, to be added to those held in De Magia.

Exceptional experiences. The Demiurge can allocate additional Experience Points if during the course of an adventure, the Custodes live exceptional experiences first-hand: they receive a teaching, access to certain sources of knowledge, a life lesson, confront a strong emotion, come into contact with an exceptional individual, etc. These points are allocated to all Custodes present (the various multipliers are then normally applied to determine the Curriculum Points).

- The number of **Experience Points** to allocate to all Custodes is equal to 1, or in truly exceptional cases, 2. In some cases the Demiurge may also allow some Pietas to be recovered.

  For example, a group of Custodes stumbles across an elderly priest, who passionately begins to describe his vision of life and death and what awaits mankind in the afterlife. Some of the Custodes decide to stay and listen. The Demiurge deems this an exceptional experience and allocates all Custodes present 1 Experience Point.

ADVANCING IN RANK IN THE COHORS ARCANA

The section dedicated to character advancement describes how a Custos can climb the hierarchy of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana (see page 86). Each Custos starts off with the rank of *Gregarius*, the lowest, but this condition can be changed as they slowly accumulate Experience Points.

The Demiurge can easily take these into account whenever the Custodes are dealing with members of the Legion; the further a Custos advances in rank in the Cohors, the less problems they'll have relating with the other ranks of the Legion, and the easier it will be to give orders to simple legionaries (this therefore facilitates various actions that normally require the use of De Societate).

CREATING ADVENTURES

The activity in which the Demiurge can best unleash their creativity and find gratification, is without it There is nothing more satisfying than witnessing the excitement of friends as they play out a scenario that has been personally conceived. After having tried a few of the published adventures, the Demiurge can definitely try their hand at this feat. This chapter constitutes a small guide to the creation of adventures for *Lex Arcana*, providing theoretical and practical tips.

ELEMENTS OF ADVENTURES

With a certain degree of approximation, it can be said that the nature of *Lex Arcana* adventures depends on the dosing of two essential factors, **action** and **reasoning**. The prevalence of one factor over the other allows very different adventures to be created: those consisting mostly in action moments (with characters constantly involved in escapes, combat, and pursuits, with very little time to make many decisions), and those where reasoning is the dominant motive (with characters needing to investigate a certain situation and draw appropriate conclusions).

A typical example that combines these two elements, while making action prevail, is the first adventure you'll find at the end of this manual, *The Long Winter Nights* (see page 248). In the second adventure, *The Mothers of Cenabum* (see page 270), the investigative aspects are far more prevalent.

Adventures based predominantly on action are easy to manage. They don't offer players a great deal of choices, but feature a fast pace that can offer great satisfaction; those based on investigation alone stimulate the players' ingenuity, but risk generating a lot of down time should the investigation run aground or be interrupted.

Either way, an adventure cannot exist without the presence of three fundamental and strictly interdependent elements: the **setting**, the **plot**, and **NPCs**.

SETTING

The first decision that needs to be made concerns the setting, the physical place in which the story will unfold. The best way to start might be to consult the map of the Empire to decide on the region that best lends to the development of the base idea. Is it better to opt for the vast cold expanses of the north or the African deserts, the Danubian steppes or highly civilized Greece? One can decide based on personal preferences, personal knowledge, the indications in the relative section of the *World of Lex Arcana* (starting on page 216) or perhaps, why not, based on a television show.

PLOT

Coming up with an original plot is the most difficult and important task. In fact, every respectable novel, film, or cartoon has a plot with a story that begins, develops, and concludes, which normally represents the key moment of the entire affair. A *Lex Arcana* adventure is no exception, insofar as every scene should represent for every player (and of course also for the Demiurge) a thrilling experience, just like a good movie.

The plot goes hand in hand with the setting. A dragon that flies over the Flavian Amphitheater [the Colosseum] every night would effectively be quite original, but at the same time highly unlikely and in total conflict with the general setting of the game. To the contrary, the unsettling presence of the same dragon lurking in a misty dark fjord of Hyperborea [Scandinavia] would be a very suggestive scene, perfectly in line with the mysterious atmosphere permeating the world of *Lex Arcana*.

NPCS

The setting of an adventure must be described not only in physical terms, but also in human (or in some cases, supernatural) terms; based on the setting and plot, the author must therefore prepare a series of encounters with more or less hostile, and more or less dangerous NPCs. The precision with which these NPCs are depicted must be proportionate to their importance in the story: some NPCs are in fact described in detail, while for others, the description will be limited to the information they provide or the die to roll.

TYPES OF ADVENTURES

We have seen how the setting, plot, and NPCs are strictly interdependent elements. We can now explore, by way of example, how they might be combined in different types of adventure structures.

INDOOR EXPLORATION

From the sands of an Egyptian desert, the silhouette of a very ancient temple suddenly emerges. The local inhabitants are terrorized, claiming to have seen strange creatures lurking nearby. It might be a good idea for a group of Custodes to inspect the area.

This is the easiest type of adventure to manage and create. It is exclusively action-based and is particularly recommended for players that love to explore burrows, meet supernatural creatures, get physical, or roll lots of dice. Characters can immerse themselves in this type of situation without too much effort: suffice it to simply assign the Custodes the mission and let the adventure begin. The plot is very basic: a certain place is infested with strange creatures, the players need to get there, eliminate as many villains as possible, and come out alive in order to receive their due congratulations. Although it might even be a little too basic, a scenario structured as such can be an opportunity for lots of fun and a good healthy workout for both the Demiurge and players.



To create an internal exploration scenario, all you need is a simple graphics program (or for the more nostalgic, a piece of paper and pencil): the Demiurge designs the map of a temple, an ancient catacomb, an Etruscan necropolis, a Babylonian ziggurat, an Egyptian pyramid, or an intricate cave system. With map in hand, it then needs to be 'populated', of course by the menacing NPC enemies, ready to obstruct the path of their invaders. To best manage the map, it is sufficient to number the important places and prepare some notes.

The main Custodes of the game sessions are most likely to be the combatant characters, such as the Fighters and Assassins, aided by the Scholars, given their skill in breaking down doors and hatches, finding traps and secret passageways, and deciphering dark inscriptions (see *Typical Actions*, page 113).

Particular attention must be afforded to regulating the danger level of the adventure: the force and number of adversaries (selected based on the setting, whether humans, animals, or imaginary creatures) must be suited to the force and number of the Custodes, thus preventing the former from being mowed down like blades of grass, or to the contrary, the Custodes from being eliminated in the first clash. The tension must always be high and the danger ever-present, but the players should nonetheless be more likely to survive than die!

Distribute a certain number of clues and indications in the various locations so that the Custodes understand who they're dealing with, are captivated by the story behind the adventure, and are facilitated in their mission. A few secondary details should also be taken into account, such as the lighting or supplies: everything may in fact contribute to heightening the tension and making the Custodes feel the claustrophobic sensation of being constantly threatened, and perhaps no longer able to find a way out.

Lastly, the inclusion of somewhat peculiar situations and factors, such as unexpected allies, clever traps, secret passageways, magical objects, and supernatural encounters, may contribute to guaranteeing a greater overall appeal, and above all, highlight the attributes and skills of all Custodes, not just those of the combatants.

EXTERNAL EXPLORATION

A terrible demon is hiding in the Atlas mountains, along the confines of the province of Mauritania. A group of Custodes is invited to explore the territory, to drive out the demon and its summoners.

Corridors and rooms are replaced by paths and clearings, but the essence is the same, at least apparently. It is sufficient to draw a map, insert the encounters and the adventure is ready to go with the Explorers this time, who will enjoy the most gratification. Typical situations in these adventures involve lots of De Natura rolls and the application of certain rules including Explore an area (see page 118), Travel (see page 121) and make a Forced March (see page 123).

For the Demiurge, managing the game might be slightly more difficult, but still simple enough; on the other hand, their imagination can run a little more wild and free. In the midst of unexplored territories, absolutely anything is possible and the Demiurge is free to imagine and describe breathtakingly beautiful natural environments and amenities (see *Exceptional Experiences*, page 129).

URBAN INVESTIGATION

A famous Athenian plutocrat has been assassinated under the Acropolis walls. Strange symbols had been traced on his body using his own blood. A group of Custodes must immediately go to the site and investigate.

Creating an urban investigation adventure is decidedly more complicated, both in terms of management and creativity. The players' maneuvering space is broadened, given they can decide to go anywhere, and it is impossible to describe an entire city in the smallest of details, including its inhabitants.

From a creative point of view, the Demiurge cannot limit themself to drawing a map and playing, but rather must come up with a genuine narrative plot of an investigative nature, while at the same time keeping tabs on the magical spirit of the game.

For the Demiurge, the steps to follow are generally the following:

- **Get an idea of the general situation.** The city, the relationship with the Imperial authority, the organized presence of Imperial enemies, obscure summoners, forbidden cults, corruption, misgovernment, etc.

- **Side with the villains.** The Demiurge now needs to place themself in the enemies' shoes, set a particular goal for them (often of a magical-religious nature) and devise a plan of action to achieve it.

- **The inciting incident.** At a certain point the villains in question will need to act more openly, either because this is part of the plan or because something went wrong. In any case, an inciting incident must be prepared, which justifies the opening of the investigations (in our brief example, the assassination of the plutocrat).

- **Devise the investigative plot.** The Demiurge now needs to place themself in the players' shoes, seeking to hypothesize their best possible lines of investigation, potentially more than one. The greatest risk in these cases is excessive foreordination of the players' actions, which would deprive the game of one of its essential characteristics: player interaction during the feat.

- **Lay clues.** Having identified the lines of investigation, they need to be filled with traces and clues allowing the progressive reconstruction of the facts. To succeed in this objective, the Demiurge needs to turn their point of view completely upside down, because the most common mistake is to assume the adequacy of clues, which in reality can only be interpreted by those familiar with the entire plot. It is therefore important to successfully reconstruct a logical line of reasoning based only on the single recoverable clues.

The protagonists of this type of adventure are normally the Diplomats, due to their ability to speak with people and gather information (see page 113), as well as succeed in *Audiences* (see page 117); the Scholars, because they can analyze and make *Investigations* (see page 120) and the Augurs, given their ability to perform influential Divination rituals.

In any case, the setting of *Lex Arcana* allows the Demiurge to rectify any possible structural errors: a dream or omen at just the right time can place characters back on track, just like any errors regarding the likelihood of circumstances can be conveniently justified by the use of magic.

SEARCHING

Several testimonies appear to indicate the existence of a text concealing ancient wisdom, hidden among the ruins of the Dacia mountains. The Custodes must find this text and deliver it to the Emperor...

The theme of searching allows all the elements seen up to now to be mixed together: internal and external explorations, investigations in small or large settlements. These types of adventures lend themselves to long and memorable campaigns (a series of adventures linked to each other, which form a single story of epic proportions), capable of leading players to the most surprising places.

In reality, it would be better to conceive a plot that's simple to follow in logical reasoning terms, but more articulate from a physical perspective (movements, natural and artificial hindrances, encounters with important NPCs, etc.). The discovery of every single trace must be the result of days of exploration and investigation.

As the adventure slowly proceeds, and if the characters overcome the numerous challenges they face, they accumulate more and more elements until finally reaching their goal and the place where the epic final scene takes place.

NEW MAGIC RITUALS

The magic rituals normally used by the Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana during their missions (*Ars Fulguratoria, Auspicium, Haruspicina, Omen, Oracolum, Sideratio, Somni Interpretatio and Speculum*) are magical, exclusively divinatory practices, typically Latin and Italic, which are part of the Empire's Official Cult. They make it possible to obtain visions or answers tied to Clairvoyance, Precognition, Retrocognition, the Interpretation of Dreams and Omens, the favor and disfavor of the gods.

If a Demiurge wishes to expand the power of the **ritualistic magic** available to the Custodes and NPCs beyond these limits, they can look for new ideas in the Roman and Italic divinatory tradition, or delve into the fascinating and mysterious magical traditions of completely different cultural and religious populations, to obtain effects often very different to 'simple' Divination. A resourceful Demiurge knows all too well that they can tap into centuries or millennia of history of the many populations that inhabited the shores of *Mare Nostrum*, or in any case within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. An immense, extremely diversified territory that hosted dozens and dozens of different religions and cults from which to draw inspiration.

Suffice it to flip through a few history books or surf the web to come across some very interesting things: the Etruscan *Evocation of lightning bolts*, the incision of *Runes of power* by Germanic populations, Persian or Egyptian rituals of *Necromancy*, Jewish and Christian *Exorcisms*, Carthaginian *Blood rituals*, etc. These are all examples of what in *Lex Arcana* are classified as magical **disciplines**. The same discipline can be used for rituals included in the Official Cult, but also for tolerated or forbidden cults.

Normally, rituals belonging to a tolerated cult or forbidden cult are officiated and possibly taught by NPC priests, necromancers, or mages who worship divinities belonging to religions and mythological traditions very different from the official Imperial cult. Followers of tolerated cults can gather inside sacred buildings, such as *Mithraea* or Christian churches, which may even be erected alongside Roman temples. Followers and necromancers of forbidden cults on the other hand must operate in the darkness of inaccessible crypts or places far from the city center to avoid any intervention and suppression by the Praetorians or Custodes themselves.

CREATING NEW RITUALS

Once the Demiurge has found a suitable source of inspiration, they must decide whether it is a ritual of the **Official Cult** (therefore of Divination), a ritual belonging to a **tolerated cult** or perhaps even a **forbidden cult**. (If the ritual does not belong to the Official Cult, in published adventures its name is followed by the indication 'forbidden cults' or 'tolerated cults').

INSTRUCTIONS ON CREATING A NEW RITUAL

1) The Demiurge decides if the ritual belongs to the Official Cult, a tolerated cult, or forbidden cult.
2a) If the ritual belongs to the Official Cult, a Divination discipline is selected to which it will be linked (from among Clairvoyance, Favor of the Gods, Interpretation of Omens, Interpretation of Dreams, Precognition, and Retrocognition).
2b) If the ritual belongs to a tolerated or forbidden cult, a magical discipline is created that is not part of the official Divination; a Difficulty Threshold must be attributed to this discipline.
3) If the ritual belongs to the Official Cult, its cost in Pietas is indicated.
4) The procedure of the ritual and its game effect is described and its name is specified.
5) For convenience, it is helpful to indicate the cost in Curriculum Points to learn the ritual (DT of discipline x 10).

Next, the Demiurge decides to which specific **discipline** the new ritual will be linked. In the case of an Official Cult ritual, it can be one of the usual Divination disciplines (Clairvoyance, Favor of the Gods, Interpretation of Omens, Interpretation of Dreams, Precognition, or Retrocognition).

If the ritual does not belong to the Official Cult, it must be linked to a new discipline (one discipline only per ritual), created *ad hoc*, which is connected to nature and the scopes of the ritual (for example, Evocation or Necromancy).

Given that, as we have seen, a set difficulty corresponds to each discipline, if the Demiurge has created a new one, it too must be associated with a **Difficulty Threshold**, for example Curse (DT 12) or Necromancy (DT 18).

If the ritual belongs to the Official Cult, a Pietas **cost** is indicated, proportionate to its effect (normally 3, 6, 9 or more). If the ritual belongs to a tolerated cult or forbidden cult, it is not necessary to indicate a Pietas cost - the consequences are very different, see further ahead.

The Demiurge must then establish the **duration** of the ritual and provide a detailed description of its **procedure** and the game **effect**; lastly, assign a name to the ritual, preferably evocative.

- A ritual's **cost of learning equals** 10 Curriculum Points multiplied by the DT (for example, the ritual of a discipline with DT 12 would cost 120 CPs).

EXAMPLE CREATION OF A NEW RITUAL

A Demiurge interested in Sumerian mythology is fascinated by Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld, who has a terrifying power:

Then Ereshkigal fastened the eye of death on Inanna.
She spoke the sentence of the accused.
She uttered the cry of the accursed
…Inanna instantly sickened to death,
her body a corpse that hung on a spike...
(from the Descent of Inanna – Sumerian poem on clay tablets)

THE CRY OF ERESHKIGAL (FORBIDDEN CULTS)

Discipline. Curse (DT 12)
Duration. Very long (one day and one night)
Procedure. The ritual consists of a curse cast by a group of worshippers, guided by an officiant who performs a De Magia roll with DT 12. The officiant must know or have seen the victim and celebrate the ritual in an underground location. In the light of braziers or candles, assisted by at least half a dozen followers, the priest raises high prayers to Ereshkigal - the queen; to Neti - guardian of the Seven Gates of the underworld; to Anunna - the judges of the underworld, and to the Galla demons.
Effect. If the ritual is a success, the victim falls into a comatose sleep which lasts for a number of days equal to the Degree of Success obtained in the De Magia roll. Along with total immobility and unconsciousness, the body slowly decomposes, causing the loss of 2d6 Hit Points for each day the effect lasts. If the officiant dies, the effect of the ritual ceases immediately. If the officiant fails to perform the ritual, they fall into an unnatural sleep for several hours, during which some parts of their body seem to decompose (they receive 2d6 of damage; armor does not protect them).
Cost of learning. 120 Curriculum Points.

The terrible power of Ereshkigal is perfect to draw upon for a ritual belonging to a forbidden cult. The Demiurge therefore creates a new discipline linked to the ritual — Curse — with a DT of 12. The duration, performance, game effect and lastly the name will then be decided. The final result is presented in the box below.

LEARNING NEW RITUALS

Although magical rituals tied to religious traditions other than the Latin one are not taught directly and their use is generally strictly forbidden by all forms of Imperial, civil, and military legislation, it may be that a particularly curious or bold Custos wishes to learn an unknown ritual, perhaps to be used in those situations when the force of weapons and Imperial Divination proves insufficient. The Custodes can learn a new ritual essentially in three ways.

- The characters secure the collaboration of a person that knows the ritual (master, priest, acolyte, etc.) and who can teach it. From the point of view of learning, this is the safest and fastest method.
- The characters have access to books, parchments, or sacred texts that fully describe the ritual in all its parts. Normally, these writings are not readily available, either because they've been seized and made inaccessible by Imperial authorities, or because they are buried in the ruins of forgotten cities, in the darkness of ancient crypts, or in the secret libraries of dangerous necromancers.
- The characters participate first-hand in the complete execution of the ritual, carefully observing all the details: they learn every gesture, memorize the words, sounds, and possibly the arrangement and function of ceremonial objects (Ingenium roll with DT 15). A *Speculum* ritual that evokes a vision of the celebration is not sufficient to capture every detail, unless the De Magia roll yielded a III Degree of Success. A description, even if accurate, by somebody that has observed the ritual but doesn't know how to celebrate it, is not of any practical use.

When a Custos becomes aware of the new ritual (using the above-described methods), they can decide to study it. To learn the ritual, the character must spend a number of Curriculum Points from those accumulated in the De Magia, equal to the cost of learning of the ritual itself. Depending on the learning circumstances, the following modifications apply:

- if the Custos is taught by a master, the cost of learning is reduced by 30 CP;
- if the Custos has only observed the ritual, the cost of learning increases by 60 CP.

If the character spends the necessary Curriculum Points, they insert the new ritual among those that can be freely used (specifying the usable Discipline).

PERFORMING NEW RITUALS

A Custos who has learned a new ritual, whether tolerated or forbidden, can from now on perform it at will. As with a normal ritual of Divination, the Peritia to be rolled is De Magia, with the following difference:

- To obtain any result from the ritual, it is necessary to be successful in the roll of the De Magia; a failure in the roll, besides not giving any of the desired results, risks triggering undesirable effects, even very dangerous ones (especially in the case of forbidden rituals, possibly specified in the rituals themselves).

Note. *Specialties linked to the disciplines of tolerated or forbidden cults are not easily taught to the Custodes, who must find other ways to learn them. For example, a Custos without experience in Curses (they have no points in this Specialty), who has just learnt the ritual of the Cry of Ereshkigal (forbidden cults), must roll their De Magia without being able to benefit from any bonus in Dice Points.*

CONSEQUENCES OF CELEBRATING AN UNOFFICIAL RITUAL: THE COHORS ARCANA

Knowing, and even worse, celebrating a ritual that doesn't belong to the official magic, may bring about serious complications for the Custos... Custodes surprised in the act of celebrating rituals of **tolerated cults** are normally temporarily suspended from their office and summoned by the provincial Magister of their *cursus*. If there are no particularly serious facts linked to the execution of the rituals themselves, the Magister may simply warn the characters of the serious danger that lies behind such unknown paths of applied magic. The thinly veiled threat of a more decisive and punitive intervention if the fact were to be repeated must be clearly conveyed by the words of the superior, unless the Custos is lucky enough to land a more open-minded Magister, who may simply prefer to forget what happened, making it clearly understood that if such rituals are celebrated, it should be with due discretion.

This is not quite the case for Custodes suspected or surprised in the act of celebrating rituals of **forbidden cults**, given that they are quite often tied to human sacrifices, demonic evocations, and other ethically unacceptable practices. After lengthy interrogations aimed at gathering as much information as possible about the ritual, the characters would then be subjected to a military trial before a Council of Magisters; in the event of a conviction, the most serious disciplinary action involves expulsion from the Cohors Arcana and a new trial before a civil

court, which must judge the crimes connected to the execution of the ritual. We remind you that a conviction for homicide or attacks on the integrity of Imperial institutions entails life-long imprisonment, or, quite often, crucifixion.

CONSEQUENCES OF CELEBRATING AN UNOFFICIAL RITUAL: THE GODS OF ROME

Performing a ritual not connected to the Official Cult normally involves invocation, contact, and worship of deities not belonging to the Greco-Roman pantheon. This may lead to the *indifference* (Tolerated Cult rituals) or *hostility* (Forbidden Cult rituals) of the deities of the Official Cult.

If a Custos officiates a ritual belonging to a Tolerated Cult, they immediately lose 2d6 Pietas and the advantage of the Fate Roll. It doesn't matter whether or not the ritual is a success. To recover them, the Custos must officiate solemn sacrifices in temples dedicated to the Imperial gods (normally at the end of an adventure or during pauses in particularly long adventures).

If a Custos officiates a ritual belonging to a Forbidden Cult, they immediately lose 3d6 Pietas, and the advantage of the Fate Roll, and additionally receive the *Cursed* condition (see page 80). To free themself from this condition, the Custos must officiate solemn sacrifices in temples dedicated to the Imperial gods (normally at the end of an adventure or during pauses in particularly long adventures).

Regaining the lost favor or placating the hostility of the gods, even in other ways, may nonetheless represent an excellent opportunity for adventures of a strongly mythical and magical nature.

OPTIONAL RULE: THE SORTES

Among the various objects considered part of the Custodes' standard equipment, there is also a satchel, normally of leather, which contains a number of thin, engraved metal tablets. These tablets, called ***sortes*** (*sors*, in singular form), are used by superstitious members of the Cohors Arcana to reveal something more about their destiny during a mission.

At the start of an adventure, the sortes included in this volume (a template that can be photocopied is found on the following page and the PDF version can be downloaded at www.qualitygames.eu) must be placed in an opaque container (possibly a satchel). Given that some of these refer to specific Offices, remove the tablets corresponding to those Offices not included among the Custodes of the contubernium.

DRAWING THE SORTES

The drawing of sortes is a very short ritual that doesn't require any rolls and which can be performed by any number of Custodes. The characters can perform the ritual at any stage of any game session; players simply communicate their intention to the Demiurge, declaring how many Custodes will participate. The ritual of sortes has two requisites:

- The drawing of sortes can only be performed once per game session;
- To participate in the drawing, a single Custos must not have already participated in another drawing during the same adventure.

To perform the ritual, each participating player draws a tablet from the satchel, reads it, and lays it face down. When all the Custodes participating in the ritual have drawn a tablet, the satchel is placed aside and can no longer be used during that game session.

USING THE SORTES

Each *sors* describes a special opportunity of play. If the requisites written on the tablet are met, the player can use their sors at any time. The requisites refer to specific circumstances such as the use of a certain Peritia or the involvement of a specific Office.

A player can check the tablet on their sheet whenever they like but cannot reveal any of its information to other players, or even the Demiurge. The penalty for revealing information is the disapproval of the gods: the Custos will lose the Fate Roll until the end of the adventure. If the sors corresponds to a "no effect", the player keeps it covered until the end of the game session under way.

If, when a game session ends, one or more players still have unused sortes (because they haven't been able to use them, or didn't want to use them, or they had "no effect"), they place them back in the satchel and draw a new one at the start of the next session. If, when the adventure finishes, one or more players have an unused tablet, the gods disapprove of being pointlessly summoned: these Custodes take 1 Experience Point less than those assigned to other characters. The "no effect" sors is an exception to this rule; it is discarded at the end of the game without any consequences.



THE SORTES

APOLLO'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Magia roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

ASSASSIN

If the Assassin has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

AUGUR

If the Augur has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

DIANA'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Natura roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

DIPLOMAT

If the Diplomat has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

DREAM

Pass this tablet to the Demiurge. Before the end of the session you will receive a premonitory dream.

EXPLORER

If the Explorer has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

FIGHTER

If the Fighter has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

FORTUNE

If any Custos (yourself included) failed a roll to perform an action (not of combat), turn over this tablet to transform the failure into a success.

HERCULES' BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Corpore roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

MARS' BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Bello roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

MERCURY'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Societate roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1.

MINERVA'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Scientia roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

MISFORTUNE

If any Custos (including yourself) succeeds in a roll to perform an action (not of combat), reveal this tablet to transform the success into a failure.

PORTENT

Pass this tablet to the Demiurge. Before the end of the session you will witness a portentous event.

RUMORS

Reveal this tablet to force the Demiurge to confirm or deny the authenticity of a rumor.

SCHOLAR

If the Scholar has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS (NPCS)

Every literary, theatrical, or film plot obviously needs its own protagonists, in our case the Custodes, but also adversaries of a certain caliber and no shortage of appearances. The stories experienced by the Custodes are no exception: it is commonplace in every adventure to come into contact with a certain number of **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)** and also interact with them. Just as the players identify with their own heroes, the Demiurge too must interpret the various NPCs encountered by the Custodes, whether **men, animals,** or *fantastical creatures,* making their speech and actions credible, without making them all the same or all hostile. The Demiurge essentially needs to be part actor and try to characterize the NPCs based on the importance of their role in the story (and therefore without exaggerating in forcibly characterizing every single NPC, even entirely secondary ones). In order to realistically interpret and manage the actions of NPCs, the Demiurge must first of all be familiar with their scores and any special abilities or magic powers, and know how they should be used. Everything they need can easily be found in the following pages, including an impressive number of NPC character sheets, all ready to go and easy to use.

THE DICE VALUE

The system regulating the behavior of NPCs and their scores is simpler than that of the Custodes and is essentially based on the Dice Value.

- Each NPC is in fact distinguished by their **Dice Value (DV)**, i.e., by one of the eight types of dice included in the game (d3, d4, d5, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20).

The Demiurge uses that die when interpreting that particular NPC: for example, a merchant with Dice Value 5 (DV5) is characterized by the d5, a fighter with Dice Value 8 (DV8), is instead characterized by the d8. When an NPC performs an action, their score always corresponds to 1, 2, or 3DV depending on how familiar they are with the action they're attempting.

- The DV of the NPC therefore indicates the **type of die** to be used, while the role, nature, or profession of the NPC determines the **number of dice** to roll to check whether an action is successful (up to a maximum of 3DV).

In the more than one-hundred NPC character sheets described in this chapter, in fact see that 3DV is indicated for values directly related to the nature or profession of the NPC (such as combat for a fighter or a lion, or social for a diplomat) and 2DV for intermediate values, i.e. those not directly linked to the nature of the NPC but also not completely unrelated (for example, if a a shepherd needs to climb up a steep slope). Finally, 1DV is indicated for values far from the nature of the NPC (combat for a poet or athletics for an erudite).

- The DV in some way represents the importance of the NPC in the scene or specific adventure: the higher the DV the greater the challenge the Custodes will have to face. For example, a normal fighter with DV 6 will roll 3d6 in De Bello, but a big, burly chieftain with DV10 will roll a hefty 3d10 in De Bello and be much more difficult to defeat.

Note. *For NPCs, the Demiurge therefore doesn't necessarily need to use the Dice Points system: if the score of an NPC (DV6) in a certain characteristic is equal to 2DV, the Demiurge can roll 2d6 directly (without having to choose between rolling 1d12, 1d8 + 1d4 etc.). This is not the case for combat in uneven numbers, where also for the NPCs the Dice Points system must be used (see page 62).*

MANAGING NPCS

The rules for managing NPCs are not very different from those for the Custodes. Let's take a closer look.

Using the Peritiae. The NPCs make rolls in the Peritiae the same way Custodes do. An exception to this may sometimes be the De Magia Peritia: NPC's magic doesn't necessarily correspond to that of the Custodes and therefore might refer to practices and rituals different from Divination, which are specified in the sheets or adventures. Any special skills possessed by an NPC are indicated in brackets (these skills may or may not correspond to the Custodes' Specialties). For example, if an NPC has a score of *2 dice:* De Scientia and a score of *3 dice:* De Scientia (Mathematics), this means they must roll 3 dice for an action that has to do with mathematics and 2 dice for all other actions that fall under De Scientia. Generally, a NPC is considered to automatically fail any action related to a Peritia not listed on their sheet.

Hit Points. If an NPC drops to zero Hit Points, they are immediately considered dead, or in any case defeated.

Combat. NPCs fight like Custodes, with the following exceptions: they never need to follow the rules on the Difficulty of weapons, and they don't use De Corpore for attacks without weapons (they always refer to De Bello for combat). Likewise, bestial animals and creatures that never use weapons (because they have fangs, claws, or other natural weapons) use De Bello and not De Corpore to fight. An exception to this rule are creatures with the special ability Grab, described below.

Damage. Human NPCs and some fantastical creatures normally use weapons to inflict damage on their adversaries (the weapons they use are always indicated on their sheets). For NPCs that don't use weapons (because they have fangs, claws, or other natural weapons), the value of the damage they cause is indicated on their sheets under the relative heading (for example, *2 dice:* Damage).

Pietas and Fate Roll. Unless otherwise specified on their sheet or in the adventure, NPCs do not possess and do not use Pietas, and do not benefit from the Fate Roll.

Special Abilities. Some NPCs have special abilities (for example Pack Animals) and dangerous forms of attack (for example Charge). If an NPC has one or more special abilities, this is clearly specified on their sheet. For the game effects of all special abilities, see the dedicated section following.

Conditions and resistance rolls. NPCs are not affected by the *Dying*, *Fatigued* and *Cursed* conditions. In case a resistance roll is required, depending on the NPC the Demiurge chooses whether to roll 1, 2, or 3 DV.

Magic Powers. Fantastical creatures, and even certain individuals, are bestowed with the most varying magic powers, which can be used to attack, defend, or even for other scopes. For the game effects of all magic powers, see the dedicated section (starting from page 139).

Healing. If for some reason it is necessary determine how many Hit Points are recovered by a wounded NPC, the following rules apply: NPCs that have not received First Aid do not recover any Hit Points; NPCs that have received First Aid recover half their DV per day (rounded up, regardless of whether they rest or not).

Size. In *Lex Arcana*, all characters have a Size score (from 1 to 5). The larger a character is, the larger their Size. All human beings (including the Custodes) have a Size score of 3, while for Animals and Fantastic Creatures the Size is specified in their sheet. The Size assumes great importance in case of close combat.

- The maximum number of Custodes that can simultaneously engage a single NPC in close combat is equal to the NPC Size (for example, an NPC with a Size score of 4 can be engaged by a maximum of 4 Custodes).
- The maximum number of NPCs that can engage a single Custos in close combat is inversely proportional to their size: 1 NPC only (if it is Size 5), 2 NPCs (Size 4), 3 NPCs (Size 3), 4 NPCs (Size 2), and finally 5 NPCs (Size 1).

In case of fights with NPCs of different sizes, the creature with the largest size must be taken into consideration (for example, a Custos can simultaneously engage one NPC of Size 2 and one NPC of Size 4).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities are particular features possessed by animals, certain fantastical creatures, and human NPCs. Each character sheet reports any special abilities held by a certain NPC.

ACUTE SENSES

The difficulty of all rolls to ambush this NPC or hide from them is increased by 1.

CHARGE

This ability is applied only in the first tempus of combat, or if the creature was disengaged at the end of the previous tempus. If they are the attacker, in that tempus their Damage multiplier is increased by 1 (for example, a x2 multiplier becomes x3). Some creatures also have an improved De Bello score when charging (this is reported in their statistics). After the charge, the creature continues to fight normally.

DIVE

Used by animals and birds of prey or fantastical creatures, a Dive has the same effects of a Charge (see above).

FLIGHT

A creature with Flight is extremely mobile. During combat they can always choose which adversary to engage and as an action in their own tempus they can freely shift from engaged to disengaged (and vice versa) without making any rolls. Unless fighting with other flying creatures, they can remain disengaged for as long as they like (or escape combat without making any rolls). They can therefore make a Dive every 2 tempus (if they possess this special ability, see above), using the in-between tempus to return to the disengaged position.

FORMATION

If three or more NPCs of the same type meet the conditions specified in their description (which normally consist in being side by side and led by a commander), they add a +1 bonus to their Parry (if without shield) or they double the Parry value of their shield if they have one.

GRAB

A creature with the Grab special ability starts a fight using De Bello, as usual. If they are the attacker in any tempus of combat (even if they don't inflict any damage), starting from the next tempus they may use **De Corpore** instead of De Bello and force their opponent to do the same. The opponent is also limited to using only one-handed weapons or unarmed combat. As for the rest, the normal rules of close combat apply. If the grabbed opponent becomes the attacker in any tempus, instead of inflicting damage they can choose to go back using De Bello again starting from the next tempus and force the creature to do the same (therefore restoring the initial situation).

NET
At the start of any tempus of combat, an NPC with the Net special ability can decide to throw their net (or whatever is specified on their sheet) over their opponent. An opposed roll of **De Corpore** is made between the character throwing the net and the character trying to avoid it. If the roll is successful, the character trapped in the net has their Damage multiplier decreased by 1 and cannot escape combat. The advantage lasts until the end of the fight unless the opponent frees themself; at the end of each tempus, they can in fact try and escape the net by making a successful De Corpore roll against DT 9.

PACK ANIMALS
Creatures with this ability can be used to carry an Encumbrance equal to double their Hit Points.

PACK TACTICS
When 2 or more NPCs of the same type possessing this ability fight in melee against the same opponent, they add 1DV to their **De Bello** and **De Corpore** rolls.

POISON
NPCs have this ability either because they are able to produce poison in their own body (animals or fantastical creatures) or because they are equipped with poisonous weapons (human NPCs). If a creature with Poison inflicts any damage and the poison is not quickly extracted, the victim risks being *Poisoned* (see below). Unless otherwise specified, the victim is considered to be aware that they have been *Poisoned*.

Extraction of poison. In order for the poison not to enter the body's circulation, it must be extracted as soon as possible. Attempts to extract the poison must be made within 3 tempus from the moment it was injected and require a **De Natura** or **De Scientia** roll against DT 9 while disengaged. The victim themself can attempt the extraction. If the roll is successful, the poison is extracted and there are no consequences. If the roll failed or if more than 3 tempus have passed, the character suffers the *Poisoned* condition (see page 128).

STEALTHY
The difficulty of all rolls to avoid ambushes by this NPC or find them when they are hiding is increased by 1.

WAR TRAINING
This creature can be used as a war mount and therefore allows all the advantages of mounted combat (see page 68). In addition, an animal with War Training can carry an Encumbrance equal to their Hit Points.

MAGIC POWERS

Some human and animal NPCs and the majority of fantastical creatures have **magic powers**, which can be used in combat or on other occasions and may prove to be extremely dangerous. It is indeed these supernatural qualities possessed by monsters, demons, and monstrous animals that contribute to making every adventure a thrilling experience. Their use must therefore be carefully dosed, first of all because these powers can be very powerful and even deadly, and secondly, it is precisely their supernatural and mythological nature that makes them so attractive and extraordinary.

Opposing magic powers. The effect of magic powers is not necessarily unexpected and automatic: the Custodes (and NPCs who play an important role in the story), will in fact have access to various forms of help and protection, which involve rolling certain Virtutes and Peritiae.

De Magia roll. In the case of a likely or imminent encounter between Custodes and creatures with very dangerous magic powers, the characters should be alerted by premonitory dreams or extraordinary events that can clearly be considered omens; this is especially true if the Custodes are the creatures' next target or are throwing themselves headlong into wherever they hide. These dreams (which occur the night before the encounter) or omens (a few hours beforehand) are normally interpretable thanks to Divination rituals and the relative **De Magia** rolls.

On the sheet of each NPC possessing magical powers is specified a **Degree of Danger**, varying from 1 to 5. The higher the degree, the more potentially lethal the creature is. The possibility that the characters will receive premonitory dreams or omens depends on this degree (see the table below). The greater the Degree of Success in the De Magia roll, the more information will be received regarding the magic powers the characters will have to face, or the creature that possesses them.

Degree of Danger of creature	1	2	3	4	5
Premonitory dream	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes
Omen	–	–	–	Yes	Yes
Difficulty for Sensibilitas roll	–	DT 12	DT 9	DT 6	DT 3

If there is more than one creature, the Degree of Danger is increased by 1 or even 2 points (up to a maximum of 4). For example, if 10 creatures with Degree of Danger 2 are approaching, the effective Degree to consider is 4.

For example, if the Custodes are unknowingly approaching a Hydra's lair (Degree of Danger 5), the Demiurge must send them an omen, which if correctly interpreted, prepares them for the battle with this terrible creature.

Sensibilitas roll. Just before an encounter or attack by an NPC with one or more magic powers, the characters are normally allowed to make one **Sensibilitas** roll. The Difficulty of the Sensibilitas roll is inversely proportionate to the Degree of Danger of the creature. If the roll is a success, the character perceives a sense of danger, agitation, imminent evil, of an intensity proportional to the Degree of Success obtained.

Resistance rolls. When the characters are the target of a magic power, they can oppose its effect with a Virtus roll (this is often **Ratio**). This is a normal roll versus rifficulty (a Virtus roll against a DT) or an opposed roll (a Virtus roll versus the **force** of the magic power, equal to 1, 2, or 3DV. If the Virtus roll is successful, the character resists the power (therefore there are no consequences); otherwise, based on the type of power, the character suffers the effects, which are sometimes very unpleasant...

CONDITIONS TIED TO MAGIC POWERS

Many magic powers are tied to the existence of certain **conditions**. For example, the *Nymphs* can enchant humans, but only if humans can see them, while the *Empusai* can suck out their victims' souls, but only if they can touch them. When a magic power needs special conditions, this is specified on the NPC sheet and the name of the condition is *highlighted*. Let's look at some of the most frequent cases.

The victim *sees* the creature. The power can be derived from their beauty, their terrifying appearance or other elements at the discretion of the Demiurge. This power acts simultaneously on all characters facing the creature, unless the character specifically declares to not look at it (normally because they know or suspect something). If a character's resistance roll is successful, they no longer need to roll to avoid additional exposure to the same creature's power (automatic success).

If a character wants to avoid looking at the creature (even while fighting it), they are considered *Blinded* (see page 127; however, the difficulty of the Sensibilitas roll to fight is reduced to DT 6**,** since the character can base themself on the creature's shadow, its reflections on the water, etc.). A Custos can also fight the creature normally (not *Blinded*), but in this case they will be exposed to the effects of the power and must make the resistance roll.

The creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim. In each tempus, the creature's power acts on one victim only (chosen by the Demiurge). If, however, the creature has received any damage, they cannot use this power in the following tempus. A character can avoid the gaze of the creature using the same methods described in *The victim sees the creature* (immediately above), but must repeat the resistance roll at the start of each tempus in which they are exposed to the effect, even if they were successful in one of the previous resistance rolls.

The victim *touches* or *is touched* by the creature. The touch may occur by way of deceit, or during the course of normal combat; in this case, the creature is considered to have touched the victim if it is the attacker in any tempus of combat (even if it has not inflicted any damage). The victim must repeat the resistance roll each time they are touched by the creature.

The victim is *wounded* by the creature. In general, the victim is considered wounded even if inflicted with just 1 damage; in some cases, the effects might be variable depending on the number of damage inflicted. The victim must repeat the resistance roll each time they are wounded by the creature.

The victim *listens* to the creature. The magic power has effect through a song or sound which the victim must be able to hear. A character that wants to avoid listening to the creature can do so if they have protection (cotton, ear wax plugs, etc.) or if they somehow manage to silence the creature or wound them (in this case, in the next tempus the creature will not be able to use the power). The victim must repeat the resistance roll at the start of each tempus in which they are exposed to the effect, even if they were successful in one of their previous resistance rolls.

The victim is *Unconscious.* Some powers only take effect if the victim is *Unconscious*, completely immobile or entirely consenting. This normally means the victim is paralyzed, immersed in a

MAGIC HEALING

Some powers have very invalidating consequences (for example Petrification or Permanent Wounds). However useful to the game it may be for danger to be constantly lurking, by the same token, unlike death in battle, paralysis, petrification, or other very dangerous powers of this kind strike their victims unexpectedly and immediately, with penalties that are sometimes too severe. If the incident is the result of pure bad luck, or if the Custos suffered the misfortune following a conscious act of heroism, it is wise to offer a chance of recovery. This may be, for example, an exotic remedy suggested by dreams or omens, which if properly interpreted point toward a place or NPC able to heal the character. A more or less obscure prophecy may indicate a dangerous adventure that must be faced to find the much-needed antidote or the NPC able to prepare it, or the creature that must be defeated to end the curse, etc.

deep sleep, *Unconscious*, or at the mercy of the creature's charm. If a character has success in a resistance roll, they no longer need to roll to avoid any additional exposure to the same creature's power (automatic success) during the same scene or fight; if the same conditions arise in the future, a Resistance roll is required as if it were the first time.

LIST OF MAGIC POWERS

BLOOD SUCKING

The creature, either in addition to, or instead of the normal damage caused (specified on their character sheet), drains a number of Hit Points from the victim equal to the force roll of the power (armor does not protect them). For example, the Blood Sucking (2DV) of a creature with DV 6 causes the loss of 2d6 Hit Points.

For each Hit Point drained in this way, the creature recovers 1 Hit Point (up to their maximum, of course). Unless the monster also has the Permanent Wounds power, the damage caused by Blood Sucking can be healed normally.

CURSE

Some creatures have the ability to cast curses. The victim opposes a **Ratio** roll against the force of the curse. If the roll fails, they suffer the *Cursed* condition (see page 80) plus any other consequences specified on the monster's character sheet.

DISEASE

The touch or the wounds inflicted by certain creatures may give rise to rare and dangerous diseases. The victim opposes a **Vigor**, or more rarely **Ratio**, roll (specified on the monster's sheet) against the force of the disease.

If the roll is a failure, within the next 8 hours the character suffers the *Sick* condition (see page 128), plus any additional effects specified on the creature's sheet. In case of success, the character does not get *Sick*.

The majority of diseases can be cured with **De Scientia** or **De Natura** rolls, but in some cases the only effective remedy consists in identifying a magic or esoteric cure, which could be great cues for an adventure.

ENCHANTMENT

Some creatures can enchant humans, luring them into traps or their own lair. The victim opposes a **Ratio** roll against the force of the enchantment. Depending on the Degree of Success obtained by the creature, the following effects are applied:

- *I Degree:* the victim is *confused*, and can only defend themself if physically attacked (in this case they recover immediately). In order for the confused victim to recover non-violently, one of their comrades must perform an action that occupies an entire tempus, shaking and speaking to the victim in a firm tone. If the enchanter performs an action that goes against nature or the principles of the enchanted victim (for example, the enchanter attacks a Custos), the victim makes a **Ratio** roll (DT 6) to recover. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.
- *II Degree:* the victim is *enchanted*. The victim follows the will and actions of the enchanter as best they can, trying to stop their comrades if they engage in hostile actions against the enchanter (without harming them, if possible). The only way to snap them out of the spell is to strike them with a weapon or violent slap (which inflicts at least 1 damage); or they can somehow be immobilized until the effect of the Enchantment has ended. If the enchanter performs an action that goes against the nature or the principles of the enchanted victim (for example, the enchanter attacks a Custos), the victim makes a **Ratio** roll (DT 6) to recover. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.
- *III Degree or higher:* the victim is *hypnotized*. The enchanter does what they like with the victim, who is no longer endowed with free will. To break the hypnosis, the same actions can be performed as for *Degree II*. If the enchanter orders actions against the nature of the victim, or which endanger their life, the victim makes a **Ratio** roll (DT 9) to break the spell. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.

EXTRA ARMS

The creature, if not engaged by a number of adversaries equal to at least its additional arms, adds 1DV to its **De Bello** and **De Corpore** rolls. The monster's additional arms are indicated in brackets after the name of the power; for example, Extra Arms *(2)*.

FATE ROLL

Certain fantastical creatures and human NPCs benefit from the Fate Roll, thanks to their consecration to a tutelary deity or intrinsic magic qualities. It works in much the same way as for the Custodes.

FIERY BREATH

Some creatures can breathe fire, which inflicts serious wounds on all those in their path. This power can be used by the creature a maximum of 3 times per day; the first time, the damage inflicted by the attack correspond to a 3DV roll, the second to 2DV and third to 1DV. Likewise, the first attack can strike up to three victims located near each other, the second two, and the third only one.

For example, the first blow of a Chimera (DV12) strikes three characters; each one suffers 3d12 damage. The second time, only two are struck and suffer 2d12 damage; only one will be struck by the third blow, suffering 1d12 damage.

In combat, the creature can use this power before or after the normal De Bello roll against engaged or disengaged enemies, provided they are within Medium distance (if the monster is Size 5) or Close distance (if the monster is Size 4 or smaller).

The characters roll **Coordinatio** (DT 9) to halve the damage inflicted (rounding up) or completely avoid them by obtaining a III Degree of Success (armor protects them as normal). If they are holding a shield, they add its Parry value directly to the Coordinatio roll (for example, a Custos holding a shield with Parry +2 rolls Coordinatio to avoid damage and adds +2 to the result).

Those who are struck by fiery breath and fail the Coordinatio roll are engulfed by the flames: at the start of each following tempus, they automatically suffer damage equal to 1DV roll (armor does not protect them). While engulfed by the flames, the character is no longer able to fight or perform any type of action apart from trying to extinguish the fire. To put out the flames, they need to throw themself in water (instantly extinguished) or roll around in the dirt, succeeding in a De Corpore roll (DT 6).

HEALING

Some creatures or substances extracted from them may have more or less powerful therapeutic or healing properties. The quantity and type of wounds that can be healed by each creature is indicated on the relative character sheets. In any case, based on contingent needs, the Demiurge is free to change these values or attribute healing powers to other beings, special plants, or places.

ILLUSION

Certain fantastical creatures or human NPCs may provoke false visions to deceive the Custodes. The victim opposes an **Ingenium** roll against the force of the illusion. In general, if a character is successful in the Ingenium roll, they no longer need to roll to oppose additional Illusion attempts by the same creature (automatic success).

The Illusion may also affect other senses, i.e. provoke noises, smells, or tactile sensations. If the Illusion succeeds, the Demiurge doesn't need to describe what the Custodes actually see, but rather what the creature wants them to see. The effects of an Illusion can often lead to entirely real consequences (for example, falling into a ravine).

IMMORTALITY

Thanks to their divine origin, some creatures are practically immortal; the relative character sheets nonetheless specify how to succeed in defeating them, at least temporarily.

INVULNERABILITY

Some creatures are invulnerable to certain types of damage: for example if the blow inflicted on them doesn't deal damage equal to at least the creature's DV (see *Berserkirs in Wolf or Bear Form,* page 167), or if the blows are not inflicted with certain weapons or sources of damage (for example, consecrated weapons or fire). Weapons, sources of damage and details on the type of Invulnerabilities are specified on the relative creatures' character sheets.

METAMORPHOSIS

The majority of creatures endowed with this power are able to transform into a more dangerous or deceitful being. Metamorphosis can sometimes be involuntary and caused by some kind of virus (for example, in the case of *Versipellis*, see page 207) other times by a hereditary defect (*Arachne's Progeny*, see page 165). Other creatures on the other hand possess a special metamorphosis, which allows them to change their appearance only in an illusory way (for example the *Empusai*, see page 171). When interpreting them, the Demiurge must therefore consider that their appearance is merely a disguise, and their behavior must remain as faithful as possible to their true nature.

A Metamorphosis is always automatically successful (the Demiurge therefore doesn't need to verify its success).

MULTIPLE HEADS

In close combat, a number of opponents equal to the creature's additional heads are denied the advantages of fighting in superior numbers, in order starting from the first attack that would benefit from the advantage. The monster's additional heads are indicated in brackets after the name of the power.

> *For example, a creature with Multiple Heads (2) denies its opponents the advantage of fighting in superior numbers on the second and third attacks against it.*

In addition, the creature is considered always alert, because it can make one of the heads rest while keeping the others awake, or watch in all directions simultaneously: the difficulty of ambushing it is increased by 1 level.

PARALYSIS

Certain creatures may cause partial or total paralysis, temporary or permanent. The victim opposes a **Ratio** roll against the force of the paralysis. Depending on the Degree of Success obtained by the creature, the following effects are applied:

- *Degree I:* the victim suffers *partial paralysis.* Their Coordinatio, De Corpore, and De Bello scores are considered halved (rounded up). The victim can make a **Ratio** roll against DT 6 at the end of each tempus to recover. Otherwise, they only recover at the end of the fight or the scene.
- *Degree II:* the victim suffers *physical paralysis*. They are no longer able to perform any physical action (they can only make purely mental actions, that do not require movements; if attacked, they are always considered *Surprised*). The victim can make a **Ratio** roll against DT 6 at the end of each tempus to recover. Otherwise, they only recover at the end of the fight or the scene.

- *Degree III or higher:* the victim suffers *total paralysis.* They fall to the ground *Unconscious*. The victim can make a **Ratio** roll against DT 9 at the end of each tempus to recover. Otherwise, the victim recovers only at the end of the fight or the scene, but is *Debilitated* for the rest of the day (see page 127).

PERMANENT WOUNDS

Some creatures, rather than deal normal damage, inflict wounds that cannot be healed with conventional systems. The victims are not allowed to make any resistance rolls.

Permanent wounds are marked in the Hit Points table with an asterisk (*), always starting from the top, even in the presence of other normal wounds (which are therefore "pushed" forward). When a character heals their normal wounds in any way, they cannot cancel the wounds marked with the asterisk, which remain until they are properly treated (normally specified on the creature's character sheet).

PETRIFICATION

This power is very similar to Paralysis, with the difference that with a III Degree of Success in the roll it causes the petrification of the victim. In this case, the victim cannot make any Ratio rolls to recover during the tempus and the petrification doesn't disappear at the end of the fight or the scene.

A *petrified* victim has a Protection value equal to 20 (regardless of their equipment), and their body no longer needs to eat, drink, or breathe and becomes immune to any effects unable to influence stone (for all intents and purposes, they become an inanimate statue). To reverse the process, sometimes the victim's comrades will need to kill the creature that caused the petrification, but in other cases they will need to resort to rare and powerful magic (which can offer interesting cues for an adventure).

POISONOUS BREATH

Some creatures' breath can be poisonous instead of fiery. The same rules apply as for Fiery Breath, with the substantial difference that this power does not damage the target with flames, but rather causes the *Poisoned* condition (see page 128). The force of the poison is equal to 3DV the first time the power is used, 2DV the second and 1DV the third; the poison cannot be extracted and starts acting immediately. If a victim succeeds in a **Coordinatio** roll (DT 9), they completely avoid the effects of the poisonous breath.

POSSESSION

This is the typical attack using which *Demons* possess the bodies of human beings. The victim opposes a **Ratio** roll against the force of the Possession. In general, if a character is successful in the Ratio roll, they no longer need to roll to oppose additional Possession attempts by the same creature (automatic success).

If the creature is successful in the opposed roll, they 'enter' the victim's body. As long as the victim is *possessed*, they are at the creature's mercy. The victim is no longer endowed with free will and loses many of their characteristics: the creature's scores (reported on their character sheet) in fact replace those of the victim, except for Vigor, Coordinatio, De Corpore, any innate Damage score (thus not derived from the use of a weapon) and Hit Points; for the De Bello value, the highest of the two (the victim's and the creature's) will be used. During possession, the creature can still use all their magic powers and gains all the special abilities of the victim.

If the creature makes the possessed victim act against their nature or in such a way as to endanger their life, the victim can make a **Ratio** roll (DT 9) to free themself from the possession. If the roll is successful, they recover their normal values.

To free the victim of a possession it may be necessary to celebrate an exorcism ritual, practiced by a priest with experience in this dangerous discipline (see also the description of the *Demons*, on page 170). A decidedly simpler, but also more radical solution consists in killing the body of the victim...

PROPHECY

Some creatures have the gift of prophecy. This power shouldn't be used to the advantage of the creatures themselves, but rather to favor the Custodes in their missions. The prophecy should be as cryptic as possible and offered to the players at a high price (sacrifices, acts of heroism, etc.).

REGENERATION

Creatures endowed with this power are able to heal any wounds suffered: at the end of each tempus, they recover a number of Hit Points equal to the value specified on their character sheets (expressed in DV). Some forms of Regeneration can be cancelled by inflicting special types of damage, such as fire or consecrated weapons (these too are specified on the sheet).

SOUL SUCKING

The creature, either in addition to, or instead of the normal damage inflicted (specified on their character sheet), drains an amount of Pietas from the victim equal to the force roll of the power. For example, the Soul Sucking (2DV) of a creature with DV6 causes the loss of 2d6 Pietas points.

For each point of Pietas drained in this way, the creature recovers 1 Hit Point (up to their maximum of course). If the character's Pietas is reduced to 0 by this power, the creature possesses the victim's soul, who can no longer recover any Pietas until the creature is killed. Any additional consequences of Soul Sucking are specified on the creature's character sheet.

TERROR

Certain creatures may cause uncontrollable terror. The victim opposes a **Ratio** roll against the force of the terror. Depending on the Degree of Success obtained by the creature, the following effects are applied:

- *Degree I:* the victim is *shaken*, and can only defend themself if physically attacked (in this case they recover immediately). In order for the shaken victim to recover non-violently, one of their comrades must perform an action that occupies an entire tempus, calming and speaking to the victim in a reassuring tone. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.
- *Degree II:* the victim is *scared*. They try and get away from the source of the terror as quickly as possible. If they are disengaged, they run and hide in a corner. If they are engaged, they try to escape to be disengaged and then hide. In order for the scared victim to recover non-violently, one of their comrades must perform an action that occupies an entire tempus, calming and speaking to the victim in a reassuring tone. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.
- *Degree III or higher:* the victim is *terrorized*. The effect is the same as *degree II*, except the victim goes into a total panic: they drop their weapon and anything else they're holding and cower on the ground, even if engaged (they are considered *Surprised* if they are attacked, then immediately recover). In order for the terrorized victim to recover gently, one of their comrades must perform an action that occupies an entire tempus, calming and speaking to the victim in a reassuring tone. The victim automatically recovers at the end of the fight or scene.

UNNATURAL SPEED

A creature endowed with this power is incredibly fast: it is not possible shoot volleys against them (see page 60) unless they are *Surprised,* and the difficulty of all Ranged attacks to hit them increases by 1 level. They can escape from combat automatically (without making any rolls).

BALANCING COMBAT

For the Demiurge, one of the most delicate and difficult decisions to make concerns the number and power of the adversaries that will oppose the Custodes in case of combat. To this end, in the published adventures you will notice that the enemy names often include the following type of indication: **(1:1)**, **(2:1)** etc., which specifies the ratio of enemies (the first number) to Custodes (the second number) that will need to fight. For example, if an adventure indicates that the Custodes encounter (1:1) *Barbarian Warriors*, this means that there will be a number of *Barbarian Warriors* equal to the number of Custodes. In the case of (2:1) *Barbarian Warriors*, there will be double the number of enemies with respect to the Custodes.

If the indication includes a partial number, for example (1.5:1), the number is rounded up (therefore to the detriment of the Custodes). If there is only one number in brackets, this means the number of adversaries is exactly that, and does not depend on the number of Custodes.

> *Example. A contubernium of 5 Custodes sees a group of (1.5:1) Barbarian Warriors in the distance, guided by (3) Berserkirs in bear form. In total, therefore, there are 8 Barbarian Warriors and 3 Berserkirs... Best not to be seen and move out as quickly as possible!*

In case of an unexpected encounter with fantastical creatures endowed with potentially very lethal magic powers, we suggest drawing inspiration from the following table, which considers the Degree of Danger of the creatures themselves. The aim is to create battles that offer interesting or heroic challenges, which are neither a stroll through the park nor a death sentence for the entire contubernium.

A suggestion: a creature that may appear very powerful risks cutting a poor figure and generating a less than epic fight if attacked by a large number of Custodes at the same time. The creature should therefore be aided by a suitable number of other creatures (with a lower Degree of Danger), or by human or animal followers that fight at its command.

The table below suggests how many creatures to oppose to a group of 4 Custodes, taking into account the Degree of Danger of the creatures and the experience of the contubernium, that can be easily determined by adding up the scores of all **De Bello** of the members of the group (for larger or smaller groups, adjust the values accordingly).

Degree of Danger of creature	Inexperienced Custodes (De Bello 50)	Experienced Custodes (De Bello 50-70)	Very experienced Custodes (De Bello 70 or more)
1	1,5:1	2:1	3:1
2	1:1	1,5:1	2:1
3	1:2	1:1	1,5:1
4	1	1:3	1:1
5	–	1	1:3

HUMANS

During the adventures, players will often come into contact with human NPCs. In the majority of cases, the aim is not to fight them, but rather to ask for information, provide or receive help, etc. To ensure everybody enjoys themselves, it is therefore important that the Demiurge be able to add value to these NPCs, describing how they look and dress, speaking for them and reacting according to their needs.

The factors that must be considered are above all their birth region, age, social class, and activity. *Lex Arcana* is set in a world similar in many ways to that we're used to seeing in films and TV shows; therefore, it shouldn't be too difficult to use one's own knowledge to imagine how the NPCs look and act. To bring an NPC to life and personalize them, it is often sufficient to simply describe them, pointing out even just one distinctive characteristic, such as a large scar on their face, a deep and persuasive voice, or an unsteady and shuffling walk.

One important characteristic distinguishing human NPCs from animal NPCs or fantastical creatures concerns the absence of a specific link between their Dice Value and their role. While all Lions generally have DV10 and all Celtic Dragons DV12, there may be fighters or merchants with DV4, DV8, or up to DV12 depending on the experience, skills, and abilities one wishes to attribute to them. The average DVs of human NPCs indicated on their sheets can be increased or decreased by the Demiurge at their discretion. For example, if the Custodes decide to pay a visit to a particularly renowned artisan, the Demiurge can refer to the *Artisan's* character sheet, but increase the indicated DV (which could well pass from DV5 to DV8, given this is no average artisan, but one of the most skilled around).

The character sheets of human NPCs are divided into 4 sections: *Non-combatant NPCs*, *Combatant NPCs*, *Gladiator NPCs* and *Barbarian NPCs*. In each section, the NPCs are listed in alphabetical order based on their activity or function.

Next to the name on the other hand, we find the setting in which they move or where that NPC can most easily be found: city, countryside, castra, or cross-border.

Note. *The castra setting (large or small military barracks where detachments or entire legions are stationed) is particularly important; in fact, in many of the adventures, the Custodes will either start or pass through one of these barracks.*

NPCs in the city: Artisans, Artists, Beggars, Courtesans, Criminals, Doctors and Healers, Erudites, Field Hands and Manual Laborers, Foreign Diplomats, Gladiators, Lawyers, Mercenaries, Merchants, Innkeepers and Shopkeepers, Officials, Politicians, Praetorians, Priests, Sailors, Soothsayers, Sicarii, Vigiles.

NPCs in the countryside: Artisans, Brigands**,** Field Hands and Manual Laborers, Doctors and Healers, Farmers and Shepherds, Guides, Hunters and Fishermen, Innkeepers and Shopkeepers, Mercenaries, Officials, Landowners, Merchants, Praetorians, Priests, Soothsayers.

NPCs in the castra: Centurions, Engineers, Foreign Diplomats, Legionaries, Military Legates, Military Tribunes, Mounted Auxilia, Praetorians.

NPCs cross-border: Barbarian Champions, Barbarian Warriors, Barbarian Priests, Mounted Nomads.

NON-COMBATANT NPCS

Non-combatant NPCs normally have DV5 and De Bello equal to 1DV. Some particularly expert NPCs can also have DV6 or DV8, and the inexperienced or young DV4 or DV3. Truly exceptional individuals can even have DV10 (DV12 is considered the maximum human limit and is only used for legendary personalities).



THE AVERAGE RESULT

Given than the d5 are not very common among the dice available to the players, when a Custos must make an opposed roll (non-combat) against an NPC with DV5, the Demiurge can, for practical purposes, not roll any dice and consider only the average result: "3" for 1d5, "6" for 2d5, and "9" for 3d5.

A Custos must negotiate a price with a merchant, with an opposed De Societate roll: the Demiurge, rather than roll 3d5 for the merchant, considers the average score (equal to 9), thus transforming the Custos' opposed De Societate test into a normal roll against DT 9.

ARTISANS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Scientia (own craft)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Artisans are normally peaceful people, dedicated exclusively to their work. This category includes blacksmiths, carpenters, goldsmiths, potters, coopers, wool makers, etc. Artisans are generally quite able in all manual jobs, even if different from their own specific profession. They are very private and generally unsocial people, but they're very useful when it comes to repairing or purchasing all types of objects. They're normally very honest and not great negotiators, but they're certainly not willing to work at a loss.

ARTISTS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (own art), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Artists are NPCs specialized in a particular art (music, literature, sculpture, painting, etc.). These individuals are often only interested in their art, but are also sensitive to the clinking sound of coins; they are constantly in search of new patrons willing to support them in exchange for a few heartfelt inscriptions. In general, they have free access to the best patrician parlors and can learn precious secrets. Artists are normally sensitive to the charm of magic and the supernatural.

BEGGARS (CITY)

Average Value: DV4
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (Negotiation, Streetwise), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy

Beggars and tramps crowd almost every street corner in major cities. Their existence hangs on the generosity of others and the regular distribution of grain by the authorities. Generally speaking, they're always ready to pull out their tricks and welcome any chance to survive or improve their miserable existence. Given they come from all corners of the Empire, they are often sources of precious information for the Custodes, but are quite skilled negotiators and will only sell at the highest price.

COURTESANS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Societate (Seduction)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

A miserable existence is the most fitting description of the life led by the many individuals (even male) who in order to earn their daily keep, must prostitute themselves in the slums where they live, or in the *lupanari* (brothels), or dance and undress at banquets that morph into orgies. Life becomes even less bearable in the case of professional dancers or courtesans, who have been taught how to properly adorn themselves and appear perfectly 'decorative'. According to a system imported from Greece, the most able are hired for a day, a month, or even a year.

CRIMINALS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello (Threaten), De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (Larceny) or De Societate (Deceit)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Tactics

Pickpockets and scammers represent a real danger to unwary visitors to the Empire's metropolises. The city streets, especially at night and in the rougher districts, are highly frequented by all types of criminals. Armed individuals are left in peace (there's no point looking for trouble), but Custodes must nonetheless be extra careful not to show off their riches or valuable items, or they risk attracting entire gangs of criminals.

DOCTORS AND HEALERS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Scientia (Medicine) or De Natura (Herb Lore), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None

Every respectable nobleman has a capable doctor in his employ, loyal to the immortal teachings of Hippocrates. Unless they can't afford it, in which case they're forced to mix with the miserable populace crowding the temples of Aesculapius [where healing and medication were practiced], the market *tabernae medicae* or the homes of self-styled healers, often followers of bizarre and folkloric oriental cults promising miraculous cures.



ERUDITES (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: De Societate (Oratory), Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Scientia (one or more disciplines), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

More and more women of high society are reading the classics, gaining full access to the parlors and clubs of literates and scholars. In spite of this, for some strange reason they are still excluded from the most profitable activity of scholars: lecturing. Thanks to the ease of travel between one part of the Empire and another, many scholars are invited to the large cities to hold crowded conferences and orations on the most disparate topics, from mythology to history, from the nature of the gods to the soul's fate.

FARMERS AND SHEPHERDS (COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (Farming)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Farmers and shepherds that live within Imperial borders are generally grateful to Rome and the Empire for the exceptional period of peace and prosperity that has fostered their harvests and their flocks' health. In any case, they live a very hard life, forced to endure the unequal competition of landowners and the abuse of local lords. What's more, especially in areas with a dense military presence, they must contribute to the supplies of passing legions. They are superstitious, hard-headed, and frugal, but hospitable.

FIELD HANDS AND MANUAL LABORERS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV4
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Hard-headed and superstitious, the life of a field hand or manual laborer is perhaps even worse than that of a slave. Officially free men, they are in actual fact genuine serfs, harshly exploited by landowners or masters. They are resistant to fatigue but age prematurely, and their average life expectancy is rather short. They are generally indifferent to everyone and everything, and it is anything but easy to shake the apathy out of them. They are poor people, but are happy to help those worse off than they, if they can.

FOREIGN DIPLOMATS (CITY, CASTRA)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Ratio
3 dice: De Societate (Diplomacy)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Foreign nobles sent on a representation mission (often to perform a specific task) in the main centers of power, throughout the provinces, and along the borders. Some remain within the Empire's borders for many years, and it's not uncommon for them to become involved in espionage activities. Due to their guilty consciences, they don't take well to any interference by the Custodes. Especially in Rome and the larger cities, they weave intrigues and conspiracies in the interests of their own country and for their own personal gain. Officially, they always behave with extreme courtesy, albeit not very sincerely, so as not to create any suspicion on their account.

GUIDES (COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore (Marching), De Natura (own territory)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

The Empire is immense. No one on the face of the earth could possibly know how to move around it risk-free, or even merely survive in every swamp, forest, desert, or mountain within its borders. In the case of territories beyond the limes, these problems become almost insurmountable. If the Custodes wish to move about in or search unknown natural places, it is essential that they employ the services of the local guides; although it may not be immediately clear, every forest is different, every swamp is different, every desert is different. They only have one thing in common: if they can, they will kill you.

HUNTERS AND FISHERMEN (COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello (Spears), De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (Hunting or Fishing)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Hunting or fishing spear (Damage 5)
Protections: None

Hunters generally live in small villages around forests or near the mountains. They are not normally interested in political affairs and aspire to lead tranquil lives. They are always particularly distrusting of foreigners, whose presence they interpret as symptomatic of undesired upheavals in their lives. Fisherman naturally live in coastal areas and on the islands. They are simple and reserved people, but normally courteous and hospitable. They usually live in poor but comfortable wooden huts and are well versed in the local myths and legends. They are also excellent guides at sea, and in many cases their help proves to be indispensable.

LANDOWNERS (COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (Decorum), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Either patricians or enriched equites, landowners that don't live in the city lead luxurious lives in their fortified and inaccessible villas, served and revered by the hordes of servants and slaves that work for them. They lead an idle existence and act like *ante-litteram* feudal lords, easily bothered by any interferences (to be honest, very few) of the Empire. They get around on horseback, protected by an escort of at least half a dozen mercenaries.

LAWYERS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Scientia (Law), De Societate (Oratory), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

The *cursus honorum* of the young exponents of the *nobilitas* often needs to pass by this position. It is a sign of prestige, money and power. If an individual walking through the crowded forum streets is preceded by bodyguards rudely shoving passers-by aside, it's likely to be a lawyer or jurist. They can afford to do so, because it is to them that everyone must turn if they need to quickly obtain a permit, or concession or be freed of an inconvenient charge. All you need is enough money.

MERCHANTS, INNKEEPERS AND SHOPKEEPERS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Societate (Negotiation)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Storekeepers and innkeepers are small traders, normally of plebeian origin, focused exclusively on their earnings; the former inside their stores (where they sell vases, furniture, mirrors, gold or ivory objects, sandals, togas, cosmetics, and anything else that can be bought and sold), the latter in their taverns. Merchants are basically ambulant shopkeepers, always hurriedly traveling from one town fair to the next, in the eternal fear of being ambushed by brigands. They are often escorted by a number of guards proportional to the value of their load, and in many cases wouldn't disdain the company of the Custodes (they may even offer them a fee). They trade any goods without scruples, focusing exclusively on their gains.

OFFICIALS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Scientia (Law), Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (Bureaucracy), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Upstanding or corrupt, cowardly or completely reckless; these are the officials of any rank and level responsible for upholding the foundations of the Empire. If there is an Imperial official in any village, whether large or small, the law of Rome is undisputed. They bear the weight of the complex task of molding every city and village in the image of the Capital. The Custodes must learn very well how to interact with them, because it is precisely the officials who know the secrets and weaknesses of the majority of those living in the community.

ENGINEERS (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Scientia (Engineering)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Every legion uses the services of half a dozen engineers, expert connoisseurs in the use and construction of siege machines and privileged advisers of the commanding officer in selecting the location for their encampment and fortification. They are generally not very skilled fighters.

POLITICIANS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Scientia (Law), De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (Oratory, Politics), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

In the distinguished parlors of local high society, aristocratic families exchange gifts and favors, introduce their children of a marriageable age, and wish each other endless blessings. But things are not always as they seem: competition for the highest political offices is ruthless and often violent. During election campaigns, for a handful of extra votes, the greatest families of the nobility, united in factions, fight fiercely with no shortage of intimidation tactics, provoking riots and scuffles and even commissioning assassinations. From the *rostra*, the public tribunes, and in the *comitii*, the places where electoral assemblies are held, politicians recite their speeches and false promises, cheered on by their supporters, those *clientes* to whom they gift *sportula* (food and wine) every day.

PRIESTS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: De Societate, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Magia (Imperial Cults*, Favor of the Gods), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

** For priests of cults other than Imperial cults, a different religion can be specified (for example, Christianity, Mithraism, or Judaism for the corresponding Tolerated Cults), or, especially in the case of clandestine or forbidden cults, Forbidden Cults, Superstitions or specific illicit religions will be indicated.*



The mix of cults and religions more or less tolerated by the Empire makes it impossible to classify all the different types of priests or priestesses that can be encountered in the city, however, these are some of the most common and characteristic traits. Priests are very familiar with the magical arts and enjoy great authority over the plebs, less so over the wealthier classes. In the majority of cases they are genuinely faithful to the god (or multiple gods), whom they claim to serve, even though they often use the privileges of their position for scopes that are anything but mystical. Their tolerance of other religions is normally less than the tolerance they demand for their own.

SAILORS (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Magia (Superstitions), Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (Sailing)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

The entire logic of commerce is based on their work. Despite the storms, pirate attacks, and wrath of the merciless gods of the sea, they spend much of their existence on board ships sailing continuously back and forth between the thousands of Imperial ports. For those who are interested, sailors are therefore an infinite source of anecdotes, stories, and rumors across all the provinces looking out to the *Mare Nostrum* or *Oceanus.*

SOOTHSAYERS (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: De Societate*, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Magia (Interpretation of Omens or Superstitions), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

**Soothsayers that live far from the city have De Natura instead of De Societate.*

Among the marginalized elements of society that crowd the city forums and muddy village streets, the so-called 'soothsayers' constitute a large and particularly pathetic group. They roam around the most popular areas in search of visitors from out of town, and in exchange for a few pennies foresee their future, normally full of joys and riches. Amidst the charlatans and imposters, when you least expect it, it's possible to stumble upon individuals who actually do have divinatory abilities, even though they might not know it. But finding them is like *acum in meta faeni quaerere* (looking for a needle in a haystack).

COMBATANT NPCS

Combatant NPCs normally have DV6. Recruits, or poorly trained or inexperienced soldiers can have DV5 (the Demiurge will adjust the NPC sheet in this case), while veterans and elite soldiers can even have DV8. Truly exceptional combatants might even have DV10, while DV12 is considered the maximum human limit and is only used for legendary warriors.

BRIGANDS (COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Scramasax (Damage 5), Sling (Damage 3)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Tactics

*The **Ringleaders** (DV6) normally have some military experience and are better equipped (they are often former legionaries): they have a Gladius (Damage 6) and wear a Lorica Hamata (Protection 5).*

Brigands and *latrones* occupy the secondary communication ways and surrounds of many villages. They gather in small groups, usually preferring woodland areas for the main purpose of stealing travelers' money. They stay hidden, waiting for the best time to strike, before making dangerous ambushes; but they do so only if the risks are minimal or if they are in a truly desperate situation. They generally kill prisoners so as not leave any witnesses, unless they intend to ask for ransom. Their collaborators and sidekicks, called *receptatores*, offer shelter and hospitality in exchange for a share of the earnings. A few random groups may have gone into hiding for special reasons; in these cases, it may be worth parleying with them.

CENTURIONS (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (Command), Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, Ratio
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Plumata (Protection 6), Scutum (Parry +3)

***Trecenarians** (centurions of the Praetorian Guard) have DV8 and use an Ensis (Damage 8) instead of the Gladius. They are among the most expert combatants in the Empire.*

Centurions, so called because traditionally they commanded centuries of one hundred men, are extremely important figures. The value and skills of the legionary units largely depend on the quality of their centurions, who live in direct and daily contact with the soldiers. They wear ringed armor with stand-out decorations representative of their achievements, and the characteristic crest mounted transversally to the head. In their left hand they carry the *vitis*, a thin club about one meter long with a thicker, apple-shaped end, a symbol of their authority and tested on the backs of the most unruly subjects.

LEGIONARIES (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (Marching)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pilum (Damage 10), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Hamata* (Protection 5), Scutum (Parry +3)

- *Special Abilities:* Formation - this skill is activated if, during combat, three or more Legionaries fight side by side and one of their superiors is present; a Custos can perform this function if they have success in a **De Societate** roll with DT 9.

**Some legions are equipped with the Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8), used less than in the past because of its high production costs: these legionaries do not have De Corpore (Marching) 3 dice.*

Simple legionaries make up the largest category in the Roman army. Despite the exceptional overall power of the Roman military apparatus, legionary soldiers are not necessarily extraordinary fighters. The invincibility of the Imperial legions is predominantly due to their spirit of discipline and sense of duty, in addition to formidable logistical support (transport of supplies, weapons, military roads, etc.).

MERCENARIES (CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: Scramasax (Damage 5), Angon (Damage 5)
Protections: Corium Lorica (Protection 3), Parma (Parry +1)

*Paid **Bodyguards** are normally very strong and tough, but not particularly skilled fighters (De Bello 2 dice, De Corpore 3 dice), and often serve Landowners and Politicians.*

More so than actual fighters, mercenaries tend to be thugs too poorly disciplined for the life of a legionary, always ready to lay their hands on the weak. To earn a living, they escort merchants, politicians or magistrates, or protect the isolated villas of large landowners. If somebody has enough money and enjoys undisputed prestige, they may even have an entire group of them, almost constituting a small private army. If they are left without work for long periods of time, they easily switch to brigandage.

MILITARY LEGATES (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV10
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Societate (Command), Ratio
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (Protection 10)

*The same statistics can be used for other types of Legates having more administrative roles, for example the **Senatorial Legates**, who will have De Societate (Politics) instead of De Societate (Command).*

These are the commanders of the military castra, career officers that don't necessarily belong to the aristocratic class. Carrying out diplomatic missions and liaising with both the local populations and those beyond the Imperial borders, Military Legates are rarely skilled or expert fighters, but they do give very clear orders that should best be promptly followed. To be instantly recognized by all those present, they wear long red cloaks; they rarely wear their armor, except during ceremonies or in case of serious danger. They are generally well disposed toward the Custodes, although irritated by their autonomy and freedom.

MILITARY TRIBUNES (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello (Tactics), De Societate (Command), Ratio
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (Protection 10)

These are the commanders of the single legionary units, officers trained in day-to-day military affairs, who take discipline very seriously. Endowed with a strong and determined personality, they don't take well to the interference of the Custodes, who therefore need to be very tactful if they wish to avoid creating a stir. The most skilled and competent are normally loved and revered by the soldiers; while in contrast, the overly authoritarian behavior of some has been known to trigger open rebellions. They are experts in military tactics and strategies.

MOUNTED AUXILIA (CASTRA)

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Natura (Exploration, Riding)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Spear (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Squamata (Protection 4), Clipeus (Parry +2)

*The **Decurions** (commanders of a decuria, or a unit of ten mounted Auxilia) have 3 dice in De Bello (mounted) and Ratio, and wear a Lorica Plumata (Protection 6).*

The legion's auxiliary troops are normally recruited from the local population. Less fearsome in combat than their fellow legionaries, the auxiliaries are nonetheless often more informed about local events and hearsay and more able in the art of survival. They are easy to meet on horseback (they ride *Light warhorses*, see page 157).

PRAETORIANS (CITY, COUNTRYSIDE AND CASTRA)

Average Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Ensis (Damage 8), Pilum (Damage 10), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8), Scutum (Parry +3)

- *Special Abilities:* Formation - this skill is activated if, during combat, three or more Praetorians fight side

by side and one of their superiors is present; a Custos can perform this function if they have success in a De Societate roll with DT 12.

The Praetorians are recruited from among the Empire's most aggressive and skilled fighters. They can be found anywhere, either escorting high-level officials, guarding important places, or patrolling the streets and favorite hangouts of thieves and brigands. They are excellently equipped and very rarely intimidated, corrupting and hindering as they perform their assigned tasks. Upon seeing the Praetorians, ill-intentioned individuals change direction without a second thought.

SICARII (CITY)

Average Value: DV5
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Societate (Streetwise), Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello (Daggers), De Corpore
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Sica (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Special Abilities: Charge (used to simulate skills in surprise attacks), Stealthy

Sicarii don't kill for ideals or to avenge a wrong, but only for those willing to pay handsomely for their temporary engagement. They are among the most despised individuals in military circles, due to their having absolutely no sense of honor or statehood. Once they receive the deposit and details of the target to be eliminated, they can hide in the shadows for weeks or months on end before acting, waiting for the perfect moment when the victim is defenseless and the risk is lowest.

VIGILES (CITY)

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Scientia (Investigation)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Cudgel (Damage 4)
Protections: Corium Lorica (Protection 3)

Special Abilities: Acute Senses

Vigiles are urban guards in charge of putting out fires, among other things, and maintaining the public order. In Rome there are now more than 7000, but they can also be found in huge numbers in other large and small Imperial cities. The Vigiles' social standing isn't one of the best, given their job is underpaid and often very risky. Among the public officials, incidents of death on duty in the Vigiles corpus is so high that many citizens consider it to be alarming.

GLADIATOR NPCS (CITY)

Perhaps we don't need to go into too much detail for these formidable fighters who spend most of their time training inside the arenas and amphitheaters. Many of them were slaves, others became gladiators by choice and earn a living thanks to the prizes awarded for the fights, if they survive... Former slaves, on the other hand, live in the hope of freedom, occasionally granted by way of their victories. They fight with great skill and above all with a sense of entertainment.

Following are the main gladiator classes. The gladiators, like other combatants, have DV6 (of course if the Demiurge wants to insert an inexperienced gladiator in an adventure, they can also use DV5, making sure to adjust the NPC's sheet). On the other hand, veteran gladiators (called **Rudiarii**), *have minimum DV8.*

MURMILLO

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Helmet, Greaves, and Lorica Manica (Protection 3), Scutum (Parry +3)

A gladiator with a striking build, but rather slow, who fights protected by a large shield. They wear a large helmet that covers their entire head.

RETIARIUS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Trident (Damage 8)
Protections: Galerus (shoulder-guard typical of the Retiarius, Parry +1)

Special Abilities: Net

A gladiator that instantly stirs up the crowd when they enter the arena due to the similarities of their fighting style and equipment with those of fishermen.



THRAEX

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sica (Damage 4)
Protections: Helmet, Greaves, and Lorica Manica (Protection 3), Parma (Parry +1)

An agile gladiator, with scarce armor protection. They carry a small shield and wear a traditional helmet with a griffin's head.

BARBARIAN NPCS (CROSS-BORDER)

In the Roman Empire, the term "barbarian" doesn't necessarily identify a less civilized or sophisticated population or single individual; barbarians are simply all those who couldn't care less about Roman citizenship and live beyond the Imperial borders. They are therefore more a geographical than ethnic denomination, but one which can easily be exploited by politicians or leaders to ensure the rapid consensus of more easily impressionable groups of society, always ready to attribute foreigners and immigrants the blame for all misfortunes.

The following character sheets are more generic and can be used to create adversaries not specified by the adventure.

BARBARIAN CHAMPIONS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Ensis (Damage 8), Securicula (Damage 7)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5), Clipeus (Parry +2)

Some particularly strong Champions have a Spatha (Damage 10) or Securis (Damage 11) instead of the Ensis, holding them with two hands.

BARBARIAN PRIESTS

Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: De Natura, De Scientia, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Magia
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: Cudgel or Sica (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Curse (2DV, the victim must be able to *see* and *hear* the druid), Fate Roll

BARBARIAN WARRIORS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Spear (Damage 6), Scramasax (Damage 5), Angon (Damage 5)
Protections: Clipeus (Parry +2)

MOUNTED NOMADS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Spear (Damage 6), Arcus (Damage 6). While mounted, they also carry a Sagaris or "horseman's axe" (equivalent to a Securicula, Damage 7).
Protections: Lorica Squamata (Protection 4)

***Elite fighters** have 3 dice in De Bello (mounted) and use a Toxon (Damage 8) instead of the Arcus. These NPCs are often encountered on horseback and use the mounted combat rules (they ride light warhorses).*



ANIMALS

Animal behavior is regulated by very simple principles: hunger and survival instinct. Animals therefore attack if they are hungry or disturbed, otherwise they tend to stay away from humans, either hiding or fleeing. Only if they are desperate or disturbed do they engage in battle, which is considered lost from the outset, and which can usually be avoided by simply offering them food. Tamed animals can normally be used by players as pack animals, transport means or simple travel companions, and their behavior depends on the type of training they've received.

BEARS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Grab

Bears live in the forests north of the Mediterranean. In the extreme north it is also possible to find ***Polar Bears***, which are larger and more aggressive (DV12). They are perpetually hungry, and leaving them some food before making a swift escape may help avoid a dangerous battle.

BOARS

Size: 3
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15

- *Special Abilities:* Charge

Boars are widespread in the forests. They are a wild animal, which if threatened charges their attacker, attempting to strike them with their tusks.

BULLS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Charge

*The statistics refer to **Bulls**, **Bisons** and **Buffaloes** in the wild. Domesticated cattle, such as pack and working oxen, have Pack Animals instead of Charge. Large **Aurochs** (DV12), wild ancestors of domestic oxen, are still widespread in many wild regions throughout the Empire.*

CAMELS

WAR CAMELS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* War Training

PACK CAMELS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Animals

***Dromedaries** (both war and pack) are smaller than the Camels and have DV8, but they are also faster and have 3 dice in De Corpore (Running).*

Camels live in desert regions, where thanks to their exceptional resistance to thirst, hunger, and fatigue, they are largely used as transport means and working animals. Some desert tribes use specially trained camels in battle, in the place of horses.

CROCODILES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (in water)
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 3)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy (in water)

Crocodiles occupy the Nile River in Aegyptus and the waterways and swamps in the heart of Sub-Saharan Africa. Their scaly and resilient skin has the same capacity to defend against blows as that of leather armor.

DEER

Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, De Bello
2 dice: De Bello (Charge), Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 16

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Charge (males only)

*The statistics can also be used for other types of deer, such as **Elks** (Size 4, DV10, 2 dice in De Corpore, no Acute Senses) and **Roes** (DV6, 3 dice in Sensibilitas).*

Deer are tame animals commonly found in all climates except for desert areas. They have strong self-preservation instincts and flee as soon as they are approached by man or ferocious animals. If forced into battle, they charge their adversary with their antlers, but quickly flee as soon as they can.

DOGS

Size: 3
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses

*The statistics describe common hunting or sheepdogs. Large **guard dogs** and **war dogs** have DV6 and Sensibilitas 2 dice.*

DONKEYS

Size: 3
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage, De Bello
2 dice: Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Animals

Donkeys are pack animals, unfortunately often hard-headed and peevish.

EAGLES

Size: 2
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage, Hit Points
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 4

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Dive, Flight

*The statistics can also be used for other birds of prey, for example **Hawks** (Size 1, DV3, 3 dice in De Corpore), **Owls** (DV3, Stealthy), and **Vultures** (Size 3, 8 Hit Points, do not have the Dive skill).*

The queens of the sky are the symbol of Roman power and glory. They are distinguished by their exceptional dive speed and the force of their claws. They rarely attack larger species if not to defend their nest.

ELEPHANTS

WAR

Size: 5
Average Value: DV20
1 die: Damage, De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: -
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 60

- *Special Abilities:* Charge, War Training

PACK

Size: 5
Average Value: DV20
1 die: Damage, De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: -
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 60

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Animals

Elephants are relatively tame and amenable animals. They can be mounted and used for heavy works or war purposes. They live in the subtropical jungles of Africa and India, but have also been introduced to the Imperial territories of North Africa and Asia Minor.

HORSES

RACEHORSES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (Running)
Hit Points: 20

LIGHT WARHORSES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (Running)
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* War Training

HEAVY WARHORSES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* War Training

CART HORSES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Animals

Horses can be found almost everywhere; some are trained for war, others are sturdier and more robust, some are trained for heavy work, others still are used for quadriga and chariot racing.

LEOPARDS (AND PANTHERS)

Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 12

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Sense, Charge, Grab, Stealthy

They live deep in equatorial forests, and are highly sought after for gladiator games.

LIONS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (Jumping, Running)
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Sense, Charge, Grab, Stealthy

The statistics describe male lions. ***Lionesses*** *are smaller, but are accustomed to hunting in packs (DV8, Pack Tactics).*

The so called "kings of the forest" live in prides in the African savannahs, but can also be found in the mountainous regions of Asia Minor, Armenia and Mesopotamia; they are highly sought after for gladiator games.

LYNXES

Size: 2
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 8

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Sense, Charge, Grab, Stealthy

MONKEYS

BABOONS

Size: 2
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 8

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Tactics

GORILLAS

Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore (Brawling), Hit Points
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Grab

CHIMPANZEES

Size: 2
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 10

- *Special Abilities:* Grab

MULES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Animals

Mules, the offspring of a jack and a mare, are bred all throughout the Mediterranean. They are much more robust than donkeys, and at the same time more resilient than a racehorse.

RAMS

Size: 2
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage, De Bello
2 dice: De Bello (Charge), Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 8

- *Special Abilities:* Charge

The statistics can describe all types of ovine and caprine animals, including ***Goats*** *(DV4) and* ***Alpine Ibex*** *(DV5).* ***Farm Sheep*** *have DV3 and do not have the Charge special ability.*

SNAKES

CONSTRICTOR SNAKES

Size: 2*
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: Damage (while they are grabbing the victim), De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 8

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy

The statistics describe medium-sized constrictor snakes, such as the majority of ***Pythons****. Larger species may nonetheless reach Size 3 and DV6.*

VENOMOUS SNAKES

Size: 1*
Average Value: DV3
1 die: Damage, Hit Points
2 dice: Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, De Bello
Hit Points: 3

- *Special Abilities:* Poison (3DV), Stealthy

The statistics describe small venomous snakes, such as ***Aspides*** *and* ***Vipers****. Particularly large and dangerous species, such as* ***Cobras****, can reach Size 2 and DV5.*

* Although most snakes are much longer than humans are tall, their physical shape means they are able to move in restricted spaces, therefore for the purposes of the game, their Size is smaller than their effective dimensions.

TIGERS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore (Jumping)
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Sense, Charge, Grab, Stealthy

Tigers live only in India and Asia, not in Africa or the Middle East; the Custodes might come across them because certain specimens are imported for gladiator games.

WOLVES

Size: 3
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Pack Tactics

A pack leader is normally the largest specimen of the pack (DV6). The statistics can also be used for other wild canids, for example ***Jackals*** *(DV4, Stealthy) or* ***Hyenas*** *(DV6, De Corpore 2 dice).*

Wolves live in packs in the forests. They have quite an aggressive temperament, but are cowardly and therefore only attack if numerically superior.

FANTASTICAL CREATURES

Fantastical creatures represent the main antagonists of the Custodes throughout their adventures. They include mythological beings, terrifying monsters, and creatures belonging to the traditions of the many populations living within the Imperial borders. The creatures are described in detail in the character sheets of this section; each sheet contains a description with all values and powers, making it easy to use the creatures in the game. The [square] brackets include historical, geographical and system information reserved for the Demiurge.

Creatures with significant common traits are grouped together under the following headings: *Demons*, *Dragons*, *Giants, Theurgic Constructs,* and *Undead*. Each heading contains a general introduction followed by the individual character sheets with descriptions and specific scores.



There is no known data or certain information for fantastical creatures. For this reason, their descriptions, the result of reports, and notes by scholars and priests of the Empire, are often lacking or incomplete.

To check whether a Custos knows something about the creature in question, the Demiurge can allow one roll; based on the Degree of Success yielded, the character acquires the relative information (every Degree of Success includes all the previous ones: if, for example, a Custos achieves a II Degree of Success, the Demiurge refers to the paragraph relative to I and II Degree of Success). If the creature belongs to a group (for example, it is a *Demon*), the Demiurge can allow two rolls: one for the group and one for the specific creature.

The DT for the roll is 9; it can be reduced to 6 if the Custos has special reasons for being more informed about the creature (for example, they are from a province where the myth of the creature is especially widespread).

The Peritiae and Specialties to be used are at the discretion of the Demiurge, even if the following represent the most common:

- **De Natura** for animals with unnatural characteristics and for hybrid animal creatures;
- **De Magia** for creatures of mythology, folklore, *Demons* and *Undead*;
- **De Scientia** for creatures present in poems and *Theurgic Constructs*.

TEKNÉS (TECHNIQUES)

The Magisters of the *cursus auguralis* of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana are convinced that certain renowned political figures, great philosophers, priests of tolerated cults, and eminent scholars have gained possession of special techniques, derived from mythology or esoteric writings, which would be extremely helpful in identifying, pursuing, and fighting the most dangerous supernatural creatures. Unfortunately, at the moment, none of them have revealed any of their secrets. The name the Magisters have decided to assign to these skills is *teknés* (sing. *tekné*, from Greek); the individual techniques are referred to as **Adversus: specific name of creature** (for example, *Adversus: Amazons*), but for now represent only the titles of a completely empty list. [Generally, the *teknés* can be learned by the Custodes during the adventures].

AMAZONS

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Natura, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura (Riding)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sagaris (equivalent to a Securicula, Damage 7), Spear (Damage 6), Toxon (Damage 8)
Protections: Corium Lorica (Protection 3), Parma (Parry +1)

- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
The Amazons are beautiful, barbaric warrior women, whose behavior is similar to that of males. They fight on horseback and intentionally burn or amputate their right breasts to make drawing their bronze bows easier. They believe they have descended from Artemis, the Greek goddess of female strength and virginity. They live by hunting and perpetuate their species by mating with the males of neighboring tribes, kidnapped from their villages or drawn to them by their incredible beauty. It is said that male newborns are maimed and enslaved, or killed.

II Degree of Success
The peoples of the Balkan peninsula, particularly the Greeks, have never doubted the existence of this mythical population of ruthless female warriors, ranging through the thick of the forests on the brink of the known world. The sightings and unlikely tales of merchants and explorers returning from Colchis [Caucasus], Sarmatia [Ukraine] ,and southern Scythia [Russia], do nothing but confirm ancient, thousand-year-old myths.

III Degree of Success
Scythians, Huns, Armenians, and Germani keep well clear of the forests where the Amazons are believed to live, while the Sarmatians seem to maintain some sort of relationship and trade with them. The great historian, Plutarch, spent a decade studying their possible objectives and movements, as he writes in *Life of Pompey* "small crescent-shaped shields and boots" typical of the Amazons were found on the battlefield after a confusing and bloody night-time battle between legionaries and mountain dwellers of Colchis, along the edge of a large forest.



MONSTROUS ANIMALS

To create a Monstrous Animal, a normal animal (also called a base animal) must be selected, which is then assigned enhanced scores and magic powers (see below). Lastly, Monstrous Animals are assigned a Degree of Danger based on their DV and possibly a Protection value.

Degree of Danger: based on the DV of the base animal (DV3 or DV4: 1; DV5 or DV 6: 2; DV8: 3, DV10: 4; DV12 or DV20: 5)
Size: that of the base animal increased by 1 (up to maximum 5)
Average Value: that of the base animal, increased by one category (e.g. from DV8 to DV10, up to maximum DV20) or by two categories if the base animal has DV5 or less (e.g. from DV5 to DV8).
1 die: the same as the base animal
2 dice: the same as the base animal
3 dice: the same as the base animal
Hit Points: enhanced based on the DV increase
Protections: the same as the base animal. Some Monstrous Animals may have additional protection, normally in the form of squamae, bony scales, or thick and resilient skin.

- *Special Abilities:* those of the base animal
- *Magic Powers (from 1 to 3):* the most common are Extra Arms, Fiery or Poisonous Breath, Invulnerability, Multiple Heads, Permanent Wounds, Regeneration, Terror, and Unnatural Speed

I Degree of Success
More and more often, the cultured classes are beginning to pay heed to those superstitious shepherds and wayfarers who believe in the existence of gigantic, deformed, fantastical creatures, apparently roaming through the darkness of the forests, the tops of mountains and hills, in the midst of putrid swamps, or through stony and scorched deserts. Since the dawn of time, the works of writers and poets have immortalized fabulous and illogical tales of animals with supernatural virtues and exaggerated physical characteristics, or unnatural crosses between animals of different species (such as the *Hippalectryon* or *Hircocervus* of Aristophanes).

II Degree of Success
Unfortunately, there is some truth to each of these stories, and it is fair to say that the appearance of such creatures never leads to any good. Whether specimens of exceptional dimensions or genuine incarnations of the forces of nature that refuse to be subjugated by man - such as the *two-headed eagle*, stormbringers that were much-feared by the peoples of the eastern limes, or the monstrous *boars with a humanoid face*, which go about the provinces of the Western Prefecture destroying homes built in the most ancient forests - either way, it is recommended to approach them and proceed with great caution.

III Degree of Success
And in the case of the horrid creatures escorting the demonic entities or deities of the Underworld (such as the cruel *black she-dogs* in Hekate's entourage), the only useful piece of advice is to try and stay alive, escape, and ask for reinforcements.





EXAMPLE: THE MONSTROUS BOAR

For their Celtic adventures, the Demiurge decides to generate a Monstrous Boar. The size of a normal boar is increased by 1 (passing from 3 to 4) and its DV by two categories (from DV5 to DV8). The special abilities remain those of the boar. The Demiurge gives Protection 4 and 2 magic powers to the creature: Poisonous Breath and Unnatural Speed. The result of the transformation of the boar into a Monstrous Boar is therefore:

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 4
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Protections: Thick skin (Protection 4)

- *Special Abilities:* Charge
- *Magic Powers:* Poisonous Breath, Unnatural Speed

I or II Degree of Success
The frightened populaces of villages erected alongside the deepest forests of the Celtic provinces (Gallia, Britannia, Iberia, Germania, and Raetia) often speak of an enormous boar with a human head, endowed with huge tusks. When it arrives, it destroys everything in its path.

III Degree of Success
Rumor has it that its tusks can be used as powerful amulets against magical attacks. [Having both tusks of a Monstrous Boar allows any Ratio roll to be re-rolled once to oppose a magic power; see page 139.]

SACRED ANIMALS

To generate a Sacred Animal, a normal animal (also called a base animal) must be selected, whose scores and magic powers are then enhanced (see below). Lastly, Sacred Animals are assigned a Degree of Danger based on their DV and possibly a Protection value.

Degree of Danger: based on the DV of the base animal (DV 6 or less: 1; DV8: 2, DV10: 3; DV12: 4, DV20: 5)
Size: the same as the base animal
Average Value: that of the base animal
1 die: the same as the base animal
2 dice: the same as the base animal
3 dice: the same as the base animal
Hit Points: the same as the base animal
Protections: the same as the base animal.

- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, plus one or two beneficial or defensive magic powers (normally Healing 1, 2, or 3DV; but also Immortality and Prophecy)

I Degree of Success
In all the great Mediterranean civilizations, animals are placed at the center of a complex amalgam of beliefs and rituals. The gods themselves possess the special attributes of animals associated and consecrated to them, and in every era, the deities have temporarily assumed animal forms for a certain scope (to move quickly, seduce, and witness events undisturbed).

II Degree of Success
Animals are considered sacred throughout the entire Empire because they are assimilated to the gods, associated with the gods, subjugated to the gods, and sacrificed to the gods. Some more than others, like the bull (for strength and fertility), the eagle (for vitality and longevity), the horse (for intelligence and human-like sentiments), the lion (for power, courage, and honor), the snake (for secrecy, its capacity for self-regeneration, and its thirst for revenge), the dolphin (for speed and generosity), and various bird species (obviously for their ability to fly, but also for their acute vision, unpredictability, and wisdom).

III Degree of Success
Certain species of these animals would themselves appear to contain an element of divinity, and their manifestation should not be ignored; should they appear to mankind, it is because they have something important to do or communicate.



EXAMPLE: THE SACRED BULL

For their Celtic adventures, the Demiurge decides to generate a Sacred Bull. Most of the statistics remain those of a normal bull. The Demiurge attributes 2 magic powers to the creature: Fate Roll and Healing (2DV). The result of the transformation of the bull into a Sacred Bull is therefore:

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Charge
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Healing (2DV)

I or II Degree of Success
Three-horned bull of a divine nature, portrayed in countless Celtic statues and jewels. The central horn is considered a symbol of the bull's supernatural origin and its role as a mediator between the human world and the magical one. If encountered, it should be approached with great caution.

III Degree of Success
The bull proves to be docile and allows single individuals without hostile intentions to approach [if they succeed in a roll of De Natura with DT 12]. Touching the central horn allows complete healing [of all normal wounds and those caused by *Permanent Wounds*; of diseases or other states of impairment: *Petrification*, *Paralysis*, etc.].

ARACHNE'S PROGENY

Human form
Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Scientia (Weaving)
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: Sica (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis

Giant Spider form
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 16
Protections: Chitinous armor (Protection 4)

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Sense, Net (spider web), Poison (2DV), Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis

I or II Degree of Success
Age-old traditions speak of beautiful maidens, Arachne's cursed progeny, able to transform into enormous spiders. According to Greek mythology, Arachne was a young weaver, so talented that she eventually came to challenge the goddess Athena. The challenge ended in a tie and the infuriated goddess struck the young girl with her shuttle, transforming her into an enormous spider. Even if the story were to be entirely untrue, the majority of the population of Asia and Syria have no doubt that certain women able to transform into monstrous spiders do actually exist, under the guise of normal human beings. They can never produce male offspring, and females are born with the same characteristics as their mothers.

III Degree of Success
These spider-women often lead ordinary lives, carrying out their work as very talented weavers; but their need to periodically feed on human flesh makes them transform into horrible, hungry poisonous spiders, the size of humans... Their woven works, too, possess the characteristic of being able to mutate into hardy spider webs that imprison the unfortunate victims persuaded to wear them [to tear the web, make a Vigor roll with DT 9; until then, the character is considered *Surprised* against all attacks].



BASILISKS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 2
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Hit Points
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello
Hit Points: 8
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 4)

- *Special Abilities:* Poison* (3DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Petrification (3DV, the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim)

** Basilisks are able to inject their poison when they inflict wounds but also spitting it at an adversary at Close range. In this case, if the victim is struck, the basilisk does not inflict any wounds but rather directly applies the poison (the power of which, however, is reduced to 2DV).*

I Degree of Success
The Basilisk is a very dangerous reptile, whose gaze alone is said to be able to petrify its victims and wither any surrounding vegetation, transforming its habitat into a lifeless desert. According to common superstition, it is born from hens' eggs hatched by snakes, is about three feet long with eight legs and is covered by hard, resilient feathers. Its head is similar to that of a rooster, with two small corneal protuberances on the forehead covered by its skin and a crown of thick feathers, rigid like scales.

II Degree of Success
It knows how to spit venom with exceptional skill and is often described by folklore in the act of hunting birds with its infallible spit: lying on its back, the Basilisk waits for passing birds overhead, then strikes them with its venom, watching them crash to the ground. If a Basilisk drinks from a pool or stream, the water is instantly poisoned [Poison: 2DV].

III Degree of Success
Certain Greek traditions state that it is fatal for Basilisks to hear a rooster's crow, and that if the body of a Basilisk is burnt, their ashes, if properly collected and prepared [**De Magia** roll with DT 12] can provide certain doses of a very powerful antidote [in numbers equal to the Degree of Success obtained in the roll, effective against Poison, Paralysis, and Petrification]: their ashes must be spread over the victim, who will return to normal within a few hours.



BERSERKIRS

Human form
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Weapons: Securis (Damage 11, two-handed)
Protections: Animal skins (Protection 3)

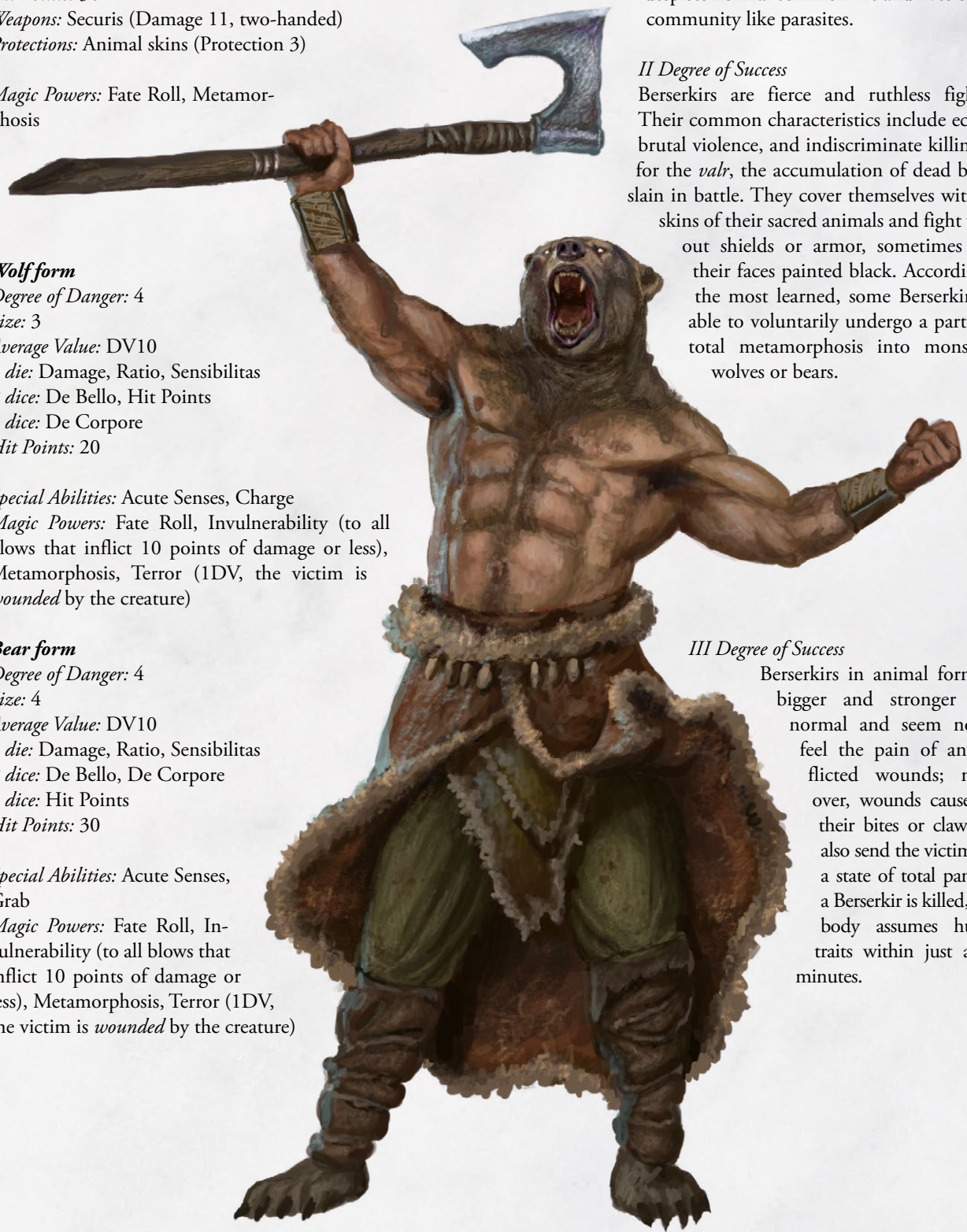
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Metamorphosis

Wolf form
Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Charge
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Invulnerability (to all blows that inflict 10 points of damage or less), Metamorphosis, Terror (1DV, the victim is *wounded* by the creature)

Bear form
Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Invulnerability (to all blows that inflict 10 points of damage or less), Metamorphosis, Terror (1DV, the victim is *wounded* by the creature)



I Degree of Success
Bersekirs, also called "bear skins" or "wolf skins" are ferocious Nordic warriors commonly found in Germanic and Hyperborean [Scandinavian] tribes, whose life has been consecrated to war and bloodshed, in order to join the Wotan heavenly host after their death in battle. Within the social structures of these populations, they are a truly privileged caste that despises normal common life and lives off the community like parasites.

II Degree of Success
Berserkirs are fierce and ruthless fighters. Their common characteristics include ecstasy, brutal violence, and indiscriminate killing, all for the *valr*, the accumulation of dead bodies slain in battle. They cover themselves with the skins of their sacred animals and fight without shields or armor, sometimes with their faces painted black. According to the most learned, some Berserkirs are able to voluntarily undergo a partial or total metamorphosis into monstrous wolves or bears.

III Degree of Success
Berserkirs in animal form are bigger and stronger than normal and seem not to feel the pain of any inflicted wounds; moreover, wounds caused by their bites or claws can also send the victim into a state of total panic. If a Berserkir is killed, their body assumes human traits within just a few minutes.

CENTAURS

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 4
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, De Scientia (Medicine), Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: Spear of Centaurs (Damage 8), Toxon (Damage 8)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Charge
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
These bizarre and hairy hybrid creatures with the upper body of a human and lower body and legs of a horse often appear in Greek literary works and artistic representations. In the most ancient tales, Centaurs are described as wild beings and natural hunters that roam through the forests and mountains, who are unable to resist the most elementary impulses and rush to wine and women without a second thought. Greek mythology reminds us that both Aesculapius and a young Achilles were raised by the centaur Chiron, and that it was the Centaurs themselves who invented medicine.

II Degree of Success
In reality, we know for certain that very similar creatures exist and dwell in various provinces of the Empire. Their relationship with humans has always been difficult. Due to their diversity, over the millennia they have in fact been marginalized, fought, driven from their lands, or exterminated. But some must have survived, and those few certainly don't harbor positive feelings toward humans.

III Degree of Success
According to certain myths, Centaurs have a great hatred for Sirens, responsible for exterminating them in the past. A few recent sightings were reported in Thessaly and in Arcadia [regions of Achaia] and in the province of Macedonia. It would also seem that certain tribes of Centaurs have emigrated beyond the Imperial borders to the north and east, among the mountains of Dacia [Romania] and certain areas of Colchis [Caucasus]. For the Custodes, it may therefore be possible, albeit difficult, to establish a friendly relationship with them.



CHIMERAS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 24
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Grab, Charge Poison* (1DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Fiery Breath, Multiple Heads (2)

** If attacking, the Chimera may decide to use its snake's tail to launch the attack (damage equal to 1d6 instead of 1d12; if it inflicts at least 1 damage it injects the venom). When fighting against multiple opponents, the Chimera can only launch this attack against one opponent (normally the weakest and least protected).*

I Degree of Success
Greek mythology tells of terrifying monsters of Hittite origin having a goat's body, lion's head, and snake's tail. However, the authors themselves describe them very differently, boding well that in reality, Chimeras are simply the fruit of poets' and bards' imagination. According to tradition, these creatures were rampant in Caria and Lycia [south-western coast of Turkey] and were able to breathe powerful and devastating fire; but they were all killed or banished.

II or III Degree of Success
According to popular legend in Achaia, the giant Chimera, daughter of Typhon (a monster that came to challenge the gods of Olympus) and Echidna (half-woman, half-snake) from Lycia, was killed by the hero Bellerophon with the help of the winged horse Pegasus. Another legend instead recounts how that same Chimera, seriously wounded, managed to escape and hide in the bowels of the earth. With the passing of the centuries, although her wounds may have healed, her anger has intensified. [the ***Lycian Chimera*** possesses all the characteristics of a normal Chimera, but Size 5, DV20 instead of DV12 and Degree of Danger 5 instead of 3].



DEMONS

I Degree of Success
We call *demons* those evil creatures dedicated to inflicting pain and desperation upon the living [see also the *Demons and Daimones* box on the next page]. Let this be immediately clear: demons must be hunted, eliminated, destroyed, and annihilated without hesitation; there are no alternatives. They are summoned to earth by powerful sorcerers and fanatical cults for the purpose of exploiting their incredible powers for nefarious purposes. Their summoning is the result of complex rituals, which often have disastrous consequences: the summoned demon rebels against their summoner to be emancipated from their slavery, then roams the earth undisturbed in search of victims. Scholars confirm that demons cannot be permanently killed, but if effectively defeated, they are forced to return to the Underworld until summoned again. Only a few of the many demons of the Mediterranean magical-religious tradition have actually been studied, specifically those about which we have the most reliable information.

II Degree of Success
The most dangerous powers of these obscene creatures are the ability to curse and possess their victims. In this last case, the demon 'enters' the body of the individual and takes control; at that point, the victim is reduced to nothing but a shell, deprived of any free will. Thanks to these powers, demons are even able to mix in and blend with humans, without being discovered. It is very useful to know that sometimes the body of the possessed is deformed by the effects of the possession, thus generating fear and suspicion in those who know them. This is perhaps the most important clue in order to start the hunt. Unfortunately, if the demon realizes, they quickly abandon that victim in search of another who they can similarly possess. Freeing a victim of a demon is probably one of the longest and most dangerous rituals that exists and rarely has a positive outcome.

III Degree of Success
The best thing to do is rely on the *exorcisms* of the *theurgists* [philosophers-summoners] who are followers of Platonism or Pythagoreanism [highly diffused philosophical doctrines among the cultural elite] or the teachings of Apollonius of Tyana [preacher and healer of the second century AD], or else the faith and determination of Jewish rabbis and Christian priests.



AZAZEL

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Magia, De Societate (Deceit), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 20
Protections: None

- *Magic Powers:* Curse (2DV, the victim must *hear* or *see* the creature), Illusion (2DV), Immortality, Disease (2DV, the victim is *touched* by the creature; Ratio roll to oppose)

*The **Disease of Azazel** also entails the loss of Pietas equal to the difference between the roll of the force of the Disease and that of Ratio (to be made immediately, and afterwards once per day due to the Sick condition). If, as a result, the character is left with 0 Pietas, the effects of the Disease disappear, but their soul is claimed by Azazel, and the character becomes his slave. The slave blindly obeys all orders by the demon until their soul is in some way freed.*

I Degree of Success
A desert demon with a goat's features, more than six feet tall, an expert in dark arts, also nominated in the holy book of Jews and many ancient writings. It is said that being touched by his cursed horns will bring about any type of disease.

II or III Degree of Success
Azazel voluntarily interacts with human beings, to whom he may appear friendly and even understanding. He likes instructing them and educating them in his perverse vision of justice and truth. To drive him out of their villages, Jews, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks used - and still use - the *scapegoat* practice: the sacrificing of a goat, preferably black, which is not killed on an altar but rather cruelly sent to die of hunger in the desert.

EMPUSAI

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Bello, Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (Deceit)
Hit Points: 8
Protections: None

- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment (2DV, only against male characters; the victim *sees* the creature), Fate Roll, Metamorphosis, Possession (2DV, only against *Unconscious* female victims), Soul Sucking* (the victim is *touched* by the creature; if they are left with 0 Pietas, they become *Dying*), Unnatural Speed

** A victim of Enchantment can become aware of Soul Sucking if they succeed in a Sensibilitas roll (DT 9); only then can they make a normal Ratio roll (DT 6) to recover from the Enchantment.*

I Degree of Success
Filthy, vulgar female demons, which according to thriving traditions all throughout the Empire, are said to be commanded by Hekate, Queen of Ghosts. For obscure reasons, the Empusai love terrorizing or killing travelers.

II Degree of Success
Their preferred activity seems to be assuming the appearance of female dogs and cows, or taking possession of the bodies of young girls, bestowing upon them the power to seduce men with their beauty. In the hottest hours of the afternoon, or even at night, the Empusai wait at the crossroads for males to pass, so they can lie with them and suck their lifeblood until they die.

III Degree of Success
The Empusai can be betrayed by their feet (or those of the young girls they possess), one of which is bronze and the other a donkey dropping. They are said to flee screaming if insulted, and if attacked they do not engage in combat but rather disappear in a blast of flames, which can cause widespread fire. But this information should be taken with a grain of salt.



DEMONS AND DAIMONES

For scholars of natural sciences, the ambiguous attempts of modern-day philosophers to explain the nature of infernal creatures devoted to evil and which operate on earth may appear decidedly bizarre. According to the majority, the deities are entirely inaccessible and impossible to know, however there do exist very powerful creatures that mediate between mankind and the gods. These supernatural creatures, which we refer to by the Greek term *daimones* (sing. *daimon*) are apparently immortal like the gods, prone to passions and turmoil like man, and able to choose whether to do good or evil. The daimones that choose to do evil are those it was agreed to call demons.

EURYNOMES

Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 2
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Damage, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 8
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Pack Tactics, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Disease* (3DV, the victim is *wounded* by the creature; Vigor roll to oppose)

The **Eurynomes Disease also causes the Cursed condition.*

I Degree of Success
Low-level human-sized demons that reside in the Underworld but tend to venture out more frequently than others. Homer and several lesser-known writers provide quite detailed descriptions: they are creatures with a disgusting appearance, dark-colored skin, long and slender fingers, and sharp teeth able to tear off whole pieces of meat in single bites.

II Degree of Success
Based on the scarce evidence of their repulsive habits, they don't seem to represent a true danger to living beings, given their preferred activity is to emerge in great numbers from the infernal abyss to feed on the flesh of long dead individuals, which they obsessively devour until there is nothing left but bones.

III Degree of Success
Eurynomes prefer to dwell in large burial sites near highly populated communities. A place infested with one or more Eurynomes can be spotted by the unusual presence of vultures. In many cases, the Custodes' mission is to monitor the situation and intervene only in the case of real danger, or if the creatures venture out toward the settlements. And to strongly advise the local folk in the surrounding areas of the need to practice cremation.



INCUBI AND SUCCUBI

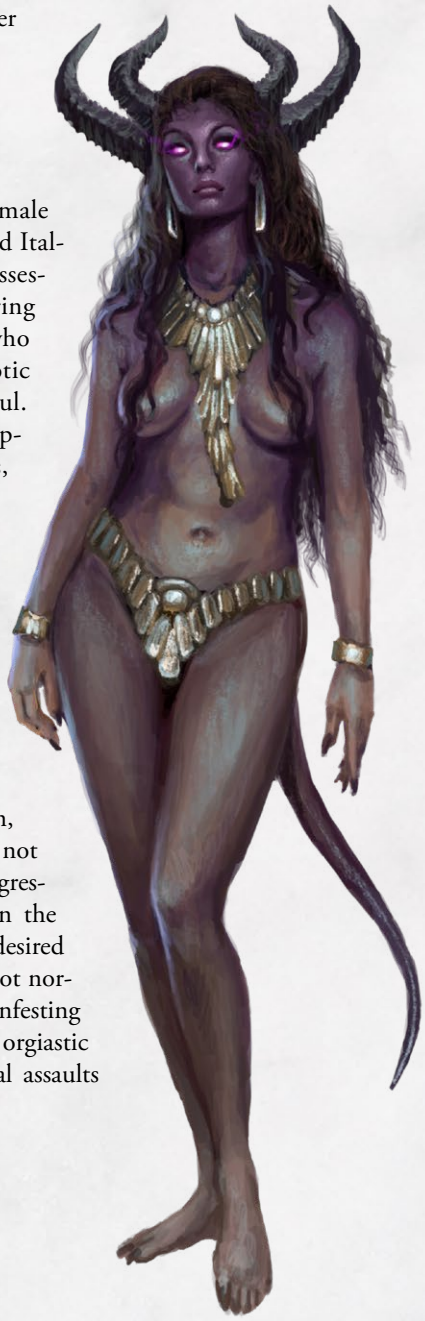
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 12
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Possession (3DV, against *Unconscious* female victims, the Incubi, or *Unconscious* male victims, the Succubi), Soul Sucking (3DV at the end of each Possession; if the character is left with 0 Pietas, their Ratio score becomes equal to 0 and the character goes mad until they somehow recover their soul), Unnatural Speed

I Degree of Success
Male demons (Incubi) and female demons (Succubi) of Roman and Italic folklore. They love taking possession of their victims' souls during the night, especially those who are ill and feverish, eliciting erotic dreams and sucking out their soul. They generally assume the appearance of wives or husbands, lovers or the persons most desired by the victims.

II Degree of Success
After the sexual act, the demons reveal their true nature, but by then it's too late: the victim is unable to free themself from their state of subjection and is forced to continue to lie with the demon, night after night. If the visits are not interrupted, the victim is progressively driven to madness, and in the case of Incubi, to horrible undesired pregnancies. These demons are not normally evoked, but are prone to infesting the surrounds of locations where orgiastic ceremonies, bacchanals, or sexual assaults have taken place.

III Degree of Success
Popular folklore narrates that the Incubi and Succubi can be held at bay if the victims sleep in the supine position or wear certain amulets or garments. Based on the evidence and testimonials of survivors, it is difficult to reconstruct what the demons actually look like, it's almost as if the victims are subconsciously reluctant to reveal anything perilous about their persecutor.





LAMIA

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 16
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Blood Sucking (1DV), Possession (2DV, only against *Unconscious* female victims; the possessed victim also gains the special ability *Grab*)

I Degree of Success
According to an old Lybian legend, Lamia was a mother, who after devouring her own children by the will of Juno, was driven to madness by the pain, succumbing to a life of complete savagery, hiding in a cave where she fed on children kidnapped from their mothers. Upon her death, due to the atrocities committed during her lifetime, she was transformed into a child-eating monster, her face transformed into a nightmarish mask.

II Degree of Success
Evoked by a curse or some obscure ritual, the Lamia - of horrible appearance and endowed with deadly claws - wanders into the darkness of the night to devour lost children, or bleed them to death, and to take possession of women walking alone (preferably of stout build and mothers of many children). Her presence leaves a mark on the skin of the possessed woman's back, which fills with snake scales.

III Degree of Success
According to not-so-reliable popular tradition, she may have the power to take her eyes in and out of their sockets at will, in order to see even when she sleeps. Another useful fact, though not confirmed, is that she cannot stand the presence of salt, and if forced into a fight she doesn't believe she can win, she flees without hesitation.



LILIM (DAUGHTERS OF LILITH)

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 16
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Flight, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Blood Sucking (1DV), Permanent Wounds



I Degree of Success
According to Jewish tradition, Lilith was an ancient Babylonian blood-sucking demon, who lived along the coasts of the Red Sea. Many centuries have passed since she was last seen, but unfortunately it would appear that her daughters are still around, the *Lilim*, who while certainly not living up to their mother's atrocities, nonetheless perpetuate many of her terrible habits.

II Degree of Success
The Lilim take flight at night, visiting settled areas and rustling up against the doors of homes with newborns inside to suck their pure blood or strangle them. They have the appearance of women with fiery eyes, long hair and bat wings.

III Degree of Success
The fear of these demons is so deep-rooted among the Jews, that when a woman gives birth, even if far away from their place of origin, the head of the family protects the newborn with an amulet engraved with the words "Out, Lilith", followed by the names *Senoi*, *Sansenoy,* and *Sammanglof* (benevolent supernatural creatures, which according to local folklore were supposed to drown Lilith, but spared her instead on the condition she would not set foot in places protected by their names).

MASHIT

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage
2 dice: Hit Points, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 20
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Immortality, Permanent Wounds, Terror (1DV, the victim *sees* the creature in its true form)



I Degree of Success
The omnipresent demon of the desert identified in some religions by the figure of the exterminating angel, the Mashit wanders through the desert terrorizing its scattered peoples. It deceivingly assumes angelic traits and claims to have descended from the skies to punish assassins and the incestuous.

II Degree of Success
The Mashit reveals its true form if engaged in combat, transforming into a terrifying and horrendously deformed skeleton. Nomad or semi-nomad shepherds of the Jewish tribes who live on the outskirts of the desert greatly fear the Mashit and offer solemn sacrifices to protect themselves and their flocks from its fury: during the full moon of spring, on the eve of the transhumance toward the summer pastures, the shepherds sacrifice a young animal, using its blood to stain the curtain rings or door frames of their homes.

III Degree of Success
Gloomy discoveries of completely destroyed camps and bodies torn to shreds lead to the conclusion that these rituals don't always work as they're supposed to. It is said that people of Jewish origin and tradition are the possessors of an obscure knowledge, allowing them to direct or 'deviate' the Mashit toward enemies or neighboring tribes. Although many are prone to attributing all types of degenerate practices to the Jews, this information seems to be confirmed by several ancient versions of their most holy book.

PAZUZU

Degree of Danger: 5
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage
2 dice: Hit Points, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 24
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Flight, Poison (1DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Disease* (2DV, the victim is *touched* by the creature; Vigor roll to oppose), Fate Roll, Immortality, Possession (2DV, the victim is *Unconscious*), Terror (2DV; the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim), Unnatural Speed



** Victims of **Pazuzu's Disease** are also Cursed and Poisoned for the entire duration of the Disease. This disease cannot be cured using traditional means: an exorcism is required.*

I Degree of Success
A horrifying and spine-chilling Assyrian demon of the desert, which spreads disease, epidemics, and destruction carried by the wind. It is said to be endowed with claws, deformed feet, eagle wings, and a monstrous head, its coming announced by wild sand storms, locust invasions, and epidemics of deadly fevers.

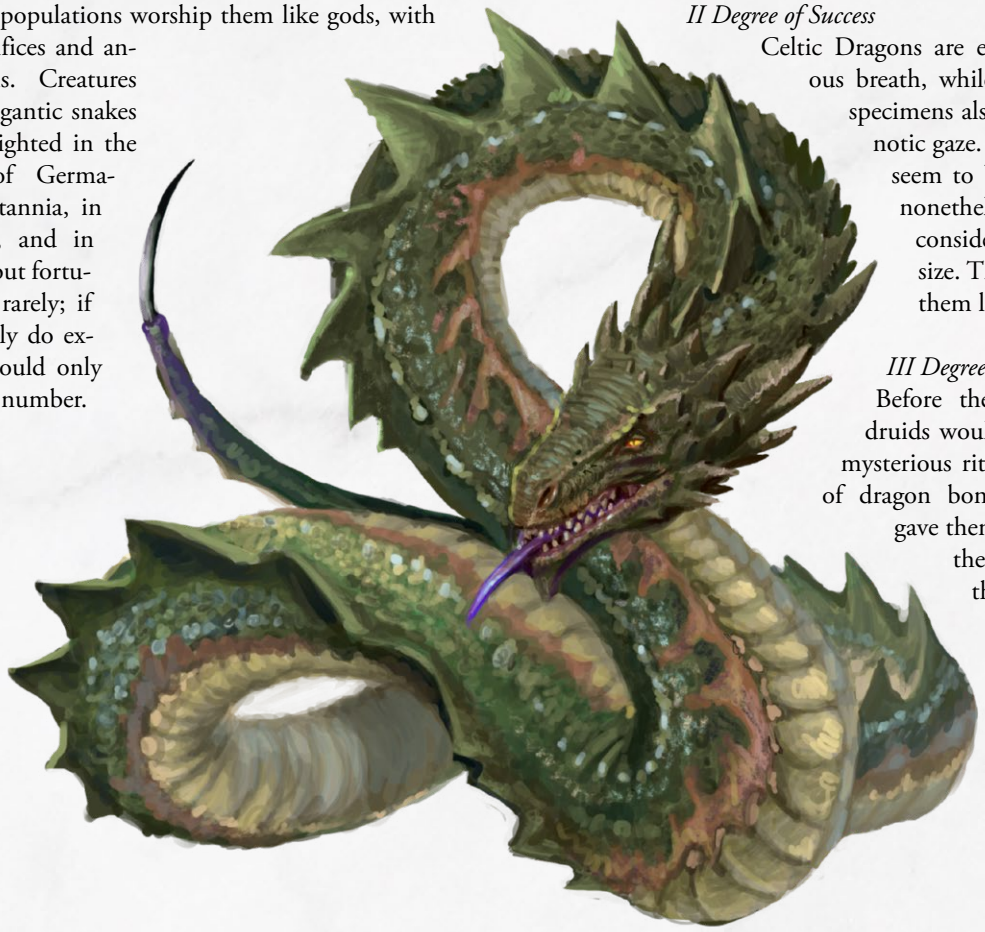
II Degree of Success
But above all, for populations that live in the provinces of Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, Pazuzu represents evil, all that which is opposed to happiness and a peaceful life, poisoning man's very existence. Evil of the body and mind, pain, decay, and privation. Pazuzu is the bearer and agent of absolute suffering. He swoops on those who are weak, doubtful, or in crisis, devastating them without reason, without fault.

III Degree of Success
Through the ages, dozens and dozens of cuneiform tablets have been collected, which are likely to contain the main remedies and practical solutions against the immense power of this demon, but unfortunately we are unable and still haven't had time to translate or fully understand them.

DRAGONS

I or II Degree of Success
Dragons are terrible creatures, similar to gigantic reptiles, that populate the tales and sagas of many populaces. They are without a doubt one of the most complex and least known creatures, given documentation concerning these monsters is generally not very reliable or else very conflicting. When authors speak of dragons, they normally provide a physical description lacking in detail, as if assuming that everybody knows what a dragon looks like. In actual fact, it's not specified whether the dragon has one or multiple heads, if it has wings to fly or fins to swim, if its body is scaly or covered in fur, whether or not it is gifted with intelligence. There would seem to be many types of dragons with differing forms and levels of danger, but for the time being they can only be distinguished into two main families: *Celtic Dragons* and *Dragons of Hyperborea*.

III Degree of Success
Folklore has dedicated much space and time to the trembling earth upon a dragon's arrival, the violent storms, the echoing thunderbolts, or the trees that bow as it passes. Some claim that dragons are easily thousands of years old and were the first to inhabit the earth, and that they live in inaccessible and inhospitable places where they collect masses of stolen treasure. They are voracious carnivores and love feeding on human flesh. Some populations worship them like gods, with human sacrifices and ancient rituals. Creatures similar to gigantic snakes have been sighted in the provinces of Germania and Britannia, in Scandinavia, and in the oceans, but fortunately only rarely; if dragons really do exist, there should only be a limited number.



CELTIC DRAGONS

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 6)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Poison (2DV)
- *Magic Powers*:* Poisonous Breath

** Legendary Celtic Dragons can also have other powers selected from the following: Enchantment (2DV), Multiple Heads (2 or 3) and Regeneration (1DV)*

I Degree of Success
For Celtic populations, a dragon is similar to a huge snake, has no wings or legs, is more than 60 feet long, and has a tail with a powerful sting. It is connected to the most obscure forces of the Underworld: it lives in the depths of the earth and rarely rises to the surface, unless someone or something disturbs its sleep.

II Degree of Success
Celtic Dragons are endowed with poisonous breath, while the most dangerous specimens also seem to have a hypnotic gaze. Fortunately they don't seem to be able to fly, but are nonetheless very quick if one considers their enormous size. Their scaly skin protects them like armor.

III Degree of Success
Before they were banned, the druids would commonly perform mysterious rituals involving the use of dragon bones, which apparently gave them the power to control the weather. Of course, the fact that they are banned doesn't stop many druids from continuing to practice these rituals in secret, the outcomes of which are not documented.



DRAGONS OF HYPERBOREA

Degree of Danger: 5
Size: 5
Average Value: DV20
1 die: Damage, De Societate, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Ratio
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 60
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 10)

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Flight, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Fiery Breath

I or II Degree of Success
These creatures are greatly feared and revered by populations of the extreme north. Dragons of Hyperborea are in fact the most dangerous among those in existence: larger still than their Celtic cousins, they have very robust rear legs and agile front legs, endowed with deadly claws. They can breathe fire that reduces all beings or objects found in their path to nothing but ashes. They are intelligent creatures and know human languages, even if ancient or forgotten.

III Degree of Success
Fortunately, these Dragons are also extremely presumptuous and vain, so much so that sometimes mere adulation can postpone your death for as long as you keep up the flattery. Dragons of Hyperborea are tenaciously attached to their millennial lives and are willing to surrender if they realize they run the genuine risk of being killed [they have suffered more damage than half their total Hit Points].

FAUNS AND SATYRS

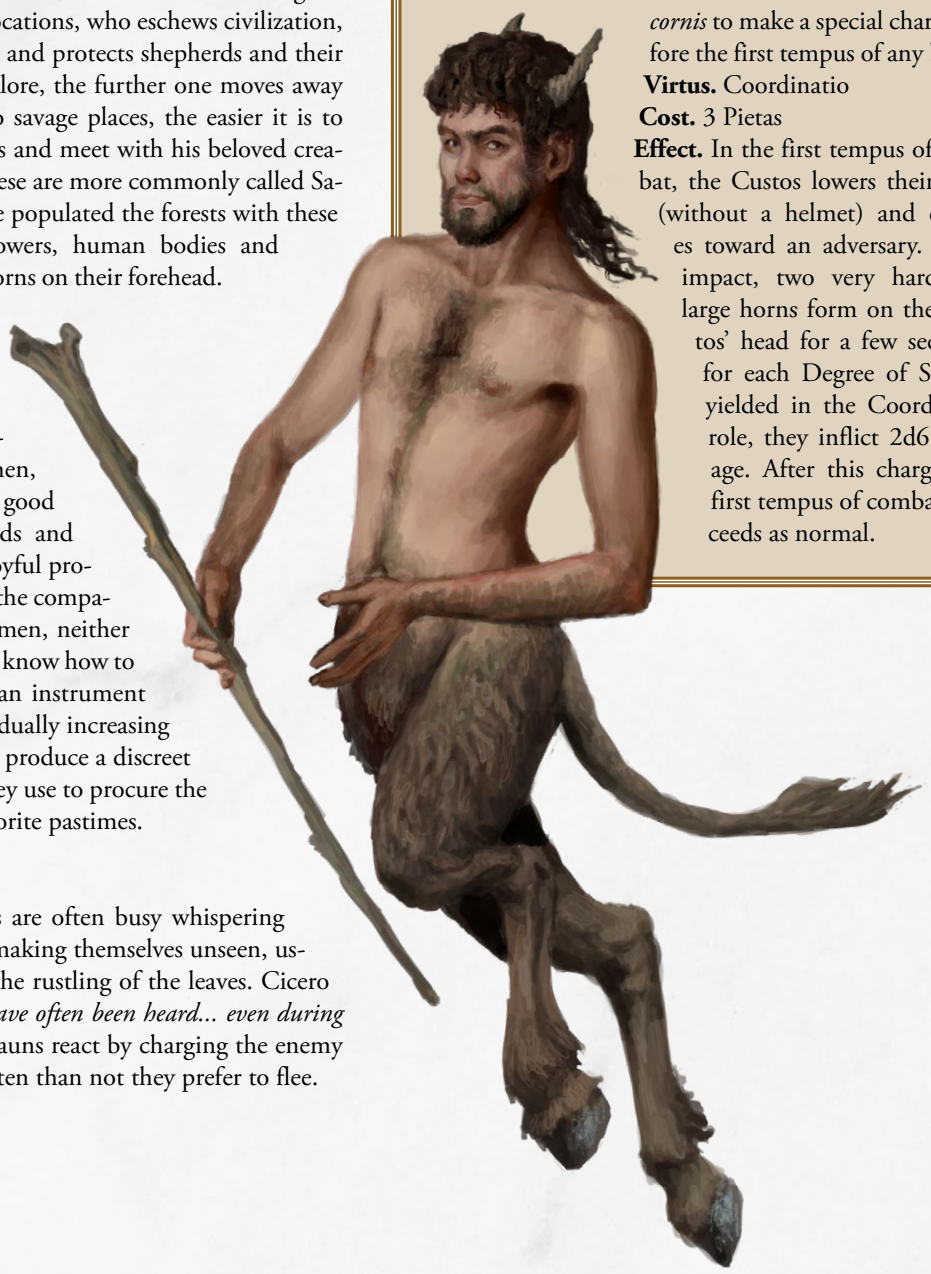
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore
Hit Points: 12

- *Special Abilities:* Charge
- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment (2DV, or 3DV against female victims; the victim must *hear* the creature; Fauns cannot attack in the same tempus in which they use this skill), Prophecy

I Degree of Success
Faunus is one of the oldest Roman deities, now scarcely worshipped. He is the god of instinct, who refuses reasoning, of the countryside and remote locations, who eschews civilization, lives in harmony with nature, and protects shepherds and their flocks. If we pay heed to folklore, the further one moves away from the city and delves into savage places, the easier it is to stumble upon his sacred lands and meet with his beloved creatures: the Fauns (in Greece these are more commonly called Satyrs). Poets and folk tales have populated the forests with these creatures having oracular powers, human bodies and heads, goat's legs, and small horns on their forehead.

II Degree of Success
Fauns are essentially peaceful toward man, but have a lively and grumpy temperament and love wine, women, and jokes that aren't always in good taste. They live in the woods and spend most of their time in joyful processions or genuine orgies, in the company of Nymphs or human women, neither necessarily consenting... They know how to skillfully play the Pan flute (an instrument made of multiple pipes of gradually increasing length), thanks to which they produce a discreet enchantment effect, which they use to procure the primary materials of their favorite pastimes.

III Degree of Success
The most mischievous Fauns are often busy whispering truths and lies to passers-by, making themselves unseen, using a voice that blends with the rustling of the leaves. Cicero writes: *"The voices of Fauns have often been heard... even during battle."* When attacked, the Fauns react by charging the enemy with their horns, but more often than not they prefer to flee.



IN THE COMPANY OF FAUNS

If the Custodes spend time in a community of Fauns (at least a few days) and they make a request, they can receive important revelations and prophecies concerning the near future. Moreover, a Custos of choice acquires the following Indigitamentum (the invocation pertaining to the Indigitamenta of the Di Indigetes, see page 92).

FAUNUS BICORNIS (WITH TWO HORNS)

The Custos can invoke *Faunus bicornis* to make a special charge before the first tempus of any battle.
Virtus. Coordinatio
Cost. 3 Pietas
Effect. In the first tempus of combat, the Custos lowers their head (without a helmet) and charges toward an adversary. Upon impact, two very hard and large horns form on the Custos' head for a few seconds: for each Degree of Success yielded in the Coordinatio role, they inflict 2d6 damage. After this charge, the first tempus of combat proceeds as normal.

GENII CUCULLATI

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 2
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 6

- *Special Abilities:* Pack Tactics, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Immortality, Unnatural Speed

I Degree of Success
Genii Cucullati is the name the Romans give to archaic and immortal creatures of the Celtic religion, which are predominantly manifested in eastern Gallia. The Romans also call them 'Hooded Spirits'. They appear in groups only by night, terrorizing the residents of non-Celtic villages and cities, emitting high-pitched laughter with a child's voice and scratching at doors and windows.

II Degree of Success
They sometimes infiltrate homes to devour their victims with thin, long, and very sharp teeth, which fill their unnaturally large mouths. If confronted, they fight ferociously, holding sharp knives and hooks with their long, bony fingers.

III Degree of Success
If in danger [the majority of Genii have lost more than half their Hit Points], they vanish from the place of battle [thanks to the power of Unnatural Speed; in this case they cannot reappear until the following night]. When one of these creatures loses all their Hit Points, they fall to the ground, but their body vanishes before the end of the fight.



GIANTS

I Degree of Success
Giant human-like creatures with immense strength are commonplace in the myths of most populaces, rebellious monsters that must be defeated in order for the cosmos to find its balance and humanity to begin. According to the Greek and Roman world, Giants were born at the dawn of time from the union between the Earth and Tartarus; they were very tall and terrible, with long hair and long beards. Pending more detailed information, Giants are currently grouped into limited numbers of families with common characteristics.

II or III Degree of Success
Mythological Giants are described as formidable fighters, able to move hills, knock down entire forests, and throw massive boulders against the gods themselves from the peaks of the highest mountains. The majority of Imperial scholars agree that these monstrous creatures are entirely mythical and symbolic, also because, given their size, they wouldn't be that hard to spot. In the unlikely event of an encounter, disappearing from sight is undoubtedly the best option.



CYCLOPS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, De Scientia (Crafts), Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Weapons: Cyclopean Cudgel (Damage 14), Boulder (Damage 12, ranged)
Protections: Animal skins (Protection 3)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab (in the tempus in which they choose to grab the opponent, they inflict no damage)
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
According to mythology, they were among the first giants to walk the earth, three times as large as human beings and with one eye at the center of their forehead. In ancient times, they settled in Thracia, Lycia [southern coast of Anatolia], and Crete. They seem to be incredibly skilled in building walls and forging iron, so much so that some of them were called to serve the god Vulcan, to assist him in producing weaponry and armor for the heroes, and thunderbolts for Jupiter.

II Degree of Success
Unconfirmed folk tales place them in the desolate and savage islands of the Mare Internum, where they live in enormous, uncomfortable caves. They are described as timid and grumpy creatures, but not necessarily hostile, except for those few that still feed on human flesh.

III Degree of Success
Cyclopes harbor a fierce hatred for the god Apollo, who in a distant past exterminated the majority of their species to avenge a wrongdoing [the Cyclopes are able to automatically perceive Custodes in possession of Apollo's invocations; if they don't quickly move away, the creature becomes flustered and any roll in the Exposure of requests stage during an Audience will have a DT of 15].

ARIMASPIANS

Several Greek legends, believed to be particularly unreliable, tell of a tribe of very valiant riders originally from the north of Scythia [Russia], who shared with the Cyclopes the common trait of having only one eye and incredible strength, but not their dimensions, which were entirely human. They wore short tunics and trousers and were armed with spears and daggers. In a remote past, this population eventually settled at the foot of the elusive Riphean Mountains. Many would be interested to know more about the Arimaspians, but unfortunately the ancient authors that wrote about them never specified the location of these mountains, which to this day have never been identified with any certainty.

One of the real reasons behind the interest aroused by this mythical population concerns its supposed immense wealth, derived from the gold mines dug on the Riphean Mountains themselves. (Credibility has been lent to this legend by the many tales about the actual wars between the Arimaspians and the Griffins over the ownership of the mines.) Should their existence be confirmed by an encounter, the Arimaspians would probably be able to teach a *tekné* to fight the Griffins.

- ***Adversus: Griffins***. If a Custos throws any gold object in the air when a Griffin has launched into an attacking dive, the creature is distracted and their charge abruptly ends (in that tempus, the creature fights without any advantage).

GEGENEES

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Weapons: various weapons with Damage 12, Pilum (Damage 10)
Protections: Scutum (Parry +3)



- *Special Abilities:* Grab (in the tempus in which they choose to grab the opponent, no damage is inflicted)
- *Magic Powers:* Extra Arms (4)

** The Gegenees can carry with them a total of 6 weapons and/or shields, although they typically wear only 1 shield and 3 weapons, of which one is ranged (normally the equivalent of a Pilum), keeping the other two hands free to Grab the opponent if needed.*

I or higher Degree of Success

Born in Colchis from dragon's teeth according to legend, they are terrible and savage creatures with 6 powerful arms, ten feet tall, with snake tails sprouting from their legs and feet. They fought against the gods at the dawn of time and were banished forever to Tartarus, whence they occasionally manage to escape to spread terror on Earth. They must be eliminated without hesitation, even if they appear friendly or willing to negotiate. They should not be confronted if encountered as a group.

CELTIC GIANTS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, De Natura, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Weapons: Giant Cudgel (Damage 14)
Protections: Improvised armor (Protection 5)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab (in the tempus in which they choose to grab the opponent, they inflict no damage)

I Degree of Success
Several traditions tell of a now-forgotten era during which Britannia and Hibernia [Ireland] were occupied by gigantic, kind natured beings who ploughed the land with their strong claws; it was they who erected extraordinary megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge. Other popular legends speak of Bran, an ancient king of Britannia, so tall that no houses were able to accommodate him, who could reach Hibernia by walking along the seabed. These Giants are normally described as at least thirteen feet tall, robust like mountains, rather hairy, and endowed with powerful claws on both their fingers and toes.

II or III Degree of Success
This Giant species seems to have died out quite suddenly. Some say that one day they left by crossing the ocean, others believe them to be hiding in the mountains. Curiously, many would like for them to return. Those remaining, if any, should be very few, holed up in the depths of their caves. One can only hope that their long period of isolation has not compromised their gentle nature.



GIANTS OF HYPERBOREA

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, De Scientia, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Ratio
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Weapons: Hasta (Damage 12)
Protections: Hyperborean Armor (Protection 12), Scutum (Parry +3)

I Degree of Success
These are large and intelligent creatures which, according to the legends of northern populations, reside in the coldest, darkest, and most desolate areas. Several scholars, based on extravagant hypotheses and well-hidden findings, identify these giants as the last survivors of a very ancient species dating back to the pre-human era, which once possessed incredible technical knowledge and had built enormous cities. Of course nothing remains of all this, bar inaccessible ruins buried in the bowels of the earth.

II or III Degree of Success
Despite not being of an evil nature, they may become hostile and aggressive if someone crosses their territory, preferring not to reveal their secrets to the human race.



PRIMITIVE GIANTS

Many other gigantic beings roam the earth we live on, but their accurate classification requires much more time. For the time being, scholars have limited themselves to grouping them under the term *Primitive Giants*, which includes all brutal creatures twice the height of man, endowed with incredible strength, and which feed on human flesh. These giants are cruel and aggressive, just like any predator, and are called *Ogres*, *Laestrygonians*, *Jötuns*, or dozens of other names based on the populations or tribes with whom they deal. The residents of the remote settlements near which they live worship them as deities and regularly bring them human offerings to avoid their villages being completely destroyed.

GORGONS

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Flight, Grab, Poison (2DV, only against creatures previously grabbed)
- *Magic Powers:* Petrification (3DV, the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim)

I Degree of Success
Much caution is required when dealing with this extremely dangerous and lethal creature, which shares in common with demons a hatred for the human race. Gorgons are scary-looking creatures whose characteristics are very similar to those made famous by Greek mythology: a head swarming with snakes, long teeth like boar's tusks, a forked tongue, bronze nails, and gold wings, allowing them to fly. Their facial features are horrendous to look at, their expression perpetually contorted by hatred; their fiery eyes have the power to turn unfortunate victims who stare them in the face into stone. In many tales, the gods themselves keep their distance. The most famous of the Gorgons was Medusa, killed by the Greek hero Perseus.

II or III Degree of Success
Athenaeus, an Alexandrine grammarian of the 10th century AUC, claims that during the Jugurthine war, a Gorgon petrified the legionaries that had attacked it with its gaze, before succumbing thanks to the arrows drawn from afar by a large number of Lybian knights. It is not known exactly which regions are infested by the Gorgons: some place them in the extreme west, others near or beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and some sightings have even been reported in the provinces of Asia and Achaia.



GRIFFINS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore (in flight)
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Dive, Flight, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
These are large, beautiful, and aggressive creatures with the body, tail, and back legs of a lion and the wings, head, and front part of the body of an eagle. They are found in many provinces of the Empire, especially in Aegyptus, Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia, and the islands of Cyprus and Crete, but also in the far north in Britannia and Hyperborea [Scandinavia]. In Greek and Roman tradition, the god Apollo uses them as mounts, hence the griffin is commonly associated with the god in official Imperial documents. In combat, the Griffin attacks by diving at its victim, engaging in a dangerous melee fight, during which it can attack with its powerful claws and beak.

II or III Degree of Success
One of its most famous characteristics is its ability to consistently keep watch over something of importance to it, or which it has been trained to defend. Recent studies in the birthplace of Griffins, Aegyptus, leave little doubt regarding the fact that a black market exists for these creatures, highly sought after by patricians and noblemen to protect their treasures or objects of particular worth. Some legends tell curious stories regarding the age-old hatred running between the Griffins and Amazons, due to continuous attempts by the latter to steal their treasures, and between the Griffins and Arimaspians, over the possession of the gold mines on the Riphean Mountains.



HARPIES

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (in flight), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 12
Protections: Armored feathers (Protection 6)

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Dive, Flight, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Prophecy, Unnatural Speed

I Degree of Success
Mythology is filled with tales of monstrous birds with a woman's face and breasts called Harpies, which kidnap their victims "as fast as the wind and as disturbingly as a storm". Their feathers are strong as steel, but fortunately they rarely kill humans, happy enough to simply torture them, taking most of their food and soiling what remains with their droppings. They are generally evoked by curses or sent as divine punishments.

II Degree of Success
Harpies are said to dwell in the dark, deep caves of Thracia, Achaia, and Crete, and this information may turn out to be very interesting. In fact, it would appear almost certain that they are experts in the art of Divination, which they are forced to use when defeated.

III Degree of Success
Less credible is the belief that Harpies guard the vials preserving the sense of men struck by madness and the memory of men struck by oblivion. The best way to free oneself of their disturbing presence is to discover the reason for their coming and rectify it, if possible.



HYDRAS

Degree of Danger: 5
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 5)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Poison (2DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Extra Arms (3) - simulating an additional advantage in combat provided by 3 heads, Multiple Heads (2), Poisonous Breath, Regeneration (2DV)

I Degree of Success
Greek mythology tells of a gigantic venomous water snake called Hydra who had the body of a dog and ten or so heads and lived in the swamps of the island of Lerna (in Achaia). She was killed by Hercules in one of his famous labors. There's some good news and some bad news: it's almost certain that the several heads are an invention of the poets (there should be no more than three); multiple sources and eye-witnesses have confirmed, on the other hand, that the Hydra killed by Hercules was not the only one in existence.

II Degree of Success
Mythology provides important information on how to find and best confront these monsters, and above all to be fully aware of the enormous challenge they represent. Their burrows are normally dug near a plane tree in dry land surrounded by large, deep swamps, preferably alongside a spring. Their most lethal weapon are their heads, which are able to regenerate if cut. Caution: one of them, the one that shines bright with golden reflections, is able to spit venom and is also described as "immortal", even if it's not exactly clear what this means. To stop a head from regenerating, it seems the wound needs to be seared with fire [the Hydra cannot use the Regeneration power to recover from wounds caused by fire].

III Degree of Success
If a Hydra is killed, it is best to cut off the golden head as soon as possible, which will probably keep it from moving, hissing, and trying to spit venom. It must be detached from the carcass and buried in such a way that it is unlikely it will be able to escape before the decomposition process is complete. A particularly bold Custos may dare to try and extract some of the powerful venom contained in the bile of the Hydra's carcass, the lethal effects of which last for hours, but this operation is strongly advised against due to the high risk of being *Poisoned* in the process. [From the Hydra's body it is possible to extract doses of poison (force 2d10) equal to the Degree of Success of a **De Natura** roll with DT 12; if the roll fails, the Custos risks being *Poisoned*.]



LEVIATHANS

Degree of Danger: 5*
Size: 5
Average Value: DV20
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 60
Protections: Impenetrable carapace (Protection 20)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Extra Arms (8), Invulnerability (to all ranged weapons except for spears and harpoons), Multiple Heads (4) - simulating the advantage of being such a large creature

** Given the incredible power of these monsters, it would be almost impossible for a group of Custodes to confront the creature in all its tonnage (and moreover in its element, water) and have a realistic chance of survival. It is more likely that the Custodes find themselves fighting off the attacks of its long tentacles while aboard a ship, in an attempt to stop it from sinking.*

Leviathan's Tentacles
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab

Damage inflicted on the tentacles is not transferred to Leviathan, but when all 8 of the creature's tentacles are down to 0 Hit Points, the Leviathan is considered defeated and retreats into the depths of the sea.

I Degree of Success
Sailors, who are certainly not among the most reliable individuals, have forever told incredible tales of gigantic creatures infesting the seas, able to drag ships and their entire crews with them into the abysses of the sea. But there's not all that much to laugh about. The number of ships that have disappeared while crossing the *Fretum Siculum* [the sea strait between Calabria and Sicilia] is statistically beyond any measure unless attributed in part to the wrath of Scylla and Charybdis, the two sea monsters, which according to Greek mythology, infest those waters. While waiting on more reliable reports, it was decided to call Leviathans all sea creatures of enormous dimensions capable of posing a serious threat to ships of any tonnage.



II Degree of Success
The information obtainable from myth and folklore is not very reassuring, given that both attribute these mortal creatures almost godlike powers and abilities: disproportionate strength and size, the ability to generate enormous, violent vortexes able to swallow up entire ships, huge tentacles, and numerous heads with multiple rows of sharp teeth used to attack the men on board. In the holy book of Jews, the Leviathan is quoted as 'he who has no equal on earth'.

III Degree of Success
Several scholars, who are fortunately paid little attention, link the Leviathans with the savage and primordial deities who infested the earth before the gods created order. Given that mythology teaches us that fighting the gods is never a good idea, these scholars go so far as to claim that the best way to proceed is to offer libations and sacrifices in honor of these sea creatures, raising pleas and prayers to them in the hope they stay out of sight.

MANTICORES

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello*, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 24
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Charge, Grab, Poison (1DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Multiple Heads (1) – simulating the creature's various options of attack

** The Manticore can also attack at a distance, hurling its venomous spines at Close range.*



I Degree of Success
A terrifying creature originating from the myths of the ancient Indus peoples, imported by the West following the expedition of Alexander the Great, used more than anything else as a bugbear by parents to draw their children into line. The most common description of the Manticore is that of a frightening creature with the head of a man, three rows of teeth in its enormous mouth, the head of a lion, and a scorpion's tail.

II Degree of Success
There has never been any actual confirmation regarding the genuine existence of this creature, despite extensive research and specific explorations. A number of testimonies by men of letters, on the heels of Alexander the Great during his unstoppable military expedition, tell of strange reconcilable nocturnes between the great general and his closest collaborators, during which alongside the shadows of the men loomed those of enormous, monstrous creatures. Some scholars go so far as to hypothesize a bizarre alliance between the Macedonian and these creatures, keen to avenge the wrongs suffered by the Persians.

III Degree of Success
Jealously guarded documents hint at the ruthless customs of the Indus populations, who in those days captured the cubs of Manticores to offer them as homage to Persian rulers. Before being gifted, they were subjected to cruelty to render them harmless, with their tails cut and a large number of their teeth forcibly pulled out. The cubs, mutilated and held in captivity, never lived more than a few weeks.

MINOTAURS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: De Bello (Charge), Hit Points
Hit Points: 30

- *Special Abilities:* Charge



I Degree of Success
In all known cultures, the bull has always represented an unrivalled symbol of strength and power, so it is only natural that this animal be at the base of many mythological tales, wherein it plays the role of the adversary that must be defeated in order for a man to become a hero, or for it to be associated with divinity and revered (as in the case of the Egyptian god Apis). The legend of the hybrid man-bull creature called a Minotaur, is quite likely simply the fruit of the imagination of Greek poets: back in the age of Minos, the famous king of Crete, following the queen's insane and secret passion for a sacred bull, the Minotaur was born, a monster with a bull's head and a human body. Imprisoned in a specially constructed labyrinth, it was eventually killed by the Athenian hero, Theseus.

II or III Degree of Success
News reports, apparently confirmed by more than one source, claim that the Minotaur is not the only one of its kind. Following the will of Poseidon, a lineage of Minotaurs spread from Crete to many territories overlooking the *Mare Nostrum*, going on to infest the underground and abandoned ruins. We don't necessarily believe there's any truth to this story, although when walking through the sprawling corridors of ancient, semi-collapsed buildings, one often has the impression they are being spied on and followed, and it takes a cool head to resist the urge to escape.

NYMPHS

Degree of Danger: 1 (3 against male characters)
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore
3 dice: De Natura, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 6
Weapons: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment* (3DV, only against male characters; the victim *sees* the creature), Fate Roll, Illusion* (2DV), Unnatural Speed (simulating the ability to become invisible)

I Degree of Success
Nymphs are semi-corporeal female spirits of a divine or semi-divine nature, symbols of the elemental forces of nature, immortal or in any case bestowed with a very long life. Known for their joyful temperament, albeit shy, they generally look like incredibly beautiful, lovely young girls. They spend their time joyfully singing, dancing, and playing with the animals populating the places where they live. Their beauty is such that even gods have fallen in love them, as did Jupiter and Poseidon; Thetis, mother of Achilles, the famous hero of the Achaens, was a Nymph. In the past, it was common for Nymphs to mate with men, generating a numerous lineage.

II Degree of Success
There are many types of Nymphs: *Dryads*, nymphs of the forest; *Hamadryads*, who live among the trees and die with them; *Oreads*, nymphs of the mountains; *Naiads*, nymphs of bodies of water; *Nereids*, nymphs of the sea, and many more still, often characteristic of a specific location (for example the *Acheloids*, nymphs of the river Acheloo). Nymphs are generally kind to humans and particularly sensitive to the charms of attractive young men.

III Degree of Success
Nymphs can nonetheless also transform into merciless vindicators of those who desecrate their habitat, lighting dangerous fires or lewdly and violently approaching the offenders; in these cases, they draw their victims into the midst of nature, forcing them to lose their way, drowning them in waterways, or throwing them off steep cliffs. Not always intentionally, they may arouse dangerous passions and cause death due to their apparent incapacity to properly dose their innate power to enchant human beings with their song, or more simply, if they are seen while resting in the sun or taking a bath.



RAM-HEADED SERPENTS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Protections: Scaly skin (Protection 3)

- *Special Abilities:* Charge, Grab, Poison (1DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment (1DV; the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim)

I or II Degree of Success
Ram-headed serpents are gigantic divine Celtic monsters. In many engravings, bas reliefs, or sculptures on mountain rock surfaces, they are often depicted in the company of deities, and in particular the horned god Cernunnos, lord of the animals. Some traditions have them strategically placed to protect sacred locations, caves, or underground treasures. Ram-headed Serpents live in the swamps, in contact with the most humid of soils, renewing their scaly and resistant skin every year. The weapons at their disposal are sturdy ram's horns, snake coils, and a gaze that charms its victim and shines through clear eyelids.

III Degree of Success
In combat, Ram-headed Serpents predominantly seek to surprise their victims, attacking them suddenly and crushing them in their coils. If the surprise attack fails, the monsters try and enchant their adversary, and finally, only if this attempt also fails, they engage in battle, seeking to strike the adversary with their solid ram's horns.



SIRENS

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: None

- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment (2DV, or 3DV against male victims; the victim must *hear* the creature), Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
Sirens are very dangerous sea creatures, found in several of the most famous episodes of Greek mythology. They look like a hybrid creature, half woman and half fish, or according to more ancient myths, half woman and half bird; their survival depends on the consumption of human flesh. These evil creatures attract sailors with their irresistible and seductive song, driving them to abandon their ships and throw themselves in the water to reach them, drowning in the attempt. They would appear to live predominantly on remote islands along the coasts of southern Italia.

II Degree of Success
There is little doubt regarding what happens to the bodies of dead or nearly dead sailors, carried by the current toward the coasts of the desert islands where the Sirens live. And the creatures themselves make no secret of it: the green fields whence they launch their deadly song are covered in skulls and bones. To this day, the only useful piece of advice to avoid a hideous death is to imitate what Ulysses did: tie oneself with a piece of strong rope (or simply block your ears with plugs of some sort).

III Degree of Success
Some tales speak of secrets that the Sirens are obliged to reveal if someone proves to be immune to their magical song and manages to reach them; secrets about the future, but also the past and the possibility to change it. If there are too few human victims on which to feed, the Sirens apparently don't mind nourishing themselves with other hybrid human-animal creatures, for example the much-hated Centaurs.



SPHINXES

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Scientia (Enigmas), Ratio
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Dive, Flight, Grab, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Terror (2DV, the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim)

I or II Degree of Success
A sacred animal of the ancient Egyptian religion, with the body of a lion and the head of a female human, the Sphinx has been referred to in official documents since the Old Kingdom as the Lion God, associated with the god Atum. More so than a god, it would appear to be a cruel and monstrous creature that attacks and devours animals and humans alike. Despite having a woman's appearance and breasts, this creature is normally male; it waits for its victims to pass, crouching to avoid being seen until it's too late.

III Degree of Success
Several ancient writings speak of it having a snake's tail and wings, and of it being able to speak. In Achaia, it is said that an enormous Sphinx was invited by the goddess Hera to destroy Boeotia [the ***Sphinx of Boeotia*** has all the statistics of a normal Sphinx, but Size 5, DV20 instead of DV12, and Degree of Danger 5 instead of 3]. Images of Sphinxes have been appearing for millennia even in Mesopotamia, and later in Syria, where they were apparently chained up and used to keep guard over secret places and sanctuaries; to access the latter without being devoured, their mysterious enigmas had to be solved [opposed roll of De Scientia or **Ingenium**].



THEURGIC CONSTRUCTS

I Degree of Success
Theurgy describes an articulated system of philosophic-scientific ritual practices, based on the often degenerate evolutions of the ancient masters. This is not the ideal context in which to discuss the thin line separating forbidden cults from the work of *theurgists* - those who practice theurgy and above all its disturbing practical application, called *telestiké*, i.e., the art of animating constructs. Suffice it to know that theurgic rituals are very elaborate and accompanied by gestures and formulas that require great precision. It would appear that such practices can lead to the complete incarnation of souls in the material world, to the point of obtaining statues and *automata* that move of their own accord. This subject has been extensively studied by the great philosopher, Proclus, who lives and teaches in Athens. According to him, certain theurgic rituals can develop and channel a power so great that they risk becoming a threat to the exclusivity of Imperial power, thus considered a form of treason toward the Emperor. There is no need to explain, therefore, that they must be treated as subversive magical practices to be persecuted using any means. Those who wish to learn more about these arguments are strongly advised to speak with Proclus of Athens in person (see the dedicated box).

II Degree of Success
Theurgic studies and writings have become very popular nowadays and are very diffused in the intellectual aristocracy of the Empire. We're not talking about religious fanatics or delusional cults that carry out rituals in cursed temples and abandoned cemeteries, but rather genuine thinkers endowed with elaborate doctrinal knowledge, noblemen, and influential politicians, who in their own homes and dark private sanctuaries secretly practice the most ambitious form of *telestiké*: the art of imprisoning or learning to control a *spiritus* or *daimon* [spirit, vital energy; see also *Demons and Daimones* on page 171] within a humanoid construct - whether a statue or specifically constructed automaton - for the purpose of interrogating it and forcing it to carry out specific tasks.

III Degree of Success
The writings collected some centuries ago by Julian, the so-called Theurgist in the *Chaldean Oracles*, would appear to be the agreed starting point for all scholars of this obscure subject. But there are currently many works addressing similar issues, all increasingly intense and more difficult to understand. All this suggests that the *spiritus* stuck in matter, this 'motor' that makes simulacra act, is of a semi-divine nature and endowed with power commensurate with its status. The simulacrum, normally of human appearance, can be of any size.



PROCLUS OF ATHENS

As everybody knows, Proclus is the greatest and most esteemed living philosopher of our time, who in spite of his elderly age, has been back directing the prestigious Academy of Athens for some years now. Fascinated by theurgy, Proclus speaks of it extensively in his writings, describing it as "a higher power than any human knowledge...". Few are aware, however, that the elderly Proclus has collaborated with the Cohors Arcana since its creation and represents the most reputable source of information on theurgists and their dangerous constructs. He lives in a luxurious villa in the heart of Athens, a city from which he never moves. Those who wish to speak with him must go to him and endure his presumptuousness and intolerance toward those he considers 'barbarians': essentially all those incapable of holding a philosophical conversation, who are not Greek, or do not speak Greek fluently. The meeting between the disciples and the great philosopher will normally also be attended by his own disciple Marinus of Neapolis, a great admirer of Aristotle and the designated successor of Proclus as director of the Academy.

Value: DV10
1 die: Hit Points
2 dice: De Magia, De Scientia, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Magia (Theurgy), De Scientia (Philosophy), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons and Protections: None

Audience with Proclus. Holding a conversation with Proclus for the purpose of obtaining information on the theurgy, the *telestiké*, and on what exactly drives someone to practice them, is considered an Audience (see *Special Prolonged Actions* on page 116).

During the Presentation stage of the Audience, the difficulty of the **Auctoritas** roll is 6 (it increases to 9 if the Custos making the presentation doesn't speak fluent Greek).

During the Exposure of requests stage, the Peritia to be used is **De Scientia** or **De Magia**; the DT for all rolls is 6; the number of successes required for the action to succeed is equal to 6 (Proclus is neither helpful nor friendly).

Outcome of Audience

In the case of both success and failure, the Demiurge must evaluate the outcome of the Audience (see the dedicated box on page 118) to determine what the Custodes manage to obtain from Proclus (each Degree of Success includes all the previous ones: if ,for example, the Custodes achieve a I Degree of Success in the Audience, the Demiurge refers to the *Failure* paragraph below, but also the paragraph relative to I Degree of Success).

Failure: general information on the theurgists and their Constructs

Proclus speaks for hours with a monotone voice, going into detail on abstruse arguments that the Custodes only pretend to understand. He makes a point, however, of regularly and vigorously stressing the difference between Platonic philosophers like himself and more vulgar and dangerous practitioners of *telestiké* (the application of theurgy for 'magical' purposes), which he considers a pastime for the rich and bored. These self-styled theurgists base themselves on writings they believe to be very ancient - but which in actual fact often aren't - and which according to them would be repositories of a lost wisdom. In some strange way, they consider themselves the heirs of great philosophers of the past such as Plato, Pythagoras, and the acclaimed Hermes Trismegistus ['thrice-greatest Hermes'], who never actually existed. Proclus is convinced that the most dangerous theurgists belong to the cultural elite of large, wealthy cities. The great philosopher takes on a more lively tone when he begins to speak of Theurgic Constructs, passionately providing only the most basic information, given "your scarce ability to follow any conversation more articulated than a shopping list."

If at least one of the Custodes manages to attentively follow the conversation, succeeding in a **De Scientia** or **De Magia** roll - DT 9 in both cases - Proclus provides all the information contained in the introductory paragraphs of *Theurgic Constructs* (*Degree of Success I, II,* and *III or more*).

I Degree of Success: in-depth information on theurgists

The theurgists that need to be watched are the rich politicians, lecturers, lawyers, and young offspring of noble families who no longer believe in the Olympic gods, but certainly don't convert to the popular and folklore gods of Eastern religions (such as Isis, Christ, and Cybele). Sunken in dark pessimism, they are convinced that man's actions are no longer guided by powerful, all-things-considered benevolent gods, but by *Heimarmene* (Fate), *Tyche* (Chance), and *Ananke* (Necessity), blind and uncontrollable cosmic forces. They therefore rely on a tortuous doctrine that offers immediate answers to the sense of isolation felt by these theurgists when faced with the vastness of theological options, and which proclaims the existence of occult ties between all elements of the cosmos, animate and inanimate.

Proclus' face seems to light up when he alludes to those secret and irrecoverable writings that would explain not only how to instill or awaken a *daimon* in a construct [see also the *Demons and Daimones* box on page 171], but also how to create from scratch a completely new spiritus. As such, man becomes the owner of forms, able to mold them and "produce gods" that walk the earth. Proclus makes it very clear that he would be very keen to take a look at such texts, should the Custodes find any, possibly before delivering them to their superiors... If the Custodes reassure him in this regard, the philosopher enlists Marinus of Neapolis to instruct them on the basics of theurgy.

- The players add the Specialty ***Theurgy*** among those of **De Magia**, with a starting score of +1. This Specialty can be increased with experience, as usual. Proclus adds that it is relatively simple to discover whether a scholar harbors an unhealthy passion for the most devious aspects of theurgy: suffice it to hold a debate with them on philosophical arguments, and within a short time they will get carried away with their own lectures... [A roll of **De Scientia** or **De Magia** with DT 9 makes it possible to understand if and how subversive and dangerous their thoughts are.]

II Degree of Success: fighting the Theurgic Constructs

Proclus disturbingly curls his lips into what he considers a smile, and dismissing Marinus of Neapolis with an excuse, invites the Custodes to follow him, guiding them down the never-ending stairs that lead to the underground. The group passes closed doors and large halls wrapped in darkness. At the end, Proclus stops in a room that appears to be some type of laboratory with phials, metals of every kind, pieces of statues, dismantled mechanical gears, and much more still. Here, serious and solemn as if in a classroom of the Academy, Proclus holds a lesson of sorts on how to most effectively confront *Automata* and *Living Statues*; all the Custodes in the room earn the following *tekné* (see the *Teknés* box above (techniques):

- ***Adversus: Theurgic Constructs***. When Custodes fight against any type of Theurgic Construct, their **De Bello** (both in close combat and in ranged combat) is increased by their bonus in ***Theurgy***. For example, a Custos with De Bello 12 and *Theurgy* +4 fighting against Automata or Living Statues rolls (12+4) 16 Dice Points.

II Degree of Success: learning a Theurgic ritual
Proclus now seems to almost welcome the company of all the Custodes, or some of them - actually, just one, the one that speaks Greek most fluently. So as not to be rude, he nonetheless invites all members of the contubernium to spend a few weeks as his guests when they have time [the Custodes can accept the invitation between adventures]. During those weeks, Proclus leads the Custodes underground for several hours each day, teaching them an actual Theurgic ritual, "which is however one of the simplest types, given the mediocrity of your intellect; and don't worry, after a few personal battles with the commissions in charge of determining the legality of rituals, this one is now considered entirely part of the Official Cult."

The *Learn New Rituals* rules are used (see page 134). The cost in Curriculum Points of adding the ritual among those that can be used is 60 (90 base points less 30 points because the ritual is taught by a master).

ORACULUM THEURGICUM

This Precognition ritual must be performed at night near the statue of a god, far from prying eyes: in the dark of a cellar, the open countryside, or amid ruins. At least three people must be present: an officiant to be the summoner and two assistants that light and keep lit a large fire. Thanks to the ritual, the statue becomes the temporary receptacle of a semi-divine being, an unidentified spiritus that will answer a question about the future, with a non-human voice.

The effect is the same as for the Oraculum ritual, but is limited to Precognition only. It takes longer to perform but is less difficult: the difficulty of the De Magia (Precognition) roll is reduced by 1 level - the DT is therefore lowered from 12 to 9.

Discipline. Precognition (DT 9 instead of DT 12)
Cost. 9 Pietas
Duration. Long (a few hours, depending on the complexity of the question)
Procedure. The ritual must be performed in an isolated and peaceful location, near a human-scale statue with godlike features. The officiant poses a question about the future; the statue emits a weak voice, a whisper almost, which can nonetheless only be heard by the officiant. The voice answers the question in Sibylline tones or in rhyme, and normally requires an interpretation by the players.
Response. One or two phrases. The higher the Degree of Success, the more articulate, detailed, or clear the responses are.

AUTOMATA (SING. AUTOMATUM)

To create an Automatum, the main choice that needs to be made concerns its Size (from 1 to 5), which will also directly determine the Degree of Danger, DV, Hit Points and Protection value. The spirit infused is always of medium power and guarantees from 1 to 3 Magic Powers. It may be equipped with weapons and a shield.

Degree of Danger: equal to Size
Size: from 1 to 5
Average Value: based on the Size (see table below)
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio
Hit Points: equal to 2DV
Protection: equal to 1DV

- *Special Abilities:* some Automata may have special abilities such as Charge (especially if they reproduce the features of horned animals), Flight (normally small constructs endowed with mechanical wings) or abilities helpful to their owners, such as Training, War Training or Pack Animals in the case of constructs created for this purpose.
- *Magic Powers (from 1 to 3):* the most common are tied to the particular construction and structure of the construct, such as Extra Arms, Fiery/Poisonous Breath, Invulnerability, Multiple Heads, or Unnatural Speed.

Size	Dice Value	Examples
1	DV3 or DV4	Constructs the size of small animals and often with the same features (cats, rabbits, birds), used mainly as toys.
2	DV5 or DV6	Constructs the size of children or dwarfs, often used as servants.
3	DV8 or DV10	Constructs the size of humans, used as guards.
4	DV12	Rare constructs the size of large animals or giants, used as guardians, transporters of goods and people, or unbeatable fighters.
5	DV20	Very rare constructs of enormous size, created as unstoppable siege weapons able to threaten entire cities and armies.

EXAMPLE: THE LOST EAGLE

The Demiurge decides to give his version of the facts on the famous disappearance of the Legio VIIII Hispania that accompanied Julius Caesar in his conquest of Britannia and on which numerous films and novels are based. After facing countless battles and rebellions, in the end the legion was sent to Eboracum [now York], after which all traces were lost. In reality, the power of the Legio VIIII in battle was derived from its great golden eagle with wings outstretched, the symbol of the legion itself: a Theurgic Construct able to free itself in flight and bring about destruction, emitting deadly flames. But the eagle didn't always stop at executing the commands of its 'own' officials, endowed as it was with its own evil will... The Demiurge attributes the Automatum the special abilities of Flight and Dive, and the magic power of Fiery Breath.

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio
Hit Points: 20
Protections: Made of gold (Protection 10)

- *Special Abilities:* Dive, Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Fiery Breath

I Degree of Success
Imperial historians and scholars have often wondered about the incredible victories achieved in the past by the Roman legions, even against armies that were far superior in number and motivation. Many clues seem to circumscribe these perplexities to a historical period that lasted no more than two centuries, roughly from the start of 700 to the end of 800 AUC [1st century BC and 1st century AD]. During these years, it is said that at the mere sight of a legion's eagle [the symbol of the legion mounted on a pole and led in battle by the *Aquilifer*] entire hosts of enemies would flee without a fight.

II Degree of Success
When speaking of this topic, scholars often refer to one specific case: the unusually large golden eagle emblem of the *Legio VIIII* (or IX) *Hispania*. This legion, operative during the aforementioned period, was frequently relocated: Sicilia, Macedonia, Hispania (whence its name is derived), Germania, Illyiricum, Numidia, and finally Britannia. Based on the scarce documentation that still remains regarding the operations led by the legion (the majority was purposefully destroyed last century), it would seem that its commanders and soldiers were constantly accused of every kind of obscenity: torture, burnt villages, terrorized populations forced into involuntary displacements that were transformed into genuine death marches.

III Degree of Success
It is precisely because of these accusations that the legion was so frequently relocated, and in the end, perhaps this was also the reason it was completely decommissioned, or even willingly sent to its own annihilation against a far superior enemy. Regardless of how things actually went, the only thing we know for certain about the Legio VIIII Hispania is the cruelty and total destruction of villages for which it was responsible, its continuous transfers, the terror it aroused in local populations, and above all the extraordinary size of its golden eagle, of which every trace has since been lost.



I Degree of Success
Objects and toys that seem to move on their own and enormous machinery with mobile mechanical parts have been prevalent throughout the Empire for centuries. They are used by high society to entertain guests or children, to amaze theater spectators by making actors appear or disappear, and to portray a sense of divine power if used for the opening and closing of the stately portals of temples. But in this context, the term *Automata* implies specifically artificial constructs, normally humanoid in form, able to move and perform actions in a knowledgeable manner because they have been infused with a sentient soul that obeys the orders of the theurgist. The incredible development of natural and astrological sciences, together with now perfected ritualistic formulas, has in fact allowed theurgists with the most intrinsic dark knowledge to reach once inconceivable heights of perfection and danger.

II Degree of Success
To produce an Automatum able to function and obey its owner, it is assumed that the theurgist needs to be assisted by one or more experts in natural sciences and mechanical arts, able to correctly assemble the enclosures in which the vital energy will be housed. Moreover, depending on the size of the Automatum, the creators will need a suitable space in which to work undisturbed, as well as ample time to dedicate to their project. While it is true that, until now, no complete and functional Theurgic Construct has ever been seen wandering through the local streets and fields, unfortunately it would seem that many are being simultaneously assembled. The general fear is that once one appears, others will quickly follow.

III Degree of Success
The procedure to complete an animated construct is very long, taking entire years. The construction of the enclosure and the infusion of the vital energy are not two distinct processes: the theurgist must in fact work with the scholars on a regular basis in order to continue the process of infusion as the enclosure is progressively built. This gives the authorities a better sense of security, keeping a close eye on the movements of aristocrats suspected of practicing deleterious forms of theurgy.

LIVING STATUES

To generate a Living Statue, the main choice concerns the power of the spirit that has been infused. The more powerful the spirit, the greater the number and danger of the magic powers possessed by the Theurgic Construct (see table below). The statue is normally of human size (Size 3), while that which is sculpted is normally a god or humanoid.

Degree of Danger: based on the power of the infused spirit
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio
Hit Points: 20
Protections: Made of stone (Protection 20)

- *Special Abilities:* some Living Statues may have special abilities such as Acute Senses, Grab, and if endowed with wings, Flight and Dive
- *Magic Powers:* the most common are Curse, Disease, Extra Arms, Multiple Heads, Paralysis, Prophecy, Regeneration, Terror



I Degree of Success
"There are statues, or Asclepius, that possess a soul, a conscience, which are full of vital breath, that do grandiose and astonishing things..." (from *Asclepius*, by Hermes Trismegistus). It is mostly the philosophical exponents of latest generation Platonism who are fascinated by the relationship between statues and that which they portray, as if a spark of intangible energy were already present in the matter, part of a soul imprisoned in the stone, which can be awakened if needed...

Power of spirit	Degree of Danger	Number of Magic Powers
Weak	3	2
Average	4	3
High	4	4
Almost divine	5	5

II Degree of Success
The *telestiké* rituals allowing such results to be obtained are unfortunately also practiced by amateur theurgists, who are certainly not able to foresee exactly what it is they have awakened. Having learnt the basics of *telestiké*, the theurgists insert special herbs, gems engraved with symbols, or stones of varying value inside a statue they have carefully selected for purposes they themselves have set (carving out niches if the statue is not hollow), which they then sprinkle with perfumed essences. Then, they recite long and complex formulas originating from other Mediterranean populaces, which must be properly pronounced in order for the ritual to work. In the space of an unpredictable amount of time, the statue comes to life and obeys the commands of its master.

III Degree of Success
The theurgic formulas to animate statues are handed down from masters to disciples (often women) orally, and according to the teachings of the *Chaldean Oracles*, the 'sacred text' of young theurgists, they must be recited in their original language. The fact that inexperienced theurgists find themselves reciting complex formulas in languages they do not know is the reason behind the frequent unpredictability and danger of the rituals' outcome.



EXAMPLE: LIVING STATUE OF HEKATE

The Demiurge decides to create an animated statue of Hekate, the much-feared goddess adored throughout the entire Empire as she who rules the demons and watches over the most obscure and dangerous magic rituals. For this important construct, it is therefore decided to infuse a high-powered spirit, thus able to guarantee 4 magic powers.

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio
Hit Points: 20
Protections: Made of stone (Protection 20)

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Multiple Heads (2), Permanent Wounds, Paralysis (1DV, the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim), Prophecy

I Degree of Success
Imperial scholars and philosophers are well aware that in Ephesus, in the province of Asia, there is an underground temple dedicated to the obscure Hekate, and that a very ancient statue of the goddess is erected inside. The statue depicts the goddess in her trimorphic form, with the faces of a young woman, a goat, and a female dog. It is said that the temple itself was built around the statue, which has been located and worshipped there since time immemorial. The location of the temple and how to get inside is known to a few members of the city's high aristocracy.

II Degree of Success
The Platonic philosopher Maximus of Ephesus often speaks of the statue, which through Theurgic rituals he declared to be able to animate for short periods. Julian the Emperor and philosopher also speaks of the statue, whereat he was initiated to the mysteries of *telestiké*. To bring the statue to life, it would appear an *iugx* needs to be spun (see page 90) at the exact moment when the spirit infusion ritual is being practiced.

III Degree of Success
Just before the statue is animated, Hekate appears in the temple in the form of a flame and makes her sepulchral voice heard, speaking of past, present, and future events. All those present fall into a confused state, while aboveground, a storm of unprecedented violence crashes down on the city of Ephesus. Then, everything subsides and the statue begins to move toward the officiant of the ritual; it stops in front of him and waits to be instructed.

TRITONS

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (in water)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Trident (Damage 8)

- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
In all civilizations whose survival depends on the sea, ancient stories are told of half-man and half-fish beings that dwell in the depths of the sea. Greco-Roman mythology considered them descendants of Triton, the son of Poseidon, and called them *Tritons*, but there are many different names used to identify that which in all likelihood, is just one species. Horrible to look at, they are traditionally depicted with the head of a man, the body of a horse, the tail of a fish, and hair the color of algae.



II Degree of Success
The Tritons are very curious about the human race, but at the same time extremely protective toward their sea kingdom. It is assumed that they constantly and carefully watch the passing ships and sailors while staying out of sight. Should these creatures be seen, or if their nearby presence is perceived, we suggest you don't let on and continue to act as normal to avoid stirring their anger [in fact, to avoid news of their presence being diffused, the Tritons don't hesitate to use an arcane power allowing them to unleash furious sea storms that physically eliminate all possible witnesses].

III Degree of Success
Several scholars of Britannia insist that certain creatures of the popular folklore of Caledonia [Scotland], which they call ***Selkies***, should be separated from this category. Their appearance mixes parts of the human body with parts of seals, faces with canine features, and long, webbed fingers. They prefer to live near the coasts. According to many, the female of the species has the ability to transform into a woman, to mate with men. The fruit of this degenerate pairing may not be aware of their true nature, developing powerful and potentially dangerous supernatural abilities over time. [***Selkies*** have the same characteristics as normal Tritons, but DV6 instead of DV8 and the magic powers of Metamorphosis and Enchantment (2DV, the victim *sees* the creature)].

UNDEAD

I Degree of Success
Necromancy, the art of resurrecting the dead or summoning the souls of the deceased back to earth, is a forbidden and heavily punished tradition, but one which is nonetheless unfortunately practiced in many cultures, especially among the Italics, Celts, Greeks, Babylonians, and Jews. It is advisable to immediately report any suspicions that these rituals are being practiced, thus allowing prompt intervention.

II or III Degree of Success
There are currently several resurrection rituals: Celtic populations use magical cauldrons, Easterners evocation rituals, the Egyptians mummification. The result, however, is always the same: bodies devoid of any real vital energy are revived, often physically impaired and normally lacking any intellectual capacity.



The reasons for resurrecting or summoning a dead person from the Underworld are manifold: a family's desire to have their loved one by their side again, the possibility of questioning the dead person about the afterlife or the future, or the desire to create armies of invincible fighters to oppose an enemy.

SILENT WARRIORS

Degree of Danger: 2
Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Spear (Damage 6)
Protections: Clipeus (Parry +2)

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Regeneration (1DV), Terror (2DV, the victim sees the creature)

I or II Degree of Success
Silent Warriors are walking corpses of the Celtic tradition, whose most disturbing characteristic is the ability to regenerate physical wounds within a few minutes, even during battle. They are distinguished by their absolute silence: they don't talk, nor make any kind of sound; it's as if they didn't exist.

III Degree of Success
If torn to pieces, they can get back up on their feet, reattach their torn limbs, and resume fighting. The only way to permanently eliminate a Silent Fighter is to cremate the body or break the spell keeping them on their feet. These creatures are called to a new parody of life by magical cauldrons, the secret of which is guarded by the Celtic druids or obscure necromancers.

LARVAE AND LEMURES (GHOSTS)

Degree of Danger: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore, Hit Points
2 dice: De Bello
3 dice: Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Invulnerability (except against fire and weapons consecrated against the Undead), Terror* (2DV, the victim *sees* the creature; 3DV if the victim is *touched* by the creature), Unnatural Speed

**This power represents the only offensive weapon of Ghosts (they do not have a Damage value). The terror they cause is so intense that if a victim fails the Ratio roll, in addition to the normal effects they lose a number of Hit Points equal to the difference between their roll and that of the force of Terror (armor does not protect them).*

I Degree of Success
This is the name given to the ghosts of those who committed a horrendous crime or highly immoral act in their lifetime, or whose life was marked by a tragic and violent end. They are pale appearances whose faces are contracted by anguish and suffering. They are the spirits of obscurity, their intentions toward the living are primarily (but not necessarily) based in evil. They spread great fear or genuine terror among even the most intrepid, driving to madness all those who are unable to keep their wits about them. They seem to be completely invulnerable to any weapon.

II Degree of Success
Larvae and Lemures are tightly connected to the culture of the dead, to those rituals practiced to stop them from coming, prevent their return, keep them away, and allow them to rest in peace. Since the most archaic ages, the *Lemuralia* festivals have been regularly celebrated in Rome. As everyone knows, they are still held today during the month of May. During the feast days, the temples are closed, and no business of any kind takes place. Paying homage to the dead in this way, the Roman State hopes to protect itself against the vengeful fury of these ghosts.

III Degree of Success
It is popular belief among Italic peoples that burying black beans around the body of the deceased and playing cymbals during their interment will prevent their return as a ghost. Enjoying much more credibility among experts, however, is the theory that in order to fight these creatures, fire or suitably blessed weapons must be used.



REANIMATES (REANIMATED CORPSES)

Degree of Danger: 1
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (Brawling)
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: None
Protections: Rigor Mortis (Protection 3)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Pack Tactics
- *Magic Powers:* Terror (2DV, the victim *sees* the creature)



I Degree of Success
A corpse summoned to walk the earth again using unnatural means - once the horror and disgust at seeing one has passed - fortunately for us is one of the least lethal undead creatures to confront and can be neutralized relatively easily. Based on the amount of time that has passed since its death, it may appear as a more or less decomposed corpse, or an actual ***Walking Skeleton:*** DV4, 12 Hit Points, no Protections but instead the magic power of Invulnerability (to all blows that inflict 4 points of damage or less).

II or III Degree of Success
Reanimated corpses tend to become particularly dangerous, however, when encountered as part of large groups or entire armies, which advance like a swarm of locusts destroying everything in their path. In this case, all contact should be avoided. Although these creatures might seem easy enough to defeat, it is quite common - and definitive - for victims not to realize that they have suddenly been surrounded without any possibility for escape, as new Reanimates continuously join the group in a seemingly infinite number.

VERSIPELLIS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Disease* (3DV, the victim is *wounded* by the creature), Metamorphosis, Regeneration (1DV)

** If the Disease is not cured by the first full moon, the effects vanish but the character is considered to have contracted the **Versipellis Curse**: they are transformed into a Versipellis every full moon until the curse is removed. On those nights, the victim loses all free will and acts in the grips of their own primal instincts.*

I Degree of Success
Stories of wolves pretending to be men in order to devour them, or vice versa, of men transforming into wolves to acquire superior predatory skills are widespread in the Italic peninsula and the Balkans. *Versipellis* (*Qui vertit pellem* - He who changes his skin) is the term by which the Italic and Latin populations refer to men able to transform into wolves, by virtue of the belief that these creatures' fur grows on the inside of their body, turning outward at the time of their mutation. They generally assume the appearance of unusually sized wolves, in which human traits are nonetheless clearly visible.

II Degree of Success
Scholars are largely at odds regarding the causes of this ghastly transformation. Some, with good reason, attribute the cause to a divine punishment, others to some kind of disease or contagion in some way connected to the lunar influence or consumption of human flesh, but there are also those who claim it is the effect of obscure spells by sorcerers or necromancers. For centuries, the Versipelles have heavily infested the hills of central Italia, to the point where many villages have adopted the tradition of performing long, complex rituals to defend themselves against their raids. To this day, every year on February 15th, the *Lupercalia*, one of the city's most archaic religious festivals, is still celebrated in Rome.

III Degree of Success
The celebrations are officiated by the *Luperci*, or "brothers of the wolf", priests specialized in warding off wolves, who after sacrificing a goat, lay a knife spoiled with sacrificial blood on their forehead and walk around half-naked striking passers-by with leather whips. According to an archaic tradition, those struck with the whips cannot be attacked by the Versipelles for an indefinite period of time.

[Having a *Lupercal* recount the uses and costumes of the Versipelles and asking for details regarding where they prefer to hide, requires the ability to hold a conversation on Italic folklore, succeeding in a **De Magia** roll with DT 9 (DT 6 for a Custos originally from the Italic peninsula). A successful roll with a II Degree of Success also convinces the priest to give the Custodes a set of herbs, which if properly mixed and burned thanks to a **De Natura** roll with DT 9, irresistibly attracts all Versipelles in the vicinity. A successful roll with a III Degree of Success also allows the Custodes who so request, to be 'whipped' by the Lupercal on their bare back (suffering 2d3 damage); thanks to the whippings, for the next 48 hours the Custos cannot in any way contract the Versipellis Curse.]



WATER HORSES

Animal form
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 20

- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis, Paralysis (2DV, the creature *touches* the victim)

Human form
Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis, Paralysis (3DV, the creature *touches* the victim)

I Degree of Success
Water Horses are almost demonic in their wickedness, very dangerous and treacherous, and are widespread in Celtic lands - especially in Caledonia [Scotland], Hibernia [Ireland], and Hyperborea [Scandinavia]. Although they are referred to by many different names (*Cabyll-Ushtey*, *Each-Uisge, Kelpie*) and sometimes have different physical features based on the region they occupy - especially their tail and mane - scholars all agree in grouping them together under a single species.

II Degree of Success
They assume the form of beautiful horses with soft, shiny manes, that allow themselves to be gently mounted before dragging their unfortunate victims in a mad and unstoppable sprint to their abodes in the depths of seas, rivers, and lakes. The victims are paralyzed and therefore unable to react, risking literal drowning within minutes. In some cases, the water horses can also assume the appearance of beautiful, and apparently naive, boys. In this form, they seek to seduce young women, running off with them before dragging them into the thrashing waves (after having paralyzed them by simply touching them).

III Degree of Success
There is total discord among scholars regarding what exactly happens to the victims dragged into the waters. Of course, the prevailing theory is that these creatures use them for nourishment. But some clues that are still being studied would suggest different hypotheses, some better, some even worse...



WINGED HORSES

Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (in flight)
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll, Unnatural Speed

I Degree of Success
Creatures of mythology, about whose real existence lingers much doubt. They are often mentioned, especially in the eastern and northern provinces of the Empire, but if anybody has ever actually seen them with their own eyes, not a word has been uttered. One might therefore imagine that these are rare and extremely wary creatures that consciously and cautiously stay away from mankind and his villages. In mythology, the most famous winged horse was Pegasus, tamed with a golden bridle by the hero Bellerophon, who then mounted him to kill a Chimera.

II Degree of Success
The dream of finding a winged horse, successfully taming it, and knowing how to feed it (a feat not to be underestimated), is to this day the dream of many children... and of a few optimistic scholars of ancient mythology, who obsessively search for the *Golden Bridle* gifted to Bellerophon by Athena. Without it, taming a winged horse is a practically impossible deed [**De Natura** roll with DT 30; if in possession of the *Golden Bridle* the DT drops to 15]. According to these scholars, the first step in the search is to spend an entire night in a sanctuary of the goddess Athena and sacrifice a bull to Poseidon.

III Degree of Success
Some particularly primitive tribes of southern Hyperborea [Denmark] and Hibernia [Ireland] narrate cruel tales of local chiefs and princes that feast on the meat of Winged Horses. Regularly nourishing oneself with this meat guarantees power and royalty in life, and the possibility of returning from the dead by means of a somewhat vague "second birth".



VAMPIRES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

He took me,
night and day he haunts me
he drains my flesh
all day he holds me
all night he never leaves me.

(Ancient Babylonian lamentation)

In antiquity, vampires possessed very different characteristics from those we know and recognize today. The typical archetype of an undead vampire that lives isolated from the community, surrounded by servants that aren't always entirely human, who attacks by night, preying on human blood, andis potentially an agent of a terrible contagion, doesn't entirely reflect the traditions of ancient Mediterranean populations, nor of the Greco-Roman culture. This doesn't mean that popular writings and legends of the ancient world made no mention of creatures of the darkness or spirits of the deceased, or demons that tortured the living for the purpose of depriving them of their vital energy or blood.

The main link between our concept of vampires and certain demonic creatures of the ancient world lies in the idea that after death it is still possible to practice two of the activities most essential to the living: sex and nourishment. In reality, the idea that the deceased may return from the afterlife to feed or mate with those they know (especially their spouse) has been a widespread fear in Mediterranean cultures since the dawn of time, with equally diffused preventative measures: distracting them with song and dance, feeding their body to wild beasts or specially trained dogs, immobilizing their corpse in their coffin with long nails through their heart, or, as the Etruscans had sometimes done, burying the deceased family member in the walls of the home, which were then constantly monitored.

The Romans, using more pragmatic measures, have for centuries celebrated the *Parentalia* festival. Each year, for a few days in February, deceased family members are honored (with a special focus on the more recently deceased) with banquets, offerings, and sacrifices, allowing them to walk freely among the living, in the hope that they will then rest in peace - permanently.

However, offering milk, honey, and flour to the deceased, or placing food - whether real or in the form of figurines - directly in their burial, is not always sufficient. The deceased have a ravenous appetite, and what they most long for is the blood of the living. Blood is the life-giving food par excellence, allowing the prolongation of life or at least various aspects thereof: ghosts, corpses, and dead spirits are all irresistibly attracted to it and scramble to get some in any way they can. Great heroes such as Ulysses exploited this weakness to summon them and "barter" sacrificial blood in exchange for information regarding future events, which the dead sometimes know.

In *Lex Arcana*, vampires are therefore not a category of fantastical creatures distinctly separate from demons or undeads undead. There are demons that are also vampires, because they feed on the blood of the living, and vice versa, vampires can also have the ethereal appearance of dreams or ghostly apparitions, devoid of flesh and body.

More specifically, creatures with the most typical and traditional vampire traits are the following (all can be found in the *Fantastical Creatures*).

- **Empusai.** Gloomy, diabolical female demons, followers of Hekate, Queen of the Underworld, they share the great sensual charge of Vampires and the ability to change form and vanish into thin air in dangerous circumstances.
- **Lamias.** Female, nocturnal child-eating demons, summoned by obscure rituals, they feed on the blood of the living.
- **Lilim.** Very ancient female demons, persecutors of newborns, they have bat wings and look like women with fiery eyes, dressed in a long black coat. According to Rabbinic tradition, Lilith was the second wife of Adam, the genetrix of a genuine lineage of vampires.
- **Incubi and Succubi.** Demons without bodies that haunt the dreams of men (Succubi) or women (Incubi), they roam bodiless around places where orgiastic ceremonies or sexual assaults have taken place. They inspire incredibly vivid and erotic dreams in mortals.
- **Sirens.** Sea creatures with a hybrid, half-woman half-fish appearance, they attract sailors with their song to devour them. Behind their irresistible call lies a clear animalistic invitation for mating and cannibalism.

The magic powers of Vampires. The most common powers available to vampire-demons of the ancient world are those connected to drinking blood, and the ability to change form and exert superhuman terror over mortals, to incite terrorizing or erotic dreams, and to cause the appearance of mists, fogs, or genuine storms.

To increase the power of the creatures already described, or if the Demiurge wishes to invent new types of vampiric creatures, we suggest use of the following magic powers in particular (described in detail on the next page):

- **Disease** (the mere presence of a Vampire can cause plagues and disease)
- **Enchantment** (to attract mortals without resorting to violence)
- **Immortality** (this characteristic is normally common to all Vampires)
- **Metamorphosis** (into a wolf, bat or, other forms halfway between man and animal)

- **Possession** (a power typical of demons to take possession of mortal bodies)
- **Regeneration** (a Vampire can regenerate inflicted wounds immediately, unless caused by certain types of weapons)
- **Soul Sucking** and **Blood Sucking** (for a Vampire, absorbing the vital energy of the living is normally the only way to survive)
- **Terror** (when faced with a demon or monstrous creature, it may be difficult to maintain control)

Several new magic powers can be added to this list, which may prove helpful in better characterizing vampire-like creatures:

- **Invite**. The creature can activate this power at the start of any tempus, but only once per fight or per scene. It is the ability to summon animals to the place where they are found or are headed. The type of animal is specified in the creature description, while the number of animals summoned depends on the Degree of Success yielded in the power roll (DT 6 if the summoned animals are common to the area, DT 9 if they are not common, DT 12 if they are rare). The greater the Degree of Success, the higher the number of animals invited or the greater their Size: from a handful of cockroaches, a few birds, or a single wolf (I Degree of Success), to a dozen mice or two or three medium-sized animals (II Degree of Success), to a plague of worms that fills the streets and squares of a village, or a pack of a dozen or so wolves (III Degree of Success or higher). Summoned animals do not obey the creature and behave according to their nature.

  For example, a creature with DV8 and the power to Invite (2DV) insects and arachnids decides to summon spiders on the bed of a victim sleeping nearby. They roll 2d8 (DT 6; we are in a city, therefore spiders are common) and achieve a II Degree of Success: in the middle of the night, the victim wakes terrorized, covered in hundreds of spiders crawling over their body, and face and under the sheets.

- **Order.** The creature can activate this power at the start of any tempus, but only once per fight or per scene. They *fix their gaze* on the victim and shout a specific command that requires rapid execution and can even go against the victim's nature or principles; it may even drive the victim to harm themself. The victim fully executes the command in a short time, based on the Degree of Success yielded in the Power roll: after 2 tempus (I Degree of Success), after 1 tempus (II Degree of Success), or immediately (III Degree of Success); in the meantime, they are left confused and can only defend if attacked. The victim can nonetheless oppose a **Ratio** roll against the force of the Order to completely cancel the effect.

  For example, the Custodes surprise the Vampire creature they had been following, which has the Order power, while they are standing on a tower in ruins. At the start of the first tempus of combat, the creature fixes their gaze on a Custos and orders them to "Jump off!". The Order Power roll yields a II Degree of Success: the victim approaches the edge and if nobody stops them, they throw themself off in the next tempus.

- **Shadows**. The creature can activate this power at the start of any tempus, but only once per fight or per scene. The creature is able to suddenly cover the place or small area where they are found (inside a building or in a small clearing) under a blanket of unnatural darkness. These shadows last 1DV tempus (or until the creature leaves the place) and cannot be dissipated by any type of natural or artificial light (sunlight, torches, etc.). The characters inside the darkened area suffer the *Blinded* condition, which lasts for as long as the darkness persists or until the victim manages to leave the darkened area.

- **Vampire Contagion.** If a victim dies due to the creature's Blood Sucking power (their Hit Points drop to 0), they are resurrected the following night. They will have the same characteristics as the creature that infected them, but a DV one level lower (if for example the creature has DV8, the victim will have DV6). From that moment on, the victim obeys their new master.

- **Vampiric Strength.** The creature can activate this power in any tempus in which they have used the Blood Sucking power. If the power is activated, the creature does not recover any Hit Points as a result of their Blood Sucking, but in the next tempus they are able to perform an action that would normally require unnatural strength. If they are in combat, in the next tempus their De Corpore score increases by 1DV.

NEW VAMPIRIC CREATURES

It may be difficult to juggle classic vampires and the genuine blood-sucking demons, much-feared and fought in many Mediterranean cultures. If a Demiurge wishes to insert a "traditional" Vampire in their adventures, they can do so using the values and powers of the similarly named creature described below (specifying whether it is a 'normal' or ancient, thousand-year-old Vampire).

If, on the other hand, they prefer to develop a creature more tied to the ancient world and its traditions, they can safely rely on the ***Strixes*** and their horrifying behavior (described further ahead).

VAMPIRES

Human form
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8 (DV10 or even DV12 in the case of *Ancient Vampires*)
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 16

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Blood Sucking (1DV), Enchantment (2DV, the creature *fixes their gaze* on the victim), Immortality, Metamorphosis, Unnatural Speed, Vampire Contagion, Vampiric Strength
- *Additional Magic Powers of Ancient Vampires*: Invite (2DV; wolves, bats, and mice), Order (2DV), Regeneration (1DV), Shadows

Wolf form
The Vampire has the same statistics as its human form, plus the special ability Acute Senses.

In Giant Bat form
The Vampire has the same statistics as its human form, plus the special ability Flight.

I Degree of Success
Vampires were human beings condemned to an immortal existence by a curse or some sort of disease, which forces them to feed on blood. They are endowed with many powers, making them very formidable adversaries (*Ancient Vampires* in particular). They generally try to enchant their victims in order to suck their blood, but if they don't succeed, they may transform into giant bats or wolves and similarly attempt to bite their victims. When a human dies after having their blood sucked, they can come back to life as a Vampire. Vampires fear sacred symbols, running water, and sunlight (in fact during the day, they rest in crypts or in the subsoil, far from rivers or lakes) and are said not to be able to bear looking at their own reflection in the mirror.

II or III Degree of Success
If a Vampire is killed during a fight, they turn into a mist, which, carried by the wind, heads back to its usual refuge, where the Vampire is recomposed in human form after a few hours. To permanently kill a Vampire, either a wooden pole or sharp weapon must be planted directly into its heart while it is resting in its refuge, it must be thrown into running water or else exposed to direct sunlight.

It is recommended to personalize the Vampire as much as possible, focusing above all on certain aspects: the origin of the curse that condemned it to a non-life, the daily drama of its condition, the temptation to create a small private kingdom where it is able to exert absolute power (through the power of Enchantment, which it can exercise on humans), and the possibility of realizing projects otherwise denied to any mortal due to the brevity of their existence (immortality can have its advantages, not least of all the absence of any time limit in which to achieve certain results).



STRIXES (SING. STRIX)

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 12

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Dive, Flight, Grab, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Blood Sucking (1DV), Disease* (3DV)

** A victim of **Disease of the Strixes** is also Poisoned. The Disease is also transmitted if the Strix is wounded or touched by the character in any way.*

I Degree of Success
Hideous, hybrid creatures, half human and half nightbird. They are said to have originated from a metamorphosis that strikes women who have committed horrendous attacks, such as cannibalism or killing their own children. They are described as giant deformed owls with enormous heads, four hooked claws black as the night, and round protruding eyes, yellowish with no pupils. Strixes arrive flying in darkness through populated areas, normally in very isolated communities, tending to settle near cemeteries or burial sites. Amid screams and cries, they terrorize the locals for days or even weeks. Their presence causes cattle to fall ill, and crops to rot in the fields, and increases the likelihood of storms and floods striking the area.

II Degree of Success
During the night, they break down the doors of homes and massacre those living within, draining them of their blood, dismembering them, and finally feeding on their entrails. They target certain homes more than others, particularly those with pregnant women or children, whose flesh they love to tear, filling their throats with their blood. For no apparent reason, one night they simply disappear, just as suddenly as they arrived. On many occasions, riots, civil conflicts, or genuine wars break out in the area where they appeared.

III Degree of Success
They are among the creatures most feared by rural and superstitious populations, due to the stories going around about those who have confronted them: if somebody brave enough manages to kill a Strix, they too will die within a few days simply from having touched the monster.



THE GODDESS CARNA

This ancient Italic deity of health, of door hinges and handles, is particularly adored for the protection she offers to children and their internal organs. It is also said that she *opens things that have been closed and closes things that have been opened*. The inhabitants of the most isolated villages also call her *She that protects homes from Strixes*, thanks to her ability to stop demons and vampires from entering homes. To thank the goddess, occupants leave offerings of spelt, broad beans, and lard, especially when they sense that Strixes are about to arrive.

When the Custodes kill a *Strix* for the first time, one of them immediately acquires the following minor Indigitamentum (invocation belonging to the Indigitamenta of the Di Indigetes).

CARNA DEA CARDINI (OF DOOR HINGES)

The Custos can invoke *Carna dea cardini* to prevent demonic or undead creatures from breaking down or passing through the door, gates, or windows of a specific location.
Virtus. Ingenium roll (DT 3/6/9/12)
Cost. 3 Pietas
Effect. For a number of days equal to the Degree of Success obtained in the Ingenium roll, no Demons or Undead can touch the door or cross through it.



PART IX

THE WORLD OF LEX ARCANA

A MAGICAL STORY

PIOUS AENEAS

I sing of arms and the man, he who, exiled by fate, first came from the coast of Troy to Italia... long suffering also in war, until he founded a city and brought his gods to Latium...

Virgil, Aeneid

Virgil, Rome's greatest poet, narrates that Troy eventually fell into the hands of the Achaens. Aeneas fled from the ruins of his burning city, bringing with him his family and the heritage of his ancient civilization. Following the prophecies of the late Hector's ghost and the shadow of his deceased wife, Creusa, the survivor sought a new homeland on the other side of the sea. After a long and eventful journey, Aeneas reached the banks of the river Tiberis [Tiber] and, in these faraway lands, fulfilled his destiny. He married Lavinia, daughter of the indigenous Latin king and founded a new lineage over which to reign, heir of the relics of the lost Troy. To them he gave a city, Lavinium.

Upon his death, the throne was passed to his son, Julus, who, having founded Albalonga, transferred the capital of the new nation there. The centuries passed, and thirteen rulers of the Aeneid lineage succeeded to the throne of Albalonga before the arrival of Numitor and Amulius. Numitor, a king by birthright, was ousted by his younger brother Amulius, who in order to prevent the birth of heirs to Numitor, forced his daughter Rhea Silvia to become a priestess of the goddess Vesta (who weren't allowed to have children). But one day, the god Mars surprised the Vestal virgin as she was walking through his sacred grove and impregnated her, making her the mother of two twins.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Amulius commissioned his servants to drown the two children in the Tiberis. The servants took pity on the twins, placing them in a basket and entrusting them to the river. They were collected and suckled by a she-wolf, a sacred animal to Mars. The twins were found by the shepherd Faustulus, who gave them to his wife Acca Larentia, who called them Romulus and Remus. Raised healthy and strong and taught the magic disciplines of Divination, the twins learned of their kinship with the royal family and succeeded in knocking the usurper off the throne of Albalonga. With justice done, the twins decided to found a new city along the Tiberis, at the exact point where their basket had stopped.

THE FOUNDING OF ROME

At the dawn of April 21st of what would become the year zero *Ab Urbe Condita* (AUC - from the founding of the city; 753 BC), the twins entrusted to the will of the gods the decision regarding who should be king of the future city. Romulus climbed the Palatine Hill and Remus the Aventine Hill, searching the sky for a sign. Remus initially spotted six vultures, but Romulus then saw another twelve. Believing to have obtained the favor of the gods, Romulus began the ritual to found the city, which he called Rome, and using a plough, traced out the walls that were destined to remain invincible. However, the first blood to fall on those walls would not be enemy blood, but rather that of his brother. When Remus daringly jumped over the newly traced threshold, Romulus killed him as punishment for the symbolic seriousness of his act. In the years to come, Romulus never forgot the tragedy, and mindful of the ambiguous interpretation of the gods' signs, decided to establish a council of wise scholars in the doctrine of Divination: the College of Augurs.

THE FIRST KINGS

The first kings of Rome bestowed upon the City many of the characteristics we still see today, as well as legislative provisions that have remained unaltered for centuries, and it is thanks to several of these that the practice of Divination rose to assume a role of such primary importance. **Romulus** was the first augur-king. He founded the city thanks to a divine augury, then endowed it with walls and political orders. He initiated the *Pax Deorum*, the pact thanks to which Emperors to this day can still rely on the favor of the gods. He established the College of Augurs and elders (the Senate), and also created the embryo of the Roman army.

Upon the death of Romulus, the Sabine **Numa Pompilius** rose to the throne, who devoutly dedicated himself to perfecting magical practices, availing himself of the *Sacred Books of Divination*, gifted to him by the Nymph Egeria. In his *Commentaries*, he established the ritualistic methods for every divine propitiation ceremony and created the College of Pontiffs. He was buried with the autobiographical texts of his most in-depth studies. The successor to Numa Pompilius, **Tullus Hostilius**, was a warrior king. He fell, struck by divine lightning when he provoked the wrath of Jupiter, attempting to perform a secret ritual taken from the *Commentaries* of Numa Pompilius. **Ancus Marcius** ordered the Pontifex Maximus to display a compendium of Numa's *Commentaries* in public, in order to avoid errors of interpretation and execution.

Tarquinius Priscus, of Etruscan origin, was an excellent warlord and shrewd administrator. He was killed by the sons of Ancus Marcius, as had been prophesied by the College of Augurs. **Servius Tullius** reorganized the institutional structure of Rome and was murdered by his daughter, Tullia, and her husband, Lucius Tarquinius (later called Superbus), son of Tarquinius Priscus. Having ascended the throne, **Tarquinius Superbus** reigned over Rome in a violent and authoritarian manner, transforming the College of Augurs into his own personal council. He declared himself the Pontifex Maximus and sought to exploit the magical knowledge of that period for personal gain. He was deposed by the Roman people, tired of his tyranny and guided by the senatorial aristocracy.

THE REPUBLIC

The deposition of Tarquinius Superbus was followed by the period known as the Republic, which lasted for five centuries and saw Rome gradually assume a leading role in the Italic Peninsula and entire Mediterranean Basin. The struggles against the neighboring Italic and Etruscan populations, the Celtic invasions, and the wars against Carthage, Macedonia, and the Seleucid dynasty of Syria are just some of the conflicts that eventually granted the City sovereignty over the Mediterranean. Following the wishes of its first king, Rome did not simply respond to the desire to rule, but rather configured each new conquest as a different stage in a single, ambitious design: that of unifying a magical heritage without comparison, a compendium of the knowledge of all peoples.

THE EMPIRE

Toward the seventh century since the City's founding, the tendency to converge all magical knowledge in a single person was intensified, also in an attempt to rationalize the accumulation of knowledge collected over the centuries. **Octavian Augustus** was the first to place himself at the center of all political and military power and magical knowledge, thus rendering unequivocal his identity as Emperor, head of state, and at the same time a depository of divinatory magic. Augustus was thus the first to systematically and organically formulate magical knowledge, collating it in the volumes of the *Codex Augusteus*. The Codex, guarded by the College of Augurs, was constantly revised and updated by his successors.

In the ninth century, **Hadrian the Great**, on the basis of incredibly negative oracular responses, decidedly revolutionized Imperial policy. He decreed the end of expansions, the freezing of borders, and the raising of Valla and defense works. Rome, thanks to the knowledge of the populations now part of its Empire, had reached unprecedented power . It was therefore time to preserve, rather than continue the search. Hadrian, one of the greatest authors history has ever known, thus published the *Codex Hadrianeus* (875 AUC), completing the great mosaic of knowledge on which his predecessors had worked for almost a millennium, definitively sealing off the boundaries of knowledge.

For more than three hundred years, the Imperial borders experienced only minimal change, while external threats failed to pose any significant risk and justify any mutation of its policies. This was a time of wealth and social improvement: the Empire seemed to have apparently found the right balance for its survival and prosperity.

Three centuries later however, conditions have profoundly changed, and the omens have become quite sinister. In 1229 AUC (476 AD), in his historical speech to the Senate, Emperor **Theodomirus** spoke for the first time of an obscure design, signs of which are said to have appeared in numerous portents reported along the borders, or even in the provincial cities themselves, and which the augurs are no longer able to explain or rectify. These are clear signs that the magic of Rome no longer represents the sum of the knowledge of its peoples, and that it is time to renew the search.

CUSTODES OF THE COHORS AUXILIARIA ARCANA

THE BIRTH OF THE COHORS ARCANA

In 1229 AUC, following the historical decisions of Emperor Theodomirus, the roads of knowledge were reopened and a cycle of renewal began, capable of wresting the Empire from the vortices of a spiral of decadence. In an effort to restore dynamism to a stagnant society, the Emperor launched numerous restructuring projects, especially in the territories of the outermost provinces. In addition to the monumental military and civil construction works (the Corinth Canal, the port of Teredon on the *Sinus Persicus*, and many more still), the new strategy also included the renewal of research and studies on magical phenomena.

The Emperor thus decreed the creation of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana and the enlistment of the first 600 Custodes, individuals selected on the basis of their extraordinary qualities and skills: *"they must"*, stated the Emperor in his famous speech *"act in small groups, study the most inexplicable phenomena, investigate in city alleys, infiltrate forbidden cults, cross valleys in search of the sources of knowledge..."*

THE DUTIES OF THE COHORS ARCANA

By creating the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana, Emperor Theodomirus sought to find a solution to the increasingly pressing social unrest responsible for the proliferation of sects and cults within the provinces, as well as the threat constituted by the rising numbers of populaces approaching the borders, bringing with them new and unknown magical practices.

In the past, knowledge of the supernatural was the exclusive prerogative of the College of Augurs, a task that had become too burdensome for such a restricted number of people. Today, it is the Custodes who are responsible for investigating magical

and supernatural events. To select these individuals, each year the Prefects of the Praetorium appoint a certain number of recruiters, who discreetly visit the provinces in search of men and women up to the task. Naturally, a certain number of Custodes, in particular fighters and explorers, are selected directly from among the most promising recruits of the Praetorian Cohorts.



SECRET HISTORY OF THE COHORS ARCANA

Although unbeknownst to most, Custodes with magical knowledge have always existed in Rome...

Legend has it that when Romulus, the first king of Rome, established the office of the *Custos Urbis* (he who must govern the newborn City in his absence), he chose to appoint a certain Denter Romulius. To defend the city of Rome from the supernatural threats originating from the immense woods of Latium, Denter Romulius recruited six men, chosen from among the most courageous and skilled.

These Custodes, whose names have since been lost in the mists of time, were specialized in six fields of human knowledge: exploration, secrecy, war, diplomacy, science, and magic. They were consecrated to six deities, who would protect them as they fulfilled their dangerous tasks. The office was a lifelong appointment: when one of the Custodes perished, a worthy successor would take their place. Little is known about the threats faced by the first Custodes during those legendary years, but what is certain is that they operated for the entire royal period at the service of the successors of Denter Romulius: Numa Martius, the second *Custos Urbis*, and Spurius Lucretius, the third and last.

The six Custodes continued to operate for almost another three centuries, even during the Republic, until the era of the *Decemviri*. In that period, the office of *Custos Urbis* was discharged of its functions and replaced by the *Praetor Urbanus*, having a merely administrative role. The Custodes were dismissed by the Consuls Marcus Horatius Barbatus and Lucius Valerius Poplicola Potitus with the emanation of the *12 Bronze Tablets*. The magical and primordial forces of Italia had now been domesticated, leaving Rome free to concentrate on territorial expansion. And it stayed that way for another three centuries.

Some claim that during these years the Custodes never ceased to exist and continued to operate in secret for the salvation of Rome. Nobody knows their deeds or names. If indeed there were Custodes during these dark years, their contribution was not recorded. What we can say for certain is that Augustus, the first Emperor, sought to restore the ancient tradition of the Custodes at the suggestion of his ally and adviser, Maecenas. The magical traditions originating from the recently conquered provinces were indeed very powerful, and; the supernatural threats that the newborn Empire would soon find itself facing would quickly become too dangerous to be ignored.

Renamed the Custodes Arcani, they grew to 24 in number, 6 for each of the Empire's four large Prefectures. Their office was kept secret, given that they were to operate only further to the instruction of Augustus, reporting directly to him or his closest advisers.

For this reason, their exploits appear in the annals of the Empire, while their names were fortunately inferred from the personal diaries kept by the Emperors from Augustus onward. The first two centuries of the Empire were years of great adventure for the Custodes: the Empire reached the peak of its splendor and the Custodes Arcani gained possession of knowledge their predecessors had only dreamed of.
And yet, where the light is brightest, the shadows are deepest. First the civil war, which brought the Severan dynasty to power, and then the crisis of the 10th century AUC, led the Custodes to reach their lowest point in history. Siding with different pretenders, the Custodes Arcani found themselves involved in plots and conspiracies, their efforts no longer directed toward supernatural threats or the search for magical knowledge.

And so it was that many of them, now little more than mercenaries, found themselves guilty of betrayal and murder, eventually banished by Diocletian. For almost two centuries, nothing more was known of the Custodes.

Until today, 1229 AUC, year in which Emperor Theodomirus, through the promulgation of the *Lex Arcana*, has restored the ancient nobility of the office of the original protectors of Rome. With the establishment of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana, formed by 600 members recruited from all provinces of the Empire, a new era of great enterprise and adventure awaits the Custodes: will they live up to their predecessors?

THE CUSTODES

Whether convinced by the recruiters or chosen from among the Praetorians, only a few hundred are selected each year, who from all corners of the Empire make their way to the Commissions that report to the four Prefectures. Each Commission is composed of expert officials of the Guard and the highest ranking members of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana (*Magisters*, sing. *Magister*), and makes potential candidates undergo a severe *Inquisitio*: an in-depth examination aimed at highlighting the candidates' physical and psychological potential, as well as their sensitivity toward magic. It is based on these requisites that aspiring Custodes may be invited to join the Cohors Arcana.

The tirocinium. Once they have been admitted and accepted, the Custos is groomed for their future role (*cursus*) through the *tirocinium*, training. During this preliminary period, the candidate is trained on the basics of their Office and follows a specific program aimed at imparting the best war, magic, scientific, exploratory, or diplomatic techniques. The Tirocinium consists in a series of difficult tests that would discourage anybody not up to the title of Custos, but which incredibly enhance the abilities of those who pass them, eventually forging a small group of individuals ready for any type of emergency, able to twist fate to their advantage: the contubernium.

The tutelary deities. The most important moment for future Custodes arrives at the end of the *tirocinium* program, in the form of an initiation to the secrets of the powers of Rome. Taking advantage of an exclusive privilege granted to the Romans by the *Pax Deorum*, the Magisters officiate the consecration of each single Custos to the Tutelary Deity of the cursus to which they belong. From then on, these protective gods will look favorably upon those individuals that choose to live in accordance with the disciplines most dear to them. The consecration makes the Custodes worthy of appealing directly to the kindness of the deities, thus allowing actions and deeds worthy of the heroes of yesteryear.

Equality in diversity. The Custodes are united by a strong sense of friendship and mutual loyalty, despite their enormously different social and ethnic origins. Even the hierarchical order in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana is predominantly based on the proficiency with which single assignments are carried out, rather than political virtues or birthrights. Once they are proclaimed Custodes, members of the Cohors receive the rank of *Miles Gregarius*, common soldiers; they can be promoted to superior ranks by demonstrating their expertise in the field.

Privileges. These are not the only characteristics making the Cohors Arcana different from any other military unit. The Custodes in fact enjoy exceptional immunity: they are subordinate



IN THE CASTRA

The term *castra* (always in the plural form) implies the Roman military barracks. A very high number can be found in Imperial territory, especially in border provinces. The largest host the legions , while many other smaller castra host the Auxiliary troops, that is, cohorts or maniples detached from their headquarters; others, known as *castra exploratoria*, are located beyond the Imperial borders, serving as outposts. Members of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana have free access to all areas of the castra and utilize all services. The starting point of a mission assigned to a contubernium of Custodes will often be one of these barracks.

The castra are normally rectangular in shape, delimited by a wooden palisade resting on a embarkment created by digging a large ditch, about three feet deep. The poles, which are pointed at the top, are five feet high, but their total elevation reaches ten feet if the height of the embarkment is considered. There are openings for bows and crossbows, and surveillance is constant along the walkways. Access to the castra is possible through four gates, one per side. The two on the shorter sides are the *porta praetoria*, the main gate, and the *porta decumana* (back gate). The others are the *porta principalis sinister* (left gate, with respect to the porta praetoria) and the *porta principalis extra* (right gate). The barracks are crossed by two major roads, which intersect at the center of the castra; the *via praetoria* joins the porta praetoria and porta decumana, while the *via principalis* joins the left and right gates. The troops' lodgings are located along the sides of the castra, divided into simple legionaries and non-commissioned officers; those of the senior officers are located at the center together with the administration offices; finally, there are always several granaries and warehouses, a machine shop and armory, a mess, and a field hospital. The most important castra, those erected near major Imperial cities, can be surrounded by stone walls defended by square towers, especially near the gates; the smallest on the other hand are normally without a palisade, with only an embankment to protect the tents housing the legionaries.

only to the upper ranks of the Cohors Arcana and Praetorian Cohorts, and the highest officials of the legion. As such, they do not have to fulfill the military obligations of ordinary troops (sentry duties, patrols, etc.), and their pay, *stipendium*, is much higher than that of a legionary. They receive supplies and equipment at the start of each mission and can obtain weapons, armor, or whatever else they need in all castra throughout the Empire. Finally, when carrying out missions, special permits called *diplomas* allow them to swap horses in the *mutationes* (inns) and receive board and lodging in the *mansiones* (staging posts) along the main roads. Due to all these and other privileges, the relationship between the Cohors Arcana and the legions is complicated, and tensions between the legionaries and Custodes are quite common.

WOMEN AND THE COHORS AUXILIARIA ARCANA

The archaic tradition that relegated women to a condition of subordination with respect to men, subjugating them first to the *pater familias* and then to their husbands, was initially challenged early on during the expansion, when Rome first began making contact with very different cultures. The role of women among the bellicose Germanic tribes, the mysterious Celts, and in the past, the sinister Sarmatians, often presented exceptions so strong that a new consideration of the social status of the female sex was inevitable: warrior women, healers, priestesses, or queens, if not all at once, increasingly made their appearance on the Roman scene.

This reconsideration of the role of women therefore kept pace with Roman cultural progress until the Imperial authorities' effective acknowledgement of the legal status of female citizens. Having taken this fundamental step, in 1229 AUC we are still witnessing the gradual process of assimilation of women into society, and the active participation of women in Rome's political and social life is far from being considered the norm. The situation is more promising in certain provinces, where for centuries women have enjoyed greater consideration, or along the borders, where necessity has always forced the participation of every able person.

For the purposes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana, the hidden potential of the female population is too great not to be exploited. Studies by the College of Augurs (traditionally open to individuals of both sexes) regarding the natural aptitude of certain elements toward magic, have identified the particular receptivity of women toward supernatural phenomena. In reality, this fact has been known for centuries in many territories throughout the Empire, where caring for the sick, propitiating divine will, and the divination of past and future events, has always been the prerogative of women. In order to insert women into the ranks of the Custodes, the Cohors Arcana uses only those elements selected by the recruiters in the various provinces, insofar as women are still precluded from forging a career within the Legion.

The life of female Custodes is certainly not easy, given that as soon as they step into action, in order to preserve the necessary secrecy in the most culturally underdeveloped areas, they are often forced to dress as men or pretend to be accompanying their male comrades so as not to raise suspicions among the local folk. Among the male Custodes, rumor has it that in order to counteract these additional setbacks, the female Custodes of the Cohors Arcana take a secret oath of mutual assistance and solidarity in every situation: the *Hippolyta's Oath*, in honor of the legendary Amazon warrior.

CUSTODES' EQUIPMENT

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

The Custodes carry non-military equipment with the help of a stick, which they carry on their left shoulder, to which they tie their satchels and leather bags using belts. Standard equipment includes numerous objects essential for every Custos: a mess tin, sickle, spare straps, razor, flint, camping pot, and tools to maintain weapons and armory. Rations for a week or longer are normally kept inside a mesh bag. A few lengths of chain and cord, a saw, a bucket, a basket, and other objects useful to the entire group are distributed among the various Custodes. Standard equipment may differ from Custos to Custos due to the objects and instruments unique to each office. Here are a few examples:

- **Lituus**. The symbolic stick of the *cursus auguralis*, made in different shapes depending on the ethnic origin of the augur that uses it. It is used to perform numerous divinatory rituals.
- **Speculum**. A small mirror in polished metal, useful in performing its eponymous ritual.
- **Dolabra**. A pick-axe of sorts, normally used as a construction tool by those belonging to the *cursus sapiens*.
- **Erba Achillea [Yarrow]**. This is a special herb with powerful hemostatic properties, used with bandages to heal wounds.
- **Abacus**. A small abacus, easily held in the palm of a hand, used to make mathematical calculations.
- **Stilus**. A straw with a pointed tip on one end to write, and flattened on the other to cancel out. It is used to write and publish all types of documents on paper or parchment.

In regards to clothing, members of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana have an unlimited choice, especially more experienced and higher-ranking members. Following is a brief description of the clothing Custodes use when they stay in the castra for more than a few days. Men and women have the same entitlements.

- **Sagum**. A large cloak, used to provide shelter from the cold or rain, sometimes used as a blanket.
- **Bracae**. Long trousers, generally tied at the ankles or tucked into one's socks; these are typical of barbarian populations, but their use is rapidly spreading.
- **Feminalia**. Long trousers below the knee, very common.
- **Tibiale**. Leggings, in either leather or fabric, which cover the lower part of the legs, from the instep to just below the knee.
- **Caligae**. Leather sandals having heavy soles reinforced with rounded iron studs.

The Custodes receive every weapon or object they need to fulfill a given assignment, and also have access to board and lodging at all castra throughout the Empire . As a consequence, they don't have much need for money. In any case, when departing on a mission, each Custos carries with them a certain amount equal to the value of approximately 3 months' stipendium. In this way, if necessary they can rent new horses at the *mutationes* or stay overnight at the *mansiones* (when they do not have the necessary diplomas to use these services for free, or if they prefer to be discreet), or easily face other reasonable costs that may arise.

MELEE WEAPONS

PUGIO

The *Pugio* (pl. *Pugiones*) is a dagger used by Roman soldiers as a reserve weapon and by civilians as a means of defense. It is worn in a sheath hooked to the belt (called *cingulum*), but can also be easily hidden between the folds of a toga, so it is the perfect weapon for an assassin. For example, Julius Caesar was knifed by conspirators armed with daggers.



SICA

A curved dagger, longer than a Pugio and therefore more difficult to hide. Considered a typical weapon of the Thracians and Illyrians, it is also the preferred weapon of hired assassins known as *sicarii* (literally "who use the Sica").



CUDGEL

A simple and robust wooden stick. The majority of improvised weapons fall under this definition.



SCRAMASAX

The *Scramasax* or *Seax* (Saxon term for "knife") is a 15-20 inches dagger used by Germanic peoples as a weapon, but also as a tool forming part of many Custodes' equipment thanks to its ease of use and versatility.



GLADIUS

Many centuries ago, mastery in using the Gladius was what determined the superiority of legions against Roman enemies. It is a short sword (about 25 inches) with a large double-edged blade and sharp point, effective in slashing and lethal in lunges. It has a small guard to protect the hand and a molded grip for a firm hold.



SPEAR

A weapon consisting of a wooden shaft surmounted by a silex, bronze, or iron tip. Widely diffused in all areas since antiquity, hunting and war Spears may differ in length and construction, but normally all have a metal leaf-shaped tip.



SECURICULA

A small throwing axe used mainly by the Franks and Saxons, also adopted by several Custodes (especially those from northern provinces).



ENSIS

Rather than indicating a specific weapon, the name *Ensis* (Latin term for "sword") indicates a broad category of weapons similar to the Gladius, but with a longer blade (from 30 to 35 inches) and sometimes curved (like the Iberian *Falcata* and the Greek *Kopis*).



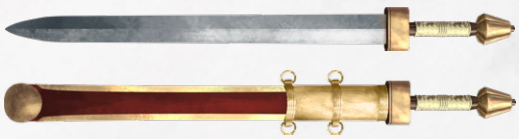
MALLEUS

A Latin term for a war club. Used only by Eastern populations in the past, it has long since become a regular part of Roman military arsenal. It is also used by some Custodes due to its brutal efficacy, and in some cases, for its valuable workmanship.



SPATHA

A sword roughly three feet long, originally introduced to the Roman army by the Celtic auxiliary cavalry, its use has since been gradually extended to infantry. It features a narrow double-edged blade and is easy enough to handle even with one hand only.



SECURIS

A battle axe that is longer and heavier than the *Securicula* and not suitable for throwing, but capable of inflicting serious damage. It is much more difficult to use with one hand only, requiring either great skill or great strength.



FALX

The dreaded Dacian *Falx* has a curved, single-edged blade about one meter long, mounted on a long wooden grip. During the war against King Decebalus, the Falx forced the Romans to modify their armor in order to protect against its terrible blows.



HASTA



A spear roughly two meters long with a yew wood shaft and a large iron tip; too heavy to be thrown, it is used only for thrusting in melee combat. In the hands of an expert fighter, it may become a devastatingly effective weapon, given it can be used together with the shield in the same way as the ancient Greek hoplites.

BIPENNIS

An enormous double-headed axe. A weapon not known for its elegance, but capable of becoming a terrible tool of death in the right hands.



RANGED WEAPONS



SLING

Composed of two sections of rope with a pocket in the middle, it is used to sling stone, clay, or lead projectiles. Ultra-light, affordable and easy to conceal, the Sling is the ideal choice for Custodes looking for a reliable throwing weapon to discreetly carry with them everywhere.



PLUMBATA

Plumbatae, sometimes called *martiobarbuli* ("barbs of Mars"), are darts with a metal tip weighed down by the addition of lead. Carried five by five on the inner side of shields, they are thrown like small javelins and can be very effective in the hands of experienced combatants.



ANGON

A javelin with a long metal tip, used mostly by Germanic peoples (other types of lightweight javelins such as the Roman *Verutum* have the same game statistics). Unlike Spears, their conformation makes them ineffective in hand-to-hand combat.



ARCUS

The *Arcus* is a Germanic hunting or war bow, typically used by auxiliary troops afoot or mounted soldiers (called *sagittarii*).



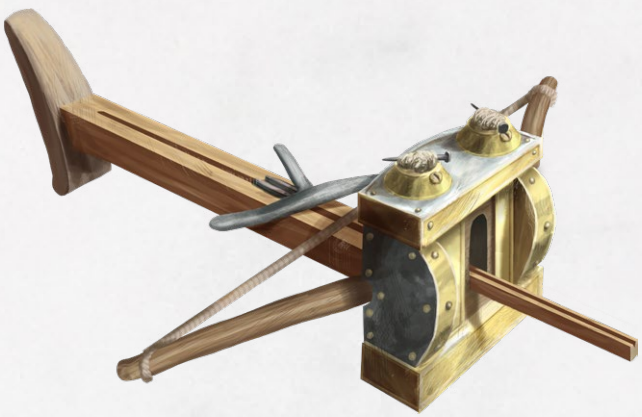
TOXON

An extraordinarily powerful curved bow composed of overlapping layers of wood (or bone) and animal tendons. The construction technique originates from Asia, where it is often used by mounted nomads and mounted Sasanian archers.



PILUM

A heavy javelin typically used by Roman legionaries, composed of a long iron tip mounted on a wooden shaft. The joint is weighed down by the addition of lead, in a spherical or pyramid shape, which improves its stability in flight and penetration through armor. Just like the Angon, the *Pilum* cannot be used in hand-to-hand combat.



MANUBALISTA

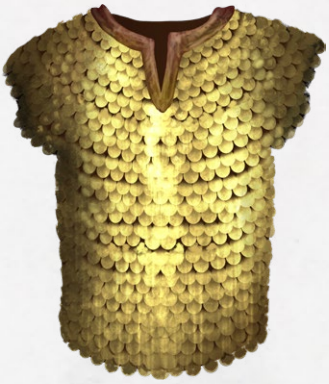
The *Manubalista*, a smaller version of the siege machine invented by the great mathematician Heron of Alexandria, is a crossbow of sorts, capable of hurling small, but lethal projectiles even across long distances.

SUITS OF ARMOR



CORIUM LORICA

The *Corium Lorica* (Latin term for "leather armor") is a form of armor in boiled leather, which covers the chest, back, and shoulders, is easy to make and comfortable to carry (albeit offering mediocre protection). It is the armor most commonly used outside the army.



LORICA SQUAMATA

Composed of a canvas support on which small metal scales are sewn, made to resemble the scales of fish and snakes. Relatively inexpensive and easy to repair, these are widely diffused among the cavalry and auxiliary troops of the Roman army.



LORICA HAMATA

It was the Gauls who taught the Romans the art of building coats of mail composed of metal rings. This laborious process produces a very flexible, reliable and resistant armor. To reduce the weight and improve the fit, part of the weight is redistributed to the hips, by way of a belt.



LORICA PLUMATA

The *Lorica Plumata* is made by applying rows of metal plates to a *Lorica Hamata*, like the feathers of a bird. Due to the elevated cost of production and continuous need for maintenance, this is normally reserved to the Tribunes and other military commanders.



LORICA SEGMENTATA

This is the armor normally used by Roman legionaries, produced in series by Imperial *fabricae*. It consists in metal strips arranged horizontally around the torso fastened to internal leather straps. Although much lighter than the *Lorica Hamata* and offering improved protection, it is very uncomfortable due to its lack of flexibility.



LORICA MUSCULATA

Made in iron or bronze, it is normally only worn by the highest ranks of the Roman army. It is nonetheless available to those Custodes looking for optimal protection (and willing to accept the extra weight and discomfort). It is composed of two sections that cover the chest and back, shaped to replicate the underlying anatomical forms (whence it derives its name).









SHIELDS

PARMA
A small round shield, light and easy to handle, reinforced in the center by a metal handle.

CLIPEUS
An oval shield, quite large and heavy, reinforced in the center by a metal handle. It offers good protection and is part of the equipment of many auxiliary troops.

SCUTUM
This is the typical shield of Roman legionaries. Rectangular in shape, convex and very large, it is a very cumbersome but extremely efficient as a defense.

ORGANIZATION OF EMPIRE

The **Emperor** is the only sovereign (*totius orbis Imperator*), responsible for all military, political, and religious decisions. He is supported by the **Senate**, constituted by 300 members from the most noble families of ancient tradition, which plays a consultative role and enjoys great prestige and influence. Very rarely have there been any open conflicts between the Emperor and the Senate. The main administrative and civil officials also depend on the Emperor and Senate, for example the *Magister Officiorum* (head of chancellery), the *Quaestor Sacri Palatii* (minister of justice), the *Comes Sacrarum Largitionum* (minister of finance) and countless others. Below we find the complex hierarchic pyramid of officials and public offices, both major and minor.

EXTENSION AND LANGUAGES

With twenty provinces under its control, the Roman Empire has reached its maximum territorial extension, although certain regions were abandoned in the past because they were deemed too dangerous or of no use to cultural and economic growth. A myriad of cultures and ethnicities have thus experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, above all thanks to the positive stimuli derived from encounters between different civilizations. The majority of the urban areas in the west have deeply absorbed the Roman influence and architectures, as can be seen by their customs and costumes; in the east on the other hand, the footprint of Hellenistic Greece is far from faded. Given the extension of the territory, an enormous number of languages are spoken throughout the provinces. In spite of this, the most diffused languages are Latin and Greek, which are used in commerce, politics, literature, and by the cultural elite. The majority of local languages, however, are still commonly used in their respective areas of influence.

PREFECTURE AND MUNICIPIUM

Based on the ethnic group and geographical location, the Imperial territory is divided into four large regions called Prefectures, each governed by a Prefect. The most important of the Prefects is the *Praefectus Urbi* of Rome, who reports directly to the Emperor. Each Prefecture includes five provinces governed by an Imperially appointed Governor who is responsible for the administration of justice, taxes, urban development, etc. Each single city (*municipium*) also has a local government, the *Curia*, a small senate of sorts, whose members vary in number depending on the size of the city. The curia constitutes a council of magistrates through which the public life of the community is very efficiently managed. The various curiae report to the Governor of the province.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY

From a military point of view, the *Magistri Militum* are the supreme commanders of the troops stationed in a given province and follow the direct orders of the Emperor and Senate. The Empire's defense is mainly entrusted to thirty or so legions, constituting the heart of Rome's military force. Each commanded by a *Legatus*, the legions are the wise heirs of the Macedonian phalanx, where discipline and compactness are of much greater value than personal fury and the individual combat practiced by many populations.

Enlistment in the legions is voluntary and open to all citizens of the Empire. Very rarely has there been any need for forced recruitment. Military discipline is very strict. Traditionally, each legion is composed of about 6000 infantrymen and 120 horsemen stationed in barracks (castra) under the orders of a Legatus. The infantrymen are grouped into 10 cohorts, each cohort (600 men) is composed of three maniples (200 men), and each maniple of 2 centuries (of 100 men). The centuries are guided by a centurion, a soldier of long-standing and proven experience and loyalty, who is responsible for training the legionaries.

The legion barracks are normally set up in locations where it is easiest to preside over the provinces and eventually rush to threatened borders. Border surveillance is entrusted to specific detachments of the legions (*vexillationes*) or auxiliary troops recruited either from the local populations, or cross-border barbarian populations that have proven their loyalty to the Empire. Each province is normally presided over by one or more legions, depending on the danger of its borders and size, and by a variable number of auxiliary troops.

COMMUNICATION ROUTES

One of the greatest privileges guaranteed by the Empire to its citizens is the ease of movement from one end to the other of its immense territory. The Roman road system, composed of a dense and efficient network of roads, connects the cities of every province and is today the main vehicle of civilization and culture throughout the entire Empire. Roman roads have often replaced pre-existing clay paths or trackways. Sometimes, especially in the East, they are laid on ancient roads paved by the great empires of antiquity. But not even the most prestigious and monumental ruins of past civilizations can satisfactorily compete with Imperial communication routes, systematically planned to best fulfill their vital functions. Since the very first stone was laid to build the various roads of the Italic Peninsula, Roman engineers have always followed specific instructions in terms of materials and measurements, instructions that the *Curatores Viarum* (the magistrates in charge of the maintenance and administration of public roads) continuously update in line with territorial development.

The road system is used by Imperial troops to efficiently defend the miles and miles of fortified limes, allowing rapid intervention in the event the borders are infiltrated. To this end, many roads have been built parallel to the borders of Imperial lands, along which countless watch towers are erected, under the shadows of which armed patrols march (the *Strata Diocletiana*, the *Germanic-Danubian limes*, the *Mesopotamian limes*, etc.).

MAIN AND SECONDARY ROADS

The main streets are paved with large stone blocks, made using the best engineering technology, slightly convex at the center to improve the flow of water; they are generally rectilinear, and monumental works such as bridges, superelevations, and tunnels bend nature in this regard. These roadways join the Empire's major urban centers and constitute the main commercial arteries of each province. All types of meetings can take place along these roads used by troops on the move, diplomats on missions, merchants, and traveling thinkers.

The secondary roads, mostly local, connect the major rural centers with the nearby cities. These are generally formed by a thick bed made of gravel or stone, covered with pebbles with a lime grout. In the countryside they are often unpaved and in many cases no wider than the paths used by the local peasant families.

ALONG THE ROAD

Along the roads, at the service of travelers and public services such as the postal service (the *cursus publicus*), two types of stations can be found, the *mutationes* and the *mansiones*. The former are change stations for draft animals, a service that can be used by Imperial officials and whoever else is authorized to do so. The latter allow travelers to stay in comfortable lodgings (with stalls for animals) and are erected approximately one day of travel apart, with five or six mutationes in between.

For less affluent travelers (or for Custodes requiring secrecy), near these stations, small and noisy taverns be found, sometimes equipped with a few beds. Possible encounters in these disreputable locations may prove dangerous, but certainly less so than those while sleeping outdoors. Where there is a tavern, there are normally small conurbations nearby with just a few houses or huts belonging to merchants attracted to the area by the possibility of trade with the wealthy guests of the mansiones. Merchants and artisans normally sell food, local wine, and various objects of little worth.

Near mansiones, there is normally a small garrison of local auxiliaries in charge of guarding the stations and the surrounding area; they normally engage in patrol or escort services within the limits of their jurisdiction (the space between one mansio and the other) and more often than not are quite hostile toward the Custodes and suspicious of any particularly strange or dangerous events. They rarely prove of any help in case of need.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

AGRICULTURE AND LATIFUNDIA

Agriculture has forever constituted the linchpin of the economy for Rome and the Empire, but also a source of important social conflict. In the countryside of most provinces, large parcels of land are occupied by *latifundia* (large estates run by a single person or family, often of senatorial or equestrian rank), which over the centuries have progressively and unstoppably incorporated small and medium-sized farms to assume proportions without precedence. It is very difficult to exert any form of control within the latifundia, which quite often end up becoming almost a state within a state, with their own troops, hierarchies, and exploitation of servile labor.

TRADE AND MANUFACTURING ACTIVITIES

The long period of peace has enabled the incredible development of trade and never before has such a high level of safety been guaranteed during travel, especially along the Empire's fastest route: the *Mare Internum*. Under the Roman fiscal system, taxes are reduced to a minimum and standardized in favor of trade relations also between the farthest provinces. Other manufacturing and artisan activities are also thriving with increases in production, expanding exports, and refined manufacturing techniques: ceramics, bronze ornaments, bricks, all types of fabric, glass, and jewelry just to name a few.

HOMES AND CITIES

Through the unification of its immense territory and thanks to the centuries of peace enjoyed by the Mediterranean area since the era of Hadrian, the Empire has been able to dispose of greater riches than in any other period throughout its history. A sizeable heritage, widely shared among the provinces, has given a tremendous boost to urbanization, in line with a tendency typical of the Greco-Roman civilization. The Empire has always sought to encourage the natural formation of these urban communities through the generous profusion of funds for the construction of buildings. New cities are enriched with aqueducts, forums, amphitheaters, richly ornamented portals, and temples, extended according to carefully designed plans (normally in line with the classic chessboard structure).

Private homes and countryside villas are no less extravagant, and their spectacular columned porticoes and mosaic floors convey a magnificence that reflects the wealth and well-being of their



IMPERIAL CURRENCY

In spite of a constant and creeping devaluation experienced throughout the entire history of the Empire, drastic reforms have never been necessary and the currencies used in all the provinces have been the same for centuries. *Aurei*, *Denarii*, *Sestertii*, *Asses*, and *Quadrans* are continuously coined in a demonstration of efficient financial management, while also contributing to another essential function: it is through the images and names represented on the coins (effigies of Emperors, commemorations of Imperial victories, etc.), that the voice of the Empire is able to reach the farthest, most remote countries well beyond its borders.

- **Aureus**: gold coin of great value, equivalent to 25 Denarii
- **Denarius**: silver coin equal to 4 Sestertii
- **Sestertius**: silver coin equal to 4 Asses
- **As**: bronze coin equal to 4 Quadrans
- **Quadrans**: bronze coin of low value

An Areus is therefore equivalent to 25 Denarii, 100 Sestertii, 400 Asses, and 1600 Quadrans; a Denarius is equal to 4 Sestertii, 16 Asses, and 64 Quadrans, while a Sestertius is equal to 4 Asses and 16 Quadrans.
The Sestertius and Denarius are the most commonly used coins. In Hellenized provinces of the eastern Mediterranean, the *Drachma* is also very diffused, of equal value to a Denarius.

inhabitants. Roman, and more generally Italic, homes are essentially formed by two parts: the first with an *atrium* in the center, and the second with a *peristylium* in the center. The atrium is characterized by an internal courtyard surrounded by rooms, which often also includes a small garden. The peristylium is also a courtyard, but larger and more spacious, often decorated by Greek-influenced colonnades and surrounded by more rooms. The home is normally inhabited by one family only and looks inward; the light therefore enters from the two central areas, around which the other environments are developed. Windows along the external walls are therefore either rare or completely non-existent.

This type of dwelling, typical of wealthy families, is very different to the *insulae*, large blocks of rented homes in overcrowded urban centers. These may be developed across multiple stories, with windows and balconies on the outer walls and built using much cheaper materials. There is little light, the rooms are small and uncomfortable, and the noise from the street easily enters, making it difficult to get a good night's sleep.

THE RICH AND THE POOR

At least in appearance, the characteristics and proportions of the social classes composing the Empire's population have changed little with respect to past centuries. At the top of the social scale we obviously find the Emperor and the senatorial class, responsible for governance and important decisions regarding the State. Then we have the equites (horsemen), forming the most numerous order and present throughout all provinces of the Empire: it provides a large number of civil and military officials. Below the senatorial and equite classes we find the variegated plebeian class.

In the city, plebs live on small businesses, artisan trades, and liberal professions. With a little sense of initiative, the most active exponents of this class can earn themselves the chance to access the higher classes. The plebeian citizens include rich and wealthy persons aspiring to gain senatorial and equestrian status, others we could define as middle class (doctors, grammarians, rhetoricians and philosophers, artists, merchants, etc.), the great mass of freedmen (slaves freed from their owners either by merit or due to the unsustainable cost of keeping them), those who occupy small public offices and finally the *clientes*, who don't have a fixed job but rather accompany the equites and senators in their movements, doing favors for them in exchange for a daily fee allowing them to survive.

The rural populace, on the other hand, consists of small owners, shepherds, farmers, and field hands, normally destined to pass their knowledge and trades on to their descendants. Among these we find veterans, highly respected former legionaries who have received property as thanks for their outstanding military careers. Famines and natural disasters are more frequent than unusually abundant harvests, thus making it difficult to improve their living situation or accumulate any substantial wealth.

At the bottom of the social scale we find the slaves, forming a numerous group continuously fed by additional births (the offspring of slaves are slaves themselves) and the sly maneuvering of merchants. The absence of war seems to have slowed the flux of slaves in the Imperial territories (prisoners), while simultaneously improving their conditions; we can safely ascertain a certain decrease in their numbers.

FOOD

It is very common to consume bread, of which there are three types: black bread, panis secondarium, which is whiter but not very fine, and luxury bread. Bread is generally baked in the oven. The most common legumes are lentils, chickpeas, and broad beans. Vegetables include leeks, cabbage, and lettuce. Mushrooms are highly appreciated, cooked with honey. The most common fruits include apples, pears, cherries, plums, grapes, walnuts, chestnuts, dates (from warmer countries), and apricots (from Armenia).

In terms of meat, the ox and pig, deer and wild donkey are the most diffused. Moreover: the stork, flamingo, crane, and peacock.

The most preferred is nonetheless fish, from that preserved in brine (cheaper) to turbot, sturgeon, sole, and mullet. The most common dressings include vinegar, honey, mint, and various sauces, often fish-based (such as the ubiquitous *garum*).

NAMES

With the spread of Imperial culture and civilization in the Mediterranean area, proper names of Latin and Greek origin are also becoming increasingly popular in almost all provinces, often combined or distorted with local names. In the archaic age, Romans normally had one or two names (for example, Ennius, Julia, Appius Claudius, etc.). In the classical age, they even had as many as three names Quintus Fabius Maximus, Gaius Julius Caesar, Publius Vergilius Maro, etc.), and specifically, the *praenomen* (for example Gaius, Quintus, Marcus, Titus, Gnaius, etc.), the family *nomen gentilicium* (for example Tullius, Claudius, Flavius, etc.) and the *cognomen*, with reference to a distinctive physical or moral feature (for example Nose, "of a big nose", Bruto, "the fool", etc.). In the Greek area, only one name is normally used (for example Demosthenes, Empedocles, Medea, etc.). Greek, Latin, and names of other cultures may be followed by a nickname, which is often a clarification of their geographic place of origin (for example Maximinus Thrax, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Nippur of Lagash, etc.).

In regards to names in the Roman Empire of 1229, there is no longer a net distinction from past centuries, and combinations of one, two, three, or even more names can be found.

Roman and Italic:

(Italia, Illyiricum, Gallia ma anche Iberia, Raetia, Thracia, Dacia, Achaia, Macedonia)

Male:

Accius
Acilius
Acron
Aetius
Afranius
Agricola
Agrippa
Albinovanus
Albius
Alcio
Allio
Alypius
Ambiuius
Ammianus
Andronicus
Annaeus
Annius
Antoninus
Antonius
Apicius
Appianus
Appius
Apuleius
Arellius
Arnobius
Asellio
Atilius
Aulus
Aurelius
Ausonius
Bassus
Bavius
Bibaculus
Brutus
Caelius
Caesar
Caius
Calvus
Camillus
Caracalla
Carinus
Carus
Carvilius
Cassiodorus
Cassius
Cato
Catullus
Catulus
Cecilius
Cecolo
Celsus
Cestius
Cicero
Cincius
Cinna
Claudianus
Claudius
Clodius
Commodianus
Constantinus
Cornelius
Corvinus
Cosimus
Crassus
Curtius
Decimus
Decius
Destro
Didio
Didymus
Difilo
Domitianus
Donatus
Drusus
Duilius
Emilius
Ennius
Eugenius
Fabius
Falernus
Falvianus
Fannius
Faustinus
Faustulus
Faustus
Festus
Flaminius
Flavius
Florus
Frontinus
Fronto
Fulvius
Furius
Fusio
Gaius
Galerius
Gallienus
Gallus
Gellius
Gnaeus
Gracchus
Gratianus
Hadrianus
Hieronymus
Hilarianus
Hilarius
Honorius
Icilius
Iulianus
Iulius
Iunius
Iustinianus
Iustinus
Iuvenalis
Laberius
Labienus
Laeuius
Lampridius
Lattantio
Lentulus
Levius
Licinius
Livius
Lucanus
Lucilius
Lucius
Lucretius
Maccius
Macro
Macrobius
Mamurius
Mancinus
Manilius
Manlius
Marcellus
Marcus
Marius
Maro
Martialis
Maximianus
Maximinus
Maximus
Mela
Memmius
Menenius
Messalla
Metellus
Mettius
Milo
Minucius
Musonius
Mutius
Nemesianus
Nepos
Nero
Nerva
Nevius
Novio
Numa
Numitor
Octavius
Oratio
Ovidius
Pacuvius
Pallante
Paterculus
Paulus
Persius
Petronius
Pinarius
Piso
Plautus
Plinius
Poillio
Pompeius
Pomponius
Pontius
Porcius
Porphyrius
Priscus
Probus
Proculus
Propertius
Prudentius
Publius
Pulcher
Quintilianus
Quintus
Rabirius
Remus
Romulus
Rufinus
Rufus
Rutilius
Sabinus
Sallustius
Scaurus
Scipio
Seneca
Septimius
Septimus
Sertorius
Servilius
Servius
Severus
Sextus
Silius
Silla
Spartacus
Statius
Suetonius
Sulpicius
Symmachus
Tacitus
Tarpeius
Tarquinius
Tatius
Terentius
Tiberius
Tibullus
Titus
Traianus
Trebonius
Trogus
Tullius
Turpilius
Ulpianus
Valens
Valentinianus
Valentinus
Valerianus
Valerius
Varius
Varro
Velleius
Vergilius
Verginius
Victor
Vitruvius
Volcacius

Female:

Acca
Agatha
Agnes
Agrippina
Anna
Antonina
Azia
Clodia
Cloelia
Domitilla
Drusilla
Fausta
Felicitas
Julia
Justina
Octavia
Paculla
Perpetua
Plotina
Poppaea
Procula
Prusia
Pudentilla
Sabina
Terentia

Greek Area

(Achaia, Macedonia, Thracia, Illyricum, Asia, Syria, Aegyptus, Armenia, Dacia)

Male:

Achilles
Aeschines
Aeschylus
Aesop
Alcaeus
Alexander
Anacreon
Antigone
Antimachus
Apollonius
Aratus
Aristarchus
Aristides
Aristippus
Aristodemus
Aristomenes
Aristophanes
Aristotle
Aristoxenus
Ascanius
Asclepiades
Astero
Astynous
Attalus
Callimachus
Caropo
Chilon
Chromius
Crates
Cretheus
Critias
Ctesiphon
Demetrius
Democoon
Democritus
Demosthenes
Diodorus
Diogenes
Diomedes
Dion
Dionysius
Dionysus
Empedocles
Ephorus
Epictetus
Epicurus
Eumenius
Euphranor
Euripides
Ezekiel
Galen
Gorgias
Hecataeus
Heracles
Hermippus
Herodotus
Hesiod
Hieron
Hippocrates
Hippolytus
Homer
Iamblichus
Ione
Isidore
Isocrates
Luca
Lucian
Lycurgus
Lysander
Lysias
Meleager
Menander
Menippus
Missileslochus
Missilesmedes
Nonnus
Numenius
Orestes
Origen
Panaetius
Paris
Parmenides
Parthenius
Pausanias
Pericles
Perseus
Phaedrus
Phidias
Philemon
Philip
Philocomus
Philodemus
Philostratus
Phylarcus
Pindar
Plato
Plotinus
Plutarch
Polybius
Polykleitos
Porphyrius
Posidonius
Prometheus
Protagoras
Ptolemy
Simonides
Socrates
Sophocles
Stesichorus
Strabo
Thales
Theocritus
Theodosius
Thucydides
Timaeus
Tyrtaeus
Xenophanes
Xenophon
Zeno
Zenodotus

Female:

Adrasteia
Adreste
Alcandre
Alchippe
Alcmene
Alexandra
Amphitrite
Andromache
Anfitea
Anticlea
Antiope
Arete
Ariadne
Artemisia
Auge
Autonoe
Calypso
Cassandra
Chloris
Clymene
Clytemnestra
Cratais
Ctimene
Daphn E
Eidothea
Electra
Epicaste
Eriphyle
Europa
Eurycleia
Eurydice
Fila
Galatea
Hecuba
Helen
Herma
Hermione
Hippodamia
Hygieia
Ilitla
Ino
Io
Iphigenia
Iphimedeia
Iphthime
Lampetle
Leda
Maera
Medea
Megara
Melantho
Niobe
Omphale
Penelope
Periboea
Perone
Phaedra
Polycaste
Polydamna
Procris
Sappho
Selene
Thoosa

Greek and Roman Nicknames

Achaeus
Africanus
Albinus
Apostata
Atticus
Bestia
Caecus
Calvus
Capitolinus
Censor
Corvinus
Crispus
Euergetes
Felix
Fiorente
Flaccus
Gallicano
German
Graecae
Italus
Lentulus
Lepidus
Libyssae
Lupus
Macedonicus
Magnus
Maior
Mamertinus
Moderatus
Nauticus
Nicomachus
Nigrum
Nobilior
Partico
Persico
Pertinax

Philadelphus
Phoenician
Pilatus
Pius
Postumus
Regulus
Rodius
Rullianus
Scaevola
Sertorius
Sirus
Superbus

Roman-Barbarian
(Germania, Raetia)

Male:

Actenusagil
Actium
Adelchis
Alueth
Ansfrid
Arichi
Aruth
Belisarius
Berich
Biorgor
Claffo
Cleph
Ebrimuth
Elagabalus
Evermor
Filimuth
Gautigoth
Godehoc
Gotila
Ibor
Ildiger
Leti
Liutberth
Liutprand
Marlhac
Mundruc
Odoacer
Paucaris
Rachis
Riothimo
Rothari
Saro
Scipuar
Sigeric
Suta
Theia
Theudas
Thiodis
Totila
Ulfari
Vaky
Vitiges
Witteric
Wulfgar

Female:

Albsuinda
Amalasuntha
Audofleda
Clotilde
Cunctator
Deuteria
Ermelindis
Frea
Galla
Guntrut
Ingund
Itta
Lantechilde
Penthesilea
Ravigonda
Romilda
Rosamunda
Salinga
Sophia
Thamyris
Theodelinda
Thrax
Tranquillus
Viniberta

Celtic Area
(Britannia, Gallia)

Male:

Ailill
Ambiorix
Anllawdd
Anvayr
Arty
Bedwyr
Branwen
Brennus
Cadyrieith
Caradawc
Conall
Custennin
Cy Chulainn
Diviciacus
Drystan
Durthacht
Dylan
Dyvnedic
Edern
Erec
Forgall
Gereint
Gwawl
Gwynn
Hafgan
Heilyn
Iddawc
Kei
Kilydd
Klydno
Kynan
Kynon
Kynyr
Labraid
Laeg
Llasar
Lleu
Llevelys
Lludd
Llwyt
Lugaid
Mabon
Madawc
Manawyddan
March
Maredudd
Math
Matholwch
Mathonwy
Maxen
Medrawt
Meirchiawn
Menw
Modron
Mynyo
Nudd
Owein
Pendaran
Peredur
Pryderi
Pwyll
Ronabwy
Taliesin
Tallwch
Taredd
Teyrnon
Trwyth
Umendruad
Uryen
Uthecar
Vercingetorix
Ynywl
Yspaddaden

Female:

Aife
Angharat
Aranrot
Armagin
Badb
Blodeuwedd
Boudica
Branwen
Briga
Creiddylat
Deichtine
Derdriu
Elaine
Elen
Emer
Enid
Essylt
Ethne
Euxen
Fand
Feidelm
Findabair
Findchaem
Goewin
Goleuddydd
Gwenhwyvar
Kicva
Kymidei
Leborcham
Lendabair
Lunet
Macha
Maga
Mata
Medb
Morrigan
Mugain
Nemain
Ness
Niab
Olwen
Rianon
Scathach
Sulis
Uathach
Ynywl

Aegyptus

Male:

Ahmose
Amenhotep
Amenmhat
Antef
Anuki
Aziru
Bek
Dedumose
Eie
Herachte
Hirior
Horemeb
Inteb
Kafran
Kaptah
Kefta
Kepru
Khenzer
Khufu
Mata
Mentu
Metufer
Neco
Nefru
Nefrusobk
Oneh
Osorkon
Pepi
Pepitamon
Petubaste
Piye
Ptahor
Ramose
Sahura
Sekenre
Senmut
Sethi
Sinufer
Sinuhe
Smende
Snefru
Tadukhipa
Taharqa
Takelot
Teti
Thoth
Thutmose
Tuosre
Tut
Zoser

Female:

Baketamon
Cleopatra
Hatshepsut
Keftiu
Kipa
Mehunefer
Mekenamon
Merit
Minea
Muti
Nefer
Neferikara
Nefertiti
Taia

African Area
(Numidia, Mauritania)

Male:

Adherbal
Bocchus
Gaia
Hiempsal
Juba
Jugurtha
Juju
Massinissa
Mathos
Micipsa

Mesopotamic Area
(Syria, Mesopotamia)

Male:

Adad
Adadnirari
Amarsin
An
Asharaddon
Ashurbanipal
Ashurnasirpal
Benadad
Burnaburiash
Bursin
Dagan
Dumuzi
El
Enki
Enlil
Eriba
Etana
Gilgamesh
Gudea
Gugalanna
Hammurabi
Ibbi
Iddin
Ishtar
Isimud
Lugalbanda
Lulal
Nabonidus
Nammu
Nanna
Naram
Nebuchadnezzar
Neti
Ninsun
Nippur
Odaenathus
Rin
Rpju
Salmanassar
Sardanapalus
Sargon
Seleucus
Sennacherib
Shamash
Shamshi
Shubattu
Shulgi
Shun
Sin
Sirtur
Tammuz
Tigatpileser
Tukulti
Ukin
Urukagina
Utu
Utukegal
Zimrilim

Female:

Anat
Ashera
Belili
Ereshkigal
Geshtinanna
Inanna
Ki
Lilith
Lulal
Ningal
Ningikuga
Ninlil
Ninshubur
Semiramis
Shammuramat
Shara
Urash
Zenobia

Middle Eastern Area
(Asia, Armenia)

Male:

Alyattes
Ardi
Astyages
Candaules
Croesus
Gyges
Hattusili
Labarna
Macarete
Midas
Mithridates
Murshili
Muwatalli
Nicomedes
Pharnaces
Sarduri
Saushshatar
Shubbiliuliuma
Telipinu
Tigranes
Tushratta

Semitic
(Syria, Arabia)

Male:

Aaron
Achab
Ahaziah
Amri
Becor
David
Elijah
Enoc
Gsbaal
Hesron
Iamne
Iamuel
Isaac
Jacob
Jonathan
Joram
Moses
Ofim
Saul
Zechariah

Female:

Asenet
Atalia
Bala
Bathsheba
Dina
Edith
Ester
Jezabel
Judith
Lia
Liahel
Naomi
Rachel
Ruth
Sarah

Arabian
(Arabia)

Male:

Abu Bakr
Abu Talib
Al Aziz
Al Azred
Al Harit
Ali
Amr Ibn Kultum
Antarah
Cumar
Cutman
Ibn Hisham
Ibn Ishaq
Imru'l Qays
Labid
Mundir
Tarafah
Yusuf
Zuhayr

Female:

Aisha
Amina
Fatimah
Khadija
Maryam
Warda

OFFICIAL CULT

During the course of its expansion, Rome found itself faced with an incredible multitude of cults and magic, but it didn't always impose its beliefs on other populations. On the contrary, the Roman religion itself evolved thanks to other religions or mythologies (suffice it to consider the great influence of the Greek civilization, for example). Numerous Italic and foreign deities moved in alongside those of the already rich Latin pantheon (the Di Indigetes), or were assimilated thereto. The Celts and Egyptians, for example, found traits in the Roman gods so similar to their own such as to identify them with the same celestial figures (for example the Celtic god Ogmios with Mars, or the Egyptian god Thoth with Mercury). A form of classification nonetheless became necessary, first realized in the *Codex Augusteus* and later in the *Codex Hadrianeus*, a collection of volumes continuously updated by each new Emperor. Currently, the Imperial gods include the gods of the Official Cult, recognized and worshipped in all provinces of the Empire, and the ancient *Di Indigetes*, recognized only in the Italic Peninsula and these days much less worshipped (see also page 92).

THE MAIN GODS OF THE OFFICIAL CULT

The gods of the Official Cult are the supreme guardians and protectors of all of Rome.

Apollo. A Greco-Etruscan god, highly worshipped in Rome since the time of kings as the custodian of the secrets of Divination. He is the bearer of light, a dispeller of darkness, a guide to the Muses, a mortal archer, but above all a god of oracles and prophecy.

Diana. A highly revered and vindictive Italic goddess of the hunt, lady of the woods, protectress of wild animals that live in her sacred areas, guardian of springs and streams, of women who do not submit to their husbands, and of slaves. In many cultures, she is also the goddess of the mmoon and death. She is connected to the Greek goddess *Artemis*, the sister of Apollo.

Hecate. Goddess of the night, of necromancy, of the lunar phases, and the passage of life and death. She is worshipped by many as a witch, capable of evoking chthonic dogs that emerge from the ground to devour souls. In Achaia she is revered as *Hekate*.

Hercules. A powerful hero of extraordinary strength, the son of Jupiter and of a mortal. He was the first man to become a god after having passed twelve tests (the famous *labors*). He is the Romanized version of the Greek god *Heracles*.

Jupiter. A heavenly father, god of rain, lightning, wind, and storms, he is the supreme deity of the official Imperial pantheon, known as *Optimus Maximus*, ruler of all other gods, guarantor and avenger in oaths and pacts between men. In mythology, he is the son of Saturn and the brother of Neptune and Pluton. The *Flamen Dialis*, the high priest of the priestly order, makes a sacrifice in his honor every month. He is identified with the Greek god *Zeus*.

Juno. The most revered goddess of the Roman pantheon, the queen of Olympus and protector of the Roman state since the time of the Republic, she intervenes upon the birth of every living being and is the patron goddess of numerous feasts tied to fertility and femininity. She sits to the left of Jupiter and is his bride. She is identified with the Greek goddess *Hera*.

Mars. Italic and Roman god of war and bloodshed, of very archaic origins. According to mythology he was the father of Romulus, the first king of Rome. He is therefore considered the protector of the entire Roman population. His primary sanctuary in Rome is not found inside the City, but rather beyond the walls, almost like a sentinel. He is identified with the Greek god *Ares*.

Mercury. The ancient god of commerce and trade, protector of merchants, diplomats, trickery, and thieves. He is traditionally considered a messenger of the gods. He is identified with the Greek god *Hermes*.

Minerva. Goddess of wisdom, of medicine and strategic warfare, protectress of artisans and teachers, inventor of numbers and mathematics. The daughter of Jupiter, she sits on his right. She is identified with the Greek goddess *Athena*.

Neptune. God of the sea, rivers and streams, and all bodies of water, brother of Jupiter and Pluto. But also the god of the dark and vengeful forces of nature, and the monstrosities that emerge from the abysses and the Underworld. Identified with the Greek god *Poseidon*, he is largely feared by sailors due to his wrath.

Proserpina. The daughter of Ceres, ancient goddess of growth and the cycles of nature, Proserpina was abducted by Pluto and taken to Hades, and during the autumn and winter months, rules the Underworld with him as his bride. During the spring and summer months, she goes to her mother on the surface and nature once more brings its gifts to man. In Achaia she is worshipped as *Persephone* or *Kore*.

Pluto. Lord of the Underworld and its riches, he is hated and feared by mortals, by whom he is scarcely worshipped, and only due to fear. He is the brother of Jupiter and Neptune and an adjudicator of the dead. He is identified with the Greek god *Hades*.

Venus. A goddess worshipped in many places by many different names, linked to the Greek goddess *Aphrodite* and her qualities of womanly beauty. In mythology, she is the mother of Aeneas, the legendary founder of Rome, and thus mother of the entire Roman population.

Vesta. Virgin Latin goddess of fire, protectress of the hearth, home, and integrity of the state. To this day, her virgin priest-

esses, the *Vestals*, still ensure the goddess' sacred fire remains lit inside the temple dedicated to her in Rome. She is identified with the Greek goddess *Hestia*.

Vulcan. God of fire, who devours and destroys. A shy and silent god, he forges weapons and armor in his forge and protects those who work with fire. Volcanic eruptions are linked to him. The temples dedicated to Vulcan are located beyond the city walls, due to the destructive nature of this deity. He is the Roman interpretation of *Hephaestus*, the Greek blacksmith god of fire, who is lame and ridiculed by the other gods.

THE MAIN DI INDIGETES

The Di Indigetes are the ancient Latium and Italic gods, who were highly worshipped before Rome's expansion beyond the borders of the peninsula, but who have now been almost forgotten.

Bellona. A bloody and beautiful goddess of war. She fights on a cart with her hair loose under her helmet. She can hold a spear, a sword, a whip, or even a torch.

Fortuna. The goddess of chance, of fate and second chances, worshipped in Rome since the early Age of Kings. She rules the destiny of the human race, improving it if one has the intelligence to understand it.

Janus. A very ancient Latium god, perhaps the most important of the original Roman pantheon. He is the all-seeing guardian of all beginnings, material and immaterial passages, entranceways and exits. His gaze looks simultaneously toward the past and future and his main temple, known as the *Gates of Janus* is a very ancient construction erected in the Roman Forum: it is open in times of war, closed in times of peace.

Quirinus. An ancient Italic deity, later associated with the cult of Romulus, the legendary first king of Rome. Quirinus is the god that presides over the welfare of assemblies and groups of citizens. He is the archaic 'political' god par excellence, who protects and looks after the community like a father would his own family.

Tellus. An Italic deity of fertility and earthquakes, almost completely forgotten. With the passing of time and the progressively lesser importance afforded to her cult, Tellus' characteristics of destruction have worsened: men have begun to perform rituals in her name to avoid the terrible earthquakes rather than propitiate births or gains.

Saturn. The supreme god of the beginning of time, father of Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. He was ousted and then driven into exile by Jupiter for his transgression, the enjoyment he took in overthrowing the established order and spreading chaos. On the day of the feast dedicated to him, *Saturnalia*, slaves become owners and owners become slaves.

THE CULT

The Official Cult includes the traditional religion and magical practices of divinatory art. In all provinces of the Empire, temples dedicated to gods of the Official Cult rise majestically, visited by the faithful in their thousands, every day. The Roman religion is predominantly characterized by a set of state rituals and ceremonies performed in order to propitiate the favor of the Gods: the *Sacra Privata* and *Sacra Publica*.

Sacra Privata. These concern the personal and family sphere, and it is the *pater familias* who must perform the prescribed rituals in order to propitiate the household deities; these include the *Penates* (guardians of supplies), the *Lares* (protectors of the home and field), the *Genius* (procreative faculty of man), *Dii Parentes* (the ancestors), and *Manes* (deities of the dead). Lares and Manes are especially widely revered. The Lares are deities tied to a place, often confused with infernal spirits of which an obscure *Mater Larum* forms part. The *heroon* (a hero's tomb) of Aeneas in the area of Lavinium also belongs to this type of cult. The Manes symbolize the world of the dead, the gods of the Underworld, or simply corpses.

Sacra Publica. These group together the institutional cults entrusted to the Priestly Colleges. Following are the main colleges. The College of Pontiffs supervises the precise execution of rituals and keeps count of the years; the Emperor himself holds the position of Pontifex Maximus, supreme head of the state religion.

- The *Vestals* keep guard over the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta, an office considered in high regard; only young girls of noble families, bound by a vow of chastity can enter.
- The *Arval Brothers* are a body of priests responsible for protecting the fields; it includes men of upper caste or senatorial rank.
- The *Salii* are the brotherhood of priests consecrated to Mars, the god of war, guided by the *Flamen Martialis*; they open and close periods of war with armed dances.

TOLERATED CULTS AND FORBIDDEN CULTS

TOLERATED CULTS

Tolerated cults are those religions that have not assimilated to the Roman religion, but which the Empire has allowed to survive, given they do not consist of illicit or dangerous practices. The majority of tolerated cults are circumscribed to a province or even a single city; others are much more widespread. The main risk is that some of these cults, in actual fact, are used to cover up sacrificial cults and forbidden magic; throughout Ro-

man history, it has not been all that rare for a tolerated cult to be investigated and eventually declared forbidden, or for specific practices within a tolerated cult to be prohibited.

The most diffused cults in the Empire are that of **Cybele** (the Mother of Phrygia, the first Eastern cult adopted by the Romans), **Mithra** (of Persian origin), **Christianity** (one of the most recent and most followed religions, derived from **Judaism**), the cults of **Isis**, **Osiris**, and **Serapis** (of Egyptian origin), and naturally the endless heritage of myths and deities originating from the Greek world.

FORBIDDEN CULTS

Forbidden cults practice unofficial and illicit magic, rituals and ceremonies that call for horrible sacrifices consumed in the shadows, carried out by fanatical worshippers of evil deities or demons just waiting to be evoked.
These practices are generally not very common, remaining circumscribed to a small group of individuals who act discreetly so as to avoid the risk of persecution. Examples of the most diffused forbidden cults include the powerful magic of the Celtic druids (Gallia and Britannia), the bloodthirsty divination practices of the Germani (Germania and Raetia), Egyptian necromancy (Aegyptus), Greek Orphic rituals (Achaia), those of **Zalmoxis** (Thracia), worshippers of **Arimhan** (Mesopotamia) and of **Satan** in Christianity (almost everywhere), the child sacrifices of the apparently banished Phoenician religion (Africa and Mediterranean islands), the cult of **Baal** (Syria), Eastern demonic evocation rituals (Asia, Armenia, Arabia, and Syria), and many more.
These cults transfer very little to the masses, and Imperial surveillance is very attentive in ensuring small hotbeds are not transformed into devastating fires capable of threatening the stability of the Official Cult.

MAGIC

Magic has always existed. All peoples, throughout their history, have recognized the power of a supernatural world that permeates reality and influences it, sometimes generously, other times destructively. Men have always had to deal with comprehensive or vindictive gods and demi-gods, wielders of extraordinary powers, and with bizarre, monstrous, or incredibly wise beings that emerge from the thick of the forests, from the depths of the abysses, or from the sun-burned savannahs. They have always fought to defend themselves from them, learned to gain their favor, and worshiped them to draw on their secrets. Spells, evocations, and rituals of every kind are widely and unequally diffused throughout the known world, entrusted to priests, druids, shamans, and those who have developed a special affinity with magic.
The closer a culture is to its natural state, the more it views the coexistence of reality and magic as nothing out of the ordinary; the more a civilization embarks on a journey of progress and territorial advancement, the more it seeks understanding, conducting in-depth studies on rituals and formulas. Great nations such as Egypt or proud populations such as the Celts have more experience with magic than others, acquiring an occult knowledge allowing them to build monuments of such mathematical and astronomical perfection that would never have otherwise been possible using only the techniques of that era. Rome, for its part, since its origins has studied and deepened its knowledge of a specific field of magic, that of Divination.

PLEASURES AND PAINS

In 1229 AUC the Imperial borders extend from the Pillars of Hercules to the rivers of Mesopotamia, from Germania to the Ethiopian mountains. For centuries, that entire part of the Mediterranean world, linked to magic and knowledge of antiquity, which was once the heritage of individual populations, has been firmly in the hands of the Empire. But in addition to this, Rome has inherited those problems of a magical and supernatural nature, which until now had been dealt with by the peoples themselves. Solving the issue of strange and dangerous creatures roaming through desolate areas, defending villages from beings that fly through the darkness and secretly enter people's homes, curses explained by reasons dating back to the dawn of time, is now the responsibility of the Empire's men. It is on them that the inhabitants of each province now rely.

The Emperors are well aware of the unprecedented opportunity they have been granted, that of being able to investigate the mysteries and ancient wisdom of its peoples, digging into their past and acquiring their magical knowledge, comparing it and integrating it with the secrets of Divination, thus practicing magic at never-before-seen levels. Over time, Divination rituals have taken on a very rigorous form, with Divination itself long since considered the official magic of the Empire.

Since its origins, Rome has established the College of Augurs, the official interpreters of Jupiter; their task is to determine the approval or disapproval of the gods, but only for and in the interests of the State. Their sacred texts are the *Libri Augurales* [Augural Books], the *augurium* is the sign of a supernatural manifestation, and the augur is the priest that declares the presence or otherwise of this magical force. The College plays a role of unparalleled importance: it represents the main architect of the Empire's magical power, its political and military victories, its capacity to adopt the best solutions at the right time.

The Greek civilization was without a doubt the most influential in perfecting Divination: it is in fact thanks to the Greeks that Rome is able to benefit from the *Sibylline Books*, constituting a fundamental source of consultation in regards to mysterious and magical events. Many other populations have also contributed to building Rome's magical knowledge and there are hundreds of texts, inscriptions and mythological stories that have been collected and analyzed over the centuries, from the farthest cities and temples. And there are even more buried under ancient ruins or in lost catacombs, waiting to be unearthed.

THE PROVINCES OF THE EMPIRE

CAPITALIS PREFECTURE

The administrative center of the Capitalis Prefecture is the metropolis of Rome itself, which in addition to being the capital of the entire Empire, due to its size and number of citizens is also considered a province of its own. From here, the *Praefectus Urbi* presides over the work of the Governors of the other four provinces of the Prefecture: Italia, Illyiricum, Macedonia, and Achaia. The majestic castra, built by Emperor Tiberius along the Aurelian Walls, is the meeting point for future Custodes recruited from among candidates who travel from all over the Prefecture to reach the port of Ostia, far from their homelands, to be subjected to the *Inquisitio*. The Commission of Rome is also responsible for personally recruiting the best candidates identified within the City itself. Defending the Eternal City are 4 Urban cohorts and 3 Praetorian cohorts, while the Legion *II Parthica* (Italia), Legions *I*, *II Adiutrix*, *X* and *XIV Gemina* (Illyricum) preside over cities of greater strategic and economic importance. The city of Rome is also the capital city of the province of Italia, while the capital cities of the other provinces are Sirmium (Illyiricum), Thessalonica (Macedonia), and Corinthus (Achaia). The dominating cultural influence is Latin in Rome, Italia, and Illyiricum, and Greek in Macedonia and Achaia.

THE CITY OF ROME

In 1229 AUC, the City boasts a population of more than one and a half million and is the heart of the Empire, *Caput Mundi*, the Eternal City. Countless adventurers, wayfarers, and pilgrims arrive each day from all corners of the earth, attracted by the wealth and greatness of the city and its emperors. It is the birthplace of those who founded the Roman State, and its inhabitants do not forget. The City is accessed through one of its 14 monumental gates, built into the largest of the city walls, the Aurelian Walls: 19 kilometers long, they are the product of the best military and architectural expertise in the Empire. A total of 380 towers connected by battlements with openings for shooting, making them virtually unassailable; commemorative inscriptions proclaim the rightful pride of those who built them. The fortified line of the more ancient Servian Walls reach up to 35 feet in height and surround the seven hills (Aventinus, Palatinus, Caelius, Esquilinus, Capitolinus, Viminalis, and Quirinalis). In the Republican era, Rome was haphazardly developed around the narrow valley of the Roman Forum and then around the new centers of political and social life, the Forums of the Emperors, thus creating a chaotic urban complex of unprecedented proportions as compared with the orderly cities of southern Greece. In honor of its origins, the ancient Palatine Hill hosts the glorious splendors of the Imperial palace, the *Domus Augustana*, and the Temple of Apollo, where in a stone chest buried under the base of a statue of the patron god of divinatory art, the *Sibylline Books* are preserved, the fundamental texts of reference for mysterious and magical events. The patricians, the wealthy, and the great names of politics and eloquence are lodged in beautiful, spacious homes with gardens and parks on the hillsides of the Quirinalis, the Viminalis, and Esquilinus, with part of the latter used as a burial site and area reserved to forbidden magical and necromancy practices. The Aventinus, on the other hand, is occupied by the more crowded districts and the sight of tall buildings, winding and crowded roads, balconies, and suspended wooden roofs between homes, is vivid testimony to the pulsating energy animating its daily life. Far from the local traffic, the parks and porticoes of Campus Martius offer a pleasant setting for moments of leisure and are a favorite haunt at sunset for literates and aristocrats in search of peace and quiet. On the banks of the Tiberis, just before the Tiber Island splits, lie the river ports used to collect supplies, which have now been largely superseded by the activities of the much more capacious port of Ostia. The triremis and the quinquiremis of the *Classis Praetoriana* (fleet) are protected inside a large fortified area. For administrative reasons, the city was reorganized by Augustus into 14 regions and 265 districts, managed by local officials. A body of 7000 *Vigiles* (night watchmen and firemen) commanded by a Prefect of the equestrian order keeps the threat of fires at bay. Four urban cohorts (1500 men each) commanded by the *Praefectus Urbi* ensure public order. Despite all this, Rome's widespread slums continue to be very dangerous, with daily episodes of assault and theft.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from the city of Rome speaks and writes in fluent Latin and one of the following languages: Etruscan, Greek, or an Italic dialect.

ITALIA

The Italic Peninsula is divided into 14 regions based on the distribution of the ancient indigenous populations, which were unified after being taken over by large civilizations. The Latin language is used everywhere and perfectly understood, but the sense of individuality and cultural identity of the different populations is still very strong, and countless languages and dialects continue to trace the boundaries between the regions. As the centuries passed, Roman energy slowly infiltrated the pre-existing urban panorama of the Greek and Etruscan cities. There is no region of Italia that has not undergone a restructuring and the peninsula's level of urbanization is otherwise unmatched. The aqueducts, a distinct symbol of Rome's technological superiority, run for miles and miles, allowing citizens to draw their water not from wells, near lakes or rivers,



but directly from the Alpine or Apennine springs. The most ancient Roman roads branch out from here toward the borders, and their similarly ancient cobblestones have been trodden by countless Italic legionaries and colonists marching toward new lands to explore.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Italia speaks and writes in fluent Latin and one of the following languages: Etruscan, Gaulish, Greek, Punic, or a Celtic or Italic dialect.

ILLYIRICUM

The continental province of Illyiricum includes the territories of Dalmatia and Pannonia Inferior and Superior, bounded on the north by the threatening Danubian border and facing south on the *Mare Hadriaticum*. Covered largely by mountainous terrain and thick forestland, just like the other provinces of the Danubian border (Raetia, Thracia, and Dacia), Illyiricum is one of the main sources of recruitment for the Imperial legions. The tensions generated among its peoples due to the constant presence of garrisons in this important connection between the East and West complicates the work of its governor. The fortifications of the Germanic-Danubian limes are erected along the northern borders and are the best product of Roman engineering to date: thanks to the mass deployment of forces housed in castra and outposts, until now the barbarian populations beyond the *Danuvius* (Danube) have always been successfully pushed back. The legionary castra of Vindobona, Carnutum, Brigetio, and Aquincum continuously monitor the river course by means of land patrols supported by the river fleet, the *Classis Pannonica*. Further inland, bands of brigands operate from their mountain refuges, constantly hunted by the men of the *Legio XIV Gemina*, stationed in Poetovio. Local mythology populates the icy hills and mountain tops of Dalmatia with supernatural creatures, and although Imperial authorities had dismissed these stories in the past as hearsay and foolish superstitions attributed to the slyness of rebellion tribe leaders, recent reports from this region are sufficiently alarming as to spark the interest of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. This region is deemed by the learned scholars of Imperial geography to be somewhat behind, but such opinions fail to consider the variety offered by these lands; while it may be true that the cold and harsh Pannonia has offered the Empire nothing more than strong fighters, it is also true that the Dalmatian coast offers numerous opportunities with its many cities: Aspalathos, the fortified Salona, and many other coastal cities, can compete in terms of beauty with the majority of Italic cities and owe their charm to the Greek influence of the architecture characterizing many of their constructions.

The capital city, Sirmium, is a fortified city of Pannonia Inferior. From here, elements of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana often work to support the men of the *Legio II Adiutrix*, in missions beyond the Danuvius river.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Illyiricum speaks and writes in fluent Illyrian, Latin, and one of the following languages: Dacian, Greek, Noric, or Thracian.

MACEDONIA

A tough adversary in many years of warfare, and at the same time an inspirational model as the birthplace of Alexander the Great, Macedonia was definitively conquered in 605 AUC (148 BC). A land of long-standing traditions and the repository of a glorious past, due to its positioning between the provinces of Thracia, Illyiricum, and Achaia, Macedonia shied away from the interests of the wider world, the one opened up by the exploits of the Emperors, and that which occurs on its bleak plateaus or in the shadows of its cold mountains is rarely spoken of outside the province. Many Macedonians, from the huts of their scattered villages and in a limited number of esoteric schools, travel the secret paths of illicit magic, and the misty summit of Mount Olympus seems to look upon their actions favorably. To better counteract the diffusion of illicit magical practices, a series of special legislative provisions have been introduced in Macedonia, with harsh penalties for those who violate them. In spite of this, necromantic rituals and mysterious Orphic initiation rites are widely practiced; the former by the poorly educated classes, and the latter by the most exclusive aristocratic circles. Only recently have genuine attempts been made to reassess the importance of the province, thanks to the personal intervention of the current Emperor Theodomirus, a native of Thessalonica and once a student of the esoteric schools of the Chalkidiki Peninsula. Under his enlightened leadership, this city, a provincial capital, now knows splendors worthy of an Imperial residence. The cohorts and fleet lodged in the castra of Thessalonica represent the most powerful military force in the province, which for many years has been protected against external threats requiring the intervention of the legions. However, the internal social situation is quite worrying: constant controls and interventions are necessary to guarantee order and compliance with the prohibitions regarding forbidden religious practices, and the Cohors Arcana were recently called upon to support the local militias.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Macedonia speaks and writes in fluent Greek and one of the following languages: Illyrian, Latin, or Thracian.

ACHAIA

The conquest of Athenae was the final chapter in a long period of warfare and diplomatic maneuvers that eventually led to the formation of the province of Achaia. The cultural genetrix of the Roman world, Achaia enjoys special prestige at the Imperial court. It includes the Peloponnese Peninsula and north-western territory of Epirus. Unlike Macedonia, Achaia has maintained its important status in the economic and social life of the Empire; thanks to its numerous ports and strategic positioning along the Eastern borders, it has been enormously enriched through its trade with Asia Minor; all types of goods cross its borders, and the wealth accumulated by certain noble families far exceeds the realm of imagination. Although their glory days are but a distant memory, some Greek cities have adjusted quite nicely to the changed historical situation, while others, incapable of renewing themselves, have inevitably experienced a decline. Athenae succeeded in transforming its political primacy into a moral and intellectual model, continuing to fulfill its historical function as a temple of classic culture. The influence of Greek philosophical schools can be perceived in every Imperial province, and many important characters visit the city to study among its magnificent temples and libraries, whose construction is testimony to the dues paid by Rome to its dearest cities. The role that continues to be played by Greek schools of thought under Imperial rule is fundamental. Often, in fact, the task of establishing the parameters used to assess the nature of new religions, cults, and foreign philosophical doctrines is delegated to Greek philosophers residing in Rome: the index of the religious rituals and forbidden magic, published together with the Emperor and the College of Augurs is the most obvious example. Delphi is a mandatory destination for anybody passing through Achaia, and no Emperor has ever questioned the answers provided by the oracle. The sanctuary of Eleusis counts many of the greatest Emperors among its initiates. The capital of the province, Corinthus, a city that was once more important than the Achaean League, was destroyed by an earthquake in 1174 AUC, but its strategic geographical positioning made it the object of a monumental reconstruction. A unique example of an entirely Roman city in Greek territory, Corinthus hosts the provincial castra, erected along the canal connecting the Gulf of Corinthus to the *Mare Aegeum*.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Achaia speaks and writes in fluent Greek and one of the following languages: Latin or Phrygian.

WESTERN PREFECTURE

The Western Prefecture incorporates those populations occupying the vast lands of the northwest. Gauls, Celtiberians, Britons, Germani, and Raeti, in spite of their profound differences, share an ancient heritage, and their countries of origin are commonly called the Celtic provinces. Lugdunum, the capital city of the province of Gallia, is the home of the Prefecture, with candidates for the rank of Custodes trained in the halls of its castra. A large number of legions preside over the territories of the Prefecture: the Legion *VII Gemina* (Iberia), the Legions *XX Valeria Victrix*, *VI Victrix Pia Fidelis*, and *II Augusta* (Britannia), the Legions *I Minerva*, *XXX Ulpia*, *VIII Augusta*, and *XXII Primigenia* (Germania), and the Legions *II* and *III Italica* (Raetia) efficiently guard some of the Empire's most dangerous frontiers. The capital cities of the provinces are Lugdunum (Gallia), Tarraco (Iberia), Londinium Augusta (Britannia), Augusta Treverorum (Germania), and Augusta Vindelicorum (Raetia). The dominant cultural influence is Latin in all provinces.

GALLIA

The conquest of the continental province known as Gallia is mainly owing to the wars led by Julius Caesar, which he himself recorded in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. Vast and fertile, it constitutes one of the supporting pillars of the Imperial structure and proper attention is afforded to its administration. The indigenous Celtic populations were less than welcoming when the Romans first crossed the Alps, and before the legions could assert their strategic authority, they quickly learned of the fighting fury of the warriors and persuasive and enchanting capacity of their priestly caste, the Druids. The memories are still vivid of the long battle fought by Rome against those mysterious long-bearded characters, dressed like priests but with the voice and bearing of great knights. Beholders of great magical skills, the Druids officiated powerful rituals in the thick oak forests, dedicating human sacrifices to their obscure gods, bringing a wave of rebellion with them wherever they went. Today, they are considered to have disappeared and their magic has been banished from the Empire; but in the misty lands of Armorica and in the province of Britannia, mentioning the Druids not only evokes fearful spirits of the past, but also a reality to this day cloaked in secrecy and ritualistic ceremonies. The subjugation of Gallia led to the birth of one of the Empire's richest provinces, given the existing well-developed culture, superior even to the Imperial one in certain fields such as metalworking: here, many *fabricae* can be found - machine shops where thousands of weapons and armor used by the legionaries and Custodes are mass-produced - which adopt traditional Celtic manufacturing techniques. Rome has empowered its manufacturing structures and improved its communications, thus encouraging the birth of large cities along the main commercial roadways. Lutetia, Durocortorum, and Avaricum are all large urban centers erected at the heart of important communication nodes, genuine centers of attraction for the various local populations. Lugdunum, the capital city of the Gallic province, bears the name of one of the most popular local deities, the warrior god Beli Lug, a kinship celebrated by the inhabitants of both the city and surrounding region.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Gallia speaks and writes in fluent Gallic, Latin, and one of the following languages: German, Iberian, or a Celtic dialect.

IBERIA

The Iberian Peninsula is the westernmost province of the Empire, entirely surrounded by sea except for the border it shares with Gallia, constituted by the Pyrenees Mountain range. Given its peripheral position and safe distance from all menacing borders, one may be justified in assuming that Iberia enjoyed a period of total peace and calm, but just like in other provinces, the threat arose from within. In fact, in 726 AUC (27 BC), while the entire peninsula was undergoing a regular process of Romanization and urbanization, the mountainous territories of the north and northwest were the scene of a great military campaign aimed at suppressing the local resistance. Fortunately, the enlightened leadership of Augustus led to the definition of a solution and the end of the Cantabrian Wars: those territories that had not yet been conquered joined the Empire thanks to generous economic and social concessions. Today, although a military camp has been built near the city of Asturica Augusta to protect the safety of the caravans using the roads that lead to the ports on the *Mare Cantabricum*, relations between northerners and Rome can be considered under control. The only source of danger is the negative influence exerted over the inhabitants of the northwestern coastlines by sailors from Armorica, and it is suspected that groups of rebellious Gauls, led by a self-styled druid, may be hiding in the mountains. To the west, in the territories bordering with the *Oceanus Atlanticus*, we find important mines of precious metals and copper, vital primary materials used in numerous local *fabricae* or otherwise exported across the borders, both via sea and using the efficient road system. The most important commercial ports are erected along the Mediterranean shores; from here, countless ships loaded with spices and particularly renowned wines, all set sail for the peninsula. To the far south lies Calpe, looking over the narrow stretch of sea separating Iberia from the province of Mauretania. Here, Emperors of the past have often found themselves pondering the importance of the seal affixed to knowledge by the Pillars of Hercules, and what is hidden to the west, beyond the world's boundaries. Tarraco, a spectacular city of the eastern coast, is the capital of the Iberian province, the home of its economic and civil administration.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Iberia speaks and writes in fluent Iberian, Latin, and one of the following languages: Gallic, Punic, or a Celtic dialect.

BRITANNIA

Beyond the *Oceanus Britannicus* lie lands once inhabited by the Titans. Today, they are the northernmost Imperial territories, and the historical chronicles of Britannia are now more than 400 years old. Some of the reasons that drove the Imperial borders so far north and which justify the possession of a British province, clearly lie in the economic advantage derived from exploiting the vast and fertile plains of central Britannia and its countless mines. In order to protect these interests, the provincial territory has been surrounded by a network of different types of fortifications: along the mountainous borders, legionary engineers erected more or less fortified frontiers, but to the north, winding and twisting from one coast to the other, is the fruit of Imperial military genius: the *Vallum Hadriani*. Driven by the threat posed by the continuous raids and attacks of the savage Picts, a people devoted to ancient traditions and their independence, Hadrian decided to "build a wall to separate the Romans from the barbarians", and thus erected the series of uninterrupted fortifications that currently mark the northern border of Britannia and the Empire. Within this protective wall thrives a culture, born from the fusion of different populations, both foreign and indigenous, which is



perfectly integrated. The administration of the numerous cities founded by the Romans, or those they simply enlarged, is in fact entrusted to the Britons, who wear the toga, having been raised and educated in a Latin environment. Even in the countryside, where Celtic heritage is perceived more so than in other areas, loyalty toward the faraway Emperor is never questioned. The reason for this apparent harmony may well be found in the invasion policy: the legions only occupied the areas of highest economic worth, either driving out or containing only the most combative tribes; the cold regions of the extreme north, the mountainous western regions, the domain of boorish chieftains and terrible druids, and the island of *Hibernia*, to this day remain practically unexplored. In these lands, the dark side of the province is fully exposed to the light: particularly large magical manifestations that follow the seasons have raised the concerns of Imperial scholars; strange creatures are regularly sighted from the watch towers of the *Vallum*, and during the long moonless nights, they even reach as far as the peripheral populated centers. The most important city centers are those of Eburacum, Deva, the port overlooking *Oceanus Hibernicus*, and Londinium Augusta, the provincial capital. Londinium rises on the banks of the river *Tamesa* [Thames], a river navigable for most of its course, used by numerous merchant fleets from the continent and by the *Classis Britannica*, the military fleet.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Britannia speaks and writes in fluent British, Latin, and one of the following languages: Gallic, or a Celtic dialect.

GERMANIA

Along the eastern border of Gallia we find the territories which together form the region known as Germania. These include Gallia Belgica, and Germania Superior and Inferior. Since the era of Julius Caesar's conquests, the continuous threat posed by the other side of the river *Rhenus* [Rhine] has been constantly renewed. From here begins the long, winding series of fortifications, which for miles and miles constitutes the Germanic-Danubian limes. A genuine divide between civilization and barbarism, the Rhenus, a sacred river for local folk, marks the oldest and most static border of the entire Empire. And that's not all: the lands known as Agri Decumates, the corner created by the Rhenus and the Danuvius, together with the many forts erected in the hinterland, were abandoned some decades ago to absorb the pressure being applied by the combative barbarian populations. Today, the ancient design that placed the border all the way up to the river *Albis* [Elba], now seems like nothing more than the dream of presumptuous strategists. The line of fortifications along the limes was recently completed, modernized, and

connected to that which, starting from Raetia, reaches the *Pontus Euxinus* [Black Sea] following the course of the Danuvius. New watch towers were erected, new castra were established, and large, prosperous cities were built all around, such as Moguntiacum and Colonia Agrippina. A large fleet, the *Classis Germanica*, finds refuge in the various river ports set up in the castra, with crews often directing their ships toward the hinterland along the various tributaries of the great river. The pacified Germanic tribes that found asylum within the borders are now characterized by generations of loyalty toward the Empire, many of whom also cover important roles or are enlisted in the legions. In fact, their well-known war skills have often ensured them privileged roles, such as bodyguards to the Emperor, replacing the Praetorians since the latter were assigned to other tasks, first by Augustus and more recently by Theodomirus. In spite of this, the magical aura that the Germani associate with the status of warrior continues to raise suspicions among scholars of arcane knowledge, and the Emperor himself has requested the Cohors Arcana be involved in the investigations. The provincial castra of Germania are erected near the main gate of Augusta Treverorum, a city strategically located on a waterway, thus facilitating access to the fortifications of the Germanic-Danubian limes. It is the capital of the province, the official headquarters of the Governor, and an important administrative center.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Germania speaks and writes in fluent German, Latin, and one of the following languages: Gallic, Rhaetian, or a Celtic dialect.

RAETIA

Raetia and Noricum, combined under the same province, constitute the connecting ring between the Celtic and eastern provinces of the Empire. Here, the fortified Danuvius limes joins that of the Rhenus to form an interminable series of impenetrable fortifications. Just like all frontier provinces, Raetia must deal with problems associated with the permanent presence of large military forces. The military administration here is based in Castra Regina, and the decisions of the Magister Militum often prevail over those of the Governor; especially since, many years ago, the border was pushed back by a number of miles, succumbing to the pressures of entire Germani clans on the move. Today, the territory is protected by the fortified border erected along the Danuvius, and two legions are lodged in the various legionary castra and numerous watch towers. The exploitation of the rich lead mines and the burden of maintaining the legions is borne exclusively by the local population, which has recently begun to show signs of discontent, holding several protests and making formal requests for intervention to the Imperial authority. One possible response has arrived in the form of vague promises regarding the possible reopening of a campaign to amplify the borders: there are many residents in these areas whose assets and families were lost in the lands beyond the Danuvius, not to mention an even larger number of refugees, who for months requested asylum from the Roman communities; many have enlisted in the legions in the hope of obtaining redemption. The last of the rebels are hiding in the mountains to the south of the province. They are the exponents of the local aristocratic class, ousted by the Romans; their presence has made it necessary to station a mobile contingent ready to intervene if needed. The risk of rebel attacks is most feared on the Alpine passes providing access to the Italic Peninsula. For this reason they are under constant surveillance. Numerous groups of explorers have recently been employed in cross-border territories, with several abandoned forts rediscovered and temporarily occupied; elements of the Cohors Arcana use them as fields from which to commence their missions in hostile lands, protected by absolute secrecy. Augusta Vindelicorum is still the capital of the province, despite its vicinity to the current border. The excellent road connections with the legionary castra along the Danuvius, but also with the major cities of the province, mean it is still the best place for the administration. The provincial castra of Augusta were recently reinforced by city walls, but the cohorts normally stationed within are being increasingly employed elsewhere, beyond the limes, in the Agri Decumates, in the remote *castra exploratoria*.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Raetia speaks and writes in fluent Latin, Rhaetian, and one of the following languages: German, Noric, or a Celtic dialect.

EASTERN PREFECTURE

The five provinces of this Prefecture make up the northeastern frontier of the Roman Empire. Dacia, the only Roman outpost north of the Danuvius, Thracia and Asia, which look out to the Pontus Euxinus, and Armenia and Mesopotamia, which extend toward the Persian Sasanian kingdom, therefore play an important surveillance role, upon which the existence of the Empire itself depends. For this reason, striking defensive constructions have been erected, including the Germanic-Danubian limes, the Armenian one, and the river defenses of the Tigris. Byzantium, the capital of the province of Thracia, is the nerve center of the Imperial administrative system, serving the role for capital of the faraway Eternal City. An impressive 10 Legions guarantee the necessary safety of these important Provinces: Legions *I Italica* and *XI Claudia* (Thracia), Legions *V Macedonica* and *XIII Gemina* (Dacia), Legions *XV Apollinaris* and *XII Fulminata* (Asia), Legions *IV Flavia* and *VII Claudia* (Armenia), and Legions *I* and *III Parthica* (Mesopotamia). The capital cities of the provinces are Byzantium (Thracia), Ulpia Traiana (Dacia), Ephesus (Asia), Tigranocerta (Armenia), and Babylonia (Mesopotamia). The prevailing cultural influence is Greek in all provinces except Dacia, where it is Latin.

THRACIA

The province of Thracia includes the territories of Moesia Inferior and Superior and extends along the easternmost part of the Danubian border, all the way until Pontus Euxinus. A steppe-like territory characterized by rugged and woody hills divided by the course of countless torrents, Thracia is found in a position that has generated the most varied types of development. The northern territories of Moesia Inferior, constantly under threat by the neighboring nomad populations, are teeming with castra and watch towers, as well as other urban settlements built to house garrisons; the ships of the *Classis Moesica* are in charge of watching over the Danuvius. To the south and along the coasts, the presence of ancient Greek *polis* has ensured the development of the arts and sciences, in addition to continuous trade with Aegean cities. Here, numerous sports competitions are organized, which often resemble Hellenic models, connected to the deities of the Greek Pantheon: the Olympic Games, the Isthmian Games, the Nemean Games, and the Pythian Games articulate the sporting seasons of this coastal city. The recent construction of circuses has opened up the possibility for gladiator games, spectacles that were immediately welcomed by the local population. Thracia therefore hosts large cities, sometimes erected around ancient tribal centers along the main roads; the majority of communication routes between east and west pass through the most important ones, including: Serdica, Philippopolis, Hadrianopolis, and Perinthus. But the largest among them is no doubt Byzantium, the capital and second-ranked Imperial city in terms of size and importance, built to the far east of Thracia, on the Golden Horn, the home of artists and writers and a mandatory stopover for caravans and merchant fleets traveling from the Asian coasts of the Pontus Euxinus. Despite powerful external influences, ancient Thracian culture has survived through its great musical tradition, metalworking techniques, and horse training. All of which are traits jealously guarded by the Thracians, and which are considered an integral part of their mysterious religion. In fact, even the temples and sanctuaries dedicated to the Mother Earth goddess and her son, the Sun, are built in sacred groves, protected from profane eyes, or high up in the mountains, where they are normally nothing more than single altars made of rough stone encrusted with sacrificial blood (the victims are normally horses). The myth of obtaining immortality in life, transformed into the widespread forbidden practice of Orphism, originates from Thracian royal cults and to this day is widely diffused and commonly practiced in burial ceremonies throughout the entire province.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Thracia speaks and writes in fluent Greek, Thracian, and one of the following languages: Dacian, Illyrian, Latin, or Phrygian.

DACIA

One of the youngest provinces of the Empire, Dacia encompasses the only lands north of the Danuvius under Roman control. A land of fighters, farmers, and breeders, it was conquered at a high price, after long wars that culminated in the Battle of Sarmizegetusa, the capital of the Dacian kingdom, subsequently renamed Ulpia Traiana after its surrender and reconstruction. The courage of Dacian fighters, a population with an age-old tradition, albeit in decline, put the legions of two Emperors, Domitian and Trajan, to the test. Their inhuman temerity and above all, the deadly use of their traditional weapon, the fearsome Falx, greatly impressed Roman soldiers so much so that today, it is used by the Custodes of the Cohors Arcana. The great campaign that definitively folded the resistance of King Decebalus is immortalized by Trajan's Column, a triumphal column erected in Trajan's Forum in Rome. However, the deeds of the warlords currently in charge of the future of this province are no less admirable than those of the great fighters of yesteryear; although 150 years of culturization have passed since the conquest, implemented through the construction of cities, aqueducts, and roads, the situation is anything but peaceful. Those few descendants of rebellious Dacian tribes, forever opposed to Roman rule, operate from their cross-border refuges or remote hermitages, conspiring together with barbarian populations, which in recent decades have increasingly approached Imperial borders. Until now, the boundaries have never been violated, except for a few sporadic attempts by isolated groups, promptly blocked by the legions stationed in Ulpia Traiana and Apulum. Today more than ever, Dacia is considered a frontier territory, at the mercy of movements by nomads from the east and rendered internally unstable by the forbidden rituals practiced by fanatical followers of the priest-god Zalmoxis, a preacher of that same immortality pursued by the nearby Thracians and followers of Orphism. The Custodes' headquarters in Dacia are inside the provincial castra of Ulpia Traiana, along the river *Tibiscum* [Tisza], at the foot of the Transylvanian Alps. From here, Praetorian ships operate in support of patrol flotillas along the course of the river, and selected men join the cohorts of the *Legio V Macedonica* in espionage and control operations. The belief in immortality and a privileged future for those who live according to sacred laws, which is shared by many, is quite likely the reason for the heedless disregard for life distinguishing Dacian fighters, who are the first choice for legionary ranks.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Dacia speaks and writes in fluent Dacian, Latin, and one of the following languages: Illyrian, or Thracian.

ASIA

The great province of Asia includes the Hellenic territories of the western coast of Asia Minor, Bithynia and Pontus, Lycia and Pamphylia, Cilicia, Galatia, and the boundless territories of the Anatolian Plateau, all the way until the borders with Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria. Upon his death, Attalus of Pergamum bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans. From the western coasts, the expansion proceeded gradually and regularly, including the annexation of the inland

kingdoms, which were client states of Rome and which surrendered to the superior strength of the legions without too much of a fight. In the eighth century AUC [1st century BC], the advancement of the borders was blocked by contact with the Parthian kingdom; it was resumed much later on with Emperor Trajan's conquests in Armenia and Mesopotamia. The situation in the Asian province is in some ways similar to that of Thracia: flourishing cities are erected along the coasts, made rich by the proceeds of agricultural crops, achieved by the opening up of the East to Western markets. They are centers of art and culture, the product of the encounter between Greek and Roman architecture, the home of literates and scholars. Ephesus is home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the great temple of Artemis, a Grecian oasis in a predominantly Roman city. Aphrodisias enjoyed special privileges granted by Emperors such as Augustus and Hadrian and before them, by the great Julius Caesar: its sacred temple of Aphrodite is more than 500 years old and continues to welcome scores of followers. Side, in Pamphylia, is a typical Roman city with a spectacular theater and circus for gladiator games. To the north of Pergamum we find the ruins of Ilium, the legendary city of Troy, the distant home of the Roman lineage; today its only visitor is the wind, passing through its ancient foundations and carrying with it the whispers of eras gone by. Citizens of respected families can become representatives of the Empire in the courts of neighboring Eastern kingdoms, or advocates of their cities in the Imperial court. Their ambition is often manifested in arrogance, and their wealth in decadence. On the Anatolian Plateau, the scenery is somewhat different: kilometers of steppes are crossed only by wild beasts and occasional caravans, while sinister shadows dart in and out between the rocks. The most common human settlements are poor farming villages, people hardened by hard work, ready to take up arms if necessary. Here, the legions are searching for recruits to employ against the brigands of the mountain regions, incited by the miserable conditions of the shepherds. It is on this plateau, in Cappadocia, that we find the cities with the only legionary castra worthy of such title: Melitene, on the border with Armenia, to the south along the Euphrates, and Satala, to the north, again on the Armenian border. The main task of local legions is to provide troops to support those stationed in Armenia and Mesopotamia, threatened by Persian power, and to ensure the safe transit of caravans traveling from the neighboring East. Groups of Custodes are often present in these castra erected along the border, but their headquarters are located in Ephesus, the capital city of the province and a major port of Asia.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Asia speaks and writes in fluent Greek, Latin, and one of the following languages: Aramaic, Armenian, Latin, Phrygian, Thracian, or an Anatolian dialect.



ARMENIA

Armenia is one of the most remote provinces of the Empire, a vast steppe-like plateau delimited by the Caucasus mountains to the north, the *Mare Caspium* [Caspian Sea] and the deep valley of the river *Araxes* [Aras] to the east, the *Pontus Euxinus* [Black Sea] and Capadoccia to the west, and the Tigris Valley to the south. In spite of its altitude, Armenia is a relatively populated province, and its strategic position plays a vital role within the Empire. Until two centuries ago, the history of Armenia consisted of wars, rebellions, and intrigues. The Parthians, the ruling dynasty in Persia before the current Sasanids, repeatedly clashed with Rome in these territories, whose possession was frequently passed from one faction to the other. Even the local population, which has never been completely subjugated, played its part in the bloody chronicles of this province, with the legions often called upon to quell the numerous revolts. The country's panorama has felt the burden of these troubled events: almost all the cities are surrounded by city walls and only the main caravan routes that cross the plateaus have been paved, specifically along those traits joining points of strategic importance, or which connect the Armenian cities to important trade centers in Asia and Mesopotamia. The entire country was the object of a profound Romanization project, and a large number of colonists were sent here on the heels of the Legion *VII Claudia* and the Legion *IV Flavia*, transferred from the more secure Moesia Superior in Thracia. In spite of this, a lingering sense of independence persists among the indigenous people, accentuated by the extreme distance from the Empire's administrative centers and the semi-wild condition of many zones throughout the territory. Moreover, the long-lasting Persian domination left its mark on the costumes of these peoples, whose Eastern sophistication often transpires through the works of local artists. A defensive line was recently completed, which winds along the banks of the river Araxes up until the eastern borders of Mesopotamia, to oppose the expansionist objectives of the Persians. The fortified limes, together with the *Strata Diocletiana* in Syria and the river defenses in Mesopotamia, constitute the eastern border of the Empire. To the north, on the peaks of the Caucasus Mountain Range, lie the most fertile lands, deep river valleys that flow into the Caspian Sea and into the Pontus Euxinus. This is the point of departure for cohorts in charge of defending the mountain passes providing access to the endless expanses of the steppe, the infinite land of savage nomads, those who Alexander the Great called the "*Gog and Magog*". In Tigranocerta, just a few miles north of Mount Ararat, lie the provincial castra. It is in this fortified city, the capital of the province, where local elements are selected for enlistment in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. Due to the distinct sense of independence demonstrated by citizens of this province, recruiters are forced to move from village to village, attempting to convince the most promising youths to join the Custodes.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Armenia speaks and writes in fluent Aramaic, Armenian, and one of the following languages: Phrygian, Greek, Latin, or Persian.

MESOPOTAMIA

Thus christened by the Greeks (the name means "the land between two rivers"), the cradle province of all civilizations includes fertile lands surrounding the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, from the Cappadocia plateau to the Sinus Persicus. It was Emperor Trajan who tore these ancient lands from the Parthians, who for three centuries conducted a merciless battle with the legions; for almost 200 years, the Romans have thus dominated this fertile valley surrounded by desert. Together with Syria and Armenia, Mesopotamia constitutes the eastern frontier of the Empire and all these provinces are afflicted by the terrible threat of invasion. Bands of Bedouins continually violate the southern borders with rapid incursions inflicting little but nonetheless worrying damage, and the increasing aggressiveness of the Persian Sasanian dynasty is currently held at bay by ancient peace treaties, watchful of the Emperor's sovereignty. This has led to the need for the constant and intense presence of garrison legions, quartered in fortifications similar to those built along the Germanic-Danubian limes. An ambitious project was launched by the current Emperor Theodomirus involving the restructuring of the port of Teredon on the *Sinus Persicus* [Persian Gulf], to house a powerful fleet allowing intense counter-attacks in the event of an assault and trade with the mysterious lands of the far East. Erected along the banks of the Euphrates is the city of Babylonia, a magnificent metropolis almost forgotten by citizens of the region, which has only today been restored to its original splendor by the express desire of the Caesars. As per the wishes of Alexander the Great, Babylonia is once more the delight of Eastern domains, surrounded by massive walls featuring eight enormous gates, each consecrated to a different god. Once the city became the capital of the province, even the fantastic rooftop gardens were restored, along with the incredible tower-temple Ziggurats, the exclusive domain of soothsayer priests. Native to this region is the cult of Mithra, a solar deity revered by the leaders of the legions and widespread throughout the entire Empire; the ancient doctrine of Zoroastrianism on the other hand, was imported from the nearby Persia. The feared and respected Babylonian magic tradition was for decades the object of studies by the College of Augurs, and many of its manifestations, especially those regarding evocative practices, have been banned and declared forbidden. But in the streets of the metropolis, horoscope reading is but the most common of the numerous magic activities practiced on a daily basis.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Mesopotamia speaks and writes in fluent Aramaic, Persian, and one of the following languages: Armenian, Greek, or Latin.

MERIDIONALIS PREFECTURE

The provinces of North Africa and the eastern coasts of the Mare Internum form part of the Meridionalis Prefecture. The headquarters of the Prefecture is the Egyptian city of Alexandria, a magnificent example of an Imperial metropolis, easily accessible from all provinces of the Prefecture by sea. Beyond the southern borders of each province lie unknown or inhospitable expanses of land, whether Sub-Saharan Africa or the Arabian Peninsula. Only Aegyptus extends deep into these lands inhabited by wild and fierce populations. Among all the provinces of the Empire, Syria is perhaps the most exposed to external threats; hence the presence of no less than 5 legions, which operate throughout the entire surrounding territory and which defend the *Strata Diocletiana*, the eastern border fortified by the Empire: the *XVI Flavia Firma*, the *IV Scythica*, the *III Gallica*, the *X Fretensis*, and the *VI Ferrata*. In Arabia, the Legion *III Cyrenaica* works to stem invasions by the marauding nomads of the desert. The capital cities of the provinces are Alexandria (Aegyptus), Antioch (Syria), Petra (Arabia), Carthage (Numidia), and Tingi (Mauretania). The prevailing cultural influence is Greek in Syria and in Arabia, and Latin in the other provinces.

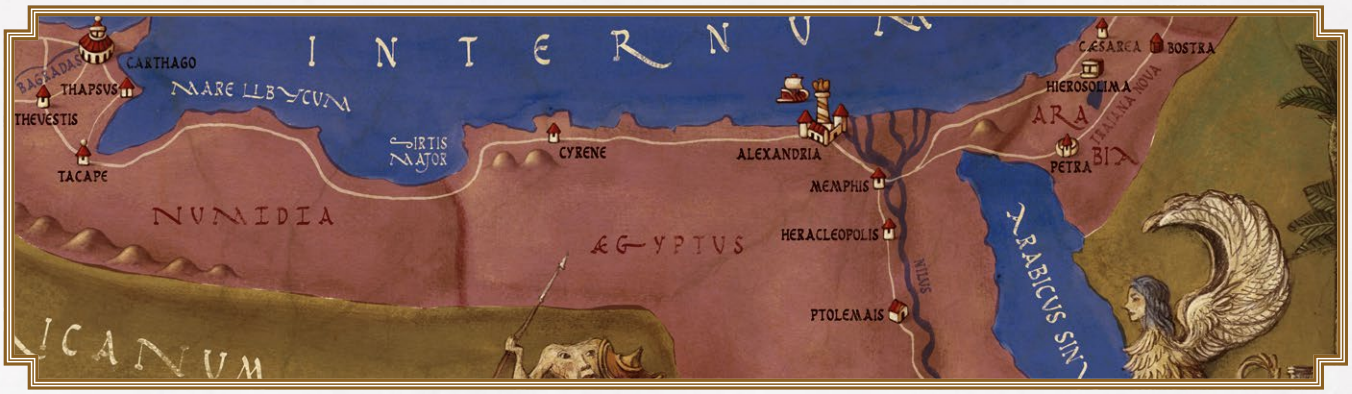
AEGYPTUS

Combined under the same province, Aegyptus and Cyrenaica are the easternmost territories of Roman Africa and also include the island of Crete, the pearl of the Mare Internum. When Alexander the Great penetrated these lands with his invincible troops, he brought with him the vanguard of the great cultural heritage of Hellenistic Greece. Here his genius and dream of greatness lived on well after his premature death, thanks to the greatest of his endeavors: the city of Alexandria. The fruit of the joyful union with the most ancient civilization of the known world, Alexandria is the greatest testimony of the magnificence of a population, which five centuries ago accepted the sovereignty of the Roman Emperor. Alexandria is a titanic metropolis, comparable only to Rome and Byzantium, but of far superior cultural standing; as the Emperors walk its roads or observe the infinite rows of books and thousands of papyri contained in its immense library, they have often wondered about that strange stroke of fate that allowed them to conquer such grandeur. The same sentiments are raised by the vision of the remaining territory south of the metropolis, whether one fixes one's gaze on any of the countless settlements lining the generous River Nile or the green expanses of cultivated land, or whether one contemplates the terrible and beautiful cities of death; here, buried in monumental tombs, that is, the pyramids, lie the Pharaohs, the eternal monarch-gods, repositories of the secrets of life and death, preserved thanks to ancient secret arts. Cyrenaica, west of the Nile, is formed by a nucleus of five great Hellenic cities along the coast, the Pentapolis. Of the five cities, the one that most stands out is Cyrene, famous for its great temple dedicated to Isis and Serapis, and Apollonia, a harbor port used for connections with Alexandria and the western provinces. Imperial science and medicine have greatly benefited from the exceptional achievements of local scholars, already demonstrated during previous centuries with the erection of unsurpassed architecture and the perfect control of the otherwise disastrous Nile River floods. Many Egyptians have proudly posted their names on the commemorative inscriptions of great constructions, aqueducts, and fortresses developed in remote and unknown lands. The pride of the Custodes stationed at Alexandria, the capital city of the province, is no secret to all other members of the corps, but it is justified if one so much as takes a look at the provincial castra, a magnificent complex of fortified buildings erected near the port, a perfect fusion between ancient and modern, military architecture and royal palace.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Aegyptus speaks and writes in fluent Coptic, Greek, and one of the following languages: Aramaic, ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, or Latin.

SYRIA

Between the sea and the desert, from the border with Cappadocia and Mesopotamia to that with Arabia, Syria offers an uneven, colorful panorama, united only by the knowledge that it constitutes the vital link between Africa and Asia. Syria owes its cultural variety and cosmopolitanism to its condition of being a crossroads between Mediterranean and Eastern countries, and between Asia and Aegyptus. Numerous civilizations have shaped its current form, and just as many continue to contest its sovereignty. These lands experienced Assyrian, Egyptian, and Persian domination before Pompey overthrew the Seleucids and transformed it into an Imperial province in 691 AUC [62 BC]. The Roman government finds itself needing to administer the interests of the most disparate people: populations profoundly influenced by the Persian occupation, intolerant toward the power of Rome; the Jews, who oppose the religious tolerance of the Empire and the influence of pagan cultures; the Phoenician coastal cities, which are traditionally independent. Numerous forms of administration have been adopted, both local and Imperial, autonomous and dependent, but only an external threat constituted by the rebirth of the Sasanian Persian Empire was able to restore unity among the province's inhabitants; the long fortified border forming the *Strata Diocletiana* is the most obvious example. Starting from the legionary camp in Bostra to the south, the *Strata Diocletiana* crosses Damascus, perhaps the most ancient city in the world, the beautiful and powerful Palmyra, city of palms, and eventually reaches Dura Europos on the banks of the Euphrates in Mesopotamia; it is essentially a long road that runs parallel to the border with the desert, studded with fortifications and kept under constant surveillance by legionary cohorts and *alae* cavalry units. It is a vital border with the provinces of the eastern coast of the Mare Internum, given the intensified clashes with bands of marauding Arab nomads, quite likely driven toward the border following the advice of Sasanian Persians living in the Arabian peninsula. In light of the relatively peaceful period, relations with the Ar-



abs and Persians are nonetheless cordial in the commercial sphere, and the Damascus and Palmyra roads, to which the caravan routes from the East lead, are teeming with the rich markets of the most exotic and sought after merchandise. However, for many of the locals, riches and trade, enemies and legions are of little interest, given they carry a timeless heritage within: in Syria magic is widely practiced in some of the most obscure and terrible forms, each different to the other just like the people who practice it. It is from Antioch, the capital of the province, that the civil government's decisions are emanated, as well as orders for the many Syrian legions and Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. The resources invested in the attempt to control the magic activities of the province are comparable only to the espionage and diplomatic activities carried out here by Imperial officials: forbidden propitiatory sacrifices and the official doctrine of Divination are both widely practiced. Indeed, it is impossible to negate the unique magical atmosphere permeating these lands, a narrow bulwark that serves to oppose the mysteries of the East and the threats of the whispering desert, occupied by nomads and scores of screaming demons.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Syria speaks and writes in fluent Aramaic, Greek, and one of the following languages: Armenian, Hebrew, Latin, or Persian.

ARABIA

Arabia was only ordained as a province in 859 AUC (106 BC) and includes the desert region of Negev, from the Red Sea to the border with Aegyptus. Negev, or the South-Country, and the lands extending as far as the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, occupy a large part of the province's territory, but are also the least densely populated regions: this territory is in fact an extremely vast desert, an expanse of calcareous rock interrupted by dry bushes, crossed by mountain ranges and furrowed by valleys that have either been raised or dug into the bare earth. Blocks of split rock bring to light shiny quartz and veins of very black flint, marvels eternally guarded by the tireless vigil of the wind and sun. It is the unknown land, the "*kingdom of terror and absolute silence, where evil spirits cry*". These places are the preferred refuge of marauders and criminals, rebels and fugitives who fear not the dangers of a night spent among the subdued murmurs of the wind, which can suddenly and unexpectedly transform into the terrible screams of evil spirits ready to suck the lifeblood from their victims. However, it is also home to nomad shepherds, poor people who win their battle with death every day, who survive by exploiting the ancient wisdom of their forefathers: they travel only by night, when there is no sun, moving camp following subtle changes in the climate or the depletion of water reserves. In the East, in the most fertile lands along the border with Syria and the desert, the local population has succeeded in exploiting the natural resources and their favorable geographic position; despite being a border region, cities such as Petra, Phainon, and Gaza are erected along the caravan routes that cross the Arabian Peninsula along the coasts of the *Sinus Arabicus* [Red Sea], once the itinerary of choice for merchants from the Far East. Today, most Eastern goods reach the Mare Internum through the ports of Mesopotamia, although these are still not equipped to welcome numerous cargo ships, while caravans travel along the Euphrates limes and the well-protected *Strata Diocletiana*, until Palmyra and Damascus. In spite of this, the Arabian market continues to prosper thanks to its contacts with South Arabia, and its cities are home to spectacular architecture characterized by their grandeur and riches; its citizens enjoy the numerous cultural opportunities afforded by their regular contact with people from all over the world. In Petra, the munificence of the Roman governors is highlighted by the donation of monuments that properly reflect its status as capital city of the province, and the beauty of its theater and Imperial buildings is surpassed only by the rock-cut tombs, ominously fascinating constructions carved into the living rock. The provincial castra are set up here in the large barracks of the Legion *III Cyrenaica*, which stands guard over the dangerous desert borders.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Arabia speaks and writes in fluent Arabic, Armaic, and one of the following languages: Coptic, Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.

NUMIDIA

Numidia is one of the main sources of recruitment for the Roman army, and its powerful fighters have fought in almost all Imperial wars. Today, it includes the territories of the Punic cities and the long coastline of Tripolitania. Beyond the nat-



ural barriers of the hinterland mountain ranges, Africa appears to be constituted of nothing more than enormous expanses of desert land, occasionally crossed by long rows of camels. It is a ruthless land without any resources to exploit, serving no purpose other than to provide shelter, in its rare oases, to those bands of mysterious forayers with their faces covered, known as the *Garamantes*. For this reason, after centuries of conflicts with the powerful Carthaginians, which culminated in the destruction of the enemy capital, the advancement of the Roman borders was interrupted and limited to the inclusion of the coastal lands. Here, numerous local cities have been Romanized, while many others have been built by colonies of veterans and Italic immigrants. The land is in fact fertile, sheltered against the hot desert winds, and each year tons of grain and thousands of liters of olive oil sail from Carthage toward the Italic Peninsula or even more distant shores. Given the rapidity of sea connections with the other lands of the Mare Internum, the provincial cities have flourished like few others have, mostly thanks to the influences of different cultures and personal contribution of various Emperors; for example, Thamugadi, a colony erected to support the legionary castra of Lambaesis, is today home to no less than 14 springs, a well-supplied library, and numerous temples. These cities and their harvests are guarded by the legionary barracks of the southern mountains, reinforced in some areas by short defensive valleys, mainly constituted by palisades and ditches. The Labaesis castra host the Legion *III Augusta*, the only consistent military force in the provinces of northwestern Africa; Carthage on the other hand is where members of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana are lodged, in the provincial castra. Until now, these forces have proven to be sufficient, but recent attacks by the Garamantes on cities along the coast of Tripolitania have indicated there might be a change in the air. The capital city of the province is Carthage, once a bitter rival of Rome. The Carthaginian port is very active, and fleets of transport vessels often sail toward Italic ports, Alexandria, or the East, bringing with them Imperial emissaries or maniples of legionaries. Thousands of Numidians are trained in the Carthaginian castra, all aspiring to the high rank of Custodes.

- **Languages**. A Custos originally from Numidia speaks and writes in fluent Latin, Punic, and one of the following languages: Berber, Coptic, or Greek.

MAURETANIA

The northwestern coasts of Africa form the province of Mauretania, colonized and explored only along the Mediterranean shores. The reasons preventing the colonization of the African hinterland appear clearest in Mauretania more than anywhere else: the tall, arid, grueling massifs known as the Atlas Mountain Range constituted an insurmountable obstacle. The long distances and proximity of the desert have also often contributed to the isolation of this province. Indeed, more so than with Eastern cities, Mauretanian cities tend to trade directly with the province of Iberia through the capital city of Tingi, an important port on the Pillars of Hercules. The local economic resources are similar to those of Numidia, based predominantly on agriculture and export crops, but have never been sufficiently developed as to guarantee any further progression of the cities: although Mauretania certainly cannot be considered a poor province, given its frequent trade with Mediterranean cities, the impenetrability of its borders has greatly reduced its possibilities for expansion. With the aim of defining new commercial routes and territories to enlarge the provinces, numerous groups of explorers are often sent southward, beyond the Atlas Mountains and along the western shores. For now, all attempts have been greeted with scarce results, and explorers almost always return empty-handed, or else decimated by clashes with bands of marauders or belligerent tribes. On the odd occasion however, survivors have spoken of marvelous lands, animals, indescribable monsters, and supernatural portents. Too often, these explorers have not been able to provide any type of evidence backing up their claims. Intrigued by these insistent rumors, it seems that Emperor Theodomirus has commissioned certain members of the trusted Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana the task of exploring the lands beyond the Atlas Mountain Range. The scant presence of Custodes at the provincial castra of the capital city of Tingi is therefore justified by their relocation to the *castra exploratoria*, outposts constructed in the depths of scarcely known territories.

- **Languages.** A Custos originally from Mauretania speaks and writes in fluent Latin, Punic, and one of the following languages: Berber, or Iberian.



PART X

THE ADVENTURES



THE LONG WINTER NIGHTS

INTRODUCTION FOR PLAYERS

It is December of the year 1231 AUC, and although the typical war season ended two months ago, the characters are on a mission in the heart of Germania Magna, 100 miles from the Imperial border, led by **Aetius Marcellus Pertinax**, a Rhaetian, Magister of the *cursus diplomaticus*.

Just three weeks earlier, the Custodes had been at the Divitia castra in Colonia Agrippina, a main colony on the natural River Rhine border of Germania, where they had been urgently summoned to support an operation under way. During their first meeting, Aetius Marcellus had arrived dressed in full Germanic attire, from his clothes - trousers, shirt, and fur coat - to his braided wire jewelry and the style of his beard and hair.

"In your eyes I see a hint of surprise, but I suggest, for your own good, that you become accustomed to this type of clothing. You yourselves will have to wear it in the days to come. I, on my part, have often worn these garments, especially in the past year, most of which I have spent outside the Imperial borders, in Germanic lands. There I found the worrying signs of a cult, whose extremism in worshipping their god of war is inciting barbarians to join forces and challenge the power of Rome.

The information in my possession indicates that many tribal leaders intend to participate in a great ritual that will be celebrated on the day of the winter solstice. My intention is to penetrate deep into barbarian territory, surprise the acolytes during the ritual, and capture or eliminate the tribal leaders, halting their intentions and impeding their reorganization. To do so, I need a contubernium of the Cohors Arcana — yourselves — to help me with the necessary field investigations, as well as an armed escort.

Members of the escort may be recruited from the Germanic legionaries of this castra, but it would be impossible to pass all of you off as locals. To justify your foreign appearance to those we meet along our journey, I shall pretend to be a Marcomannic slave trader traveling from the south with goods to sell — yourselves — accompanied by several escorts. To avoid needing to sell you along the way, I will state that I am trying to keep you for the Angles farthest from the border, where exotic goods can be sold at the best price."

INTRODUCTION FOR DEMIURGE

About two years ago, an ancestral cult suddenly took hold among the populations of Germania Magna. Its dictates are based on the worship of *Tiwaz*, the ancient primitive deity of the Teutons, who subsequently evolved into the three deities Wodan, Thor, and Tyr (which in the *Interpretatio Romana* are respectively *Mercury-of-Ting*, *Hercules-of-Ting*, and *Mars-of-Ting*). Followers of this religion attribute their origins to Tiwaz and see themselves as part of a single community. This has created a climate favorable to inter-tribal cooperation, allowing the development of peaceful relations among many tribes that were once bitter rivals.

Several Roman spies have received news of these events, and the Magister Aetius Marcellus Pertinax, a leading expert in Germanic populations within the Cohors Arcana, spent a good part of the last year, having infiltrated Germania Magna, looking for more detailed information about the cult and its followers.

LIMITS TO EQUIPMENT

The need to go unnoticed in hostile territory has driven Aetius Marcellus to equip his team with only typical Germanic equipment. Their clothes are typically barbarian, suitable for the harsh winter season, and the Custodes can carry armor limited strictly to Corium Lorica, Lorica Squamata, Lorica Hamata, Parma, Clipeus, Angon, Arcus, Axe, Cudgel, Scramasax, *Kurzsax* (equivalent to a Pugio), Securicula, Securis and Spatha.

- The players must therefore swap the majority of their characters' equipment in order to adapt to the limitations (see the section of the rulebook, *Equipment*, on page 40).



In any case, unbeknownst to Pertinax, a number of Germani serving in the Roman army have betrayed him, unveiling his mission and identity to their cross-border contacts. The leaders of the Tiwaz cult therefore feed Pertinax false information, convincing him of the possibility of delivering a fatal blow to the anti-Roman movement. The Germani plan is to lure Pertinax and his men to the most sacred location of the cult itself - the **Glade of Chains** in the sacred forest of Tyr - and attack them en masse to consecrate the alter of Tiwaz with an abundance of Roman blood. As expected by the Germani, Pertinax has organized an expedition and is delving deep into enemy territory, unaware of the fact that he has been betrayed and is walking headlong into a trap.

Adventure Value: 8 EP.

SYNOPSIS

The adventure is composed of three parts, each divided into one or more scenes providing a linear route to the conclusion:

Part 1 - Beyond enemy lines
During their march beyond the Imperial borders, the Custodes have the opportunity to chat with soldiers and assess their mood and level of expertise (Scene 1). After identifying a trail that leads toward the location of the ritual, the characters continue their long and tiresome journey, exacerbated by the harsh weather conditions (Scene 2), until finally reaching the Glade of Chains.

Part 2 — In the den of thieves
The ritual turns out to be a trap, to the detriment of the characters: a large group of Germani attack the Custodes, forcing them to fight their way through and escape into the forest (Scene 3). The Custodes, pursued by the barbarians, must hurry to shake them off. Along the road, they avoid a patrol by the skin of their teeth and can overhear their conversations (Scene 4).

Part 3 - The long road home
Having failed the mission, the surviving Custodes and legionaries find themselves once more isolated in the thick of a territory occupied by hostile tribes, whence they must begin the dangerous journey home. Along the way, they come across a village, where they ask for information and supplies (Scene 5). They receive a visit from a supernatural Elf (Scene 6) and are welcomed by an old shepherd that lives in the ruins of an ancient Roman watch tower (Scene 7). Finally, the Custodes manage to reach the limes, welcomed by the garrison of one of the border castra (Scene 8). Their relief is short-lived when they are attacked by a group of assassins as they make their way to the city (Scene 9). A quick investigation on the bodies of the fallen reveals that the aggressors are Roman traitors, yet another worrying revelation that must be reported.

PART 1: BEYOND ENEMY LINES

SCENE 1: UNDER THE TENT

Two weeks have passed since the Custodes left the comforting safety of Imperial reign to delve into Germani territory, led by the Magister Aetius Marcellus Pertinax. Together with members of the Cohors Arcana, **ten legionaries** are on the move, five from the province of Germania, constituting Pertinax's armed escort, and five from various provinces of the Empire - Italia, Armenia, Thracia, Iberia, and Aegyptus - which together with the Custodes will pose as slaves.

Pertinax is the mediator of all encounters with the locals: his knowledge of the language and customs allows the group to set up camp near the villages and exchange food, drink, and firewood. It is important to stop and speak with the tribes, not only so that Pertinax can gather information about the location of the ritual, but also to prevent travelers from succumbing to the terrible Germanic winter.

SLAVE TRADERS

The need to disguise themselves as a convoy of slaves and regularly stop to ask for information forces the group to take a slow march, full of stopovers. The comfortable pace, weather-suitable clothing, and constant assistance provided by the Germani allows the Custodes to proceed without any consequences owing to the harsh local climate.

THE PEOPLES OF GERMANIA MAGNA

The text of the adventure makes explicit reference to different tribes (*Semnones*, *Marcomanni*, *Franks*, etc.); the Romans refer to these tribes collectively as *Germani*, using this name to indicate all populaces settled in central Europe, from modern Denmark to Romania, known as *Germania Magna*. Although Germanic tribes each have their own distinct identity, manifested through regional and cultural variations, for the purposes of the game mechanics all Germani will share the same language and religion.

The names used in the text reflect the distribution of the populations in the age of the Antonines (3rd century AD), and the Germani appear to be very fragmented: in fact, the tribes have not yet been grouped into ethnic federations, which historically occurred from the 3rd century onwards. This is because the ethnic federations were a result of the migration of the Germanic peoples, made possible by the permeability of the limes following the crisis experienced by the Roman Empire. In *Lex Arcana*, where the borders are drawn along the boundaries of maximum expansion, the Germani are not free to either raid or expand into Roman territory: the arrival of other tribes from the north reignites local conflicts due to the territory having exceeded its capacity, thus impeding unification. The adventure attributes the diffusion of the Tiwaz cult to the creation of a broader national identity and ethnic federations that will subsequently pose a risk to the Empire.

NIGHT-TIME DISCUSSIONS

Tonight, the Custodes have set up camp a short distance from a village of the *Chasuarii*. Icy, biting gusts of wind whip against the leather tent, penetrating the inside where it is terribly cold, despite the numerous blankets and men. It is difficult to sleep and the Custodes are still half-awake when one of the sentinels returns to the tent after his sentry duties; his skin has turned white from the cold, his beard, moustache, and eyebrows are frosted and his words are condensed in icy puffs of breath.

"Any sign of the Chasuarii?" asks one of the soldiers in the tent. *"No, Leti, they're all asleep,"* answered the young sentinel that just walked in. *"And anyhow, I'm beginning to wonder whether we really need to fear these barbarians. I become more and more doubtful with each league traveled beyond the border: we have crossed villages not all that different to the one where I was born, the people*

who live there speak a language similar to my own and worship my same gods. We are more like them than we are the Italics."

"They are Germani like us, they dream of the same things: a dignified life, a good wife, honor in battle, riches, and land. But don't think for one second, Wulfgar, that this makes us friends: it is the limes that makes us different, because the lands they dream of conquering are ours, the enemies they dream of defeating are us, and with each league traveled beyond the border, the greater the risk of ending up with an axe through our skulls!"

The soldier's daring response wakes up all the Custodes and other men in the tent. The Custodes can chat with the legionaries, but to convince them to open up and speak freely, they need topass a roll of **Auctoritas** or **De Societate** with DT 6. Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"To be honest, I don't mind it here," says Berich, a thirty something legionary. *"It's true that we're running a great risk, but the pay we've been promised has no comparison with the pittance we get for defending the limes. And anyhow, with Pertinax we have nothing to fear, see how far he's taken us? One-hundred miles outside the Empire and nobody with even the slightest suspicion! That Rhaetian is familiar with these people and knows how to deal with them."* A **Sensibilitas** roll with DT 6 reveals that despite their positive attitude, Berich and the other soldiers are actually quite tense and afraid.

II Degree of Success
"Let's hope it keeps up that way," adds a soldier from the back of the tent, *"because I have no desire to find out whether or not our training is up to the task. If you think about it, none of us have ever really had to fight: the border has stood still for centuries and the nearest barbarian tribes have placed their minds at ease, preferring to trade with us rather than try and break down our defenses."*

III Degree of Success
"True," sparked up Leti, with a hint of regret in his voice. *"The era of excessive Roman power is long gone. In the past, the legionaries carried the eagle and wolf from one part of the known world to the other, thus creating a better world also for themselves and their families. Today, they pay us next to nothing to train with wooden puppets, and without expansion wars there is no looting, no gold, no slaves, no new lands, no farms to cultivate after the honesta missio* (honorable discharge at the end of one's military career)."

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ALL THIS?

The information provided by the legionaries is not relevant to the Custodes' mission (finding the ritual and neutralizing the tribe leaders), but provides an insight into the lives of legionaries, their problems and uncertainties, and the nostalgia they feel toward the Empire of times gone by. Being aware of the rampant discontent among soldiers allows the Custodes to better understand how some of them may feel betrayed by Rome and even go so far as to become traitors themselves.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

As the winter solstice approaches, Aetius Marcellus becomes increasingly restless, fearing he won't find the location of the ritual in time. One day, during a stopover in a village of the *Dulgubnii*, a reborn Marcellus reports that he thinks he has discovered the approximate location of the ritual. One of the elders told him that in the heart of a forest to the east, beyond the river known as the Weser, lies a glade where the barbarians meet to worship their gods: nobody can enter unless chained, nor is it possible to leave without making a human sacrifice.

To find out more, the Custodes can make a **De Magia** roll with DT 9. Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information(every Degree includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
The Custos remembers something about these places, known as *Glades of Chains*, where the faithful chain themselves as a sign of their submission.

II Degree of Success
Even the historian Cornelius Tacitus, in his ethnographic treatise "*De origine et situ Germanorum*", makes reference to a similar place among the *Semnones*: *"On an agreed day, the representatives of all peoples sharing the same blood meet in a forest, consecrated for centuries by rituals and fear, and there, having killed a man in the name of the community, a horrendous barbaric ritual begins. Their reverent subjugation before that sacred forest is also expressed in other ways: nobody can enter unless bound by chains, thus attesting to their dependence on the power of the god. Should anybody fall, they cannot rise to their feet either on their own or with anybody's help, but rather must crawl along the ground."*

III Degree of Success
These religious locations, however, have been long forgotten along with the rituals celebrated there. They were in fact the expression of ancient times, from well before Mercury-of-Ting – who the Germani call Wodan - became the most powerful of their gods.

Aetius Marcellus must return to the village to spend the night insofar as a welcomed guest of the local inn, but he urges his men to pack their bags: they will all leave together the following morning to reach the sacred forest and find the glade before the tribe meets!

FINAL PREPARATIONS

On the last night, before leaving the land of the *Dulgubnii*, while the Custodes and legionaries are busy collecting their weapons and bags for the next day's march, the conversation sparks up again under the tent, when Leti asks: *"Has anybody understood exactly what we're supposed to be preparing for? Because I don't remember hearing anything about the number of enemies we'll be up against except for a vague 'find the tribal leaders and imprison them, or eliminate them if they pose resistance'."*

"Hmmm, that's true... Are we sure Pertinax knows what he's doing?" asks Sahura, the Egyptian. *"Because he seems really good at negotiating with people, but I'm starting to suspect he has no idea what we're getting ourselves into."*

"You're joking, right? You still have doubts about him?"

"Well, Berich, the Egyptian may have a point. At the end of the day we're here with the Cohors Arcana and we know these guys are used to fighting the living dead of Aegyptus, Babylonian demons, etcetera. I'd hate to think we're getting ourselves into something we're not prepared for..."

"You're not hiding anything from us, right?" asks Sahura, turning directly toward the Custodes. *"We're not Praetorians and we know you have your secrets, but if you don't tell us how it is, we risk being unprepared for the battle and being taken by surprise."*

"That's right, there's really only a dozen or so of us," says Wulfgar, *"how are we supposed to fight? Are you expecting a stout resistance? What should we expect?"*

A **Sensibilitas** roll with DT 6 will reveal that the soldiers are quite concerned. As time passes, their growing sense of uncertainty is making itself heard, fueling growing tensions, which are now brought to light. Judging from their conversations, the main problem seems to be their fear of the unknown, the uncertainty regarding what awaits them. It is quite likely that the legionaries simply need to have an idea of what they're up against, and the Custodes could easily reassure them by telling them something to placate their fears.

If the Custodes reassure the legionaries (by revealing their expectations regarding the encounter and encouraging them to trust the quality of the military training they have received) and pass a **De Societate** or **Auctoritas** roll with DT 6, the soldiers will be more motivated (they are considered *reassured* when the deciding moment arrives, see further ahead).

MAGICAL SEARCH (I)

During this phase, the Custodes may turn to divinatory magic to try and find the location of the ritual or foresee the outcome of the attack. Performing a Clairvoyance ritual requires a De Magia roll with DT 9. If the roll is successful, the Custodes receive a vision of the snow-covered megaliths and the sacrificial altar at the center of the circle. The vision of the location includes elements useful for the purposes of orientation in the forest: each Degree of Success yielded in the De Magia roll to perform the ritual adds one success to those accumulated during the exploration. Repeating the ritual does not add new information.

Performing a Precognition ritual requires a De Magia roll with DT 12. If the roll is successful, based on the Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
The snow is stained red with blood. Legionaries and Custodes are fighting in the middle of a circle of tall megaliths, cropping out from the snow like teeth from gums.

II Degree of Success
On the ground, Roman and barbarian corpses lie side by side, the faces of some embittered by a grimace of hatred, others fixed in an expression of surprise and fear.

III Degree of Success
A gigantic half-man, half-bear warrior fights among the stones. With its mighty claws it sweeps away a group of Romans, grabbing Aetius Marcellus and lifting him off the ground. The Magister thrashes around, trying desperately to strike the head of his aggressor, but the monster rips off his face with a single bite, throwing his lifeless body onto the sacrificial altar.

SCENE 2: THE WINTER

When they leave the village of the *Dulgubnii*, the Custodes only have 6 days to find the location of the ritual, exploring the great forest beyond the River Weser.

- The search for the Glade of Chains follows the Explore an area rules (see the section of the rulebook, *Special prolonged actions* on page 116). The DT of the De Natura roll is 9, given that the place is not easy to find, and for each day of exploration the Custodes can make only one roll, given the limited daylight hours available to them. Each Degree of Success beyond the first yielded in the rolls is counted normally as an additional success. To find and reach the glade, the Custodes must obtain a total of 12 successes (the area is vast and the territory is arduous).

Only the Custodes make the exploration rolls, while the legionaries act as their armed escort, following them closely, ready to intervene in the event of danger.

If the Custodes accumulate the successes they need in less than 6 days, the group can set up stable camp and rest suitably before the solstice - see *Waiting for the moment.* Otherwise, the Custodes and legionaries will be forced to advance at a Forced March during the night - see *The winter solstice*.

During the exploration, the Custodes travel off the beaten track and can no longer rely on the possibility of finding villages in which to trade supplies or ask to stay in heated, comfortable huts. The harsh weather conditions of the Germanic winter mean the Custodes risk succumbing to fatigue and frostbite (see the rules for unfavorable weather conditions on page 123). Moreover, as they charge toward the sacred locations of the Germani, the Custodes enter territories consecrated to hostile deities and it becomes more and more difficult to perceive the presence of the Roman gods. At the end of each day of exploration, the Custodes must pass a **Ratio** roll with DT 6 or lose 1 point of Pietas (see *Losing and recovering Pietas* starting from page 78).

OMENS OF DEATH

On the third day of exploration, while the legionaries are dismantling their temporary camp after a night of rest, Aetius Marcellus gathers together the Custodes. His face is tense, his eyes hollow; it seems he hasn't slept for days.

"Every morning I wake with a sense of emptiness, a weight on my heart that makes even the waking hours heavy," begins the Magister with a ponderous tone. "It is an omen of death that comes not from premonitory dreams, nor from signs of the gods, but from the knowledge that nobody has ever come this close to the heart of a cult, and that if we should all perish, Rome would be left powerless before such danger. Once the ritual has been stopped and the tribal leaders have been interrogated, it is of utmost importance that at least one of us returns alive to report on what we found. Should I die during the mission, go to Augusta Treverorum and report to Maera Diodora, a good friend of mine and Magister of the cursus auguralis."

WAITING FOR THE MOMENT

If the Custodes find the Glade of Chains before the winter solstice, Aetius Marcellus gives orders to set up stable camp at a certain distance (see the dedicated paragraph in the section of the rulebook, *Special prolonged actions*), to wait for the ritual more comfortably, in warmth and safety. The DT for **De Bello** or **De Natura** rolls is 9; thanks to the help of the legionaries, the total number of successes required to perform the action is reduced from 6 to 3.

Having set up a stable camp, the Custodes can now rest in a comfortable place, useful in freeing themselves from the *Debilitated* condition and to heal a number of wounds (see page 127).

ONE LAST TRY

To reach the site of the ritual in time, the group must proceed at a Forced March (see page 123). Each Custos makes a single **De Corpore** roll with DT 6 (if the group obtained at least 10 successes during the exploration) or 9 (if they obtained less than 10 successes). If a Custos fails the roll, they suffer the *Debilitated* condition; if they were already *Debilitated*, they suffer 1d3 damage.

For the purposes of this adventure, Aetius Marcellus and the legionaries are considered not to suffer the negative repercussions of the forced march.

THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The sun has long since set, and the Custodes are waiting in the dark; it is the winter solstice, the longest night, the night of the ritual. A faraway chant, carried by the wind catches the Custodes' attention.

If the characters have accumulated the 12 successes needed during the exploration phase, they are no doubt in the vicinity and can reach the Glade of Chains without any problems. If, on the other hand, they haven't obtained the 12 successes, they will be forced to proceed at a Forced March during the night to reach the site of the ritual in time (see the box *One last try*).

In both cases, in the end, the Custodes reach the edge of the Glade of Chains and have no difficulty spotting the lights through the trunks and snow. They cautiously approach to spy on the ritual.

PART 2: IN THE DEN OF THIEVES

SCENE 3: THE GLADE OF CHAINS

The characters cautiously approach the source of the chant. The forest soon opens up to a clearing having a diameter of about 100 feet, completely covered by a thin layer of snow. Several monolithic shapes rise up from the center, some low and wide, others tall and soaring, organized in a complex structure consisting of two circles, one inner and one outer (see attached map). A fine haze envelops the circle, cloaking the scene with a supernatural aura.

THE ILLUSION

Chained to the top of the tallest rock is a young woman with long blonde hair that falls softly on her shoulders and arms, left bare by the thin white dress she's wearing. In front of her stands a man leading the chant. He is richly dressed, with white and red trousers and shirt and a thick fur coat; he is holding a long knife in one hand, with the other tied behind his back. The man is surrounded by a circle of men kneeling in the snow with their hands either tied to each other or around their necks; their eyes are all fixed on the young girl and their voices are united in song. The scene is lit up by a number of women, young and old, dancing slowly around the kneeling faithful, with a lantern in one hand and the other tied behind their backs.

In reality, the Glade of Chains is enveloped by the magic power of *Enchantment* (see page 141), used to draw Pertinax and his men to the center of the glade in order that they can be killed and sacrificed by Tiwaz's followers. The effect of the *Enchantment* is manifested as a loss of self-control and a magical illusion that gives the characters a reason to act rashly and recklessly, displaying a scene that corresponds to the expectations of those looking on. If, during the course of the adventure, the players have expressed their expectations in relation to this encounter and what they believe or fear they will find, the Demiurge can weave the fears of the players into the vision described above and modify it to their liking. If, for example, the players have made associations with books and films and expected to find a Celtic druid with a sickle and headdress with deer horns, the Demiurge should use this description instead of the one provided above.

While the characters are preparing to act, the chant suddenly grows with paroxysmal intensification, the priest prepares to slaughter the sacrifice, and the young woman screams with terror upon seeing the approaching knife.

- The Custodes must make a **Ratio** roll with DT 9 to oppose the magic power of the Enchantment.

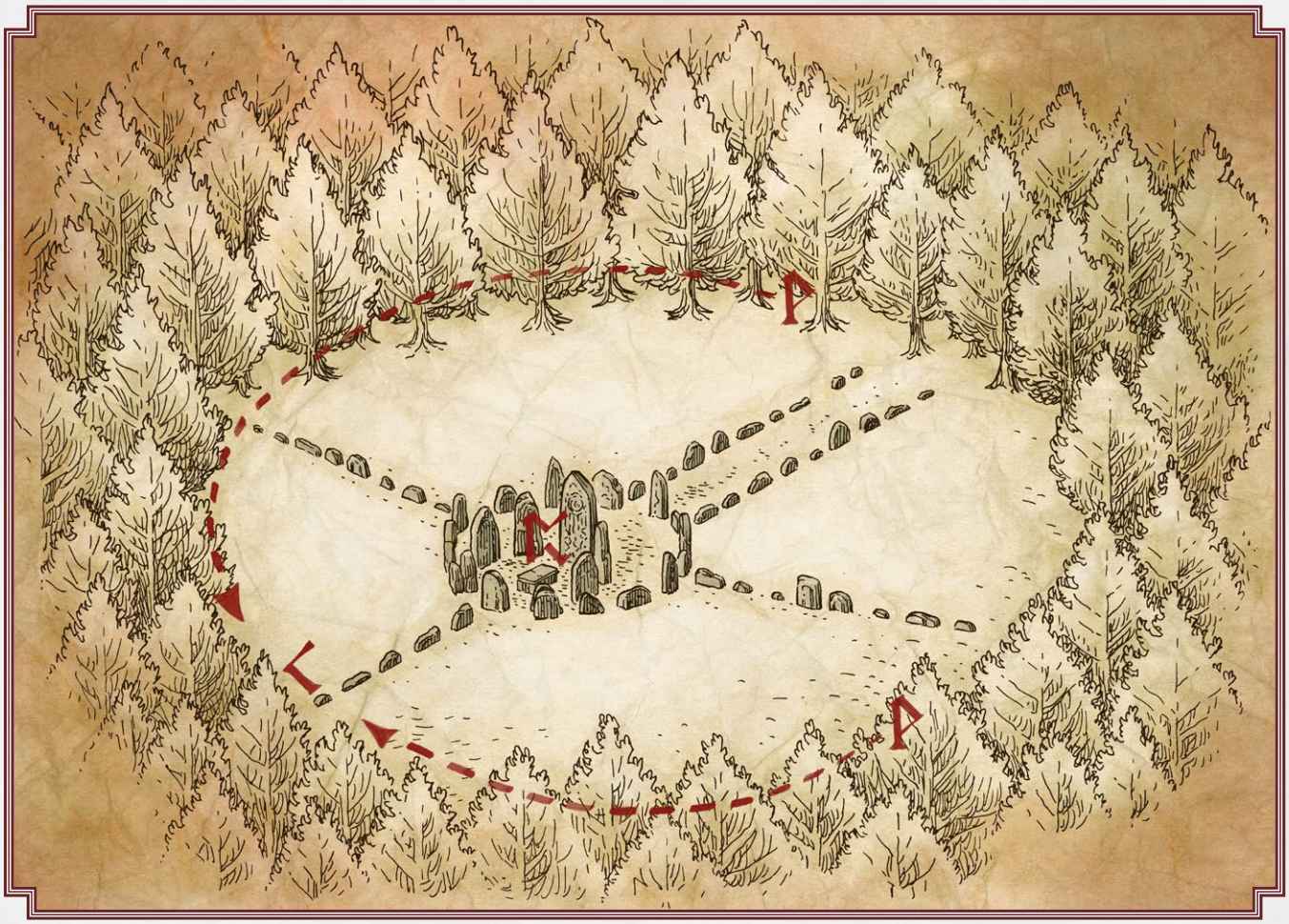
Custodes that fail the roll are overcome by uncontrollable warlike ardor: they bounce out of the trees and enter the glade, wielding their weapons, ready to take on the priest and save the young girl.

Custodes that succeed in the roll keep a cool head and are able to autonomously decide how to react (they may even decide to

A CURSED GLADE

The Glade of Chains is a place that has forever been consecrated to Tiwaz thanks to countless human sacrifices. According to the cult's priests, it is not possible to enter the glade unless chained as an act of submission to divine will (hence the name, *Glade of Chains*).

If a Custos enters the glade they must immediately make a **Ratio** roll with DT 6. Those who succeed will not suffer the consequences. Those who fail the roll immediately lose 1d3 Pietas and suffer the *Cursed* condition (see the dedicated paragraph in the rulebook, on page 80). The conditions disappear as soon as the *Cursed* Custodes leave the glade and return to the woods.



voluntarily enter the glade). They see all those inside the glade, except the priest, begin to fade and then suddenly vanish; but above all, they notice something that those inside the glade are unable to see because of the magic: an enormous creature standing at the center of the stone circle, a terrifying cross between a man and a bear, a *Berserkir* of superhuman proportions ready to unleash its fury.

Each Custos that resisted the spell can immediately make a **De Societate** or **Auctoritas** roll with DT 9 to stop the other characters or legionaries from throwing themselves into the glade: each Degree of Success yielded in this roll allows the Custos to hold back one person of choice (another Custos, Pertinax, or a legionary).

If the Custodes are unable to break the spell, Aetius Marcellus and a certain number of legionaries fall under the effect of the spell and launch themselves into the glade under the horrified eyes of the other legionaries. They may well be joined by other Custodes that failed the roll and were not stopped by their comrades.

- The number of legionaries that throw themselves into the glade is equal to 3, or 2 if they had been previously *reassured* (see the paragraph *On the right track*).

THE AMBUSH

The moment one or more individuals enter the stone circle, the trap set by the Germani is triggered. Dozens of fighters hiding in the forest launch themselves against the Custodes and legionaries along the edges of the glade (they don't want to fight in the glade, insofar as according to their religion, one must be chained to enter), shouting their thirst for blood to the skies. Inside the glade, the giant Berserkir prepares to strike as the priest disappears into the forest.

- A **dual battle** begins: against the Germani fighters at the edge of the glade and against the Berserkir in bear form inside the glade.

The Demiurge can refer to the following two paragraphs, *The battle in the glade* and *The battle in the forest*, to manage the situation. The paragraphs describe what happens, tempus after tempus; the Demiurge should therefore proceed in a parallel manner, resolving tempus 1 in both battles, then tempus 2, and so on. The Custodes have limited options (they are unlikely to win the battle) and sooner or later will have to order a *Tactical withdrawal,* which will give rise to a *Pursuit* (see the dedicated paragraphs).

THE BATTLE IN THE GLADE

Legionaries and Custodes inside the glade in a state of Enchantment don't realize what's happening at first and continue to be obsessed by the illusory scene of the ritual. They wander around the stone circle trying to strike the images conjured up in their minds by the priest's spell, without even being able to see the enormous creature preparing to attack them.

At the end of each tempus of combat, spellbound Custodes can nonetheless make a new Ratio roll to cancel the effects of the magic. The Custodes are also no longer subject to Enchantment the moment they are attacked by the Berserkir. Any Custodes that voluntarily entered the glade to help their comrades, despite having rolled a successful first Ratio, can see and engage the *Berserkir*, but cannot influence the perceptions of their spellbound comrades.

Tempus 1. If not engaged in combat by one or more characters (PC or NPC) not in a state of Enchantment, the Berserkir attacks a disoriented victim (see the box *The Berserkir of the glade*). At the end of the tempus, the Custodes can make a **Ratio** roll with DT 9 to free themselves from the state of Enchantment.

Tempus 2. As in tempus 1; the DT for the Ratio roll is reduced to 6.
Tempus 3. As in tempus 1; the DT for the Ratio roll is reduced to 3.
Tempus 4 and following. As in tempus 3. If any NPC are still alive in the glade, at the end of the tempus they are freed from the state of Enchantment and can react normally (see the section further ahead, *Tactical withdrawal*).

THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST

Legionaries and Custodes found at the edge of the glade are struck by haphazard waves of Germani fighters in increasing numbers, coming from the east. There is no time, and this is not the place, to fire initial volleys before close combat begins. An efficient defense line is hastily organized, but the situation appears desperate from the outset.

Tempus 1. The Custodes must confront **(1:1)** ***Germani Warriors*** (see the box *The Germani*) to help the legionaries maintain the line of defense. Wounded or killed Germani fighters are replaced by others in the next tempus.

THE BERSERKIR OF THE GLADE

Selected by way of a ritualistic battle among the strongest fighters of all Germanic tribes and subsequently consecrated to Tiwaz, this champion is a frightening sight. Almost ten feet tall, it has legs, a torso, human arms, but the head of a bear. From its waist up, its torso is covered by increasingly thicker hair until becoming actual fur at shoulder height. Its hands are prehensile, but end in strong and stout grayish claws.

The statistics of the *Berserkir* in *human form* should be used (see page 167), applying the following changes: the DV of the creature is equal to 12 (instead of 10); it does not fight with weapons, but using claws (Damage 12); its Fate Roll magical power only has effect within the Glade of Chains; it does not have the Metamorphosis magic power.

During the battle, characters (players or non-players) that have been freed from the state of Enchantment can freely choose whether to engage the Berserkir.

If the Berserkir is not engaged in combat, it hurls itself against a spellbound legionary, slaughtering him. If there are no legionaries, it attacks Aetius Marcellus with the same lethal consequences. If Aetius Marcellus isn't there, it attacks a Custos (who is *Surprised* in the first tempus of combat, and who then automatically frees themself from the state of Enchantment and can fight normally in the following tempora).

If there is no one in the glade, but at least one Roman has been killed in the glade, the Berserkir remains in the glade to consecrate the sacrificial stones with the blood of the slain; otherwise, in the next tempus the Berserkir joins the *Battle in the forest,* replacing one of the Germani engaged in hand-to-hand battle.



THE GERMANI

Right from their childhood, the males of the various Germanic tribes are trained for combat by the adults of the community, thus becoming fearsome and determined fighters. Each of the tribes that intervened in the Glade of Chains sent a small contingent of fighters, for a total of 48 armed men.

The statistics of the *Barbarian warriors* should be used (see page 154), applying the following changes: they use a *Francisca* (Damage 7) as a ranged weapon instead of the Angon; as protections, they wear a Lorica Hamata (Protection 5) in addition to the Clipeus.

Tempus 2. As in tempus 1.
Tempus 3. As in tempus 1, but 1 Germani Warrior is added to the Custodes' opponents, thus forcing one of the Custodes to fight multiple opponents.
Tempus 4 and following. As in tempus 3, but with each new tempus (including this one), the number of Custodes that fight multiple opponents increases by one.

TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL

If Aetius Pertinax is in the glade, as soon as he is freed from the state of Enchantment (in tempus 4) he returns to the legionaries in the forest as soon as possible.

If Aetius Pertinax is in the forest or as soon as he reaches it, he immediately realizes the position is indefensible and informs those present to prepare to retreat in the opposite direction to that from which the barbarians are coming. Just before ordering the retreat, however, he is struck in the head by a Germanic axe and falls to the ground (if someone has time to check his condition, they see that he is simply *Unconscious*). The onus of ordering the retreat therefore lies with the Custodes.

Regardless of whether or not Pertinax is present, the Custodes can assess the situation. In each tempus, the characters can make a **De Bello** or **Ingenium** roll with DT 6. If they succeed, they realize it is impossible to defeat the barbarians and that the only solution is to flee west; moreover, they realize that the more legionaries they leave behind to cover the withdrawal, the easier it will be to escape.

At the time of the retreat, the Custodes can therefore choose to order a number of soldiers to hold their position, sacrificing themselves to allow the others (including the Magister) to escape. This requires the Custodes to choose how many soldiers to sacrifice (there were initially 10 legionaries, but 2 have died or are dying as a result of the clash in the forest, and others may have been killed by the Berserkir in the glade).

The Custos that gives the order must make a **De Societate** roll with DT 6 (if the legionaries are *reassured)* or with DT 9 (if they are not *reassured*). If the roll fails, 1d3 legionaries among those that should be covering the withdrawal abandon their post and flee as soon as the Custodes turn their back, disappearing into the forest (and therefore do not participate in the defense).

When the Custodes retreat into the forest, the Germani begin to pursue them.

THE PURSUIT

The Custodes flee into the dark forest, pursued by the barbarians who try to catch up with them, firing a volley of arrows toward them.

To shake off the barbarians in the forest, all Custodes must succeed in a **De Corpore** roll against standard difficulty (2d6); for each legionary left behind to cover the withdrawal (with the exception of those who deserted), one of the Custodes can avoid making the roll. The other legionaries that escape with the Custodes and Aetius Marcellus do not need to roll. *For example, if there are 4 Custodes and they leave 3 legionaries to cover the withdrawal, only 1 Custos needs to roll.*

- If a Custos fails the De Corpore roll, they are hit by a stray arrow (suffering 1d6 damage) and force all Custodes to repeat the roll in the next tempus.
- If the Custodes realize they are unable to shake off the Germani, they can order one or more of the soldiers

that are fleeing with them to stop and fight, thus earning time. To do so they must proceed as described in the section *Tactical withdrawal*: therefore, choose how many soldiers must stay behind and pass a **De Societate** or **Auctoritas** roll with the same conditions and consequences in case of failure. Each legionary that stays and fights further reduces by one the number of Custodes that need to make a De Corpore roll to escape.

SCENE 4: TAKE TO FLIGHT

The Custodes managed to break through the Germani offensive ring and shake them off during the night. Now they need to hurriedly get away from their pursuers and therefore make a Forced March. The march is carried out as previously described (see the box *One last try*); the DT of the De Corpore roll is 9.

THE PATROL

In the afternoon of the second day of escape, while the group is moving through the forest, the Custos with the highest Sensibilitas is alerted by the sound of a dry branch snapping not too far ahead of them; he strains his ears and hears voices. A short time afterwards, **(1:1)** ***Germani Warriors*** emerge from the other side of a snowy hill, walking through the snow toward the Glade of Chains. They are in the midst of a heated discussion, and the Custodes can try and hear what they're saying (to do so, the characters must be able to understand the Germanic language, spoken by Custodes that come from Germania and Raetia, and by Aetius Marcellus and the legionaries).

To listen to the conversations of the patrol, each Custos must remain still and strain their ears, making a **Sensibilitas** roll with DT 6, or move closer with a **De Corpore** roll with DT 9. Each character can choose to attempt one of the two actions, but the Demiurge must consider only the highest Degree of Success yielded in the various rolls. In any case, even if only one character that chose to make a De Corpore roll fails, the patrol is alerted of their presence and attacks.

Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"Those rats are still here, I can feel it," says a young fighter. *"Can't we stay out here another few days? It's only a matter of time before we catch them!" "Maybe,"* answers another, *"but the forest is huge, our supplies are nearly finished, and it's best we head back to the group. Any anyhow, their blood has already stained the sacred stones: the sacrifice to Tiwaz has been made."*

II Degree of Success
"But we can't give up now! We could keep going and alert the different villages that Roman spies are coming and leave their capture to them." "That's not what we've been ordered to do, and with good reason: many tribes still haven't joined the alliance, and should there be a clash in a village, our efforts could be undermined. It's best we join the others and organize mounted patrol units to cut off those bastards' retreat."

III Degree of Success
"By Loki! How did we let them escape the Glade of Chains?" "It doesn't matter. Tiwaz is satisfied, the Roman plan failed, and if they try and set foot in our lands again we'll be informed early enough. Did you see how easy it was to prime that spy?" "Yes, he thought he was here to stop the sacrifice, he had no idea he was bringing us the blood we needed!" concludes the Germani with a scornful laugh as the patrol moves away.

The Custodes who heard the name Tiwaz can try and remember any relevant information with a **De Magia** roll with DT 9. Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
The historian Tacitus, in his ethnographic treatise *"De origine et situ Germanorum"*, writes that in the Glade of Chains an all-dominating god is worshipped, but does not mention his name. Tiwaz may be this deity, although none of the gods of the Germanic pantheon goes by this name.

II Degree of Success
The name has a more ancient ring to it, perhaps dating back to before the Germanic language became what it is today. This may indicate that Tiwaz was adored even before the arrival of the Mercury-, Hercules-, and Mars-of-Ting cults (which the Germani call Wodan, Thor, and Tyr) and who, being all-dominating, would have had similar powers to those of Jupiter and Zeus. Tiwaz may well be an ancient version of Tyr: Tacitus mentions a forest sacred to Tyr somewhere beyond the Visurgis river, which may be the Weser crossed by the Custodes to get here.

III Degree of Success
Tacitus also states that some tribes trace their origins back to this supreme god, claiming the birth of their tribal identity to be essentially his doing. The diffusion of this cult may indicate that the Germani, who are pervaded by a sense of unification, are setting aside their tribal differences. This may potentially pose a great risk to the safety of the Empire.

PART 3: THE LONG ROAD HOME

On the evening of the second day of escape, the group of Custodes tries to take stock of the situation: they find themselves engaged in a retreat that promises to be long and full of pitfalls, in the middle of winter, in hostile territory, all the while pursued by the Germani of the cult who are trying to cut off the retreat.

At this point their only aim is to get to safety and return to the limes, without falling victim to the enemy patrols, unforgiving cold, and lack of supplies.

What's more, the pursuers have driven the Custodes east, even further from Roman territory, thus preventing them from retracing their steps, forcing them onto trails that no one in the group has ever traveled.

PREDATORS AND PREY

Return to the limes is a prolonged action that has no time limit and requires a total of **18 successes** in **De Natura** rolls. For all these rolls, the Demiurge must consider not only the total number of successes, but also of **failures** (when indicated, failures in other rolls may be added to the total failures).

As the Custodes slowly accumulate successes in De Natura rolls, favorable events are triggered and their salvation becomes closer within reach. Likewise, the more failures are accumulated, the greater the risk of stumbling into dangerous situations.

Each day, the Custodes must decide how to proceed (see paragraphs A to E), however the choice will not be easy. If they proceed with caution following less-beaten tracks, they will probably accumulate less failures and have fewer dangerous encounters, but they risk spending many days exposed to the terrible climate and lack of food. Vice versa, if they hurry or choose to follow well-trodden paths, they may obtain more successes and advance quickly toward the limes, but they will also accumulate more failures, risking being noticed by their pursuers and having to face them in battle.

A) ADVANCE BY AVOIDING THE MAIN PATHS

The Custodes proceed slowly, but the risk of getting lost or being caught is limited.

In order to accumulate the successes needed to complete the *Return to the limes* action, each day the Custodes can roll De Natura with DT 6; each successful roll normally guarantees a number of successes equal to the Degree of Success yielded.

- Several Custodes can make the roll (representing the Custodes that advance in a very open formation), but all failures will be added to the total failures.
- At the end of the day, all Custodes must make a Vigor roll to avoid the consequences of the extreme weather conditions (see page 123).

B) ADVANCE BY AVOIDING THE MAIN PATHS IN FORCED STAGES

The Custodes proceed quickly, but with a greater risk of getting lost or being caught.

- At the start of the day, one or more Custodes must make a De Natura roll with DT 6; only one Custos needs to succeed in the roll to identify the right direction.
- If all the Custodes fail the roll, no more rolls can be made throughout the day to accumulate successes to *Return to the limes*; all failures obtained in this roll will be added to the total failures.
- In order to accumulate the successes needed to complete the *Return to the limes* action, each day the Custodes can make two De Natura rolls with DT 6 and one with DT 9; each successful roll normally guarantees a number of successes equal to the Degree of Success yielded.



MAGICAL SEARCH (II)

If the Custodes perform a Clairvoyance ritual to try and avoid the Germanic patrols while they are trying to Return to the limes, information on the location of the pursuers allows the failures accumulated that day to be reduced by a number equal to the Degree of Success yielded in the De Magia roll, down to a minimum of 1.

MANAGING THE MAGISTER AND THE LEGIONARIES

Aetius Marcellus and one or more legionaries may have survived the ambush in the Glade of Chains.

The legionaries (their stats can be found on page 152), in light of their training, will be of little use during the exploration and negotiations (the Demiurge can therefore ignore any of their contributions to the De Natura and De Societate rolls), but of essential use in the event of an armed battle.

Aetius Marcellus on the other hand, debilitated by the great blow he received, will be of very little use, especially during the first few days. In fact, once the group reaches the village of the *Semnones* (see scene 5), his input will be limited to that of interpreter in the absence of the perspicacity and readiness normally distinguishing him.

In general, both the Magister and the legionaries do not suffer the consequences of the climate or forced marches. In the event of a battle, the legionaries join forces with the Custodes in taking on the enemies, while Aetius Marcellus, if possible, stands aside. In this case, the Demiurge can entrust control of the legionaries to the players: it will be they who make the requested rolls.

Aetius Marcellus Pertinax
Value: DV8
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Scientia, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Societate
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Kurzsax (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Squamata (Protection 4), Parma (Parry +1)

- Several Custodes can make the roll (representing the Custodes that advance in a very open formation), but all failures will be added to the total failures.

- At the end of the day, all Custodes must make a **Vigor** roll to avoid the consequences of the extreme weather conditions and one **De Corpore** roll with DT 6 to check the consequences of the Forced March (see the box *Forced March in unfavorable weather conditions*, page 123).

C) PROCEED ON BEATEN AND EASY TRACKS

The Custodes advance faster to the detriment of their safety.

- To accumulate the successes needed to complete the *Return to the limes* action, each day characters are considered to automatically accumulate 3 successes in the De Natura rolls, but also a number of failures equal to the number of Custodes (Aetius Marcellus and the legionaries are therefore excluded).

- At the end of the day, all Custodes must make a Vigor roll to avoid the consequences of the unfavorable weather conditions (see page 123).

D) PROCEED ON BEATEN AND EASY TRACKS IN FORCED STAGES

The Custodes proceed very quickly, but are exposed to a greater number of risks than other cases.

- To accumulate the successes needed to complete the *Return to the limes* action, each day characters are considered to automatically accumulate 6 successes in the De Natura rolls, but also a number of failures equal to double the number of Custodes (Aetius Marcellus and the legionaries are therefore excluded).

- At the end of the day, all Custodes must make a **Vigor** roll to avoid the consequences of the unfavorable weather conditions and one **De Corpore** roll with DT 6 to check the consequences of the Forced March (see the box *Forced March in unfavorable weather conditions*, page 124).

E) STAY STILL

It may be that the Custodes wish to spend their time hunting to collect food, to perform a ritual, to set up camp (and rest in a comfortable place to free themselves from the *Debilitated* condition) or for other reasons.

- For the purposes of the successes and failures needed to *Return to the limes*, the Custodes do not accumulate any successes and 1 failure.

Example. A group of 5 Custodes are trying to Return to the limes. On the first day, the Custodes decide to Proceed on beaten and easy tracks: they accumulate 3 successes and 5 failures. The next day they decide to Advance by avoiding the main paths. Three Custodes make the De Natura rolls and obtain 4 successes and one failure (the total therefore increases to 7 successes and 6 failures).

On the third day, they try to Advance by avoiding the main paths in forced stages. They start with the De Natura roll to orientate themselves: the first Custos fails the roll; a second Custos tries, and fails; fortunately the third is successful and identifies the right direction in which to proceed (however the total number of failures has increased from 6 to 8). The two De Natura rolls can now be made. Three Custodes try the roll with DT 6 with a result of three successes and one failure; only the Explorer attempts the roll with DT 9, succeeding with a II Degree of Success. The total number of successes and failures after the third day is 12 successes and 9 failures.



TIGHTENING THE BELT

During their time in the forest, the Custodes travel off the beaten tracks and can no longer rely on the possibility of crossing through settlements in which to trade or purchase supplies.

After two days of escape, the entire group is left without supplies: they hadn't brought enough with them during the night attack in the glade, and not even by rationing were they able to make them last for very long. Fortunately water is not a problem (there's no shortage of snow).

For the consequences of being left without food, see the paragraph *Remain without supplies*, in the section of the rulebook, *Travel* on page 121. To hunt and procure food, see the prolonged action *Find food and water* in the section of the rulebook, *Special prolonged actions* on page 116.

For the purposes of simplicity, the Demiurge may disregard the consequences of the lack of food in relation to Aetius Marcellus and the legionaries, who nonetheless strongly insist on stopping to hunt or otherwise procure food once three days have passed without eating.

TRAVEL EVENTS

During the journey to return to the limes, a series of predetermined encounters occur depending on the successes and failures accumulated each day by the Custodes. These include positive happenings as certain success goals are reached (**Events**), and negative happenings caused by the accumulation of failures (**Dangers**).

DANGERS

The following table contains a list of the Dangers the Custodes may face during the course of the day, specifying the minimum number of failures that triggers each Danger. The Demiurge is free to decide at what time of the day the various negative events occur. The description and consequences of each Danger are provided in the paragraphs after the table itself.

Number of failures	Danger
3	Tailed
6	Surrounded
9	Chased
12	Unlucky
16	Caught
20	Doomed

Tailed. The Custodes hear screams and howling dogs coming from behind. For the time being they don't seem very close, but their pursuers have clearly not stopped looking for them.

Surrounded. The Custodes stumble across the traces of a night camp that had hosted various men and horses. A **De Natura** roll with DT 6 allows them to understand that the traces date back to the previous night. The Custodes can make an **Ingenium** roll with DT 6 to understand that the Germani are trying to cut off their retreat (confirming the previously heard conversations of a patrol).

Chased. The Custodes end up near a small settlement. They may wish to seek hospitality, but they arrive just in time to see a patrol of **5** ***Germani Warriors*** on horseback enter the village (this is a patrol of pursuers that interrogates the locals as to whether or not they've seen any strangers wandering around).

It would therefore be unwise to ask for hospitality. The Custodes may, however, notice (**Sensibilitas** roll with DT 6) some dried fish on drying racks down by the stream that flows near the houses. Each Custos can make a **De Corpore** roll with DT 6 to steal some; for each Degree of Success, the character obtains enough food to feed one person for one day; however, all it takes is one failure to alert the patrol, which has already dismounted and attacks immediately. The village locals do not intervene in the battle, but nor would they have offered the Custodes any hospitality.

Unlucky. By chance, the Custodes meet a lone fighter along the way, who after doing his business emerges from the bushes to catch up with his **(1:1)** ***Germani Warriors*** comrades, who have left him trailing behind. After an initial moment of surprise, he recognizes the Custodes and raises the alarm. The Custodes must fight first him and then his comrades, who arrive in the third tempus of combat.

Caught. The Custodes are identified by a large number of **(1.5:1)** ***Germani Warriors***, among which a leader (use the stats of *Barbarian Champions* on page 154), and must fight to save their lives.

Doomed.
The Berserkir catches up with the Custodes, who must fight to save their lives (the monster has recovered all Hit Points that may have been lost during the previous battle). The creature's statistics can be found on page 167.

EVENTS

The following table contains a list of Events that may happen to the Custodes, specifying the minimum number of successes that triggers each Event. An entire scene is dedicated to each Event; the various scenes (5-8) can be found after the table itself.

Number of successes	Event
3	The *Semnones'* village
7	The apparition
12	The spirit minder
18	The return home

SCENE 5 : THE SEMNONES' VILLAGE

In the middle of the day, the Custodes reach the outskirts of a *Semnones'* village.

The characters advance cautiously toward the strands of smoke rising in the daytime sky, signaling the presence of a village. The woods soon give way to large open spaces surrounding a built-up area of ten or so pit-houses with either thatched roofs or coverings made of wooden slats. The settlement is surrounded by fallow fields and snow-covered pastures, separated by wooden fences. The area is imbued with a pleasant smell combining smoke, cattle, and dried fish; children are playing in the snow, fighting with wooden spades under the watchful eye of a blond-haired man.

If the characters approach the settlement without appearing threatening, with the intention of collecting food, or information, or even just to find somewhere warm to rest, they do not stir up any particular reactions among the locals. In a short time, as soon as the Germani are alerted of the Custodes' presence, several men armed with axes emerge from the homes to welcome the group and accompany them to the village elders.

- The encounter with the Semnones follows the rules of Audiences (see page 117). If there is no one in the group that speaks the local language and who plays the role of interpreter, the difficulty of all De Societate rolls increases by one level.

During the Presentation of Custodes, only one Custos makes the necessary introductions with an **Auctoritas** roll with DT 6. Based on the result, the number of attempts available to the Custodes for the subsequent Exposure of requests is determined as normal.

The Peritia to be used during the Exposure phase is **De Societate**. The Difficulty for all rolls depends on the Custodes' requests and may vary between DT 6 (if the Custodes ask for food, a place to stay for one night, and some directions), DT 9 (if they ask to stay for more than one night), or DT 12 or even 15 if the requests are more substantial. The number of successes to be accumulated in the available attempts is 6, given that the tribe is not loyal to Rome or particularly friendly.

If the action fails (the Custodes do not manage to accumulate 6 successes before using up all the attempts available to them), the Semnones become suspicious of the characters and ask them to leave their village immediately.

If the action is a success, the Custodes' requests are satisfied insofar as possible. If they stay the night, they are invited to stay in one of the locals' homes. Inside, the home is heated by

a central hearth that spreads a reddish light around the room, filling it with a thin mist that evaporates through a hole in the roof. A group of women are spinning and sewing, while another is breastfeeding a baby.

If they stay in the village for some time, the Custodes can try to gather information (see page 113 by making a **De Societate** roll with DT 9.

Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"You are very far from home, are you not?" asks an elder. *"To be honest, it's no surprise to us anymore. In the last year we've become accustomed to passing foreigners:* Franks *from the lands of Rinaz,* Varini *and* Saxons *from the north,* Alamanni *and* Marcomanni *from the south..."*

II Degree of Success
"... Overall it was a good year: while it's true that we looted less, we also traded much more. Three years ago we were at each other's throats with the Burgundians*, and three months ago we traded salt, gold, and skins with them and drank in honor of both our dead. Our relations with nearby tribes seem to have suddenly improved."*

III Degree of Success
"In actual fact, I have heard that this is happening a lot these days: many foreign leaders are cultivating peaceful relations, granting concessions to their neighbors, and even offering their help to rival tribes. There is a new sense of cooperation, shared goals, the idea of a common destiny."

SCENE 6: THE APPARITION

In the morning, the Custodes suddenly awaken. Aetius Marcellus and all the legionaries, including the sentry guard, are sleeping soundly and it seems impossible to wake them.

All around them a glorious autumn clearing has magically appeared in the midst of the icy, snow-covered moor where they had fallen asleep. The tree tops brandish every shade of color, from the tender green of summer to bright yellow and deep red, and their leaves float gently to the ground, covering the tall yellowed tufts and short dark green grass in a scarlet-colored cloak. On the snow-free ground, sun-bleached skeletons are embraced by rusted armor, while many other human bones sprout here and there, dispersed by the animals that feasted on them.

A long spear is driven into the ground in the center of the clearing, skewered with the lifeless bodies of three large eagles.

As the Custodes look around them, a figure emerges from the trees and moves toward them, stopping at a safe distance. It is a man of extraordinary beauty, blond, diaphanous, with black star-studded eyes like the night sky; he is dressed in Germanic attire, but his clothes are the richest and most sophisticated the Custodes have ever seen, white like the snow, embellished with golden embroidery (it's a new fantastical creature, a ***Liosalfar***; see page 269). The stranger raises his hand in a sign of peace and speaks:

"That which you poured into the Glade of Chains was not the first and shall not be the last Roman blood to wet this land. It is a mere drop that flows into a running stream, which will first become a river and then a tidal wave, and all lands from the north sea to the great mountains of the south shall be flooded. All that which you see, man, animal, and plant, shall be torn down: man by his fellow man to conquer riches and land, animal by arrow, to feed the hungry droves, and plant by the darkness, to build bridges and boats with which to cross the flowing river. This I know because it is written in the Book of Future Events, but also that you will be able to extinguish the embers of the war before it explodes into a raging fire."

That said, the stranger turns his back on the Custodes and disappears back into the forest; at the same time, the Custodes all of a sudden feel very tired and crash to the ground, fast asleep. They are awakened by the legionaries who are looking all around them, awe-stricken and impressed by the wonders that surround them. The camp is in fact still immersed in the autumn clearing, although the spear, eagles, and skeletons have all disappeared.

The contubernium has clearly received a visit from a fairy creature, who tried in his own way to communicate something that he considers very important.

With a **De Scientia** roll with DT 6, the Custodes will be able to note how the various elements of the stranger's speech and in the vision of the clearing seem to refer to the *clades variana*, the Varian Disaster in the Teutoburg Forest. Publius Quinctilius Varus, a bureaucrat turned governor of the territories recently conquered by Tiberius in Germania Magna, had boorishly attempted to impose Roman values and criteria on the defeated peoples, placing them at risk of losing their cultural identity immediately after having lost their personal freedom.

This led the Germani to join forces against the common enemy under the command of prince Arminius, who, perhaps aided by the bloody practices of divination, managed to ambush the Romans. The battle, which lasted until the end of the summer of 762 AUC (9 AD), was one of the Empire's greatest defeats: the three legions led by Varus were completely annihilated and never reformed due to the shame they suffered and Rome definitively renounced all attempts to conquer Germania Magna.



SCENE 7: THE SPIRIT MINDER

The sun is setting behind a wooded ridge, sinking the earth into a dark shadow under a still-light sky, scattered with red burning clouds. The group is on the move in search of a suitable place to set up camp, when one of the Custodes notices a Roman watch tower less than half a mile away: the flame of a burning fire illuminates the internal windows, emitting a thin strand of smoke high up in the sky.

"We're safe!" exclaims one of the legionaries, but Pertinax quickly crushes the thrill of excitement running through the group, saying *"No, that's one of the old watch towers of the old Flavian limes. We're somewhere in the Taunus, north of the Agri Decumates, and we're very close: two or three days at most until we reach the border."*

With a **De Scientia** roll with DT 6 the Custodes can remember that the *Agri Decumates* was a territory forming part of the province of Germania up until a few centuries ago, when the rising tensions with the *Alamanni* tribes had forced the Empire to withdraw behind the Rhenus, leaving the *Agri Decumates* to the barbarians (see also page 154).

As the group cautiously approaches to investigate, the high notes of a flute can be heard wafting from the tower, which are then joined by the sound of a howling dog. As they near the construction, the flute stops and a cracked elderly voice starts humming a cheerful tune. The characters' arrival is announced by the dog's barking, immediately reproached by the old man who yells, *"That's enough! Can't you see we have guests?"*

The Germani, who introduces himself as Aruth, is a goatherder that happily and enthusiastically welcomes the group of travelers, inviting them to spend the night in the tower. From what the Custodes can see, it is clear that the old man has set up home there and lives in complete isolation. There is but one room inside, which is spartan but welcoming: wooden shelves are stacked with jars, food, utensils, and a few work tools. There is dried fruit on one shelf, and small blocks of cheese are being smoked by the fireplace. The food, water, and shelter offered by Aruth allows the Custodes, if they wish, to have rest in a comfortable place.

As the characters eat and chat with the old man, they can't help but notice, behind the fireplace, dozens of anthropomorphic earthenware and bronze statues: Roman Lares and Penates. If questioned about them, Aruth states that he often finds them among the ruins in the area.

"I don't know who they are, but they're gods," says the old man with conviction, referring to some of their clearly magical or mystical features, *"although they must be very poor gods, so poor as to have been forgotten and abandoned by those who once adored them. Whenever I find them, I collect them and bring them here, so at least they have someone who remembers them."*

- Seeing the statues of Lares and Penates so lovingly protected by Aruth is an *exceptional experience* (see page 129): each Custos earns 1 Experience Point.

- In addition, all Custodes can pray in front of the Lares and Penates to recover Pietas (see page 78).

The old man's words fill the air with sadness, and the Custodes' hearts, previously lightened by the friendliness of their host, are filled with worry. If the words pronounced by the stranger in the clearing were true, and a war threatens to wrest the northern lands from the Empire, the provinces of Gallia and Germania would risk suffering the same fate as the *Agri Decumates*, where all that remains of the glory of Rome are ruins claimed back by nature, and where the protective gods of battle become a curious keepsake for the winners.

SCENE 8: THE RETURN HOME

The snow falls gently from the grey sky as the characters silently advance, their eyes straining to penetrate the whiteness enveloping them in search of signs to confirm they're close to home. All of a sudden, one of the legionaries excitedly exclaims: *"The limes! The limes!"* he shouts, pointing to the lazily flowing Rhenus, covered by a light mist.

From a nearby watch tower located on the opposite bank, a sentinel alerts his comrades of an approaching armed group; after a few minutes of explanations shouted across one bank to the other, a boat driven by legionary guards ferries the Custodes over to within the Imperial borders.

The Custodes are led up to the Bingium auxiliary fort, an outpost made of wood and earth near a walled town at the confluence of the Rhenus and Nava, and news of their arrival quickly spreads throughout the garrison. After being checked out by a field doctor and taking a wash, the characters can collapse on a camp bed to rest for a while.

In the evening, many of the legionaries stationed in the fort make their way to the Custodes' tent, each bringing with them part of their own rations with which to lay the Custodes' table (in the Roman army, each contubernium must prepare — and sometimes procure — their own food: the soldiers in the camp know the Custodes haven't had time to do so, and therefore offer to help them). The Custodes' evening meal is soon spon-

taneously transformed into a banquet with cereal, leek, and legume soup, black bread, cheese, eggs, sweet honey, and apple rolls, all washed down with local beer and spiced wine. The legionaries try to find out what the Custodes got up to beyond the limes, asking them to recount the stories of their battles with barbarians, feats with women, and other heroic deeds, in addition to having survived the march in the middle of the Germanic winter.

The Custodes can chat freely with the legionaries, but to convince them to open up and speak freely, they need to pass a roll of **Auctoritas** or **De Societate** with DT 6. Based on their Degree of Success, the Custodes obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"My cousin lives in a village on the other side of the limes," explains one soldier, *"and he tells me he's never had any problems with nearby barbarians, but that now things seem to be getting even better: there are new peaceful relations and apparently even tribes from distant places travel all the way there just to trade." "It's true, this summer I was stationed at Mogontiacum and a group of Germani crossed the Rhenus to trade skins, ivory, and perfumes."*

II Degree of Success
"Given these lands are so peaceful, I wonder why Rome doesn't take them back!" says another. *"I certainly wouldn't mind having a beautiful farm in the Agri Decumates, but instead, if we keep refusing to conquer anything, after the honesta missio, I'll be forced to share my father's field with my brothers."*

III Degree of Success
"Oh hush, with the training we've had, we'd risk copping a good whipping from the Germani!" The soldier's comment stirs up a number of angry reactions, voices are raised, people begin to speak on top of each other, and the conversation is transformed into a heated discussion: *"Defeatist!", "There's more of us!", "Who dares oppose the power of Rome!?" "Didn't you hear? Even Cleph's cousin went to conquer a barbarian on his own, you really think the entire Martia Victrix would fail!?" "Barbarian? What barbarian? That guy was born with his feet in the Rhenus! The only reason you're not a barbarian is because you were born on the right side of the river!"* A decurion soon arrives with a maniple of soldiers to break up the crowd, sending everyone back to their quarters.

The Custodes can remain in the castra as long as they like, making the most of the effects of rest for each day spent there. Sooner or later, however, they will need to report on what happened to someone in the Cohors Arcana; Aetius Marcellus had suggested going to Augusta Treverorum and speaking with the magister Maera Diodora.

PARTING WITH THE LEGIONARIES

If any of the legionaries in the group survived (given the Custodes gave the order to the legionaries during the withdrawal, they themselves can decide who survived), when it's time to leave Bingium, the Custodes and the commander of the fort grant them a safe-conduct allowing them to return to Divitia.

The legionaries gather before the Custodes, raising their hand to their head in a military salute, before offering the same hand as a sign of friendship.

"You shouldn't blame yourselves for having ordered our comrades to fight and die," says one of the legionaries. *"When we were recruited at Colonia Agrippina, we knew the serious risks we would face and we volunteered anyway: we knew some of us might die for Rome, and that's how it went. You should not be held accountable for their deaths: it was nobody's fault except for those who sent them to Elysium by the blows of their axe. We are happy to be here, alive, and we salute you as comrades. I pray to the gods that we will meet again, perhaps by the fire in an inn, warmed by wine and friendship. Goodbye."*

SCENE 9: STAND AND DELIVER

At the Bingium castra, the Custodes can borrow horses to make the journey to Augusta Treverorum. The Prefectus heading up the fort informs them that the journey shouldn't take longer than two or three days.

On the afternoon of the first day, during a brief pause on the ground to give the horses and their sore backsides a rest, the Custodes meet a group of **(1.5:1)** individuals dressed like local farmers, coming from the opposite direction. Once close enough, the "farmers" all of a sudden furiously and relentlessly attack the Custodes, fighting to the death (for the statistics, see the box *Faux farmers*).

- It is therefore a surprise attack (see page 64).

All Custodes can make a **Sensibilitas** roll to become aware of the ambush. The roll difficulty depends on the attitude shown by the Custodes toward the approaching travelers. If even one Custos succeeds in the roll, the surprise attack fails.

FAUX FARMERS

Expert and well-equipped combatants hide under the guise of modest and inconspicuous farmers.

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5)

Once the clash has ended, the Custodes can examine the bodies of their assailants in search of clues with a **De Scientia** or **Ingenium** roll with DT 6. If the roll is a success, the Custodes note that under their simple garments, the attackers are wearing chain mail similar to that supplied to the frontier troops and that two of them have an Imperial eagle tattooed on their arm, indicating they are most likely legionaries. Ultimately, the Custodes realize they have been attacked by traitors nested within the military forces.

CONCLUSION

Along the last few miles, the road flanks the white ribbon of the Moselle, which, as it winds through the valley, blends the reflections of the surrounding hills with the shadows of the trees lining the structure. Augusta Treverorum welcomes the Custodes with a view of striking twenty-foot-high walls, interrupted by a multitude of towers, embracing gigantic public landmarks: the hippodrome, amphitheater, enormous springs, and granaries. The capital city of the province of Germania, nicknamed *Rome of the North*, is an enormous city with close to 100,000 citizens, made wealthy by its trade routes which converge and convey its riches through the limes toward the south and toward Rome.

The provincial Praetorian castra are located near the monumental port made of blocks of grey sandstone, which opens to the north side of the city walls. When they reach the gates, the Custodes present their diplomas to the guards and are led inside where they are shown their quarters; the horses are taken into custody.

The Custodes, standing still in the center of the square speaking with the picket officers, are the only static element of a picture in continuous movement: around them, groups of soldiers march, duel, and fight in training skirmishes, carrying pennants with images of the goddess Minerva, of the Capricorn, of the Gaul wielding an axe, and of Mars, thus indicating the presence of *vexillationes* (detachments) of the Legions *I Minervia*, *XXII Primigenia*, *VI Gallicana*, and *I Martia Victrix*.

Once military doctors have dealt with any of the Custodes' wounds, the group is informed of the whereabouts of the Magister of the Cohors Arcana they have come to meet, and they join her in her private city quarters.

Maera Diodora is a mature woman originally from the sun-drenched mountains of Achaia, with long, black hair just beginning to turn white. She listens to the Custodes with interest, rarely interrupting to ask for clarifications, as a scribe scribbles notes on a wax tablet. At the end of their report, the woman nods to herself silently, stretching over the triclinium to reach a glass of honey-wine with a blank, distant gaze. Silence falls upon the room, filled with tension, while Diodora seems to deliberately prolong the duration of every gesture, taking time to reflect. She sips on the glass of wine before turning toward the Custodes again.

"The things you have told me," Diodora begins after a long pause, *"are of indescribable gravity for the Empire, especially the confirmed presence of traitors in the army. This presence must be sufficiently widespread as to have a network of informers distributed throughout the various border forts. The news is very serious. It is also necessary to understand if and how the Germanic cult is connected to the legionaries that attacked you.*

What is now required is not a mere investigation among the army ranks to better ascertain the extent of the betrayal, but a careful analysis of the Germanic cults tolerated by the Empire. Perhaps we were wrong to allow these people to maintain their customs rather than assimilate them to the Official Cult, and this mistake may well have been a vehicle for the contamination now undermining us from within.

As for you, in the name of the Magisterium of the Cohors Arcana, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you did and for the very important information you have gathered.

From now on, more expert persons than yourselves and myself will take care of this matter. About which, of course, you must maintain the utmost discretion. You may now return to your villages and rest."

At this point, the Custodes are dismissed by the Magister and free to return to their homes to enjoy their winter leave. The adventure is over.

LIOSALFAR
(NEW FANTASTICAL CREATURE)

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Hit Points, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (northern forests)
Hit Points: 10

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Stealthy
- *Magical Powers:* Enchantment* (2DV, the creature *fixes its gaze* on the victim), Illusion* (2DV), Prophecy

**These powers represent the only offensive weapons of the Liosalfar (it does not have a Damage value).*

I Degree of Success
Among the Nordic peoples, there is a widespread belief that in the oldest forests of Caledonia [Scotland], Hyperborea [Scandinavia], and Germania still dwell the elves, fairy creatures similar to men, but infinitely more dangerous. In particular, the local folklore recommends being very careful to not confuse the wise and benign people of the light elves (the *Liosalfar*) with the dark elves (the *Dockalfar*), dark demons of the Underworld. The two lines are practically identical in appearance and manner, and this makes it difficult to distinguish the warnings of a Liosalfar from the deceptions of a Dockalfar. Both peoples appear thin, pale, and with blond hair, and they can easily be mistaken for men and women with particularly delicate and charming features. [To distinguish a Liosalfar from a Dockalfar, it is necessary to be able to observe the Elf for a long time and succeed in a roll of **Sensibilitas** with DT 12.]

II Degree of Success
The traveler who ventures into the thick of the forests may happen to attend a festive gathering of Liosalfar, who dance and sing in unnaturally green glades, blooming and flooded with light and scented air. Sometimes they take delight in mingling with men, who treat them like hilarious wild people. Despite their childish ways, the Liosalfar consider themselves guardians of the natural order of things, particularly attentive to the preservation of the ancient places in which they live. If forced, they temporarily abandon their usual pastimes and take a stand in personally making things go as they should, especially if external interventions of a magical and malevolent nature are likely to cause changes in the normal flow of events. They are said to be aided in this by possessing the *Book of Future Events*, a magical tome with enormous divinatory powers.



III Degree of Success
People talk with pleasure about some female Liosalfar, who seem to be living in the snowy forests of Hyperborea [Scandinavia]. Called *Huldrer* (sing. *Huldre*), they look gorgeous and seductive, especially when they dance or bathe in the rays of the moon. They wear gray clothes and snow-white veils that seem to move of their own accord. They also have the tail of an animal (a cow or a fox), of which they feel great shame. If a human being is invited to join the dance, it is strongly recommended to accept without hesitation.

[The Huldre invites those with the highest Auctoritas to dance. If the invited Custos hesitates or shows any doubt, the Huldre will sadly ask them if "it is because of her tail...". If the Custos answers something like, "What tail?", or firmly denies that as the reason (roll of De Societate with DT 6), the Elf will leave smiling and without causing any harm; otherwise, before disappearing from sight, she will throw a grim look at the Custos and their companions, who will soon realize that all their supplies have disappeared. If the invited Custos does not show any hesitation and succeeds in a roll of De Societate (DT 9), the dance continues until the music stops. Then, the grateful Huldre looks at the character with her bright eyes and teaches them the following tekné (see page 160).]

Adversus: Dockalfar. The Custos is completely immune to the Dockalfar's Enchantment power. Moreover, if the Custos tries to understand whether the Elf in front of him is a Liosalfar or a Dockalfar, their Sensibilitas roll has DT 6 (instead of 12).

THE MOTHERS OF CENABUM

INTRODUCTION FOR PLAYERS

Eight months have passed since that terrible night in the Glade of Chains, when the Custodes fell into a Germani ambush, betrayed by someone from within the army. After the final report to Maera Diodora, Magister of the *cursus auguralis*, they were separated and assigned new tasks. In the meantime, the investigation launched by Aetius Marcellus Pertinax's expedition is proceeding without them.

Ten days ago, just before the Ides of August (13th day) of 1232 AUC, the Custodes had been summoned with utmost urgency to Lugdunum, the capital of Gallia. From there, they were sent northward toward Urbs Aurelianorum, a fortified city not far from the prosperous city of Lutetia (the modern Paris). When they reach Urbs Aurelianorum, after displaying their diplomas to obtain the collaboration of the local curia (local government), the Custodes are brought before Maera Diodora.

The Magister hasn't changed much since their last meeting: black curly hair with splashes of grey, full lips, defined features. Lying on the floor of the cellar, she seems to be sleeping with her eyes closed and a composed posture. Her inhuman pallor is the only clue indicating to the Custodes that they are standing before a corpse. Although the *libitinarii* (undertakers) had carefully prepared her body - washing and binding it with a bandage that frames the face and keeps the mouth closed, in which a coin is placed to pay Charon for the ferry - only the blessing of Venus Libitina had been able to preserve the beauty of the woman's body intact, even two weeks after her death.

In the cellar lit by a single dim lamp, the Custodes think back to the concise information they were given by Marcus Nepos, the old Magister of the Cursus Auguralis stationed at Lugdunum, to prepare them for this mission:

"In recent months, three members of the Cohors Arcana have died at Urbs Aurelianorum. They had commenced an investigation following your report on the mission in Germania Magna; the aim was to confirm that a tolerated cult had been the vehicle used to disseminate rivalry and sedition in Germania. But what we found is much more disturbing.

THE STORY GOES ON...

This adventure is ideally the follow-on from *By the Will of the Gods* (which can be found in the Quickstarter volume of *Lex Arcana*) and *The Long Winter Nights* (in the previous pages of this volume). *The Mothers of Cenabum* can be played immediately after *The Long Winter Nights* or after any other adventure, which must however finish in time to assign the mission to the Custodes in August of 1232 AUC.

- If the characters have not played any other adventures between *The Long Winter Nights* and *The Mothers of Cenabum*, before this mission starts the Demiurge can assign each Custos 6 Experience Points (to simulate the experience accumulated in the period between the two adventures by way of training, study, and less important missions).

Rather than one single cult, the investigations led us to identify an entire underworld of cults, sects, and movements, each independent from the other. Ideas are circulating among their members, which by preying on local religions, emotions, and struggles, are fueling a widespread separatist sentiment. What we suspect is that these seditious ideas are being diffused not only in Germania, but also in bordering regions, in the north-east of Gallia.

The first two Custodes killed in Urbs Aurelianorum, Licinius Modron and Tallwch, son of Sulis, had arrived in the city as part of this investigation; a few months later they died in mysterious circumstances, before they were even able to send a single report. The Magister Maera Diodora, who suspected there were obscure forces at play, insisted on seeing for herself what had happened; two weeks later, she too was killed.

Your mission is to go to Urbs Aurelianorum to investigate the death of Maera Diodora and the two Custodes before her."



INTRODUCTION FOR DEMIURGE

This story is centered around three ancient deities, *Ligia*, *Matir*, and *Beriavis*, the **Mothers of Cenabum**. Called the *Aurelian Mothers* by the inhabitants of Urbs Aurelianorum, they are benevolent personifications of nature and the surrounding territory; their cult is considered entirely tolerated (many similar deities are worshipped in various parts of the Empire, also in Italia). The Mothers are suddenly woken by from their centenary sleep, acquiring awareness and form due to the nearby *Sword of Vercingetorix*. This ancient weapon holds the power to wake ancient Celtic deities and instigate human beings to rebel against Rome, an historical invader and current exploiter of the people of Gallia. More than two years ago, the sword landed in the hands of Drusus Lupus Milo (see the adventure *By the Will of the Gods*, in the *Lex Arcana* Quickstarter), a former Roman official who lives in his villa of Aquae Segetae, no more than two days' walk from Urbs Aurelianorum. This proximity between Milo's villa (where the sword is preserved) and the sites consecrated to the three Mothers (the town of Urbs Aurelianorum and the surrounding countryside) is precisely the initial source of the problem.

The Mothers once more began to protect themselves and their peoples, just as they did many centuries ago. Given they are local deities, their sphere of influence and action is limited to Urbs Aurelianorum and its surrounds; inside this area, they can draw on the collective knowledge of their faithful. The Mothers are in fact aware of all that which occurs and demonstrate their protective nature by gifting abundant harvests, preventing infant mortality, and eliminating wicked and violent individuals. Similarly, the goddesses protect their followers and cult from those who threaten them.

PRODIGIES AND BETRAYALS

Urbs Aurelianorum is interwoven with dreams of independence, religious fervor, and personal ambitions involving politicians, priests, and aristocrats. The Curio (head of the curia) Aetius Rufus Velleius dreams of becoming governor of an independent city; Valentinus Trebonius, consumed by his own ambition, wishes to take the place of Velleius; the priest Branwen uses the cult of the Aurelian mothers to pave the way for an insurrection, possibly led by Drusus Milo.

When the Custodes Licinius Modron and Tallwch arrived in town, they don't know that their mission was destined to fail: their investigations were thwarted by the men of the curia themselves, who they had turned to for help and support, their messages to the Cohors Arcana were intercepted and destroyed. In the end, the two Custodes were eliminated by the Mothers of Cenabum because they posed a risk to the local cult. Licinius was suffocated to death along the road by Ligia (who possessed the body of a passer-by), Tallwch was killed in a brothel by Matir (who possessed the body of the prostitute Nessa).

Maera Diodora therefore decided to personally visit Urbs Aurelianorum, together with her trusted scribe and assistant, Faustinus. The two made rapid progress: they managed to reconstruct the investigations of Licinius Modron and Tallwch, but were unable to explain their deaths. They also began to harbor suspicions regarding the members of the local curia, but did not have time to conclude their investigations because, for the Mothers of Cenabum, they now represented a threat. Maera Diodora was killed by a night watchman possessed by Beriavis; Faustinus went mad, although he managed to shake off his pursuers and hide in the nearby countryside.

Valentinus Trebonius was obliged to report the news of Maera's death, but not before destroying some of the Magister's notes containing information otherwise compromising for his position or for the cult of the Mothers.

Adventure Value: 8 EP.

SYNOPSIS

The adventure consists of three parts, each divided into one or more scenes, and an interlude between part 1 and 2.

Part 1 - The arrival
The Custodes arrive in Urbs Aurelianorum. They are welcomed by the members of the curia, who give them an initial briefing on the facts: Maera Diodora was killed and her body abandoned by the road; her assistant cannot be found and is suspected of killing his mistress (Scene 1).

THE CITY OF URBS AURELIANORUM

Urbs Aurelianorum, shortened by the local folk to Aurelianis, is a commercial city on the northern bank of the Liger river, erected on the site of the ancient Celtic Cenabum. The then-inhabitants, belonging to the Carnutes, were first subdued by Gaius Julius Caesar more than five centuries ago; however, they later joined the rebellion led by Vercingetorix, the great warrior king of the Arverni tribe. In retaliation, the Divine Caesar tore Cenabum to the ground and exterminated its citizens in 701 AUC (52 BC). The city was nothing but ruins overgrown with weeds until it was reconstructed by Emperor Aurelian in 1027 (274 DC), thus acquiring its new name.

Urbs Aurelianorum rapidly regained its status due to its very strategic positioning. The city is in fact located at the center of rich agricultural land and represents an important junction between the road and river networks. From here, the cereals cultivated in the surrounding countryside descend along the Liger until the oceanic port of Portus Namnetus on the *Sinus Cantabricus* (Bay of Biscay), whence they continue on toward the great southern cities of the Empire.

The city is protected on three sides by its walls, which were commissioned by Aurelian, while the fourth side is flanked by the Liger. At the crossroads between the cardo and decumanus maximus lie the most important public buildings: the forum, the hot springs, and the basilica. The main temples look over the *decumanus maximus*, while the theater and necropolis are erected just outside the *porta dextera*. An aqueduct serves the city, delivering water from a source on the northeast hills. To the south, the city is flanked by the Liger river, which is crossed by a long bridge (more than 1200 feet). An efficient river port allows goods to be loaded and unloaded directly in the heart of the city. The walls enclose a rectangular area of 60 acres, home to roughly 4500 inhabitants. The rest of the population resides in the various suburbs built around the city or scattered around the farms and villas speckling the surrounding countryside. A good part of the territory is used to grow cereals: spelt, barley, millet, and wheat, which at this time of year grows as tall as man. Each parcel of land is framed by willow fencing and thorny hedges to prevent the flocks of sheep transiting along the roads and trails from entering the fields and ruining the crops.

Interlude - The Awareness of the Mothers
This part of the adventure contains paragraphs and tables that help the Demiurge manage the Custodes' presence in the city. In fact, although they won't immediately know it, their every move is being watched and evaluated by the ancient goddesses...

Part 2 - Investigations in the city
When the Custodes start their investigations, they may wish to ascertain the circumstances of Maera Diodora's death (Scene 2) and reconstruct her last movements (Scene 3 and 4). They will roam the city of Urbs Aurelianorum to interrogate or simply speak with the locals (Scene 5) and listen to various tales on a number of topics (Scene 6). They have the opportunity to find a terrorized Faustinus and can try and make sense of his mindless delusions (Scene 7). They also discover telltale signs of a deep-rooted local discontent (Scene 8). As the Custodes slowly reach a number of conclusions, someone appears to be spying on them and a threatening supernatural presence becomes increasingly oppressive (Scene 9). After an encounter with a supernatural being, Maera Diodora appears before the Custodes in a dream to help them out (Scene 10).

Part 3 - A blow to the heart
In the end, the Custodes challenge the most powerful of the three Mothers in an epic battle that spans thousands of years of history (Scene 11). Only once normality seems to have been restored in the city do the Custodes understand that Drusus Milo is at the center of a complex plot threatening the fate of the Empire (Scenes 12 and 13).

PART 1: THE ARRIVAL

SCENE 1: A SAD WELCOME

After having silently prayed to the gods before the lifeless body of Maera Diodora, the Custodes leave the cellar and return to the dazzling warmth of the afternoon summer sun. Two men of the curia are waiting from them, talking to each other in irritated tones. Aetius Rufus Velleius is a forty-something grey-haired, slightly overweight man, who nervously wrings his hands, sweating in his lordly clothes. He moves toward the Custodes and reports on the situation.

"As soon as the Magister's body was found, we immediately informed Lugdunum of the terrible sad news. We were ready to go ahead with the cremation and funeral rite, but an urgent dispatch stopped us in our tracks, forcing us to wait for your arrival, thus allowing you to examine the body. We now await your instructions. In regards to the assassin, our suspicions are concentrated on Faustinus, the young man who always accompanied Diodora; the man in fact disappeared without a trace on the same day the Magister was killed. We cannot send the few guards we have to scour the local countryside, but we have informed one of our trusted contacts to keep their eyes open."

If asked about this person, Velleius explains that it is Drusus Lupus Milo, a former legionary who rather than look after only his own farm, has decided to help authorities clear the area of brigands and assassins.

"Evening is falling, and I imagine you're very tired after your long journey. I therefore leave you to your duties, but for anything you may need, please ask Valentinus Trebonius, here with us, a young, diligent, and able member of the curia."

Valentinus Trebonius introduces himself to the Custodes and adds: *"I urge you to consider me for all your needs, whether it be regarding the current and past situation of our city or to send missives with dispatch riders."* Having said that, Trebonius invites the characters to collect their things and follow him to the lodging assigned to them: a small dwelling inside a modest building.

If interrogated about Maera Diodora's residence in the city, Trebonius explains: *"The Magister made a specific request for accommodation compatible with her status. Aetius Velleius had therefore procured for her an entire domus, which she shared with her assistant Faustinus. Following her assassination, the house was locked up, and access is forbidden. I didn't think to have you stay there: I could never forgive myself were you to incur the wrath of the larva of death,"* (*larvae* are the vindictive spirits of people who died by a violent death, see page 205). Only if the Custodes make an express and insistent request, does Trebonius allow the Custodes to lodge in the home of Maera Diodora (see *Scene 3: In the home of Maera Diodora*).

FIXED ADVENTURE EVENTS

Some of the events described in this adventure occur on well-defined dates. The Demiurge must take this into account.

Date	Events
20th August	The adventure begins (Scene 1)
24th August	If he hasn't already been found by the Custodes, Faustinus is brought to the city by Drusus Milo (Scene 7)
25th August	The Custodes attend the harvest festival (Scene 8)

INTERLUDE: THE AWARENESS OF THE MOTHERS



The Mothers of Cenabum - Ligia, Beriavis, and Matir - are local deities, generous givers of gifts and protectors of their faithful. Their hostility may be manifested through a series of accidents inflicted upon those who represent a threat to their cult or the inhabitants of the city. Given the goddesses are respectively the personification of the river, the land, and the people, they are always aware of everything that happens in the city and its surrounds.

What happened to the previous members of the Cohors Arcana is that they were identified as a threat to the cult of the Mothers; as a consequence, they were eliminated. The Custodes too are likely to face the same fate. Their presence in the city does not go unnoticed by the Mothers, and should their actions and behavior become too problematic, the ancient goddesses will not hesitate to intervene using their powerful incarnations (see *The Mothers of Cenabum*, at the end of the adventure).

- During the course of the entire adventure, it is essential that the Demiurge always consider and update the level of **Awareness of the Mothers**, which is expressed by a score: the higher the score, the greater the hostility of the three goddesses toward the Custodes.

- The score starts from 0, but tends to gradually rise based on the progress of the Custodes' investigations (the specific points to be added to the total on each occasion are indicated at the end of the paragraphs dedicated to the investigations, under the heading *Awareness of the Mothers*) and also based on their behavior: each time they perform one of the following acts toward any citizens of Urbs Aurelianorum, the following points are added.

- Psychological abuse (for example, they threaten a citizen): +1 point
- Physical abuse (for example, they attack a citizen): +3 points
- Assassination (for example, they kill a citizen): +5 points

When the Awareness of the Mothers reaches certain levels, the Custodes begin to find themselves involved in a series of unpleasant happenings. The atmosphere in the city will become increasingly more tense and oppressive, until the inevitable clash with the personifications of the Mothers of Cenabum...

- Based on the total Awareness score, the Demiurge consults the corresponding boxes below.

EFFECTS OF AWARENESS OF THE MOTHERS

Awareness	Atmosphere in city	Events
From 0 to 3	Urbs Aurelianorum seems to be a pleasant city whose citizens are kind and friendly.	–
From 4 to 7	As they wander through the city, Custodes who succeed in a Sensibilitas roll with DT 6 have a fleeting sensation that they are being secretly watched; if they try to find out whether this is true, there is no way to confirm their doubts.	Every day, the Custodes are victims of minor, unintentional accidents provoked by the local folk (a bucket of urine is emptied from a balcony, a fisherman spills a bucket of fish heads on their feet, a merchant mistakes one of them for a thief, etc.). The consequences of the accidents are normally only aesthetic and can be avoided by a roll with DT 6 (normally Coordinatio or Auctoritas).
From 8 to 11	As they wander through the city, Custodes who succeed in a Sensibilitas roll with DT 6 have the feeling they are being secretly watched; if they try to find out whether this is true, there is no way to confirm their doubts. The atmosphere in the city appears grim: the people are less joyful and when children see the Custodes, they stop playing and move away.	*Event 1* While the Custodes are talking to one of the locals, the latter stops mid-sentence and stares at them with possessed eyes. With a sepulchral voice he warns the Custodes: "Leave immediately, or the city will swallow you up and the earth will feed on your bones!". If interrogated in this regard, the person has no memory of having said anything similar. *Event 2* That same night, the Custodes dream of the Mothers of Cenabum (see Scene 9: The Visitation). *Event 3* Minor daily accidents (as per the table Awareness, from 4 to 7, above).
From 12 to 15	As they wander through the city, Custodes who succeed in a Sensibilitas roll with DT 3 have the distinct feeling that they are being secretly watched; if they try to find out whether this is true, there is no way to confirm their doubts. The city is dark and overshadowed, the streets narrow and oppressive, the people distrusting and threatening. The difficulty for De Societate rolls involving the citizens of Urbs Aurelianorum increases by 1 level.	*Event 1* During the night, the *Incarnation of Ligia* (one of the Mothers, see page 292) enters the home of the Custodes thanks to her Liquid Body power and attacks the Custos with the most Pietas points. *Event 2* The Custodes occasionally see the faces of the Mothers mixed in with the local crowd (as they saw them in the dream, see Scene 9: The Visitation). *Event 3* The minor daily accidents continue (as per the table Awareness, from 4 to 7, above), but they become more serious. For example, the Custodes risk being struck by a falling vase or tiles being laid by a laborer on the roof, or being thrown into the river during an argument. The consequences of the accidents inflict up to 2d6 damage and can be avoided by a roll with DT 6 (normally Coordinatio or Auctoritas).
From 16 onward	The atmosphere in the city is very oppressive. The Custodes feel like they're the only ones moving around in an otherwise completely lifeless city. The local folk are unusually quiet and stop whatever they're doing to stare at the Custodes with dull eyes. If the Custodes stop for long enough in the one place, a crowd starts to gather and close in around them, as the voices of men, women, and children unite in a cacophonous chant, crying, "Get out!" The Custodes can no longer obtain any information from the locals, and even simply interacting with them has become extremely difficult.	*Event 1* In the full light of day, the *Incarnation of Beriavis* (one of the Mothers, see page 292) appears amidst the crowd and attacks the Custodes. *Event 2* That same night, the Custodes are visited by the *larva* of Maera Diodora (see Scene 9: The dead in the land of the living). *Event 3* Once a day, the Custodes are attacked by one or more Incarnations of the Mothers of Cenabum (the Demiurge decides which is most suited to the situation, see page 292).

PART 2: INVESTIGATIONS IN THE CITY

SCENE 2: THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH

Gather information on the death of Maera Diodora, following the rules of Investigation (see page 120). The DT of the De Scientia roll is 9, given that considerable time has passed and the site has been tampered with (the corpse has been moved and cleaned, certain clues removed, etc.). The number of successes needed to complete the investigation is 6 (the scene is complex). For each day dedicated entirely to the investigation, the Custodes can make two rolls; each Degree of Success beyond the first yielded in the rolls counts as one additional success.

Outcome of investigation. Maera Diodora died on the night of 4th August during the *secunda vigilia* (between 4 and 6 hours after sunset) near the *porta praetoria*, north of the city. There are no eyewitnesses to the fact, but a passer-by confirms to have heard a man yell *"Run, Maera!"* Maera's body was found a few hours later, by a night watchman. An examination of the body revealed that she died of wounds inflicted by two arrows; one struck her side, the other her lung. One of the arrow tips was left stuck inside the wound; once extracted by the Custodes, it was proven to be of incredible workmanship, with the symbol of a serpent. Maera was wearing simple clothes, a *stola* and *palla* (an open dress and female cloak). None of the clues revealed anything about the role played by Faustinus or his fate.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point for every day the Custodes spend investigating the death of Maera.

SCENE 3 THE CRIME SCENE

If, following the investigation of Maera's death (Scene 2) the Custodes go to the place where her body was found, and the scene of the crime has nothing interesting to offer (local testimonies are already included in the outcome of the investigation).

Performing a Retrocognition ritual reveals the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
A Gallic fighter shoots an arrow toward Maera Diodora while the Magister runs toward the north gate. The fighter is richly dressed, with a helmet surmounted by a bird, scaled armor, and jewels worthy of a king. Many live snakes are crawling all over him, twisting around his arms, neck, and legs.

II Degree of Success
The fighter picks up one of the snakes and when he draws his bow, the snake becomes an arrow. Maera is hit in the back and falls to her knees, while Faustinus escapes.

III Degree of Success
The fighter begins to chase Faustinus, but the setting of this scene seems very different to the one before: there are no longer the paved roads of Aurelianis, nor the stone houses and tiled roofs, but only the beaten earth and homes made of wood and straw, in what seems to be a countryside village.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point for every ritual the Custodes perform along the streets of Urbs Aurelianorum.

SCENE 4: IN THE HOME OF MAERA DIODORA

The local domus where Maera Diodora and her scribe Faustinus lived has been barricaded. There is disorder inside, a sign that no servant has stepped foot in the house to clean it up, and the Custodes are most likely the first to enter since the day the Magister was killed.

A few robes have been thrown on a triclinium; two cups left on a *mensa* (a round table) have traces of wine turned to vinegar, and a faint rancid and moldy smell wafts out of the pantry. The robes and personal objects of the home's two inhabitants are all still here, arranged in two spacious *arcae viatoriae* (trunks). A smaller trunk contains the writing kit used by the scribe Faustinus, with styles, inks, rolls of papyrus, and wax tablets. Some of the rolls of papyrus are covered with fine cursive characters: it is the summary of the Magister's investigations (see the box *The notes of Maera Diodora*).

- With a successful **Ingenium** roll with DT 6, the Custodes can notice that although Maera Diodora died on the 4th August, her notes were interrupted one week earlier.

THE NOTES OF MAERA DIODORA

10th July. Two Custodes have died in a northern Gallic city. They had not sent any reports on their investigation. This has raised my suspicions.

11th July. I have interrogated the oracle. Its responses were more cryptic than usual, if that's even possible, but nonetheless appear to confirm the hypothesis that the death of the Custodes was not caused by man. *Those who step foot in a viper's den are asking to be bitten. Fear the judgement of the six-eyed goddess. A lion that bites a porcupine will die with its spines in its throat.* Tomorrow I will head to Urbs Aurelianorum. Perhaps the two accidentally got involved in something bigger than they.

25th July. As soon as I arrived, the Curio Aetius Velleius entrusted me to his subordinate, Valentinus Trebonius, who promptly satisfied my requests. Unfortunately, too many days have passed between the death of the Custodes and my arrival: I found only two urns filled with ashes and the two fingers. (When a corpse is cremated, a finger is cut off so that it can be buried and purified in contact with the earth).

26th July. The two Custodes died on the same day, but in different places. Licinius Modron was found in a street north of the city, while Tallwch, son of Sulis, died in a brothel. According to the *libitinarii* (undertakers), neither of the two had any evident wounds, although it is suspected that Licinius Modron was suffocated. I thought about the possibility of poison, but the responses of the oracle were clear. *One's life was torn away by water, and he died gasping for air when his lungs burst; the other's life was torn away by desire, and he died of joy when his heart burst.* Either way, it seems implausible to me that a young man in his prime could die during carnal relations with a prostitute.

27th July. Faustinus interrogated Nessa, the prostitute, who said that after an evening of food and wine (about which she admits she recalls nothing), Tallwch's dead body was found in the cubiculum. Near the place where Modron's body was found on the other hand, there is a fountain known as *Lacus Canis*. Six eyes? A dog? Perhaps Hekate has something to do with this? (The is dog an attribute of Hekate, goddess of witchcraft, who is portrayed with three bodies and three heads, and therefore six eyes).

28th July. I made a sacrifice to Jupiter. Few people were at the temple. Despite their having been Romanized for five centuries, the Gauls have little interest in the Official Cult and continue to prefer their local deities.

If the home is thoroughly examined, in one of the braziers, the Custodes can find (**De Scientia** or **Ingenium** roll with DT 6) a fragment of burnt papyrus with traces of the Magister's notes:

"Further to an analysis of my findings and those of Faustinus, it has emerged that in recent years an alarming number of accidental deaths have occurred in the city. No one in the local curia seems to have linked these deaths to one another, quite likely due to their being dissimilar and seemingly isolated. However, in light of that revealed during the course of the investigation, they may well be the work of a supernatural presence."

Performing a Retrocognition ritual reveals the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
A hand drops a sheet of papyrus into the lit brazier, which starts to crumple and burn.

II Degree of Success
A fleeting figure rummages through the trunks, reads the notes and throws some of them into the brazier. Part of the notes are, however, left where they can be found.

III Degree of Success
To read one of the sheets they are holding, the figure moves closer to a lamp. The dim light distinctly reveals the figure's face: it is Valentinus Trebonius.

SCENE 5: WORD ON THE STREET

The investigations will inevitably lead the Custodes to make inquiries in Urbs Aurelianorum and ask the locals for information (refer to the typical action *Gather Information*, page 113).

The Custodes may also visit specific locations or search for information about specific things: depending on what they're looking for, the Demiurge consults the following paragraphs (found further below in the same order).

- Information about Drusus Lupus Milo
- Information about the curia
- Information about the suspicious deaths
- Information at the river port
- Information at the temple of Jupiter
- Information at the brothel
- Information at the temple of the Mothers

Rumors. Each time the Custodes interrogate or speak with someone to obtain information, they also hear a rumor (see *Scene 5: Rumors*).

Official or unofficial capacity. The willingness of local citizens to speak with the Custodes varies depending on whether the Custodes appear in an official or unofficial capacity. For example, respectable citizens are often more willing to speak to emissaries of the Imperial authority, while those who have something to fear or hide will definitely be less inclined to collaborate. At the start of each interaction with an NPC, the Custodes must therefore declare whether they are acting *in an official capacity* or as private citizens *in an unofficial capacity* (the Demiurge must take this into account to determine the difficulty of actions regarding social interactions, normally DT 6 or DT 9).

The Custodes are fully aware that if they walk around with visible weapons and armor, they are considered to be *in an official capacity* (the only weapons that can easily be hidden are the Pugio and Sling). The right to carry arms is in fact the exclusive prerogative of members of the army. This rule always applies in urban city centers; at their discretion, the Demiurge may extend this rule to rural contexts, especially if the Custodes' have typically military equipment (a Bow and Spear may be hunting weapons, but a Scutum, Pilum, Manubalista, and Lorica Musculata are certainly not).

INFORMATION ABOUT DRUSUS LUPUS MILO

Gathering information about Drusus Milo (known as Lupus [Wolf]), depending on the Degree of Success leads to the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
Drusus Milo is a former army officer, who rather than enjoy his retirement in his villa on the outskirts of Aquae Segetae (a thermal city a few days' walk east of Urbs Aurelianorum), decided to form a group of volunteers, mostly veterans, together with whom he is dedicated to freeing the territory from the plague of brigandage. Many believe this is the reason he's called Lupus, but in actual fact, he earned his nickname when he was still in the army. It seems he was a great strategist, much-loved by his soldiers and completely wasted in the current situation of total immobility of the limes.

II Degree of Success
Lupus has organized a network of informers that keep him up to date on acts of brigandage, allowing him to promptly intervene with his small private army. Thanks to him, the rural lands around Aurelianis are now much safer. In the past, Drusus would visit the city often, bringing to trial the many *latrones* and *receptatores* he captured, but thanks to his good work, the number of brigands has greatly decreased and so too have his visits. Each time he comes to Urbs Aurelianorum, he is welcomed with great fanfare by the local population.

III Degree of Success
And yet it would seem Lupus is not interested in the adoration of the masses: he wants not laurels, dreams not of glory, seeks not riches. He could easily have settled for what life gave him: indeed, he comes from a rich family of equites, followed a brilliant *cursus honorum* that culminated in the role of *Praefectus Annonae* in Lugdunum (a very important official responsible for managing cereal stocks and other foodstuffs). It was the death of his elderly father at the hands of a bloodthirsty band of brigands that gave him a new reason to fight.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes gain information about Drusus.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURIA

Gathering information about members of the local curia (government), depending on the Degree of Success, leads to the following information.

I Degree of Success
Some say: *"The Curio Aetius Velleius is an honest, professional politician. Despite the many folks competing to earn positions of prestige, he has managed to enter the curia just as many times as he has left it. In this, he is also aided by his popularity among the plebs."* (Members of the curia are elected by popular vote; although the representation guaranteed by law to the plebs is limited, it may nonetheless be deciding when the upper classes fail to come to an agreement).

II Degree of Success
Some say: *"The only bad thing about Velleius is his ambition: he believes he is owed a position of command and this occasionally lends him a touch of arrogance. Ambition is nonetheless a widespread problem: although Aurelianis is not a particularly large city, many would do anything to obtain just a flicker of personal power."*

III Degree of Success
Some say: *"Rumor has it that certain members of the curia, including Aetius Velleius and Valentinus Trebonius, are trying to make friends with Drusus Milo. Their aim is to convince him to head up a genuine revolt to create an independent territory. Only fools would believe such a thing: no one can revolt against Roman rule and survive."*

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes gain information about the curia.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUSPICIOUS DEATHS

The search for this type of information is a prolonged action (see page 115). It can be carried out by several Custodes, has no time limit, and requires a total of 6 successes in **De Societate** rolls with DT 6. Each Degree of Success beyond the first yielded in the rolls is counted as an additional success.

Outcome of investigation. There are simply too many mysterious and unexplained deaths considering the number of inhabitants and the size of the city. Some believe an assassin has teamed up with a prostitute to kill: she lures the victims and he kills them by suffocating them. Others believe a single person is killing unsavory characters out of sheer pleasure, laying the blame on the port's criminal activities. The Custodes' meticulous research allows an analysis of the various snippets of information in a more thorough and organic manner as compared to that conducted by the public order: the majority of the victims were violent individuals and the causes of their death are always the same: a weak heart, suffocation, drowning, or homicide.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point for every day the Custodes spend looking for information about the suspicious deaths.

INFORMATION AT THE RIVER PORT

The port of Urbs Aurelianorum is constituted of long stone quays and two sloping ramps that connect the river to the city. Sailors play *duplum molendinum* (the Roman version of Connect 4) on game boards carved into the stone, fishermen repair their nets, and children splash about happily in the Liger. Speaking with those who work at the port is not an easy task: strangers who ask too many questions aren't looked upon favorably around here.

If the Custodes *in an unofficial capacity* fail a roll, they are quickly encircled by a group of **(1.5:1)** ***Criminals*** (see page 146). *"This instrument right here is the best master of many teachings,"* says the ugliest of the mugs, tapping a large cudgel into the palm of his hand. *"Today it will teach you a lesson on how to stay out of other peoples' business!"* The criminals attack the Custodes and fight until half of them are out of action.

Depending on the Degree of Success, they can nonetheless obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
Despite the clear signs of criminal activity, there are no indications of conflict between rival gangs. The atmosphere is, however, very tense: it appears many of those who worked at the port have met with an inauspicious fate over the last few years. Some died during a *taberna* brawl, some were assassinated in the streets of Aurelianis, and some were drowned in the Liger. As a consequence, the locals are even more superstitious than usual.

II Degree of Success
For this reason, many pray for the death of Drusus Lupus Milo, responsible for bringing to justice many friends and relatives of less-respectable members of society, while the fishermen and boatmen invoke the protection of Ligia, one of the Aurelian Mothers and the personification of the river. Her kindness protects them from the dangers of the currents and quicksand.

III Degree of Success
Many have become very fond of a little girl, believing her to be the personification of the goddess of the river. The girl, one of the countless orphans that lives off charity and sleights of hand, is mute but always smiling; she loves to swim in the river and once saved a drunken man that fell off the dock into the water.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes start to look for this girl (it will not be possible for them to find her in any way).

INFORMATION AT THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER

At the center of Urbs Aurelianorum rises the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus - Juno Regina - Minerva Augusta. Inside, the Custodes can speak with Carvilius Lentulus, the most important of the priests.

Depending on the Degree of Success, they can obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"Aurelianis is a beautiful city and the region is peaceful, especially in recent years. It seems almost blessed by Fortuna, goddess of fortune. Although there does seem to be some degree of disaffection toward Jupiter Optimus Maximus."

II Degree of Success
"Perhaps this disaffection is also due to a local flamen (priest) called Branwen: a clever man who claims to be the people's defender but in actual fact is nothing more than an inciter. Unfortunately Gallia is full of priests like him, furthering the cause of a thousand local deities in an effort to obtain visibility, prestige, and donations."

III Degree of Success
"The most popular cult in the city is no doubt that of the local Matronae, of which Branwen is the priest. The three Mothers compete with Ceres and Juno, because like them, they are deities of the land and river, dispensers of fruit, and protectors of the people."

INFORMATION AT THE BROTHEL

There are fifteen or so brothels at Urbs Aurelianorum; without reasonably accurate indications, it is very difficult to find the one where Tallwch died. The business is clearly marked by a wooden sign above the entrance, depicting a huge phallus with the wording *Hic habitat felicitas* (happiness lives here). From the first floor emerges a woman wearing nothing but a piece of cloth around her breasts and another around her hips, gesturing to the Custodes to enter. To the side of the door, a man of sturdy build watches over the modest flow of men and women entering and leaving the venue. In order to speak with Nessa, the prostitute who found Tallwch's body, the Custodes must first pay the pimp (the person running the brothel).

If the Custodes *in an unofficial capacity* fail a roll, they are quickly encircled by a group of **(1.5:1)** ***Criminals*** (see page 146). *"You see, this respectable enterprise has very precise rules that clearly prohibit disturbing the girls, and in particular getting involved in the affairs of others,"* says the ugliest of the mugs, tapping a large cudgel into the palm of his hand. *"Allow us to explain them to you one by one!"* The criminals attack the Custodes and fight until half of them are out of action. Depending on the Degree of Success, they can obtain the following information from Nessa (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"*I can't help but feel responsible for what happened, poor Tallwch! He wasn't violent, he didn't haggle, he was kind, young, and pleasant. So for the girls, he was easy money. Lately he would always ask for me: he enjoyed my company, and the last time he paid for the entire night and even brought food and wine. I must have drunk a lot, because I don't remember anything about that night, only the terrible awakening the next morning...".*

II Degree of Success
"What if this gets me into some kind of trouble? What if someone thinks it was my fault? Why are so many people so interested in what happened? A few weeks ago a lanky, kind-looking man came to ask me the same questions, and just after it happened someone came from the curia, a snake of a man with a sharp tongue. Matir, protect your daughter!"

III Degree of Success
"I don't want any more problems, please! I'll tell you the same thing I said to the skinny guy: two years ago something similar had already happened. A merchant from Lutetia who came here every now and then died in bed with a prostitute. That time everybody was happy: he was a scoundrel who liked to hurt the girls."

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes speak with Nessa.

INFORMATION AT THE TEMPLE OF THE MOTHERS

The temple of the three Aurelian Mothers is a discreet building with a six-column portico overlooking the decumanus. In the sacred cella on the inside, the faithful leave offerings and ex votos to the Mothers every day (there is a hidden passage in the cella leading to a small sacred underground sanctuary dedicated to Beriavis, but a thorough inspection is needed to find it, difficult to make during the day with the faithful and the priest going around; see also Scene 11 on page 286).

Unlike the simpler representations scattered here and there around the city, at crossroads and in aediculae, here the Mothers are portrayed in much more detail. The most beautiful is located at the back of the cella, supported by a marble base: a large high-relief in terracotta showing the three Aurelian Mothers seated, holding their divine attributes in their lap. Ligia has her feet submerged in water, is holding a vase in one hand and wearing a cloak made of netting; Matir has her breast exposed and is feeding a swaddled baby; Beriavis is holding a pomegranate while a snake twists around her feet.

If the Custodes declare they are analyzing the temple, also from an architectural point of view (roll of **De Scientia** with DT 6), depending on the Degree of Success they may reach the following conclusions (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
The temple of the Mothers doesn't seem very organic in terms of its construction materials and architectural styles, indicating it was built in different stages and in various eras.

II Degree of Success
Unlike the majority of Roman buildings of worship, this has lower than usual flooring, only slightly raised with respect to the street level (Roman temples are built up high, with access provided by a set of stairs at the front).

III Degree of Success
This may have been intentional in order to integrate the temple with the foundations of a pre-existing construction.

Inside the building, a priest is chatting with a woman, inquiring about her son's health. The priest is Branwen, who has already been informed by his conspirators at the curia of the Custodes' mission. As a consequence, the information he provides is very vague (this attitude can be noted with a **Sensibilitas** roll with DT 6).

Depending on the Degree of Success, Branwen can provide the following information on the three Mothers (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
"Ligia is the young one; she is cheerful, fresh, the bearer of life, the promise of the future. She sculpts clay just as the river water shapes the banks, because she is the river itself, the patron goddess of potters and boatmen. Matir is the mother; the generous dispenser of fruits, she who makes the land and women fertile. She nourishes man with bread and milk and is loving as all mothers are. Beriavis is the elder; she is wise and knows every foot that has walked these lands, every brick, every ear and fruit. She is the land who remembers all those she welcomes in her womb after death, who nourishes the plants with the ashes of the dead."

II Degree of Success
"The Mothers were here well before the Romans stepped foot in this land..."

III Degree of Success
"...and they continue to walk in places where Roman feet have yet to reach."

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes speak with Branwen.

SCENE 6: RUMORS

Every time one or more Custodes spend time looking for information and speaking with the people of Aurelianis, the Demiurge reveals one rumor (*in addition* to that which they're looking for).

- To determine the rumor, the Demiurge rolls 1d20 on the table of Rumors on the next page.

Each Rumor is accompanied by two letters, one before and one after the rumor itself. The first letter indicates whether the rumor is very diffused **(D)** or rare **(R)**. The second letter indicates whether the rumor is true **(T)** or false **(F)**.

Note. *During the course of the Investigation, the Demiurge may need to generate various rumors, which may lead to obtaining the same result as the table. In this case, if the rumor is diffused (D) the Demiurge repeats it to the Custodes, otherwise if it is rare (R), the d20 is rolled again to generate another rumor. If the Custodes wish to check how diffused a specific rumor is, they must spend half a day asking for confirmation and succeed in a De Societate roll with DT 6. This does not indicate the truthfulness or otherwise of the rumor, but rather only its level of diffusion. For example, in the city there are many false but widely diffused rumors (F, D), but also reliable information, which is not public knowledge (T, R).*

SCENE 7: FAUSTINUS

On the night Maera was killed, Faustinus found himself catapulted into the past, chased along the ancient roads of Cenabum and eventually wounded by the poisoned arrows of the *Incarnation of Beriavis* (see page 292). Following these unnatural events, he lost his light of reason. Believing he was in an entirely different era, Faustinus found refuge in the countryside; he is distrusting of all settled areas and won't go near them, living by his wits, sleeping in the open, and stealing whatever food he needs from the fields and homes of farmers. Faustinus' condition has progressively worsened, aggravated by the poison, but fortunately for him he has been found by a number of brigands who believe him to be a victim of the Roman guards and have welcomed him among them.

The Custodes can look for Faustinus by scouring the countryside around Urbs Aurelianorum (see *The wolf! The wolf!*); otherwise, the search for him is continued by the local curia and Drusus Milo (see *In chains*).

THE WOLF! THE WOLF!

The search for Faustinus follows the Explore an area rules (see page 118). The DT of the De Natura roll is 12, given he tries not to be found; for each day of exploration, the Custodes can make two rolls. Each Degree of Success beyond the first yielded in the rolls is counted as an additional success. To find Faustinus, the Custodes must yield a total of 3 successes (the area is circumscribed and the terrain is flat).

The Custodes can facilitate their search using a Clairvoyance ritual. If the ritual is successful, they receive oracles or visions of a feverish Faustinus lying on the straw of a stable in a remote farmhouse. This information provides elements useful for the purpose of orientation in the countryside: each Degree of Success yielded in the De Magia roll adds one success to those accumulated during the exploration.

When they succeed in the exploration, the Custodes arrive near an isolated farmhouse. A strand of smoke is wafting up from the chimney and chatter can be heard coming from within.

If the Custodes approach the building without too much hesitation, a man comes out to speak with them. He seems intimidated by the Custodes' presence and their armament, nervously gripping an axe as if to reassure himself. Once he understands that the Custodes are looking for someone in the countryside, he starts screaming: *"They are the Wolf's men! There's not many of them, let's kill them!"* **(1:1)** ***Brigands*** (see page 151) come out of the hut ready to fight; after three tempus, another (1:1) *Brigands* come out of the stable and join their comrades.

RUMORS

D20	D/R	Rumor	T/F
1	D	"Lupus (Drusus Milo) is cleaning up the area with his veteran militia. The countryside is much safer than it was before."	T
2	D	"We had an excellent harvest this year."	T
3	D	"The larva of the woman killed weeks ago roams the streets when the sun sets."	F
4	R	"A monstrous creature wanders through the streets at night."	F
5	D	"Heilyn 'the tick', a notorious thief and troublemaker, must have seen the biggest score of his life, because he's disappeared from the city without a trace."	T
6	D	"The Lacus Ardeae fountain (the source of the herons), which was dry for years, is once more filled with water."	T
7	D	"In the last two years, Aurelianis has been blessed with many new births."	T
8	D	"Branwen, the priest, is a nuisance: his subversive talk will attract the wrath of Rome."	T
9	D	"Branwen, the priest, is a good man and has the good of the people at heart."	T
10	D	"Rufus Velleius has always been part of the curia. I don't know exactly what he does, but the city's doing well, so he must be doing something right."	T
11	D	"Valentinus Trebonius is a bright and capable young man. He is a good administrator and certainly has a good career ahead of him."	T
12	D	"Lupus (Drusus Milo) is a dangerous extremist, an intransigent person who knows no compromise. He even had his own friend put to death because he believed he was a criminal."	T
13	D	"The river Liger is dangerous for those unfamiliar with it. Many have drowned in it."	T
14	D	"Two years ago Iunius the pimp was found dead, stuck in the city walls with only his legs sticking out from the bricks."	T
15	D	"Lupus (Drusus Milo) is little more than a murderer: given he can no longer kill in war, he uses his private army to massacre innocent farmers. He may not be a real wolf, but he's certainly the son of a lupa (prostitute)."	F
16	D	"There must have been a war between the criminal gangs of the port: all those who recently died in Aurelianis were good for nothing, outlaws and violent people. Someone is clearly settling the score."	F
17	R	"Five years ago, the statue of Minerva August started to sweat blood."	F
18	D	"Rufus Velleius and Branwen are friends. That's the only reason Branwen is able to say the things he does with such impunity."	F
19	R	"Valentinus Trebonius is an unscrupulous, ambitious and ruthless piece of work. He is bound to try and push his way into local politics, taking over from Rufus Velleius as soon as he lets his guard down."	T
20	D	"In the temple of Aurelian Mothers, there is a small sacred underground sanctuary dedicated to Beriavis (one of the Mothers)."	T

The brigands fight fiercely, but as soon as half of them are out of action, they quickly flee, straggling out in the countryside. The Custodes can search the various constructions and find a feverish Faustinus lying on the straw of the stable. At the sight of the Custodes the poor madman starts to mumble a series of incomprehensible phrases (see *The delusions of a madman*, below).

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +3 points if the Custodes find Faustinus.

IN CHAINS

After a clash with a few brigands entrenched in a farmhouse, Lupus finally finds Maera's feverish scribe, who he brings back to the city together with a few other prisoners.

On the afternoon of 23rd August, the Custodes are summoned to the basilica (the indoor building deals are negotiated, disputes are settled and justice is served, among other things). The curia arranges for a preliminary hearing in order to ascertain whether the evidence against Faustinus is sufficient to charge him with murder, and deems the Custodes the most appropriate persons to speak in his defense, thanks to the investigations they are carrying out. If the curia decides to charge him with murder, Faustinus will be immediately transferred to Lugdunum, where he will face trial before the provincial court; otherwise, he will be detained in Urbs Aurelianorum. (If the Custodes refuse to defend Faustinus, he will be automatically charged with murder and transferred).

In the basilica, the Custodes are welcomed by Aetius Rufus Velleius and other persons unknown to them, some clearly pertaining to the upper classes, others who are blatantly plebs. Velleius sees to the standard introductions, in particular of Drusus Lupus Milo, the *advocatus pro tempore* (temporary lawyer) of the two farmers robbed by Faustinus. Before the curia hearing begins, Drusus briefly recounts to the Custodes how he found Faustinus.

At the moment, the accusations against Faustinus include the murder of Maera Diodora, of being a *receptator* (he was found together with *latrones*) and of having stolen eggs, chickens, and grains from the fields of two farmers. The Custodes can defend Faustinus against the accusations, thanks to what they have discovered thus far. Faustinus' defense follows the Audience rules (see page 117). The Presentation of Custodes stage occurs as normal. During the Exposure of requests, the Custodes must argue their case in defense of Faustinus using **De Societate** rolls with DT 12 (not knowing whether Faustinus may or may not be a problem for his position, Aetius Velleius would like to get rid of him as soon as possible; he will therefore be particularly disputatious in response to all the Custodes' arguments), and yield a total of 3 successes.

If the Custodes are successful in the Audience, they have managed to argue an excellent case beyond all reasonable doubt. Drusus Milo himself is convinced of the man's innocence and assists the Custodes in persuading the members of the curia that Faustinus is simply a poor victim of terrible circumstances. Thanks to the support of the Cohors Arcana, the farmers are amply compensated, waiving their right to claim further damages. Aetius Velleius does not insist on the accusation so as not to arouse suspicions and agrees to the release of Faustinus.

If the Custodes are not successful in the Audience, the curia decrees that Faustinus must be sent to Lugdunum. He will pass the night in a cell and be escorted the following morning.

In both cases, after the discussion the Custodes are allowed to speak with the prisoner (see *The delusions of a madman*).

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes defend Faustinus.

THE DELUSIONS OF A MADMAN

When the Custodes see Faustinus, they immediately understand that he is distraught and delusional: a continuous muttering of incomprehensible phrases is expelled from his lips, his dark eyes filled with flashes of madness and fear.

"The barbarian, the hawk, the snake..." Faustinus repeats incessantly. "I want my time, take me back to my time... The others dead, it's them... The Heart of Cenabum. Let me go, I can't stay here, she has seen me! She will come back to kill me!"

With a successful **De Natura** or **De Scientia**roll (DT 6), the Custodes understand that Faustinus is suffering the effects of an animal venom, most likely that of a snake (for the consequences of being *Poisoned*, see page 128). If treated, he will regain health and sanity in a few days.

If, for some reason or another, Faustinus is in Urbs Aurelianorum for more than two days, Beriavis will try and kill him (see *The reckoning* below).

THE RECKONING

After two days in Urbs Aurelianorum, an *Incarnation of Beriavis* goes to Faustinus to eliminate him. If Faustinus is alone, he is killed by an arrow similar to that which took the life of Maera Diodora. If, on the other hand, Faustinus is in the company of the Custodes, an encounter with the Incarnation of Beriavis is inevitable (see page 292).

If Faustinus survives, the scribe slowly emerges from his delirium. The Custodes see Faustinus' face slowly begin to calm as his previously darting eyes start to focus on what's before him.

"You must stop her!" Faustinus cries, sitting down, still a bit confused. *"You need to stop Beriavis in the Heart of Cenabum!"*

Once he has calmed down, the scribe begins to explain: *"Three deities have manifested themselves in Urbs Aurelianorum, the three Mothers Ligia, Matir, and Beriavis. They protect the city against all those who threaten it, whether they be evil and violent or simply a risk to the Mothers' cult. They have killed many over the years, including the two Custodes previously commissioned. When the Magister Diodora and I delved into the mysteries of Urbs Aurelianorum, we attracted the attention of the three goddesses and one of them sent a champion to kill us. The most dangerous and powerful is Beriavis, who draws her power from her sanctuary buried under the temple of the Mothers. You must go there by night and consecrate the chamber to Jupiter or some other powerful Roman god to deprive her of all her powers."*

After speaking with the Custodes, Faustinus falls fast asleep due to exhaustion. The serenity of his sleeping face is a reward for the Custodes who protected him and courageously snatched him from the jaws of death. Thanks to this *exceptional experience* (see page 128) each Custos earns 2 Experience Points; for the compassion demonstrated, each Custos also recovers 2d3 Pietas.

When he wakes, Faustinus jumps on the fastest horse he can find, getting as far away as possible from the damned Urbs Aurelianorum, as fast as he can.

SCENE 8: DARK NOTES TO THE OPALIA

The eighth day before the Kalends of September (25th August), on the same day Rome celebrates the Opalia (the feast dedicated to agricultural wealth), Urbs Aurelianorum is filled with people for the harvest celebrations. It is a joyful occasion, during which the Custodes perceive the embrace of a community that places cultural and racial differences aside, united by the same cycle of seasons and sense of relief at having collected a harvest that will see them through the winter.

- The Custodes can pray the gods to recover Pietas (see page 79).

As they wander through the crowded and festively adorned streets, the Custodes end up in a crowd of people watching the public celebration held by Branwen, the priest of the Aurelian mothers. After sacrificing to the goddess, Branwen addresses the people:

"Many of you have come to honor the goddesses with the fruits of your harvest. The smoke of the sacrifices rising into the air indicates that Matir appreciates your gift, but also that she is disturbed by what she has seen today. The Mother knows with which hand she gave to you and with which you gave to her, and she sees who gives less and who gives more.

In fact, those who were given the most did not work the land, did not sow their future, did not reap the wheat, did not collect the fruits, because they have hordes of slaves to bathe the furrows of sweat in their place. Those who were given the most placed less on the sacrificial altar because they have never known the value of work and the meaning of suffering.

And despite all this you are here, grateful, celebrating the harvest, pretending not to see that landowners sell at prices lower than yours and surviving is more and more difficult with each passing year. And so as not to compete with the hordes of slaves working for their owners, farmers become legionaries and go to battle against the droves of barbarians at the border. And how are they repaid? With small parcels of land that sooner or later they'll be forced to sell to another landowner.

The first men to enjoy the fruits of this land were free men, now it has become the land of slaves, because you may be free in name, but you are slaves in fact. The time will come when free man shall walk and work this land."

It is clear to the Custodes that, regardless of the truthfulness of the facts exclaimed, Branwen's speech and his attack on the landowning aristocracy is somewhat controversial, if not outright subversive. As the crowd begins to disperse, the Custodes bump into Valentinus Trebonius. After an initial moment of surprise, Valentinus Trebonius quickly explains that he is there to keep an eye on Branwen, a man well-known to the local curia for taking controversial stances. If the Custodes succeed in a **Sensibilitas** roll (DT 6) they have the impression that Trebonius is uncomfortable speaking with them.

- **Awareness of the Mothers.** +1 point if the Custodes listen to Branwen's speech.

SCENE 9: THE VISITATION

At night, the Custos with the highest Sensibilitas score has a dream.

The Custos is walking along the streets of a city wrapped in a mist similar to that which cloaks the rivers on winter mornings. The mist conceals and suddenly reveals things, transforming the buildings into indistinct dark masses and passers-by into surreal and amorphous shadows. In the middle of the road, covered by a layer of human bones, a group of children dressed in rags plays, chasing a dog. A little girl with dark hair, light eyes, and feet covered in the black mud of the river bank suddenly stops chasing the dog and stares at the Custos with a curious, almost malicious look...

It is the gaze of a truly beautiful woman, with prosperous breasts that rebel against the modesty of her stola. She carries a shoulder bag made from a piece of fabric containing apples and other fruits; her clothes are threadbare, and on her bare feet covered in sores, the dust mixes with the blood. As the woman bends over to offer some fruit to the rowdy children, a man steals a piece of fruit from her shoulder bag. The woman stands up and looks at the Custos, her face marked with the wrinkles of worry...

The wrinkles are deep, they are those of an old woman who leans against the trunk of a small tree, as if it were a walking stick; she glances at the Custos with an angry look of hatred. The Custos realizes that all the indistinct shadows have taken the form of the three women, who stare at him incessantly.

If the Custodes perform an Interpretation of Dreams ritual, based on the Degree of Success they obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
Three goddesses are aware of the Custodes' presence, and their attitude ranges from indifferent to hostile. These deities are inextricably linked to their individual attributes and to this land, where they have been worshipped since time immemorial.

II Degree of Success
The city is experiencing a period of calm, but ignores the fact that its current happiness is founded on the deaths of many other people and that it is characterized by social disparity, which sees the dominant classes become increasingly wealthier, to the detriment of those less fortunate.

III Degree of Success
Part of the three goddesses resides in all citizens who worship them, and this allows the Mothers to follow the Custodes' every step, judging their actions.

SCENE 10: THE DEAD IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING

At night, the *larva* (ghost) of Maera Diodora appears in a dream to the Custodes to comfort them and guide them toward the best solution to the problem.

The larva forces the Custodes up from bed and takes them outside. The city landscape slowly disappears, and the characters realize they are in the open countryside. Three children, just a few years old, are ripping the skin off the body of a woman until a young lady emerges from the sheath of dead skin: she is dressed the same as the children in leather robes and shoes, her smiling face framed by blonde matted hair.

The young woman begins to work the land with a wooden spade when a pack of wolves emerges from the nearby woods. She tries in vain to protect the children, who are mauled by the beasts one by one. For each dead child the woman grows in size until becoming so large as to defeat the wolves. Left alone, the woman bends over the bodies of the children, tearing off their skin just as they had done with her; the children eventually emerge from the shells of dead skin.

Lightning strikes the ground and blinds the Custodes. When the white light starts to fade, the giant woman has disappeared, and in her place stands a wrinkled old woman; where the lightning bolt fell there is a crater, inside which lies a blackened and smoking heart. The larva of Maera Diodora takes the old woman by the hand, who, although reluctant, doesn't have the strength to oppose; the two move away until eventually disappearing from sight.

If the Custodes perform an Interpretation of Dreams ritual, based on the Degree of Success they obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
Maera Diodora wants to help the Custodes and lead them to her same conclusions. Even if there are three deities, the one that must be confronted is the goddess of the land and rebirth, as old as the memory of mankind and as strong as the earth's roots buried deep in a remote past. Her primary instinct is to defend herself and her protégés.

II Degree of Success
All mortal efforts to fight the goddess are in vain, and violent actions, such as killing the faithful, only feed her resentment: they instigate reactions just as furious as the brutality of the attack. It is impossible to completely annihilate the goddess, but her powers can be weakened by a blow to the heart inflicted by one of the Roman gods.

III Degree of Success
The goddess' heart is the part of her being yet to be conquered with iron or marble; it lies beneath the ground trodden by her enemies, where none have yet step foot.

If the Custodes ask how the Roman gods can intervene, the Demiurge asks for an **Ingenium** roll (DT 9) or successful Favor of the Gods ritual (DT 6). The answer is simple: the deities are always present when a temple is dedicated to them through a *Consecratio* ritual (the consecration of a Roman deity).

PART 3: A BLOW TO THE HEART

Sooner or later, the Custodes should come to the conclusion that in order to successfully resolve the mission they need to defeat Beriavis, and the best way to do so is to find her sanctuary, where they must perform a *Consecratio* (consecration) ritual to Jupiter or some other Roman god (see also the box *Alternative consecration rituals*, page 294).

The Custodes can either perform the *Consecratio* themselves or request the collaboration of Carvilius Lentulus, the priest of the temple of Jupiter; if the reasons for the consecration are explained to him, he will voluntarily and enthusiastically offer his services (for his statistics, use those of *Priests*, page 149; Lentulus is entirely immune to the Mothers' powers of Possession, see page 292).

SCENE 11: THE HEART OF CENABUM

If the Custodes manage to examine the cella of the temple of the Aurelian Mothers, they will have no trouble finding the entry to the sanctuary of Beriavis; behind the base supporting the effigies of the goddesses (see page 278) there is a stone trap door with two metal rings and a long wooden pole to be used as a lever.

The trap door opens above a staircase formed by slabs of grey stone, which protrude about one cubit (approx. 20 inches) from the stone wall. The staircase leads into a small circular room with a dirt floor. Three unlit candles, ash remains, and a small statue of Beriavis are laid on top of an altar.

PERFORMING THE CONSECRATIO

This is a prolonged action (see page 115). It can be carried out by several Custodes, has no time limit, and requires a total of 12 successes in **De Magia** rolls with DT 9 (the only applicable Specialty is *Imperial Cults*). Each Degree of Success beyond the first yielded in the rolls is counted as an additional success. When the Custodes reach a total of 12 successes, the consecration is complete (see *Back to the present*).

- As the Custodes perform the consecration, an infuriated Beriavis will attack them with all weapons at her disposal. This is the concluding battle of the adventure, in addition to being by far the most dangerous (see *A desperate defense* below).

THE EARTH'S RESENTMENT

This underground room is a part of the construction of the city of Cenabum, the capital of the Celtic Carnutes. The only space to survive the destruction of Cenabum by Julius Caesar without being damaged, the vault is the last original shred of earth worshipped and adored by countless generations of man since the dawn of time: from the Paleolithic hunters who buried female statues, to the Celts who made sacrifices to them.

The rest of the territory was ravished and burned to the ground by a population of invaders now seeking to replace the local traditions with an imported creed. But here, in the *Heart of Cenabum*, the spirit of Beriavis has survived, feeding on resentment and hatred.

- As they descend the stairs into the vault, all Custodes must roll a **Sensibilitas** (DT 6) and eventually a **Ratio** (variable DT).

Those who succeed in the Sensibilitas roll perceive the resentment of the Mothers and are more prepared when entering the goddess' sanctuary: for each Degree of Success yielded, the difficulty of the next Ratio roll is reduced by 1 level (with a I Degree of Success the DT drops to 3, with a II Degree of Success it is automatic). Those who fail the Sensibilitas roll make the next Ratio roll with DT 6.

All Custodes that fail the Ratio roll immediately lose 1d3 Pietas and suffer the *Cursed* condition (see page 80). The condition vanishes as soon as the consecration is completed or the characters leave the vault.

A DESPERATE DEFENSE

Beriavis perceives the presence of the Custodes as soon as they enter her sanctuary; she immediately realizes what they intend to do and attacks, aided by totally unexpected allies.

The characters' aim is to defend those who are performing the consecration: at the start of each tempus they must decide how many of them will fight and how many will keep the ceremony going. Of course, if all characters are engaged in close combat the consecration is temporarily stopped; it can be resumed as soon as at least one character is not engaged in combat and can return to the consecration.

- As the Custodes slowly accumulate successes in the consecration, Beriavis is weakened and uses her Time Shift power (see page 292) on several occasions, dragging those present back in time, further and further back...

At the start, the battle takes place ***in the present***: the Custodes must fight only the Incarnation of Beriavis. When the characters have obtained **3 successes** in the consecration, the battle is shifted ***into the past***: the incarnation is joined by several Celtic warriors. With **6 successes** the Custodes must continue to fight ***in a distant past***: the Celtic warriors are replaced by men armed with only bronze weapons. Finally, with **9 successes**, the characters are dragged back ***to the dawn of time***: the enemies the Custodes are up against are animals that disappeared off the face of the earth thousands of years before. Once they reach **12 successes**, the consecration is complete and the characters are shifted ***back to the present***.

IN THE PRESENT (0-2 SUCCESSES)

The Custodes begin the consecration ritual. In the next tempus, the *Incarnation of Beriavis* (see page 292) opens the hostilities.

The Incarnation appears in the cella of the temple, and tries to ambush the characters from a distance (see *Spotting an ambush*, page 65). She attacks firing the first of the deadly poisoned arrows against one of the Custodes who started the consecration, if possible. If the Custodes do not engage her in close combat in the following tempus, she keeps herself at a distance and continues to fire poisoned arrows (one arrow per tempus). If any characters approach her, the Mother fights from her position on the stairway, thus forcing the Custodes to confront her one by one (there isn't enough space for any more combatants).

If the Incarnation of Beriavis is defeated, the goddess' spirit takes flight to possess a new body; she returns after 3 tempus to attack again.

IN THE PAST (3-5 SUCCESSES)

Suddenly, the setting completely changes. The vault and arched ceiling disappear, and the Custodes and the incarnation find themselves fighting inside a hut, with a low stone perimeter wall and wooden beams supporting a very sloped roof in straw and reeds.

- The *Consecratio* starts to weaken Beriavis: the DV of her Incarnation lowers from 10 to 8.

Tempus 1. The Incarnation of Beriavis cries out for help. In the following tempus she is joined by **(1:1)** ***Celtic Warriors***, who charge into the hut and fight alongside her (using the statistics of *Barbarian Warriors*, page 155). If the Incarnation of Beriavis is defeated, her spirit possesses one of the Celts present and returns to fight in the next tempus.

Tempus 4. Somebody outside sets fire to the hut. Due to the heat and smoke, at the start of each following tempus the Custodes must make a **Vigor** roll with DT 6 (see also *Suffocation*, page 128); those who fail lose a number of Hit Points equal to the difference between the DT and the result of the roll (armor does not protect them).

Tempus 6. The temperature rises, and a portion of the roof in flames falls on a random Custos, who suffers 2d6 damage (armor does not protect them). The character rolls **Coordinatio** (DT 6) to halve the damage inflicted (rounding up) or completely eliminate it with a III Degree of Success. Through the gashes in the roof, the Custodes see that the sky is continuously changing: the sun repeatedly sets and rises and the days and nights alternate at a frantic pace.

IN A DISTANT PAST (6-8 SUCCESSES)

The setting changes again, and all the Custodes' previous enemies have disappeared. In the eerie silence, a woman's voice sings a sad lament. A rectangular ditch opens up before the characters, with inside a wrapped corpse; two kneeling men are carefully laying the grave goods. Near the ditch, a handful of **(1:1)** ***Funerary Guards*** with bronze weapons and armor are paying their dues to the dead, surrounded by a large group of mourners.

- The *Consecratio* continues to weaken Beriavis: the DV of her Incarnation lowers from 8 to 6.

Tempus 1. The Custodes have barely enough time to see what's happening around them before the Funerary Guards attack with a war cry (see the following box for their characteristics). In the meantime, the days and nights continue to overlap and the sky transforms into a disorientating blue kaleidoscope.

FUNERARY GUARDS

Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Spear or Axe or Carp's tongue sword (Damage 6)
Protections: Bronze armor (Protection 4), Bronze shield (Parry +1)

THE DAWN OF TIME (9-11 SUCCESSES)

All the noise, the screams, and the smoke disappear. As they look around them, the Custodes see nothing but a grassy plain without any sign of human settlement.

A deer is galloping through the grass, running away from something. It is enormous, the largest animal the Custodes have ever seen, and it is heading straight toward them...

- The *Consecratio* has deprived Beriavis of all her strength: her Incarnation does not participate in the battle.

Tempus 2. 1 ***Giant-antlered Deer*** attacks, charging a random Custos (see the following box for its characteristics). At the start of tempus 2, the deer frantically attempts to flee: it is in fact closely followed by terrifying predators, who upon seeing the characters change their target.

Tempus 3. (1:3) ***Long-toothed Tigers*** attack the Custodes (see the following box for their characteristics). When a tiger loses half of its Hit Points, it abandons the fight, quickly disappearing into the tall grass.

BACK TO THE PRESENT (12+ SUCCESSES)

As soon as the ritual is completed, the characters find themselves once more in the temple vault, in the present, on their own.

The atmosphere is now completely different, and a reassuring presence fills the Custodes with a sense of relief. There is only one difference: the petrified bones of giant animals sprout from the dirt floor of the vault.

- The Custodes feel this is the right time to pray to the Imperial gods to recover some Pietas (see page 79); the vicinity of the gods lowers the difficulty of the De Magia roll by 1 level (which changes to DT 3).

SCENE 12: THE TRIUMPH OF DRUSUS

The Custodes finally leave the temple of the Aurelian Mothers. It is clear that in the Heart of Cenabum, time did not pass normally: regardless of when they entered the vault, the Custodes now find themselves outside, under the warm afternoon sun in the middle of a large crowd.

The city's *decumanus maximus* is in fact teeming with a crowd of people that parts to allow a group of horsemen through. They are a group of elderly, tough-looking men, their faces calm, full of dignity. Leading them, mounted on a robust black horse, wearing a crimson *paludamentum* (military cloak) on top of simple leather armor, is Drusus Milo. Behind them, a dozen or so *latrones* hobble, tied to a rope.

GIANT-ANTLERED DEER

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello (Charge), Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities*: Acute Senses, Charge

Prehistoric deer of unprecedented size, almost twice as large as humans and with a gigantic head of antlers more than ten feet wide.



LONG-TOOTHED TIGERS

Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello (Charge), De Corpore (Jumping)
Hit Points: 24

- *Special Abilities*: Acute Senses, Charge, Grab, Stealth

Long-toothed tigers are fierce and terrifying long-haired, spotted animals with exceptionally long canines that protrude roughly half a foot (15 centimeters) from their jaws.

The group has almost reached the front of the temple of Aurelian Mothers when, from the midst of the shouting crowd, a man rushes to free one of the prisoners with a knife. The shocked crowd begins to remonstrate, raising the alarm with the horsemen. Drusus turns his horse around, spurring it to stop the two men. When he speaks, his voice is firm and devoid of anger: what he says is not a threat, but an affirmation. *"This man is in shackles not due to my own zeal, but due to the consequences of his choices and actions. This is your opportunity to choose: do so wisely."* After a moment of hesitation, the man drops the knife, embraces the prisoner and flees through the crowd.

As the procession resumes its march toward the forum, the crowd explodes in jubilation, chanting *"Lupus the fair! Lupus the merciful!"* The Custodes are amazed to see the reception reserved by the citizens of Urbs Aurelianorum for this simple veteran, who is greeted by a sea of people worthy of an *ovatio* (a public ceremony to honor a triumphant general, a smaller version of a triumph, reserved to emperors).

Drusus has shown to be a charismatic leader, a capable commander, an honest administrator, and for this reason is very much loved by the people. If he wishes, he has the potential to become incredibly influential even at a provincial level, especially if he is respected by his former comrades anything like he is by the residents of Aurelianis.

THE OMEN

As Lupus nears the temple, Custodes that succeed in a **Sensibilitas** roll with DT 9 perceive an aura of supernatural hostility emanating from Drusus and are overcome by an irrational sense of pending danger.

Immediately afterwards, a sudden gust of wind sweeps across the decumanus, lifting the dust off the ground to form a dark whirlwind, with Drusus in the center. His horse, disturbed by the wind and dust, rears up, standing on its back legs. Drusus manages to control the animal and when it falls back to the ground, its hooves echo with the dull roar of thunder, shooting sparks blown about by the wind like the burning embers of a fire. The sparks seam to outline the figure of a person standing near Drusus, who in actual fact is not there. Then the wind settles, just as suddenly as it rose.

If the Custodes perform an Interpretation of Omens ritual, based on the Degree of Success they obtain the following information (each Degree of Success includes the previous ones):

I Degree of Success
The Custodes find themselves dealing with a multitude of events, each seemingly of little relevance and isolated from the other, but which in actual fact form part of a machination with potentially catastrophic consequences for the fate of the Empire. Drusus Milo finds himself at the center of this whirlwind of activity.

II Degree of Success
At the heart of the conspiracy lies a military leader with a fiery spirit and brilliant mind. In him lies a deep hatred for Rome. Fate placed him on the road to Drusus and now, having become his adviser, he whispers the right words in his ear to push him beyond his own desires, onto the road of open rebellion against the Empire.

III Degree of Success
Many supernatural forces participate in the machination, lending their will and powers for the purpose of achieving the common goal. The war horn has now sounded, announcing a battle intended to subvert the status quo and create a new political and social balance.

SCENE 13: CONCLUSION

Just when the Custodes thought their mission was complete, they stumble across another complication. Their assignment requires them to immediately report once they resolve the mystery behind the death of the two members of the Cohors Arcana: the Custodes must therefore make their way to Lugdunum as soon as possible and report to Marcus Nepos.

After eight days of travel, first riding up the Liger valley on horseback, then traveling down the *Rhodanus* (Rhone) in a river boat, the Custodes finally reach Lugdunum. The capital of Gallia is a large city and the seat of Imperial power for its three administrative divisions (Aquitania, Belgica, and Lugdunensis); it is called the "Capital of the Gauls".

As they travel down the Rhodanus, the Custodes are greeted by the monumental forms of the amphitheater in white marble and the colossal colonnade surrounding the Sanctuary of the Three Gauls. Beyond the settlements lining the river bank rises a steep escarpment surmounted by a brick wall, from which the roofs of the upper town sprout.

The boat leaves the Custodes at the Island of the Canabae, in the lower town, amidst the merchant deposits; all around them Latin and Gallic is mixed with Greek, Phrygian, and Iberian. Their steps lead them to cross the bridge over the Arar river, climbing their way up the bends of the road leading up the escarpment, until finally entering the city through the *Porta Italica*. The Custodes take care to remain in the southern part of the city, in the commercial district, far from the crowded streets near the forum, theater, and main sanctuaries. The *Porta Oceani* leads the Custodes outside the wall again, along a stretch of the Via Agrippa leading west. The provincial castra welcomes them from afar with the familiar cries of the instructors and marching songs of the troops.

Just a short distance from the wall of the castra, an old man is lying in the shade of an oak tree wearing a broad-rimmed straw hat to protect his head against the scorching sun. As they pass, the old man gets up to greet them with a wave of his hand, revealing the friendly face of Marcus Nepos.

"And here you are back again!" says the old man, with a troubled grimace. *"Unless the stars lied to me last night, you have come to ruin my afternoon with burdensome news."*

The old man manages a playful tone and an insincere smile crosses his face. Nepos asks the Custodes to sit near him, in the shade of the tree; he pulls out a goatskin bottle and passes it around, inviting them to drink the sweet wine contained within.

When the Custodes finish making their report, revealing their suspicions about Drusus Milo, the jovial expression fades from the Magister's face. *"I need to reflect and interrogate the gods. Take me to my quarters,"* says the old man, getting up with the help of his staff. *"We will meet again when I have something intelligent to tell you."* Once he enters the castra, the Magister disappears inside his quarters without a word.

The next morning, Nepos summons the Custodes: *"At my age, there is no such thing as coincidences, only signs... And the signs lead me to believe that what you discovered in Urbs Aurelianorum is connected to another old case. Many years ago, during the early days of the Cohors Arcana, I received an omen that terrible events would occur north of here. The Custodes sent to investigate in Pagus Mandubiorum had found one real and one supernatural threat; having eliminated one, the other disappeared, and I deluded myself that the problem was solved* (see the adventure *By the Will of the Gods*, in the *Lex Arcana* Quickstarter). *Both in Aurelianis and in Pagus Mandubiorum, non-Roman divine powers were manifested, and following the report of the assignment from two years ago, it has emerged that one of the victims of the brigands of Pagus Mandubiorum was Levius Milo, the father of our Drusus. If these two events are linked, then so is what recently occurred in Germania* (see the adventure *The Long Winter Nights*, in this volume). *It is of utmost importance that the link between these events be found, and quickly, before the events of the ominous omen occur. Rome must be warned. In the meantime, do not leave town: you are likely to be assigned another mission very soon."*

The adventure is over. The Demiurge can continue this story as they see fit, letting their creativity run wild. Or, they can wait for *The Shadows of the Past*, the final adventure of this short campaign, in which the Custodes will face the shadow of Vercingetorix, the famous Gallic warrior who was defeated by Julius Caesar centuries ago.



THE MOTHERS OF CENABUM
(NEW FANTASTICAL CREATURE)

I Degree of Success
The three Mothers of Cenabum, Ligia (goddess of the river), Matir (goddess of people), and Beriavis (goddess of the land), called the Aurelian Mothers by the people of the Gallic city of Urbs Aurelianorum, are the personifications of nature and the local territory; their ancient cult is very popular and entirely tolerated by Roman authorities.

II Degree of Success
The Mothers' sphere of influence is limited to Urbs Aurelianorum and its immediate surrounds. Inside this area, the Mothers can draw upon the collective knowledge of their followers: in fact, they are aware of all that which occurs and demonstrate their protective nature by gifting abundant harvests, preventing infant mortality, and eliminating wicked and violent individuals. Similarly, the goddesses protect their followers and cult from those who threaten them.

III Degree of Success
The most beautiful portrayal of the deities shows the three Aurelian Mothers seated, holding their divine attributes in their laps: Ligia has her feet submerged in water, is holding a vase in one hand and wearing a cloak made of netting; Matir has her breast exposed and is feeding a swaddled baby; Beriavis is holding a pomegranate (the fruit of death according to Greek mythology) while a snake twists around her feet.

When they decide to intervene, the three Mothers do so by way of their respective Incarnations.

Incarnation of Beriavis
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: —
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: Hit Points, Ratio, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 30
Weapons: Arcus (Damage 6), Ensis (Damage 8), Spear (Damage 6)
Shields: Lorica Squamata (Protection 4)

Special Abilities: Poison (1DV, the Poison only applies to arrows shot by the Incarnation)
Magic Powers: Fate Roll, Immortality, Possession*, Time Shift



** Beriavis can automatically possess any original inhabitant of Urbs Aurelianorum, granting them the attributes of her preferred form: a mighty Celtic warrior. The warrior is accompanied by various snakes that crawl over his feet or wrap around his calves or forearms. The warrior is dressed in precious jewels (rings, torques, and bracelets), shiny scaled armor, a helmet surmounted by an eagle, a spear whose tip resembles the head of an heron, a sword with anthropomorphic hilt, and a sturdy bow. In this form, Beriavis can take one of the snakes crawling over her and shoot it like an arrow from her bow, transforming it into a poisonous arrow. Beriavis can abandon the possessed victim whenever she likes; the victim remembers nothing about what happened. If the possessed victim gets down to 0 Hit Points, Beriavis abandons the host, leaving its corpse on the ground, ready to possess another body.*

Incarnation of Ligia
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3 (this may vary for the Liquid Body power)
Average Value: DV10
1 die: —
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 20

- *Magic Powers*: Deadly Water (2DV), Fate Roll, Immortality, Liquid Body, Possession*

** Ligia can automatically possess any original inhabitant of Urbs Aurelianorum, granting them the attributes of her preferred form: a young woman of beautiful appearance, despite apparently being drowned. Her skin is pale, her lips purple, her flowing blue robes covered in mud, and her dark hair woven with the fronds of water plants. She seems to have just emerged from the water and her feet form a puddle if she stands still for more than a few seconds. Ligia can abandon the possessed victim whenever she likes; the victim remembers nothing about what happened. If the possessed victim gets down to 0 Hit Points, Ligia abandons the host, leaving its corpse on the ground, ready to possess another body.*

Incarnation of Matir
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: De Bello
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: Ratio, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 20

- *Magic Powers:* Enchantment (2DV), Fate Roll, Immortality, Life Draining** (2DV), Possession*

** Matir can automatically possess any original inhabitant of Urbs Aurelianorum, granting them the attributes of her preferred form: a sensual, extremely beautiful woman, able to deceive people of both sexes, also thanks to her power of Enchantment. Martir refuses combat and can abandon the possessed victim whenever she likes; the victim remembers nothing about what happened. If the possessed victim gets down to 0 Hit Points, Matir abandons the host, leaving its corpse on the ground, ready to possess another body.*

*** This is the only offensive weapon of the Incarnation (it does not have a Damage value): if she wants to kill someone, she seduces them and uses this power until leading them to their death.*

NEW MAGIC POWERS

- **Deadly Water.** When touched by this creature, the victim's lungs are filled with water. After being touched by the creature, in each tempus the victim remains engaged with the creature, they suffer the consequences of *Suffocation* (see page 128; the DT of the Vigor roll is equal to the force of the power).

- **Liquid Body.** Whenever it likes, the creature can transform into a shapeless column of sentient water. In this form, the creature cannot make any non-magical attack, but gains Regeneration and may automatically escape combat (without making any rolls).

- **Life Draining.** The creature uses this power to drain the victim's life, normally during carnal relations. The power works like Blood Sucking, except the victim is not aware of what's happening to them unless they succeed in a roll of Sensibilitas (DT 9).

- **Time Shift.** This power allows the creature to exist in any era and in any place where it has been worshipped by man, and it can choose to move to whichever era it desires. The mortals present appear to be traveling in time: the setting around them changes and is transformed, and the days and nights continuously alternate in the sky. The creature can use this power to hinder their adversaries, for example, stopping them from calling for help or barricading themselves inside a building (when the era changes, that building no longer exists). The victims are not allowed to make any resistance rolls.

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSECRATION RITUAL

If the Custodes do not perform the consecration, they may wish to address the problem in another way. Below are the most likely scenarios, which may lead to completely different and very interesting developments or finales...

VIOLENT SOLUTION

The Custodes kill Branwen or desecrate the sanctuary of Beriavis (vandalizing it, burning it, or causing it to collapse).

Beriavis, backed by the angry citizens of Urbs Aurelianorum in the face of this blasphemous act, obtains enough power to transport the Custodes into the past to make them experience the same horror felt by the residents of Cenabum when they were invaded by the Romans.

The following morning, the Custodes wake in ancient Cenabum at the exact moment when Gaius Julius Caesar's troops entered the city to massacre its people. To make matters worse, they realize they look like Celtic warriors in every respect: they have the same appearance, and clothing and do not speak any languages other than Celtic.

They must devise a cunning plan to survive, find the place in Cenabum that will become the sanctuary of Beriavis and destroy it, in order that its memory and cult cannot be preserved.

ASK THE COHORS FOR HELP

The Custodes decide that the situation in Urbs Aurelianorum is too complex to deal with on their own and ask the Cohors for help. The best thing to do is therefore return to Lugdunum to report to Marcus Nepos.

The Magister, who is very concerned, accompanies the Custodes to Rome to discuss the problem with the highest ranking members of the Cohors Arcana. After a week of discussions, alternative proposals, and negotiations, the order is given to raze the city to the ground and sprinkle salt over its foundations.

The adventure ends here.

ASK THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR HELP

If, on the other hand, the Custodes turn to the curia of Urbs Aurelianorum for help (ignoring the fact that its members are followers of the Mothers' cult), the following night, Valentinus Trebonius and his hirelings barricade the doors of the building in which the characters are sleeping and set it alight.

The Custodes must fight amidst the smoke and flames to save their lives and those of the other citizens trapped inside the burning building. The murderous gesture of Trebonius, in the meantime, sparks the wrath of the Aurelian Mothers: the young man is found lifeless in his city domus, mysteriously drowned in his bed.

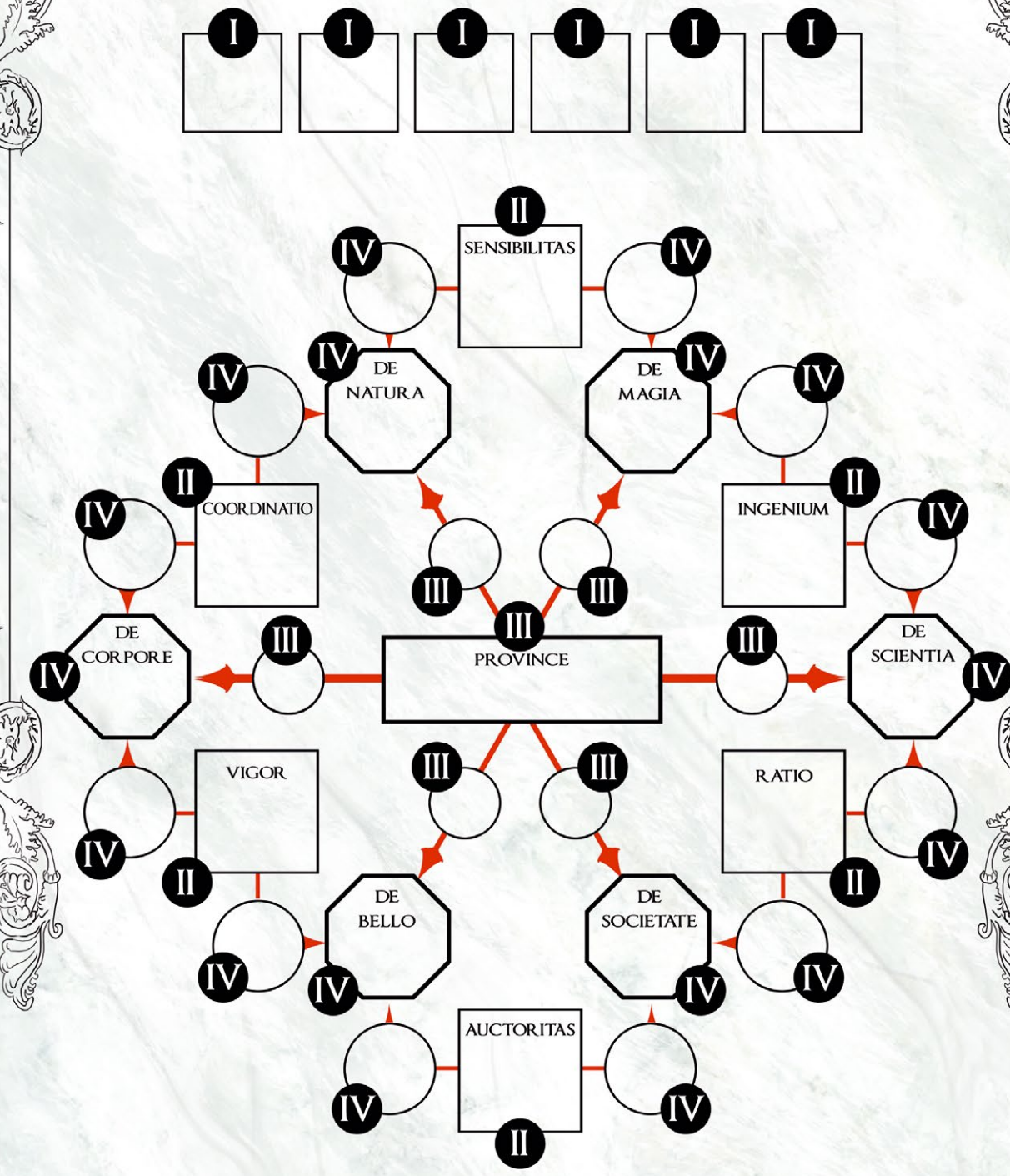
Regardless, the Custodes will not have solved their problem…

APPENDIX

GAME TOOLS



LEX·ARCANA


I
I
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II
SENSIBILITAS
IV
IV
IV
DE NATURA
DE MAGIA
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IV
IV
II
COORDINATIO
INGENIUM
II
IV
IV
III
III
III
DE CORPORE
PROVINCE
DE SCIENTIA
IV
III
III
IV
VIGOR
RATIO
III
III
IV
IV
II
II
DE BELLO
DE SOCIETATE
IV
IV
IV
IV
AUCTORITAS
IV
IV
II
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AGE
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V
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VIGOR
COORDINATIO
INGENIUM
AUCTORITAS
RATIO
SENSIBILITAS
VI
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VI
VI

Name _____
Province _____
Languages _____
_____

LEX·ARCANA

Age _____
Sex _____
Office _____
Rank _____

VIRTUES

COORDINATIO ○	AUCTORITAS ○	RATIO ○
VIGOR ○	INGENIUM ○	SENSIBILITAS ○

PERITIAE

DE BELLO	DE CORPORE	DE MAGIA
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○

DE NATURA	DE SCIENTIA	DE SOCIETATE
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○
_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○	_____ ___ ○

PIETAS

MAX ☐

HIT POINTS

40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

TREATED ☐

MULTIPLIERS

1	2	3	x1
4	5	6	x2
7	8	9	x3
10	11	12	x4
13	14	15	x5
16 OR MORE			x6

TUTELARY DEITY

_____

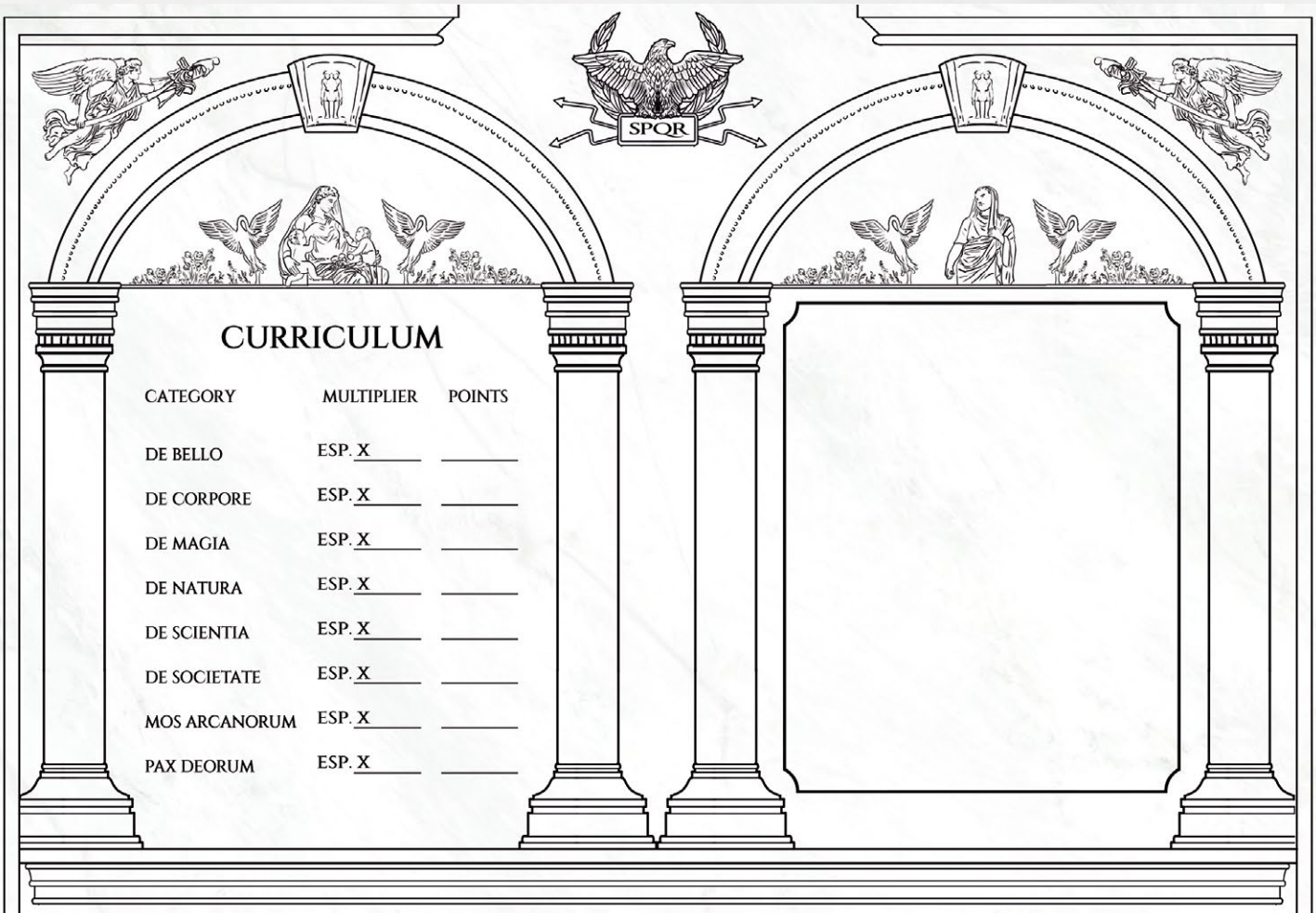
INVOCATIONS

_____
_____
_____
_____

COMBAT ABILITY

_____

WEAPON _____ DAMAGE ___ ENC ___ EXPERTUS ☐
WEAPON _____ DAMAGE ___ ENC ___ EXPERTUS ☐
SHIELD _____ PARRY ___ ENC ___
ARMOR _____ PROT. ___ ENC ___
TOT ☐



CURRICULUM

CATEGORY	MULTIPLIER	POINTS
DE BELLO	ESP. X	
DE CORPORE	ESP. X	
DE MAGIA	ESP. X	
DE NATURA	ESP. X	
DE SCIENTIA	ESP. X	
DE SOCIETATE	ESP. X	
MOS ARCANORUM	ESP. X	
PAX DEORUM	ESP. X	

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Yari Montorsi
Yuri Sinigaglia
Yurj Mancina
Z. Vanetti
Zajac Maciej
Zavien Nathaniel Tey
Zeb McNamara

FORTUNE

If any Custos (yourself included) failed a roll to perform an action (not of combat), turn over this tablet to transform the failure into a success.

Never, by oblivion, slip into a wave of misery...

MISFORTUNE

If any Custos (including yourself) succeeds in a roll to perform an action (not of combat), reveal this tablet to transform the success into a failure.

Our shell that floats away...

MISFORTUNE

If any Custos (including yourself) succeeds in a roll to perform an action (not of combat), reveal this tablet to transform the success into a failure.

The vehemence of matter...

RUMORS

Reveal this tablet to force the Demiurge to confirm or deny the authenticity of a rumor.

The initiators are united by constraints...

DREAM

Pass this tablet to the Demiurge. Before the end of the session you will receive a premonitory dream.

... and not leaping beyond the threshold.

PORTENT

Pass this tablet to the Demiurge. Before the end of the session you will witness a portentous event.

... invoking like so, you will see a fire that flickers toward the whirlwind of air, just like a child.

EXPLORER

If the *Explorer* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

The mortal cannot restrain the god...

AUGURE

If the *Augur* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

The evidence is in the depths...

FIGHTER

If the *Fighter* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

... that without form takes form.

DIPLOMAT

If the *Diplomat* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

From the ether that flows you evoke me, with constrictions that dominate the gods.

SCHOLAR

If the *Scholar* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

Give life to others, more than to yourself...

ASSASSIN

If the *Assassin* has just been attacked (but before having rolled for damage), reveal this tablet to transform the attack into a miss.

... and do not bend down: there is an abyss, which drags below the threshold of the seven ways.

MARS' BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Bello roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

... struck by Mars, more pure are those souls that leave the body by way of violence.

HERCULES' BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Corpore roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

Listen to me, even if I do not wish to speak, because you chained me against my will.

APOLLO'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Magia roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

And you shall not leave the dregs of matter to the abyss...

DIANA'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Natura roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

If you tell me more than once, everything will appear in the form of a lion...

MINERVA'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Scientia roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1 (it cannot transform a failure into a success).

That which Intellect expresses, it expresses with intuition.

MERCURY'S BLESSING

If any Custos (yourself included) has just made a De Societate roll, reveal this tablet to increase the Degree of Success by 1.

For no other reason does god divert man, and with his living power lead him toward new ways...

NO EFFECT

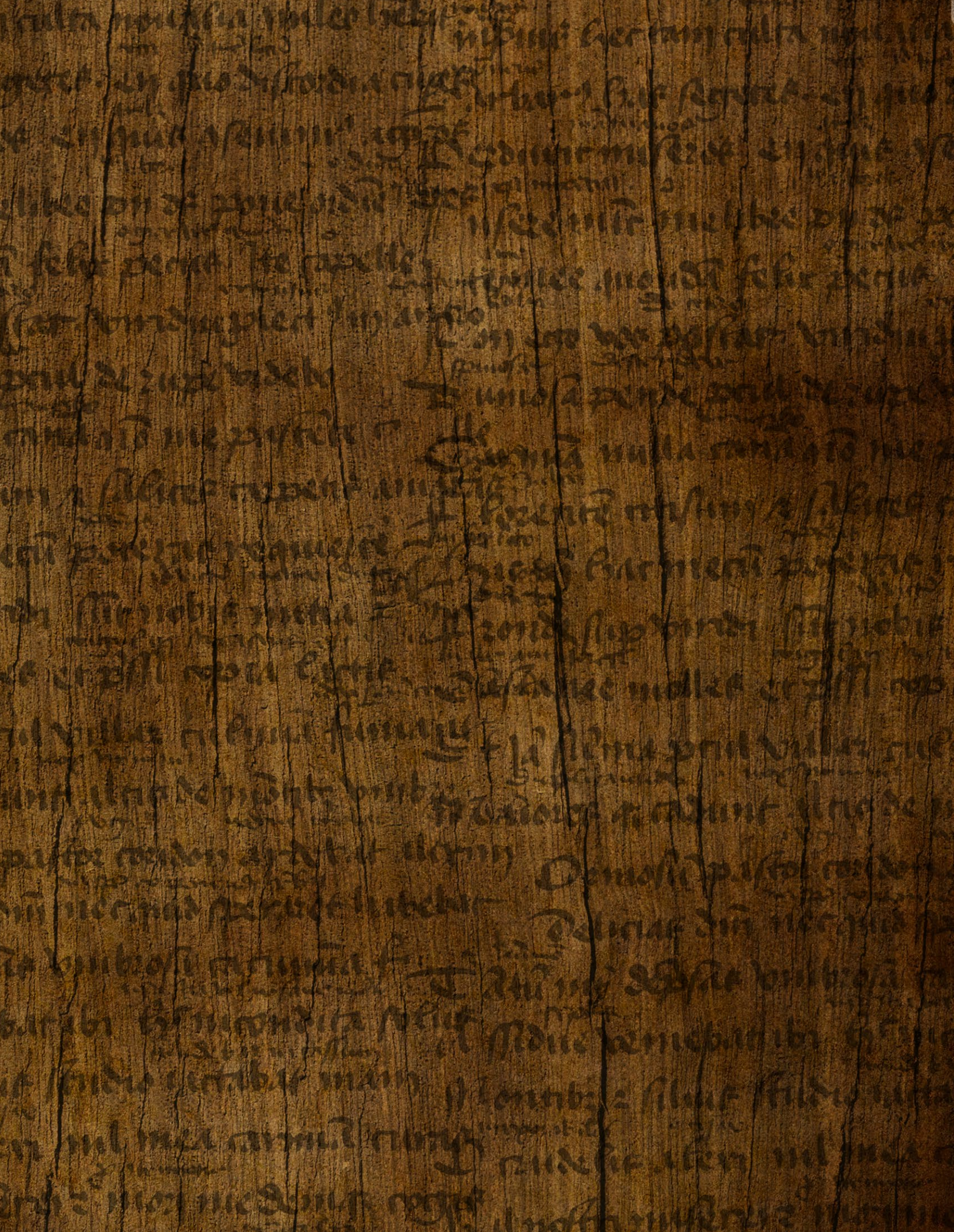
Maintain your silence, man!

NO EFFECT

Do not rush into a world that dreads the light...

NO EFFECT

For inaccessible boundaries of thought...





POTERIS · NIHIL · ROMANO · IMP



ERIO · VISERE · MAIUS ·

M. GALLICUS FECIT
ANNO MCCXXIX A·V·C

"Then Romolus shall receive the sceptre of his race, and found the walls of Mars, and call the people Romans. I have given no limits or duration to their possession: I've given them empire without end."

Virgil, Aeneid

LEX ARCANA IS THE ALTERNATE HISTORY ROLE-PLAYING GAME SET IN A ROMAN EMPIRE WHICH DID NOT FALL

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