

The Grimoire
Volume 1



agone

A compendium for the Twilight Realms



Credits

AGONE

An epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms. Adapted from the novels by Mathieu Gaborit.

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XS thanks all those who changed his life. Thanks to them, the year 2000 will become the beginning of a new era. May it never stop...

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greetings to all Greek wine fans!

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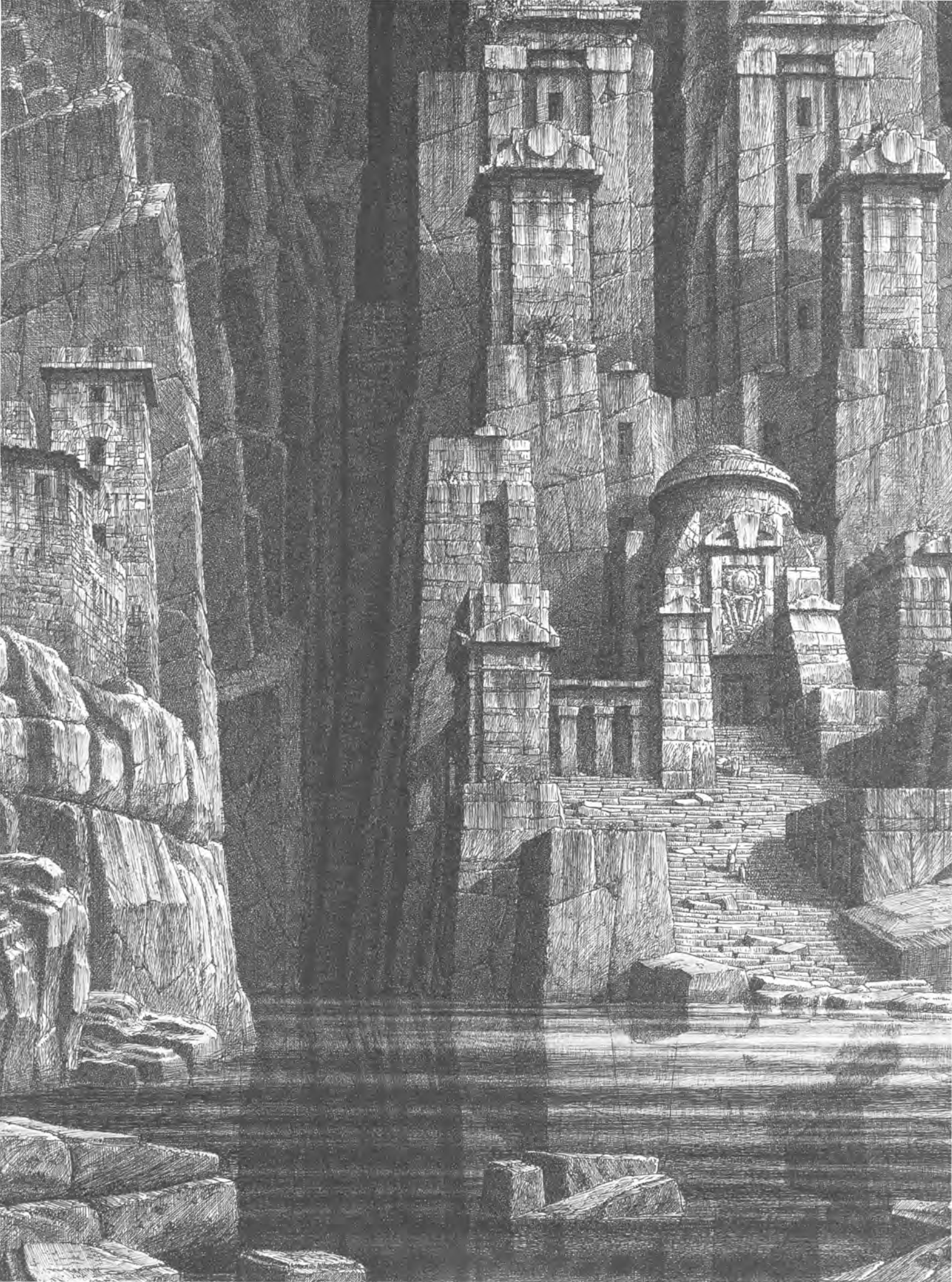
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The Flame of a City



Jed settled down on a rickety chair in a dark corner of the Tighrope Inn. Dusk made the city tremble with expectation, like a beast lying in wait. In less than an hour, it would become a huge and upright cosmopolitan bazaar. Jed could not get used to this vertical city. Since his arrival, the dizzying perspectives of the city of the thieves haunted even his dreams. He couldn't stop picturing himself on the verge of the abyss, at any moment being sent plummeting down by a jostle of the crowd. Since he had left Ashais to the solitude of her tomb, he felt lonely and distraught. His life seemed like a river run dry and waiting for a providential rain. He signaled the waiter, a sad-eyed young sprite, and ordered a glass of wine.

He waited until midnight, when the inn's doorway revealed a strange couple he intuitively knew had come for him. First there was a pale young boy who pulled down the hood of his cape and cast a trained look around the room as he entered. Following him was a woman in garnet-colored clothes, her face hidden behind an iridescent butterfly-mask.

Inside, the lingering customers shut up and silently accepted the gold held out in the boy's frail hands. He went snaking around the tables to the bar and bent over the counter to whisper a few words in the innkeeper's ear. He nodded his approval, waited until all the customers had cleared the room and went out through a side door.

In the uneasy silence that followed, the young boy slipped behind Jed. The woman then deigned to remove her mask. With a rustling sound, the butterfly wings opened to reveal a face of such striking beauty that Jed couldn't help but whisper:

"By the Muses' grace..."

His gaze lingered on the emerald green of her eyes, then on her bald and glittering skull where a scarlet-scaled boa was coiled. At his mistress' touch, the snake unwound and slowly encircled her neck. When it stopped moving, the medusa came forward, took a chair, and sat across the table from Jed.

"Hello, hunchback."

Jed was at a loss for words. He finally nodded and said in a faltering voice:

"Madam..."

"Miss Leriezi", she said, stroking the snake's lower jaw with the tip of her forefinger.

"I... I'm looking for Moontooth."

"I know," she answered with a sardonic smile.

"Not a thief is left in the entire city that is ignorant of your purpose. You have not been inconspicuous."

She raised her eyes toward her son, who bent down to whisper in Jed's ears:

"I had to protect you, you know. I am her counter-assassin, but she insisted I become your shadow since you arrived in Koffer."

"This is extremely unfortunate," she said, gazing intently at Jed. "I cannot stand to lend him away. This boy is mine... Aren't you, my dear?"

"Yes mother," the boy answered, straightening.

"We'll let that pass," she went on. "The important thing for now is to get you to safety, sir hunchback."

"What about Moontooth?"

"He will join us later. For now I must make sure nobody knows who you are or what you carry on your back..."

Jed swallowed and whispered:

"Darkdream's soul."

"Indeed, hunchback. The soul of a city. That is why you are invaluable."

"But... How is it possible?"

"Possible? I have no idea. The brotherhood of the Hunch strives for understanding, but nobody has yet been able to supply a satisfactory explanation."

"Then what does it do?" asked Jed, puzzled.

"It tries to help people like you elude the Betrayer's influence. For should he lay his hands on you, cities would be doomed; he would be able to infiltrate the stone, infecting the city and ultimately controlling it."

"You mean the soul commands the city, and if I die, the city dies?"

"No, not exactly. That would be too simple..."

She nibbled her lower lip before asking:

"Jed, do you know the salanisters of Abysm?"

"Only by name."

"They are extraordinary lizards born from the flesh of the Obese. When those lizards attach themselves to your neck and mix their blood with yours, you begin to feel Abysm."

"And you think the... the soul growing in my back will have the same power?"

"The Brotherhood supposes so."

"I have never felt Darkream, as you put it."

"Not yet, hunchback, not yet. But in a few years, you will dream the dreams of a city."

Jed felt his blood chill. "You... you claim I will form one body with Darkdream?"

"Why do you think some sprites succumb to the Stonepox, this disease that turns their flesh into stone?"

"I don't know," Jed confessed.

"But you do know perfectly. Others inherit the souls of cities and become their victims. They cannot control that gift, they let the city control them, and they are dominated by its immensity. Whereas the opposite should have happened."

With a hint of a smile, she put her hand on the hunchback's arm.

"The Brotherhood will teach you to accept and control your inheritance, so that you become the master and the city obeys your willpower."

"This is insane!" Jed burst out.

The medusa's face tensed, and the boa on her neck quivered.

"Do not try to run or to refuse this prestigious legacy. The Muses are watching, you have no right to show weakness."

"Who talks about weakness?" answered Jed. "I only want to find out what lives inside me."

"And this is perfectly commendable," added the

medusa in a softer voice. "I am sure you have already experienced motherly feelings."

"What do the others say?"

"The others?"

"People like me, hunchbacks..."

"You will meet them soon. It will greatly help you, you will see. You will be able to share your experiences and strengthen one another."

"And where am I to meet them?"

"In the Widowlands. We will head for my Domain. Members of the Brotherhood have taken up residence there and are expecting you. Moontooth will join us there. I have hired two giants to accompany us on our journey. We leave at dawn. Until then, you will stay with my son. He will watch over you as dutifully as he has watched over me."

"What about you?"

"I have a few affairs to settle before we go."

She was beginning to rise when Jed firmly seized her hand.

"Wait!"

The medusa's eyes narrowed, and her son's hand went to the short sword on his hip. Unblinking, Jed uttered:

"Have any of the others given birth yet?"

"Yes."

"And? To what?"

"A Flame, hunchback. Only a Flame."

To be continued...

Book One



The art of the world



1 ~ Remains

minence,

The time has come to take stock of the situation. When the Muses created Harmundia, they wished it to be perfect. They used all their knowledge and skills to ensure the flawlessness of their creation. For many centuries, during the Flamboyance, numerous cosmological theories were studied in order to discover the origin of Harmundia, its nature, its purpose and its flaws. The Muses have bequeathed their craving for perfection to the Inspired. There is no paradise in Harmundia's myths, no beautiful place that awaits the virtuous dead. Harmundia was supposed to be that paradise. Depending on your point of view, the purpose of the Inspired is to protect it, or to heal it so it can become paradise again. Flamboyant Remains, Sanctuaries and esoteric architecture are legacies of the Muses' efforts to make Harmundia a paradise. But the Masque's agents become a growing threat. Where do we stand now?

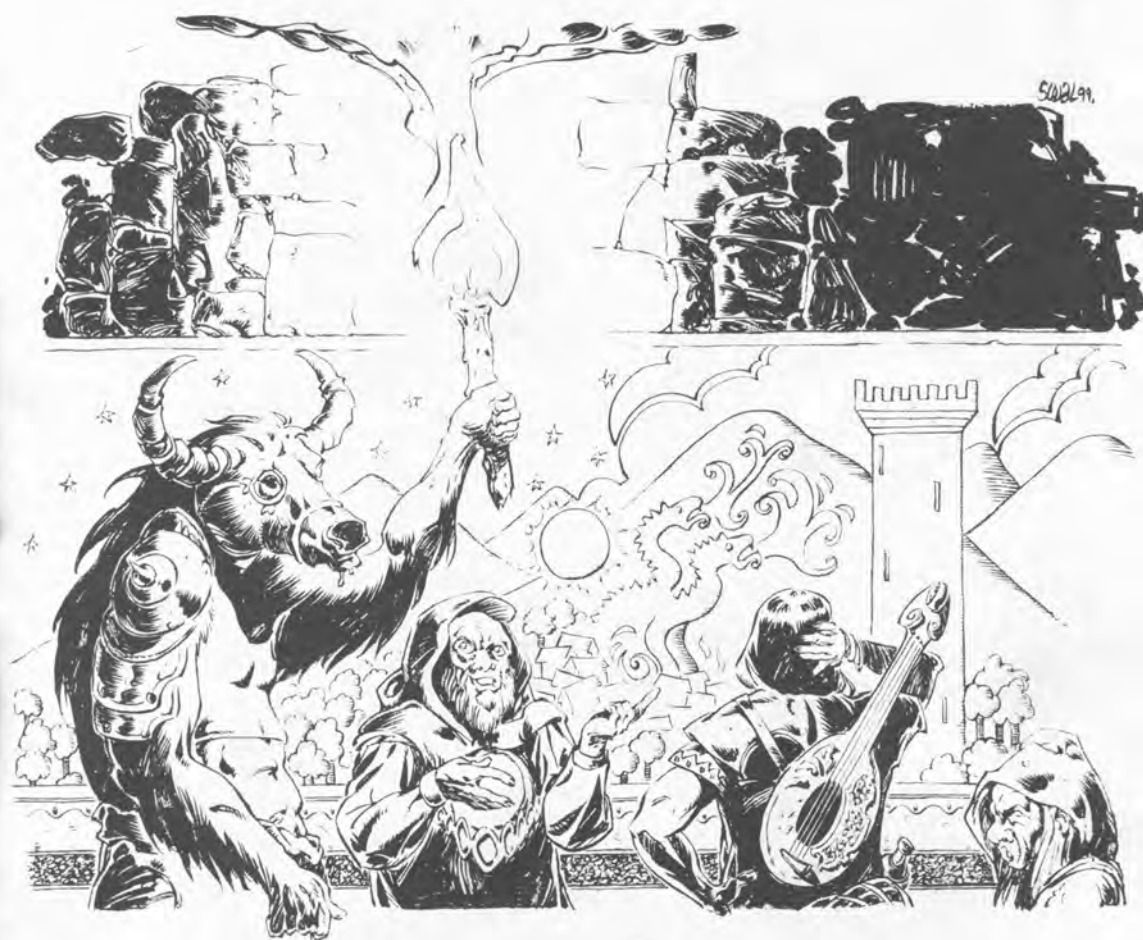
An Overview

Remains are rare inheritances from the Flamboyance. They are generally buildings, because all the moveable Remains have been sold, stolen, resold again and used to the point of depletion. Moreover, many legendary Remains have been destroyed or lost because no one could find a use for them.

It would be impossible to list the products of three millennia of Inspiration – the creations of over one hundred and fifty generations of Inspired. They were far more prolific than we are, not because they were more powerful than the modern Inspired, but because there were so many more of them. Many scholars who study the Flamboyance are convinced that our ancestors were unrepentant hedonists, who were weak and lazy and abused their extremely precious gifts for their own comfort, instead of using them to defeat the Masque once and for all.

But these zealous Concordists often overlook the abundant research of that time period; its deluge of new ideas enabled men to tame Harmundia and make it more livable. Certainly using Shape to soften a mattress can seem trifling, but these kinds of experiments were a fundamental element of research that might one day lead to the creation of a beautiful oasis in the middle of the Keshite Desert.

Remains are scattered throughout Harmundia, an eternal testimony of Harmundia's grace. But the notion of grace can vary depending on the artist; indeed, some do have strange interpretations of grace.



For example, a Keshite noble possesses a collection of five chairs covered with damask linen that has unfortunately become dull, though they are still in good shape after two thousand years. Their enchantment allows people to remain seated on them for days without feeling tired. Another Flamboyant Remain is the fountain in the Ribat of Jallh, which is always full and fresh. It enables several hundred Keshites to survive in the middle of the inhospitable desert.

Dormant Magic

Remains are the vessels for the extremely powerful Magical Arts opuses that were used to create them. To some Concordists, they can serve as encyclopedias of powerful Free Art opuses.

Shapers dream of discovering new opuses simply by living in the Thousand Towers of Lorgol. Unfortunately, living in a Remain is insufficient to obtain such knowledge. The Concordist must study its arcane secrets in order to understand the Remain's logic.

Once the Concordist has discovered an Elder Art opus *used on a Remain*, he must then extrapolate it into a Free Art opus. The difficulty of understanding the opuses

involved in the creation of a Remain varies depending on the importance and power of the Remain.

There are three general categories of Remains:

- **Monumental Remains:** Dozens or even hundreds of Concordists were quite probably required to create such places. The Thousand Towers of Lorgol, the colossal Pictureworlds of Sasmiyana through which an entire ship can travel, the crystals that contain the essence of the heroes of the City of Mounds in Lyphan, the Fortress of Coronis in the Wild Reaches, the Breaks, the ruins of Larsha on Bokkor, the Valley of Poets in the Keshite Empire, the Modehan king-trees... It is virtually impossible to decipher the opuses they contain because they are so complex and because the skills used to create them are so diverse. However, *those who succeed* in unraveling some of the mysteries that shroud these places are certain to gain extraordinary knowledge – dozens of 20 and 25 Threshold opuses.

Technically, the Concordist must succeed in an ART + relevant Magical Art skill (restrictive Concord and every other relevant skill: masonry, forge, etc.) against DIF 30. He may only make one roll per year of research. Once he has discovered the secrets of the Remain, he uses the normal apprenticeship method to learn the opus (AGONE rulebook p. 217).

- **Major Remains:** Pictureworlds, enchanted manors, musical masterpieces... Less exceptional than monumental Remains, but striking examples of Flamboyant creations nonetheless, these places and works can "contain" nearly every opus detailed in the AGONE rulebook, as well as other lesser-known opuses (such as those detailed in this book).

Technically, the Concordist must succeed in an ART + relevant Magical Art roll (restrictive Concord) against DIF 25. Only one roll per season of research (i.e. once every three months) is allowed. As above, the Concordist can use the normal opus apprenticeship method to learn the opus (AGONE rulebook p. 217).

- **Minor Remains:** Small Pictureworlds, fragments of symphonies, poems, etc. Concordists can directly use the normal apprenticeship method to learn these opuses.

Regardless of the fact that Remains are "vessels" of Free Art opuses, they also have special capabilities that Concordists can attempt to control. For example, the Thousand Towers are the center of numerous unexplained phenomena. The process of discovery is identical to discovering Free Art opuses in a Remain: the Concordist must succeed in the same roll. The time required to study the Remain depends on the powers of the object, and instead of discovering Free Art opuses, the Concordist will understand one of the Remain's special capabilities. Of course, if the Concordist wants to discover all of the powers, he will have to repeat the same process for each.

Famous Remains

THE THOUSAND TOWERS OF LORGOL

No one has actually counted all the towers of the Urganish capital because many of them regularly change places or simply disappear. Each tower is unique and can be considered a separate work of art.

Phalaen Tower lights up every evening.

Labyrinth Tower has many doors, which never open into the expected room unless the person is trying to leave the tower.

The Suspended Tower begins on the second floor, hanging in the air as if a first floor existed below it.

The Transparent Tower reveals only one floor at a time, depending on the time of day.

Moviendo Tower leans and sways as if made of wood though its walls are made of thick limestone.

The Ever-rising Tower is now over four hundred floors high, but is only sixty feet tall. Nonetheless, one more floor appears every ten years.

THE CITY OF MOUNDS

This amazing Lyphanian necropolis shelters hundreds of tombs. Its center is lit by a fire that does not burn. In the tombs, a crystal, sometimes small and sometimes quite big, is laid on the chest of each body. A person who stares into one of the crystals is able to view scenes of the past that the deceased experienced. Several Inspired have claimed to possess a map that shows the way to a secret area under the tombs. The bodies of several Flamboyant heroes are supposedly entombed here, but no one has yet discovered the entrance to this area.

CORONIS

This fortress is said to have a soul and to produce strange echoes of past events when the winds of the Wild Reaches rush through its glass arches. The entire Remain is made of glass, including the huge forges and tools awaiting a human capable of grasping the Flamboyant glassmakers' secrets.

THE TOMBS OF THE FLAMBOYANCE

These Remains are rumored to be somewhere in the middle of the Keshite Desert, but they never appear in one place for too long. They are creations of the most powerful Inspired. Alas, since the decrease in the number of Inspired, the Tombs tend to appear for Dullen, who generally do not survive the powerful visions of the Flamboyance that they experience here.

THE MODEHAN KING-TREES

Now supposedly useless, they are all that is left of a huge architectural project was interrupted by the Eclipse: sylvan cities where thousands of inhabitants could live in a single tree.

The list of Remains that survived the Eclipse is enormous. Each region has its own unique Remains, often unknown and inaccessible. For example, no one can explore the ruins of Black Man's Island, for they have partially sunk under the sea. Other Remains have such a harmless appearance that nobody has yet discovered their true nature. For example, in Janrenia, there is a group of five houses that resemble typical dwellings. In fact, they are Remains, which have endured the passage of time and are permanently free of dust. How could anyone notice such a simple miracle?





minence,

Soon enough, after thrilling adventures in the Twilight Realms, your Inspired will come to need the help of a Luminary in order to effectively fight Perfidy and the Masque. Some of these Luminaries wander Harmundia, but those that escaped their bearers at the moment of the Eclipse are anchored in secret locations, usually far from civilization. These places are called Sanctuaries. They are havens of Concord to be discovered and protected by the Inspired. The Troupe enables the Luminary to blossom and to convey his knowledge to the expectant Flames of the Inspired. The Luminary will then be capable of generating new Flames.

2 ~

Sanctuaries The Luminary

Note: the rules in this chapter only apply to Founding Luminaries. This information supplements the description of Sanctuaries in the AGONE rulebook (pp. 298 - 299).

EVOCATION

When Inspired discover a Luminary fossilized in Harmundia, they must first wake its Flame with their own. This process, called Evocation, requires an occult ritual hidden by Diurn within each Flame. This ritual binds the Inspired to the Sanctuary and to the Luminary that founded it. It must be performed every time an Inspired leaves or enters the Troupe. It is a rather simple rite: plunging one's hand into the Luminary's Flame. This Flame does not burn, and it is the only way for a Luminary to unite his Flame with those who wish to bond with it.

AWAKENING

Luminaries have a Flame, but unlike Inspired, they do not need to develop it, for its three Aspects are already sublimated. However, their Flames may have become lusterless after so many years of isolation. In such cases, Concordists say the Sanctuary is "dormant" and that its Flame is only an ember.

The first Evocation ritual stirs the Founding Luminary's Flame. Then begins the very long process of awakening that the Inspired will need to participate in. They should regularly gather in the hearth (see 'The Hearth' below), around the Luminary's Flame, to relate their adventures. The deeds of the Troupe will remind the Luminary that once he too performed marvelous feats and experienced grand adventures. Little by little, the Luminary's memory and strength will come back to support the Inspired in their quests.

The Awakening Aptitude (Awakening APT) measures the effects of time on a Sanctuary on a 1 to 10 scale.

A low score reduces the capabilities of a Sanctuary and penalizes the Inspired. The development of their Flame Aspects depend on their Sanctuary.

The Awakening APT increases as the Inspired give IP to the Luminary during the awakening. Their tales of the Troupe's adventures stir the Luminary's Flame. The Awakening APT increase is managed by the EG as follows:

IP GIFTS FROM THE INSPIRED

Number of IP required to obtain
+1 Awakening APT =

Current Awakening APT
x Next Awakening APT

The Luminary reduces the IP cost for developing the Body, Spirit and Soul of the Inspired (and only these aspects). The Luminary provides -1 to the experience multiplier (see the AGONE rulebook p. 181) when its Awakening APT is between 1 and 4, -2 when it is between 5 and 7, and -3 when its Awakening APT is between 8 and 10. This reduction is limited by the Awakening APT. If the Luminary has an Awakening APT of 3 or less, the Inspired does not receive the reduced cost when developing Body, Spirit or Soul beyond 3. (But the characters can still develop his Attributes normally, with the full multiplier.)

Example: a Luminary with an Awakening APT of 5 requires 30 IP in order to develop an Awakening APT of 6 ($5 \times 6 = 30$).

To gain an additional Awakening APT point after that, the Luminary will require 42 IP ($6 \times 7 = 42$).

The Luminary will then have an Awakening APT of 7. This Luminary reduces the cost of developing aspects by subtracting 2 from the experience multiplier.

SANCTUARY WORKSHEET

Name of Founding Luminary:
 Personality:
 Awakening APT:
 First Godmother:
 Second Godmother:
 Third Godmother:
 Fourth Godmother:
 Number of Disciples:
 Description:

PERSONALITY

The Luminary that founded your Troupe's Sanctuary is an intelligent being. He has a personality that will manifest itself when the Sanctuary attains an Awakening APT of 4. We advise you to role-play the relationship, Eminence, for the interaction between your Inspired and their Sanctuary must be more than a mere IP trade. Here are several archetypes for Luminary personalities:

Grumbler: This Luminary is never satisfied. He constantly complains about everything, very often without reason. Despite his grumpy attitude, he likes the Inspired very much.

Leader: This Luminary loves giving orders and recommendations to the Inspired. He is always advising this and that, and he cannot stand it when they do not listen to him. His experience ensures the correctness of his orders.

Teller: This Luminary strives to revive the Flamboyance through his own memories. He will often gather the Inspired in his hearth for long evenings of storytelling. His knowledge of the past is truly extraordinary. His quests usually involve the Arts.

Judge: This Luminary has an opinion on every subject. Though he dislikes those who have opinions other than his own, he is a true judge of human and seasonling intentions. Spies and traitors are transparent to him.

Maternal: This Luminary knows she is the intermediary between the vanished Muses and the Inspired. She is perhaps a little over-protective of her Inspired. She is quite strict concerning the respect the Inspired must have for their harmoniums (see 'The Harmoniums' below) and Muses. In return, the Sanctuary will always be clean and comfortable.

Melancholy: This Luminary cannot bear his immobility and deeply regrets mistakes in his past journeys throughout Harmundia. He will often send the Inspired on distant quests for he prefers the struggle against the Masque to waking new Flames. He knows virtually all of Harmundia and has a great deal of information about every region of the Twilight Realms.

Joker: This Luminary is able to spend entire days inventing witty stories and laughing at his own jokes. He will frequently trick the Inspired and laugh at their mishaps (even when they are tragic). But his enthusiasm is a source of energy for the Inspired.

Wise: This Luminary is solemn and thoughtful. He always has several opinions and never makes decisions for the Inspired. His opinions are however extremely prudent.

Solitary: This Luminary will act as if he does not like the Inspired. In reality, he only wants to be left alone. He has spent a long time by himself and has gotten used to solitude. He believes the Inspired took too long to find him. Though he can seem unpleasant, this meditative Luminary could calm down even a berserk warrior. The Inspired should always remain calm in its presence.

Avenger: The hatred this Luminary feels for the Masque clouds his judgment. He often involves the Inspired in dangerous intrigues. This Luminary is an experienced tactician and master-at-arms.

Violent: Like the "avenger", this Luminary will send the Inspired into armed combat against his enemies (and he can make mistakes!). He spends much time producing new Flames. Maybe he invents the conflicts in which he involves his Inspired, but thanks to him, the Inspired will always take part in noble battles and epic adventures.

Eminence, you are free to create any type of personality for the Founding Luminary of your Troupe's Sanctuary. You can, for example, mix two of the above personalities in order to obtain a complex and interesting character.

You should also give a name to the Luminary (perhaps one that gives a hint about his personality) and determine his back-story. This information will help you create the harmoniums (see below) and anchor your Luminary in your Drama. For a complete Luminary background, make sure you have answered the following questions. What is the history of the Luminary? Has his Flame been corrupted by Darkening or Perfidy? Are there any Dullen who devote a cult to him? Has the Luminary already been awoken by another Troupe?

Inside the Sanctuary

A freshly awoken Luminary will gradually restore the physical dimensions of his Sanctuary. Rooms that were invisible will appear for the Inspired. They shelter many wonders and secrets.

THE HEARTH

Each Sanctuary has a hearth – the heart of the Sanctuary. It is generally a room (but it can also be a natural cavity) that symbolizes the work of the Muses. Sculptures and frescoes usually relate the story of a group of Inspired who aided a Flame in order for it to become a Luminary. The Muses are also often represented in the hearth. In the center of the hearth, there is generally a crucible in which a bright flame burns. It

radiates opalescent light and grants courage and inspiration to whoever stares at it. When the Inspired are close to the hearth, they are able to hear the crackling of their own Flames within their bosoms. They feel invincible. In game terms, when the Inspired are in the hearth, their Fortune points are restored to the maximum (1 Fortune point/minute spent in the hearth).

The hearth is where the Evocation rituals must be performed. When the Inspired decide to give IP to the Luminary, this must be done in the Hearth.

ON PRUDENCE ...

Inexperienced Inspired may be tempted to use their Sanctuary as their headquarters. This is a mistake. A Sanctuary is the residence of a Founding Luminary. The latter can be hospitable, but it is his "house" and Luminaries generally grow weary of the Inspired when they are constantly present.

The Sanctuaries that have survived did so because they were concealed from the Master of the Sham and his puppets. The only way the Inspired can truly protect their Sanctuary is to keep it secret. This requires much discipline. The Inspired will have to be prudent each time they visit their Luminary. Are they being followed? Is anyone suspicious with the Troupe?

Once you have made your players understand these fine points, they should realize that the Sanctuary is not theirs and that it is not simply a new and more powerful Domain! They must take care of it and protect it.

THE HARMONIUMS

As the Sanctuary slowly awakens, four portals – one for each Muse – appear in the hearth. The ornate doors are decorated with the symbols of the Muses.

Each of the suites, called harmoniums, that these doors lead to is subject to specific rules. They are a series of rooms of varying size that are connected in a complex labyrinth around the hearth, often in defiance of all geometrical principles.

The Awakening APT determines the number of active portals (see the table on p. 18). The order in which the harmoniums appear is important. It will affect the way the Sanctuary interacts with Harmundia. The Muses who are active are the Luminary's "Godmothers". The first Godmother grants to any Concordists present in her harmonium a +4 bonus to all their Magical arts rolls. The second Godmother grants a +3 bonus, the third Godmother grants a +2 bonus and the fourth Godmother grants a +1 bonus. These bonuses are reduced by 1 point when the Inspired are in the hearth and by 2 points when the Inspired are within 90 yards of the Sanctuary. Beyond this limit, the harmoniums no longer affect the Inspired.

When the four harmoniums have been fully developed, the magic of the Sanctuary becomes as powerful as a Flamboyant Remain.

But what exactly is in these harmoniums?

The Inspired will find artifacts of the given Godmother – Elder Art opuses that may allow Concordists to rediscover powerful opuses. Non-Concordists may even be able to become Attuned, Scanders, Shapers or Painters without the help of a mentor! Harmoniums also contain many treasures of the Flamboyance (Picture-worlds, visions of the past, enchanted weapons, statues that talk, etc.) that you can incorporate into your Drama. With these objects, you can, for example, relate the past life of the Luminary. It is important for your Inspired to note that all the objects in the Sanctuary belong to the Luminary and not to them. The Sanctuary should absolutely not become an arsenal of powerful weapons. These objects are a source of inspiration that the Luminary can choose to lend to the Troupe to accomplish great quests or to defend the Sanctuary. These artifacts can also help you counterbalance the power of the enemies of your Inspired. Indeed, the Inspired can inherit special objects from the harmoniums that were stored here by his former Flame bearer(s).

The architecture of the harmoniums is pregnant with magic that the Luminary can control. Each harmonium has its own style and magical effects.

🎵 Tune Harmoniums

ROOMS IN A TUNE HARMONIUM

They are spacious and full of pleasant echoes, subtle melodies, fragments of lost songs or the agreeable sound of an instrument being tuned. There are many instrument workshops, storerooms full of strings, reeds and rare wood, awaiting a craftsman to bring hundreds of magnificent instruments to life. There are rehearsal rooms with transparent ceilings, comfortable chairs and couches, and even concert halls. In other rooms, the Inspired will find numerous scores and old parchments that still echo forgotten melodies. The layout of Tune harmoniums is generally round, spiral or star-shaped, and it rarely respects gravity and traditional architecture. Indeed, the rooms' primary purpose is acoustic: some rooms were made to carry echoes and others were made to conduct sound harmoniously.

WHAT A TUNE HARMONIUM CONTAINS

All types of instruments are available in a Tune harmonium. There are musical wonders created by legendary Concordists, more basic instruments for apprentices, and even makeshift instruments that sound like pots and pans, which are kept because they belonged to a famous hero.

There are also numerous scores. Once again, their quality varies. Some are short ritornellos that are only the signature of a dead Attuned, or clumsy scores that belonged to a young Concordist. But once in a while true masterpieces can be found. Of course, all the texts required to learn how to play an instrument – normally or with Inspiration – are available.

THE SYMPHONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

No one can say when this opus was created. It is a mixture of clashing sounds, each seemingly independent from the others. The discordant music travels from one room to another in a Tune harmonium. However, if an Inspired takes the time to listen carefully to the musical chaos, he will realize that there is logic behind the apparent cacophony.

The construction of this Symphony required over three hundred musicians from all the instrument families of Tune. A side effect was the creation of an immortal disembodied consciousness out of music. It is an individual entity with reason and feelings that has even created an empathic language enabling it to communicate with those who will listen.

The Symphony of Consciousness has an instinctive knowledge of Tune that allows it to perform any given score. Moreover, it is one of the rare entities capable of performing Symphonies. These Symphonies have no purpose other than to demonstrate the greatness of Tune.

INT 10 WIL 5 CHA 12 CRE 16

Skills:

Music (spe.: playing itself) 10, Tune (spe.: playing itself) 10

MARMICAND THE HARPSICHORDIST

When the Harpsichord family decided to reject Inspiration, Marmicand was protected by a Luminary. He immediately understood the danger of their decision and attempted to bring them back to their senses. When he returned, one year later, his intellect was shattered and his body was a walking wound... In an ultimate attempt to save the life of their friend, the Inspired created an Elder Art opus – a symphony with harpsichords, citterns and harps. Thanks to this opus, the Inspired were able to integrate Marmicand's soul with his harpsichord. To this day, Marmicand waits in a Tune harmonium for someone to save him.

His harpsichord is white with gold borders, and is lit by many small lanterns that always burn with Marmicand's Flame. The Concordist communicates through music; in fact he has created an entire language based on music. He knows every Harpsichord opus, a majority of the Cittern opuses and certain Harp opuses. He has sworn to do all he can to make his favorite instrument, the harpsichord, disappear so its power cannot be abused. Therefore, he does not teach anything concerning Harpsichord aside from the basic protections against Harpsichord opuses.

In return for his knowledge, he only wants company. Indeed, Marmicand can be particularly talkative.

INT 9 WIL 11 CHA 8 CRE 10

Skills:

Concord 7, Eloquence 6, Language (music) 9, Music 10, Traditions (Flamboyance) 7, Tune 10

There are strange occult devices capable of recording and replaying sounds, and automatons that dance when they hear music and can play as accompaniment or even scribe live performances into a score. In some of the most magnificent sanctuaries, ethereal orchestras await a talented Inspired to conduct them...

Shape Harmoniums

ROOMS IN A SHAPE HARMONIUM

They consist of small, calm rooms, full of dust and rock splinters, as well as abundant stocks of raw materials from the most precious to the most common: exotic wood, clay, gold, meteorites, unfamiliar alloys, strange powders, plaster, bone... An ever-glowing forge awaits an Inspired to bring the materials to life. There are also long corridors with many alcoves in which stand sculptures. The Inspired can discover Shaped sculpture gardens, or entire villages of statues that lack only the spark of life.

WHAT A SHAPE HARMONIUM CONTAINS

Shape requires many tools, and these harmoniums can make them appear seemingly as needed. Perhaps the sculptors who used to work here left their most useful tools behind...

There are a wide variety of tools: tongs, stonemason's hammers, ice axes, engravers, hollow chisels, sandpaper, etc. Some of these tools are light and balanced, and made from precious materials; others are rough and heavy. Certain tools do not even have an identifiable use!

Finally, there are numerous machines and devices, some of which were given a soul by black feys centuries ago. Most of these machines simply await an Inspired who can figure out how to use them. There are carts, rails, pulleys, and other contraptions. The most astounding devices are wooden servants that carry the dangerous materials and destroy unsuccessful opuses. In some places, there are Shard caches hidden in special holes that block the emotional emanations.

THE GLOVES OF XIMORE GREAT-HANDS

Two plaster hands hold up a pair of gloves made from an unknown metal that looks like silver but never tarnishes. The gloves are light and flexible like cloth, but are as solid as iron. Stone and metal can be modeled like clay with these gloves.

Unquestionably, Ximore was a powerful Shaper, but he was too unmotivated to become truly great. It took him ten years to create these gloves. Legends say that when Ximore finished the gloves, he laughed heartily at this proof of his indolence and locked them away forever.

THE SHIELD OF STENCH

This huge shield was created by a giant Shaper. He was fed up with seeing mortals die in futile wars. He decided to enchant his shield so that it counteracted their quarrelsome behavior.

The Shield of Stench is made of stone and ringed with iron. Inside, a severe face stares at the bearer; on the outside, there is a realistic representation of a scene of reconciliation between two friends.

Anyone striking the bearer of the Shield of Stench will break his weapon without doing any damage to his opponent. Then, thick dark smoke begins to emanate from the shield, reeking of blood, burned bodies and carrion. The smoke makes all combat impossible and the stench makes everyone nauseous. Everyone in a 90-yard radius is affected.

In return, the bearer of the shield must never use it while attacking someone. If he does, the inside face will permanently blame him and will start to tell all the shameful secrets of the bearer's life, for the shield knows whoever uses it intimately.

Vista Harmoniums

ROOMS IN A VISTA HARMONIUM

These harmoniums are kingdoms of light. Regardless of the Sanctuary's location and layout, there are always myriad stained glass windows that cast sunlight into the harmonium. There are openings in the ceiling through which the blue sky looks down on the Inspired visitors. There is plenty of comfortable furniture – couches, stools and chairs – allowing artists to rest before going back to work at their easels. Painters can use the numerous human and seasonling models (sometimes living) that can pose for hours without becoming tired. There are also smaller rooms that stock many objects to be used as scenery: plants, carpets, decorative weapons, beds... The most interesting rooms are the laboratories in which inks, pigments, paintbrushes and quill-pens can be manufactured. Of course, the entire harmonium is completely decorated with beautiful paintings and sketches.

WHAT A VISTA HARMONIUM CONTAINS

Though Shape harmoniums are generally better equipped, there are many materials and tools available in Vista harmoniums. Silk, hemp, jute, wood, metal and even stone canvases are plentiful. The rooms are stuffed with equipment gathered by many centuries of Concor-dists. There are thousands of brushes with tips of fur, fiber and unknown materials. Some brushes only have one hair! Aside from brushes, there are trowels, wooden sticks, rags and just about everything else that can be used to spread paint on a surface.

The baroque décor would not be complete without the numerous paintings on the walls, and sketches lying around on scraps of paper. Many paintings are unfinished, and they await a Painter to complete the inspiration.

Vista harmoniums contain study rooms where Painters can find all they need to know concerning geometry, portraits, nudes, still lives, color, perspective art history, and even Pictureworlds.

Finally, models wander from room to room. These ephemeral beings have the ability to appear and disappear before a Painter as needed.

THE HIDDEN PAINTING

This ugly 6-foot square oil painting of a port stands forgotten a harmonium. It portrays a busy fish market, with fishermen, workers, and customers... there is even a very well hidden painter, with his back to the viewer, painting a lighthouse. On closer inspection it can be seen that this painting has twenty-seven similar painters (or maybe the same painter in different outfits) but the angle from which he paints the lighthouse is always the same. And this angle is the angle of the observer to the painting itself. Of course, the purpose of all this is to call attention to the lighthouse, where a woman is kissing a man who is about to enter the building. Through the open door, the Inspired can see (on a highly successful Alertness roll) the same painting of the lighthouse on the wall. This is the true painting: a high quality Pictureworld hidden in a mediocre painting. To enter the Pictureworld one need only speak the word "twenty-seven".

THE GREAT TAPESTRY OF SATISFACTIONS

This huge wall hanging, over 35 feet long and 6 feet wide, portrays twenty-four seasonling couples and a human couple. They are all completely nude and extremely beautiful. When someone puts his finger on a couple and says "come" in archaic Modethan, the chosen couple appears before the tapestry to satisfy all of the user's sexual fantasies. The couples cannot do anything else. Rumors concerning this tapestry say a satyr, driven mad from loneliness, wove it.

The truth is, as usual, quite different. A woman created it for a satyr with whom she was in love. But she could not bear the satyr's frequent infidelities. She created the Great Tapestry of Satisfactions in a desperate attempt to please him...

Scansion Harmoniums

ROOMS IN A SCANSION HARMONIUM

Silence is the true master of these harmoniums. Whispering is barely authorized, but every now and then, the Inspired can hear ringing voices declaiming unknown texts and practicing rhythmic recitations.

Libraries are followed by reading rooms in which restful amber light always shines on just the right part of a page. Many literary treasures are hidden within the

endless bookshelves. There are also small parchment manufacturing rooms from which emanate odors of old paper and precious inks. In each room and corridor, there are numerous tables, desks and lecterns with rare vellums, quill-pens and multicolored inks...

WHAT A SCANSION HARMONIUM CONTAINS

Furnishings are generally minimal; the walls are unadorned, and only writing and reading equipment is present. Amidst this bareness, there are many treasures of knowledge – most of the great writings since the first written words are kept here. In addition to books and parchments, there are many other types of texts including fragile clay tablets, graffiti, tombstones, and obelisks with scaffoldings that enables readers to see the text at the top. Writings in almost every language – some of which come from Pictureworlds – can be found.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POETIC PREDICTIONS

The origin of this series of texts is lost. The only certainty is that each time a prophecy is obtained through Scansion, a detailed description of it can be found in this encyclopedia. Currently, the encyclopedia has over eight hundred tomes, containing about one million predictions listed in chronological order, from the most mundane – about weather, love and money – to a detailed description of the fall of a kingdom.

The most curious detail concerning this encyclopedia is the volume numbering: the books begin with number 576. Some say the other volumes were lost, or perhaps they were destroyed for some unfathomable purpose. The first chapter of volume 576 is the end of a prediction that must have begun in one of the lost tomes. It is written in an unknown language – which has however been translated – and relates the results of a ritual that will occur several millennia in the future. The ritual concerns a sacrifice, the Eternals, Diurn, and a certain "A.R."

THE LENS OF THE ANONYMOUS LAZY PERSON

All that is known of the maker of this Artifact is his legendary laziness and his hatred of foreign languages. Instead of learning the numerous languages and alphabets he needed, he used Elder Shape and Scansion to create a magical instrument to assist him. He enchanted an oversized piece of silk paper on which he wrote the word "translate" as well as all the letters of the alphabets he knew. He then created a lens that could translate any text as long as the letters of the alphabet were written on the enchanted paper. Unfortunately, as time passed, there were more and more languages... Therefore, the paper had to be extended. Today, two chariots are required to move the enchanted alphabets.

THE PORTALS

Awakening APT	Number of Portals
1-2	0
3	1
4	1
5 (*)	2
6	2
7 (**)	3
8	3
9	4
10 (***)	4

(*): At this level of Awakening, the Luminary can speak.
 (**): The Luminary can create visions – illusions, mirages or dreams – from the past of the Inspired who have borne his flame.
 (**): The Luminary is capable of creating new Flames.

There are dictionaries, treatises on linguistics, metrics, rhymes, prose, grammar, and spelling. There are thousands of novels, fairy tales, fables, biographies, autobiographies, travelogues, poetry anthologies, religious texts and more. In short, all the inspiration a Scander will ever need!

The Benefits of a Sanctuary

APPRENTICES

Sanctuaries can help the Inspired to develop their Flames at any age. Therefore, your players will certainly want to recruit younger Inspired in order to nurture their Flames. This method is extremely profitable, not only for your Troupe or the recruits but also for Harmundia, which benefits from having more Inspired around to bring it closer to the Muses. In game terms, the Inspired and their apprentices have their Aspect Experience multipliers lowered by one point once the Sanctuary's Awakening APT is greater than 2 (see AGONE rulebook p. 180). This reduction is cumulative with the "normal" reduction given by the Luminary. Moreover, the disciples are new characters that your players could use in case their Inspired die. The only way to recruit new Inspired is to be extremely lucky or to know a Flame Giver or another representative of the Decan Council. Unless the Sanctuary is capable of creating new Flames...

NEW FLAMES

As the Sanctuary grows more powerful, the Troupe will be able to welcome Dullen and give them Flames. Fully awakened Sanctuaries are capable of creating new Flames through a long and painful process for the Luminary and the Troupe. Creating a Flame requires certain conditions:

- The Awakening APT must be 10.
- The future Inspired must be innocent (a factor of age); the age of innocence depends on the race of the future Inspired. It must be before puberty, but the body and the mind of the child must be developed enough to

survive the trauma of Inspiration. For an human child, it is between 7 and 10 years old. For seasonlings, adjust the age depending of their life expectancy.

- ♦ The members of the Troupe must spend a total of 30 IP.
- ♦ The Evocation ritual must take place with the future Inspired at the same time as the IP payment.

The Dull becomes an Inspired, and the Troupe must train him and cope with the problems inherent in the situation. Should they give the child back to his parents? If not, what should they say to the parents?

Dangers

DULLEN

The majority of Dullen do not fully comprehend Inspiration and Concord. They may have an abstract understanding of these concepts but do not understand them innately as Inspired do. Therefore, they can easily be manipulated and turned by the foes of Harmundia. This conflict manifests itself in some Dullen, who begin to hunt Luminaries for pleasure; others consider Sanctuaries potential treasure caches to plunder.

THE DARKEN

The Darken is not Harmundia's true enemy, but it views Sanctuaries as shelters for Glimmers and other servants of Diurn. Demons loathe Sanctuaries because no demon can bear the presence of a Luminary's Flame, even if it is still slumbering. The Flame affects demons as fire would, with a POT equal to the Flame score (see AGONE, p. 243).

THE MASQUE

The Masque's minions relentlessly seek Sanctuaries to destroy. This hidden threat is the greatest danger facing Sanctuaries.

Other Sanctuaries

During your Troupe's first Dramas, the Inspired will not have a Sanctuary; they will have to find one during their adventures. One day, the Sanctuary will have fulfilled its duties and one or several Inspired will be capable of transcending their mortal flesh to become Luminaries. Perhaps even a Founding Luminaries... The choice is yours, Eminence.

When an Inspired develops his Flame to level 10, he becomes a Luminary. If he is a Founding Luminary, he will have an Awakening APT of 10. The First Godmother will be determined by the highest Magical Art skill (Tune, Shape, Scansion or Vista), the Second Godmother will be determined by the second highest, and so on. If two skills are equal, the player can make the choice.

SANCTUARY CREATION

As Eminence Grise, you must determine the nature of the Founding Luminary your Troupe encounters. Below are some guidelines, depending on the power of the given Luminary, to help you develop the atmosphere of your Dramas. Keep in mind that your Inspired may, one day, become Luminaries.

1. Choose the level of Awakening

Confined Luminary:

The Sanctuary barely exists – only the hearth can be found. The Inspired will have to accomplish many adventures and quests throughout Harmundia in order to gain enough IP to develop this Sanctuary and their Flames. The Awakening APT of these Luminaries is 2. Such Sanctuaries will infuse your Dramas with an atmosphere of darkness, for there seems to be very little hope for your Inspired or for Harmundia.

Sleeping Luminary: The Sanctuary is barely developed. The Inspired will soon have quests that extend beyond the confines of their Domain and even their kingdom. These Luminaries have an Awakening APT of 4.

Discreet Luminary: The Luminary is able to support the Inspired, though they must sacrifice IP in order to obtain long-term results. These Luminaries have an Awakening APT of 6.

Active Luminary: The Luminary has been waiting for the Inspired to take up its struggle against the Darken and the Masque. It could become an efficient headquarters if the Inspired respect and protect it. These Luminaries have an Awakening APT of 8.

2. Choose the personality of the Luminary

See 'Personality' above.

3. Determine the site

Mineral Sanctuaries: These Sanctuaries are built on lofty crests, snow-white slopes, or underground caverns. They are well hidden and secure. Unfortunately, draaken are fond of such locales.



Plant Sanctuaries: Built atop trees, hidden under roots, or even inside a hollow tree, these Sanctuaries are astonishing. Their origin is often seasonal, thus their main Godmother is frequently Nuence because of her bond with Vista. These Sanctuaries were generally founded by Luminaries who were supported by Flame Givers or members of the Decan Council.

Man-made Sanctuaries: Certain Luminaries founded Sanctuaries in the cities and villages of Harmundia. Some even enchanted entire neighborhoods. These Sanctuaries are often founded by Luminaries who feel close to humans, spriggans and dwarves. Such Sanctuaries are constantly threatened by the Masque who can easily manipulate the Dullen who live nearby.

Sanctuaries in Remains: Some Luminaries – generally fully awakened – have settled in Flamboyant Remains. These rare Sanctuaries are extremely precious for Inspired because they contain much valuable information. They are difficult to protect because of their dual nature (but are more able to protect themselves). Such Sanctuaries are the ultimate discovery for an inexperienced Troupe, because they have so many amazing powers.



minence,

*Esoteric architecture is abundant throughout Har-
mundia. Fortresses, palaces and manors that
ignore the rules of classical architecture are common.*

Overview

*"No other civilization has understood the proper use of
magic in architecture. There is no need for rooms to move
at random or for the interior to be larger than the exte-
rior of the structure; the building's miraculous stability and
solidity is where the magic should be focused. Take two
stones. Lay one of them on top of the other. How long will
they stay in that position? Now behold buildings that were
built before the Flamboyance and are still standing. Behold
the many mountains that have crumbled away into obli-
vion. Here is the true magic of architecture. The rest are
nonsense – simplistic, self-indulgent constructions."*

— Master architect Grondard the Stern
from "Introduction to the Way of the Square"

The purpose of esoteric architecture is to create and
produce miracles. A palace nestled on a crest that resists
time even as the mountain itself slowly erodes, a castle
with towers so high and delicate that they defy gravity,
ingenious traps that continue to guard an ancient tomb
after eons... all these possibilities are within the sphere
of this art.

The Square has made construction an art form by
incorporating magic practices that enable these miracles.

Esoteric architecture, like many other magic practices,
suffers from difficulties due to the increasing scarcity of
Shard. However, the members of the Square have over-
come their obstacles, and carry on its precepts in secret.

HISTORY

Legends state that the dwarves discovered the first
Sanctuary. A peculiar Luminary lived there, who refus-
ed to return to the Spiritcore. The Luminary was upset
that his hiding place had been discovered, so he com-
manded the dwarves to keep the secret of his Sanctuary
and to accomplish a feat in his name. Since the dwarves
were already famous for their architectural knowledge,
he asked them to come up with plans for a palace wor-
thy of his greatness. He would build it and, in payment
for their efforts, if the construction was successful, would
explain its secrets to them.

The plans the dwarves handed to the Luminary were
so extraordinary that he had to use a large amount of
his power in order to actually build the palace. The
dwarven architects decided to create an order that would
preserve the secrets they had discovered.

3 ~ Esoteric Architecture



This is how the Square was formed. Its future was promising, and soon the buildings that bore its mark became more solid, graceful and grand than any others. The fame of the order soon became known to the other races. The enlightened age of the Flamboyance welcomed the miracles the Square created. Magic was widespread and the esoteric architects could concretize even the strangest and most absurd imaginings.

Then came the Eclipse. Esoteric architecture suffered more than any other magical practice. Their contracts, some of which had been signed years before, could no longer be honored. Many architects went bankrupt and looked to the order to pay the huge sums that had to be reimbursed.

Surprisingly, after due reflection, the Square agreed to pay, and the order shared the copious riches it had gathered through the centuries.

In the meantime, the architects began to search for a way to regain at least a part of their past influence. They achieved this through three different approaches: classic architecture, Shard enchantment and the dark art.

THE SANCTUARY OF ORIGINS

Dwarves are discreet, sometimes even secretive, people. They are paranoid about protecting the palace of the Luminary who gave them the secrets of esoteric architecture. Very little is known of this Sanctuary – neither the location of the palace, nor its appearance, nor even the Luminary's name. The one recurring story regarding these secrets is that once someone is said to have sold some information about the place. The dwarves caught the traitor, punished him and executed him, along with all those who knew anything related to the Sanctuary. Thus, the treason is as secret as the Sanctuary itself.

THE THREE MODERN PRACTICES

Classic Architecture

Certain masters of the Square decided to compensate for their lost influence by increasing their non-magical knowledge. Consequently, they perfected many techniques to erect buildings rivaling those created before the Eclipse, but without supernatural features. This movement helped rehabilitate the Square's reputation. Many clients even believed magic had returned, and their inheritors still consider the buildings magical. Actually, they are just exceptionally well constructed – and well marketed – edifices. The Square has never been modest, and sees to need to dispel the perception that magic is involved.

At the present time, master architects of the Square continue to seek new techniques to solve architectural conundrums. This type of research is firmly supported by the order, and is almost certainly the foundation for the future of architecture, esoteric or otherwise.

Shard Enchantment

After several decades of research, the Square finally discovered that they could enchant a building with Shard. Unfortunately, this method is extremely expensive and complex, so it is not especially promising. Shard cannot reproduce the incredible magical effects of the Flamboyance. Moreover, Shard is a very rare substance, and large quantities are required for even the smallest buildings. Finally, advancements in classic architecture have limited the need for Shard enchantment. Due to the rarity of Shard, the architects of the Square use physical solutions as much as possible, and the precious material is only used for the most demanding architectural problems. The Square has been known to recycle fragments of buildings from the Flamboyance in order to erect new enchanted constructions.

The Dark Art

Some more audacious architects discovered that demonology could also benefit esoteric architecture. Certain demons can accomplish lost rituals; others can become incarnate in a building, bringing it to life. The architects devised constructions that cast complex shadows from which major demons, such as obsidians, could appear. The Square (ever pragmatic) discreetly took over this movement so it would not fall under the influence of the demons. It is today an official branch of esoteric architecture that requires the architect to use the powers of the Darken without being darkened themselves – an extremely dangerous art indeed. Demonologists often seek out these constructions, which facilitate their work.

As dwarves detest the Masque, and as he does not provide any advantages to architects, practitioners of the dark art are not drawn to the Master of the Sham. Still, the Masque has been known to corrupt members of the Square in order to play his nasty tricks.

LEGACIES OF THE FLAMBOYANCE

The surviving esoteric constructions that were not built by the Square in ancient times are mainly Remains. The Square has maintained and protected these buildings, though they often predate its existence. For example, the Thousand Towers have lasted for fifteen centuries unaltered despite the numerous scoundrels that have attempted to modify them, redecorate them, or even to open new entryways.

The only consistent feature of all Remains is their solidity. Enchanted buildings seem indestructible, but even a Remain can collapse under titanic efforts.

Each Remain has its own characteristics. In some, rooms change place at random, others are never dirty or dusty, others have an entrance only for certain people, and so on. See p. 9 for more details.



The Order of the Square

LAWS AND SANCTIONS

YOU SHALL HELP OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SQUARE, ESPECIALLY DWARVES.

Refusing to assist a member of the Square is punished by the law of equal retribution. For example, if the member is killed, the law-breaker receives the death penalty; if he lost a certain amount of money, a fine of the exact same amount must be paid. The punishment for not helping a dwarf varies greatly depending on the mood of the Keeper of the Laws, from basic physical punishment (usually whipping) to the dismissal from the order.

YOU SHALL HONOR YOUR CONTRACTS.

The punishment for not honoring a contract is dismissal (if the consequences were minor) or death.

YOU SHALL NOT COPY THE SEAL OF ANOTHER MEMBER AND YOU SHALL ONLY USE YOUR SEAL IF THE INTERESTS OF THE SQUARE OR YOUR OWN LIFE ARE AT STAKE.

The punishment for breaking this law is always the death penalty.

YOU SHALL SERVE THE ORDER, NOT THE OPPOSITE.

The punishment for misappropriating the means of the order for one's own profit is dismissal (in the best case) or, after the money has been reimbursed, death.

YOU SHALL KEEP THE SECRETS OF THE ORDER.

The punishment for revealing a secret of the order is the execution of the renegade, his family and his friends.

Dismissal from the Square not only means that the member no longer belongs to the order, but also that he is no longer considered to be a human or a seasonling by the order. He is an unpleasant animal that can be wounded, tortured or put to death without any consequences.

MEANS

The Square has vast financial and human resources. The order can easily gather a force of one hundred dwarves or lend 10,000 GP to one of its members. In urgent situations, the Square can gather mages, 500 dwarves and 50,000 to 100,000 GP. In a major crisis, the order can also gather Inspired (the current representative of the dwarves to the Decan Council is also a high-ranking member of the Square).

Guilbert

The Square has teachers for every skill related to architecture (Shape, Concord, Demonology, Sculpture, Intrigue, Stewardship, Etiquette, Weapons, Alertness, etc.). These teachers are highly knowledgeable (the masters have at least 7 in the relevant Attribute and at least 8 in the relevant skill. Some specialists have 10s and 11s).

The order keeps many Relics and Remains that it sometimes lends to its members (for extremely short periods) when they need them. It can mobilize and rally all its resources in order to protect one of its members, or anybody else who it decides is important. Among other things, the order can arrange false deaths, identity changes and even set up shelters so secure that the Masque himself cannot find them...

ENDS

The only objectives of the Square are building, and protecting those who build. Above all else, it safeguards its own institutions because the protection of all its members takes precedence over the protection of one of its members. Occasionally, it offers its services to others in the building profession, even if they are not (and will never be) members of the order. Finally, the Square is an important defender of knowledge, regularly sponsoring scholars (of any science or art), building libraries, promoting museums, etc. Though the inner circle of the order only consists of dwarves, non-dwarves can become associate members.

THE SEAL OF THE ARCHITECT

The members of the Order respect one thing more than all else: their seals. Each member has his own seal, which is more or less well-known depending on the works it has been engraved into. Copying the Seal of another architect is a capital crime.

The origin of the seal is extremely ancient, however its use is as prevalent as ever. The seal is the final touch on a building. Not only is it the architect's signature but also the headstone for enchantments. The seal activates the supernatural capabilities of a building, its traps and machinery. There is a short but obscure ceremony for seal engraving.

Finally – and this is a jealously kept secret – the seals are all made from a shared template. Applying one's own seal on top of the mark left by another architect disarms the traps, dispels the enchantments and allows access to secret passageways. These "keys" permit any member of the order to enter Square buildings.

ORGANIZATION

The Square is organized into two distinct groups: **architects** and **keepers**. The architects are the public members of the order: hewers, masons, glassmakers and foremen. The keepers are the hidden ones, in charge of the organization of the Square: accountants, guards, master keepers, etc.

Architects

There is an informal hierarchy among the architects, enforced by the foreman who can choose to use it or not, or even modify it. Except during the actual construction, all architects – from the lowliest mason to the greatest master blacksmith – are considered equal. They have the same rights and duties. However, in a construction zone, the situation is completely different. The Square determines the importance of individuals based on the importance of their tasks.

- ◆ At the top of the hierarchy is the **foreman**. He is the architect who has created the plans for the building. He oversees all the stages of the construction and supervises the work of the artisans. He can dismiss any worker, order rebuilding, reject the work of an artisan, etc. The only people who can overrule him are the masters, and only in certain cases (if, for example, the foreman issued orders that were impossible to fulfill). A foreman can also call upon the Keepers of the Laws if the building yard is threatened.
- ◆ Next there are the **master artisans**. They are divided into four groups. *Master hewers* are responsible for the extraction, and judging the quality and the hewing of the stone. *Master carpenters* are in charge of the selecting and judging the quality of the wood, and of all the carpentry. *Master glassmakers* are in charge of all glasswork, from ordinary panes to huge stained glass windows. Finally, *Master blacksmiths* are in charge of metalwork, from simple nails to imaginative ironworks and mechanisms. In theory, the Master blacksmith has the highest status among the master artisans. But, once again, his position depends on the amount of work he has to do on a given project. Master artisans can dismiss any member of their team, and they can also inform the foreman of the impossibility of achieving a part of the work. In such cases, the master must call upon the Keepers of the Laws to find a solution. Master artisans can also call upon them if they consider their workers or themselves in danger.
- ◆ At the bottom of the hierarchy are the **journeymen**. Artisans and simple workers, they are all considered equal, though there can be tensions because certain artisans deem themselves superior to others. The only mark of status between journeymen is their experience, specifically the number and the

importance of the buildings they have previously worked on. The more experienced they are, the more they are respected. Journeymen do not have the power to make important decisions about their project, but their master must support them and defend them, calling upon the Keepers of the Laws if there is litigation.

The Keepers

The keepers are members of the Square who keep the secrets of the order. There are four types of keepers:

- ◆ **The Keepers of the Laws** are the most common. Not only do they organize the laws that rule the order, but they must also make the rest of the order respect these laws. They are legislators, custodians of traditions and even soldiers. They are also in charge of protecting the members of the Square, providing bodyguards, armed escorts, or soldiers depending on the situation. But above all they are the supreme authority of justice when the decisions of foremen or of master artisans are contested. The Keepers of the Laws are organized based on their experience:

- **Recruits**, the youngest, are generally soldiers or members of the militia.
- **Veterans**, with at least five years of experience, can hope to command a small unit or serve as bodyguards for members of the order.
- **Ancients**, the most experienced Keepers of the Laws, are at the head of large units or can become judges for internal affairs.

These offices are never permanent; indeed, each time a construction is ended, the supervisor's duties are relieved until the next building.

- ◆ **The Keepers of the Treasure** are slightly less numerous than the Keepers of the Laws. Everything that concerns finances is their responsibility. They are not only accountants, but also bankers and debt-collectors. Their duty is to manage and administer the order's huge sums of money. They are also in charge of distributing the necessary funds for every project, obtaining payments from clients and resolving financial misappropriations. There are different levels of Keepers of the Treasure, depending on merit – the more significant the cases they have handled, the higher their status.

- The lowest-level Keepers of the Treasure are the **controllers**; these members spend most of their time learning the ropes and awaiting an important case that will allow them to advance to a superior status.

- Then there are the **inspectors**, who are in charge of virtually everything: audits, threatening or torturing debtors, etc. They are detectives, assassins, soldiers and judges who can deal with any situation. These spies are always lying in wait for a new case. They have proven themselves effective even in cases that don't concern finances.

- At the top of the financial hierarchy are the **vigilants**. Only the most loyal and efficient inspectors can hope to attain this office one day. They are in charge of the inspectors, dispatching cases and keeping tabs on them.

- ◆ **The master keepers** are the elite of the Square. They are in charge of research. Whether working alone or in teams, they are always ready to tackle the major concerns of the order. They get involved in cases when a foreman or a master artisan is faced with an insoluble problem, and they have a knack for heading off trouble before it even occurs. They are curious and extremely intelligent. Their second duty is to teach the foremen their findings. There is no hierarchy among the master keepers; each of them is independent. Their only obligation is to notify the Square when they make a discovery.

- ◆ **The Keepers of Secrets** are few in number, and play no active role in the Square. Their only duty is to know and keep the most important secrets of the order. The first of these secrets is the location of the Sanctuary of Origins, which gave birth to the Square. They know other dangerous information, including the names of Shard traffickers, the most sensitive projects underway in each Realm, and the secrets behind powerful building methods. They have three rights:

- Electing a new Keeper of Secrets when one of them dies.
- Deciding if a secret can be revealed to another member of the Square. (This group always includes one Attuned of the Cittern who can make someone forget a secret that he should not know.)
- Rallying the Keepers of the Laws and the Keepers of the Treasure to eliminate someone who knows too much. In such cases, anyone even suspected of knowing secret information must be slain, as well as their friends and family.

PLAYING A MEMBER OF THE SQUARE

First of all, the player must decide which branch of the Square his character belongs to: Architect or Keeper? Then, the player must choose his Office (detailed in the table below). Though difficult, it is possible for members of other races to become journeymen and even master artisans. However, only dwarves can become foremen or keepers.

There is one common trait among all members of the Square: curiosity. They always keep an eye out for new ideas.



OFFICES INSIDE THE SQUARE

Office	Requirements	Cost of the Asset
Journeyman	none	1
Master Artisan	Craft 8; Concord (spe.: esoteric architecture) 6	2
Foreman	Concord (spe.: esoteric architecture) 8	3
Keeper of the Laws	Weapon 7; Law (spe.: Square) 8	2
Keeper of the Treasure	Stewardship 7; Intrigue (spe.: Square)	2
Master Keeper	Concord (spe.: esoteric architecture) 8	3
classical architecture	(classic architecture and/or Shard enchantment)	
Master Keeper	Concord (spe.: esoteric architecture) 7;	2
dark arts	Demonology 7 (dark art)	

Assets and Faults

FAULT: DISMISSED FROM THE ORDER (3, DWARVES ONLY)

You did something that brought the wrath of the leaders of the Square upon you. Perhaps you ignored their warnings and caused many difficulties for the community. Perhaps you embezzled funds from the order. Or perhaps you used another member's seal. Only a major crime can lead to such a punishment. Your previous works no longer bear your Seal and your former brethren despise you.

ASSET: WELL-REGARDED BY THE ORDER (1, DWARVES ONLY)

You are a very promising member. The order takes good care of you, and funds your work. You never have to seek out teachers. They find you first!

ASSET: CORE MEMBER OF THE SQUARE (VARIABLE, DWARVES ONLY)

You are a member of the order and therefore you have the following advantages: the assistance of the order, free board and lodging in every city where the Square is present, and your personal seal, which enables you to disarm

traps and mechanisms in buildings erected by the Square. You are aware of numerous secret passages and hidden doors in the buildings you helped build. If you spend 1 Fortune point, the EG must inform you of the specifications of a Square building. (Depending on your office in the order, some information may be restricted, even to a master, and some may have been lost centuries ago).

ASSET: ASSOCIATE OF THE SQUARE (2)

You have already helped the order, and perhaps worked as a journeyman on some projects. However, you are not a part of the dwarven inner circle. In return, the Square grants you its protection – it will help you when you are in need and offer you free board and lodging in every city where the Square is present.

ASSET: DEMON ARCHITECT (2, DWARVES ONLY)

You know a demon that is fond of architecture. In return for accurate advice, it only asks to participate in your architectural projects. Moreover, it can take up residence in a house you specify and make it extremely terrifying or incredibly comfortable. You must be an Invoker to benefit from this asset, or at least have a score in the Demonology skill (in which case, the demon must be Invoked by someone else).





minence,

As you know, modern magic was born during the Eclipse. Shard is the physical form and the pure magical essence of the Eternals, and is the core of this magic. But do you know the fundamental principle applied to the use of magic? "Nothing is created or destroyed. Everything is transformed." All Shard was created during the Eclipse, and that same amount of Shard is still present today. It never disappears and it never spontaneously appears. It merely recycles itself in many different forms.

4 ~ The Shard

Traces of Shard

Here are the main sources of Shard:

- ◆ **Dancers:** the skeletons of these small creatures are composed of pure Shard, which generates the sparks that enable Ascendancy. The sparks are not made of Shard, they are only emanations of its power.
- ◆ **Remains and Relics:** these are the best examples of the crystallization of magic during the Eclipse. Emotional vibrations are extremely strong in these objects and sites, and these vibrations are the source of their power. Remains and Relics are not merely enchanted objects, rather they are objects composed of magic.
- ◆ **Pictureworlds and Ergastula:** these two Elder Art creations are far more complex than simple artifacts. Unlike the latter, Pictureworlds and Ergastula contain small quantities of Shard that activate their incredible powers.
- ◆ **Esoteric Architecture:** certain esoteric buildings contain Shard, but they are extremely rare.
- ◆ **Nature:** in certain places, magical activity was so intense that large quantities of Shard were freed without being recycled spontaneously. In these areas, a thin deposit of Shard can become crystallized in an object. When the Shard is collected in a plant or an animal, conflict can occur between the emotions of the Shard and the life form. Sometimes this phenomenon produces unique and outlandish creatures.

Alchemists

Some extremely bright people had the idea of breaking the natural cycle of the Shard in order to obtain fragments of it to use at will. The Alchemists Guild was

created for this purpose. These scholars came from everywhere – mages, Inspired and even Dullen in search of power. Soon the Dullen took over the reins of the organization. The group is now mainly composed of contractors who work for the Cipher-sorcerer and other, more secret, clients.

Alchemists can extract the Shard from any object (with a DIF that depends on its origin). This is a secret skill that is only taught to the members of the guild. Technically, it is a specialization of the Concord Skill that can only be learned from the Alchemists.

In order to perceive the Shard in an object or a living being, the Alchemist should use the Shard perception rules on p.188 of the AGONE rulebook. However, their specialization enables them to perceive any Shard Value, even less than 2.

In order to extract Shard once it has been perceived, the Alchemist must succeed in a $(CRE + WIL)/2 + \text{Concord}$ roll against a DIF equal to the Value of the Shard $\times 5$ (+5 if the Shard is inside a living creature). It is impossible to extract Shard from a Dancer.

If the roll is successful, the Alchemist can extract a fragment of Shard to use as he will. The most common use is for mage gems. The Alchemists are in charge of creating these precious objects for the Cipher-sorcerer, setting them within flesh without danger (especially emotional addiction). There are many other uses of Shard, and the researchers in the Cipher-sorcerer develop new ideas every day.

The Square is the second main client of the Alchemists. The architects need large quantities of Shard in order to enchant their buildings.

Shard Addiction

The intense emotions in Shard affect all surrounding beings. Those who spend extended time near one source of Shard are subject to emotional addiction. When the Value of the Shard is greater than 2, there is potential for addiction. If the owner of a Relic carries it more than 8 hours per day, or someone lives in a Remain for a month, he must make an addiction roll ($WIL + \text{Concord}$ against $DIF \text{ Value of the Shard} \times 3$). If he succeeds, he is not affected. But if the roll is a failure, he develops an addiction to the object. He needs its presence and feels deep empathy with the emotions that it radiates. Such an addiction becomes problematic when he must part with the object...

One can only develop Emotional addiction to one source of Shard. Books Two and Three will explain how this addiction is viewed by mages and Concordists.

Note: This rule also applies to Dancers, which are creatures with a Shard Value of 5. A mage must make an addiction roll every month if he spends too much time with his Dancer. This explains the extreme attachment certain mages develop to their Dancers.





tifacts can be exceptionally powerful objects, but they all share one shortcoming. Unlike Relics, which contain a fragment of Shard, artifacts' fundamental matter is devoid of magic. These objects generate their effects through enchantments, the talents of their creators and the Flame of their possessors. Artifacts are strongly bound to the Magical Arts, especially Shape, which is frequently used in their creation. The creation of these objects is a legacy of the Elder Arts that has survived to the present time thanks to the popularity and simplification of the techniques. Today, artifacts are less powerful because of these simplified methods and because of the scarcity of Flames.

Artifacts are an integral part of the magic of Harmondia and they are the sources of numerous legends spread by troubadours throughout the Twilight Realms.

5 ~

Artifacts *Artifact Use*

In order to use an artifact, the Inspired must first understand how it functions. There are two fundamental rules concerning artifact use:

- ◆ The possessor must have a Flame (or a dark Flame).
- ◆ Dullen can feel whether an object is or is not an artifact, and can even gain a rough understanding of its powers, but are be unable to use it.

THE FELT

The felt is the feeling an artifact imprints on the beings that surround it. When people (Inspired or Dull) or animals are near an artifact, they can be affected by the emissions radiated by the object, and even feel the emission in their dreams.

Any person in contact with an artifact should roll PER + Concord against DIF 20. This roll can be attempted as soon as the artifact has been noticed, or once the person is within a 3-yard range of the object.

If the roll is successful, the person will have a vision during his dreams that same night. If the SM of the roll is greater than 5, the person immediately falls asleep and is affected by the vision. The EG must determine the nature of the artifact and its abilities in order to relate the appropriate dream.

Unlike direct artifact use, this interaction with an artifact can happen to anyone (Dull or Inspired); in fact, some of the most erudite artifact specialists are Dullen (often mages) who are baffled as to why others (Inspired) can use the objects while they cannot.

The felt can provide much information depending on the SM obtained (see the table below). Once the secrets of the object's powers have been discovered, an Inspired can attempt to use them. A Dull will be fascinated by the object without being able to actually use it.

FELT INFORMATION

SM	Information
0	The character knows what the artifact looks like, even if he has not seen it.
1 to 2	The felt vaguely hints at the effect(s) of the artifact.
3 to 4	The character knows how to use the artifact.
5 and more	The felt is perfectly clear and completely reveals the nature of the artifact.

ARTIFACTS AND FLAMES

Only Inspired can use and create artifacts because, as these objects are not composed of Shard, a Flame is required to activate their magic. Unfortunately for Inspired, dark Flames can also activate artifacts.

Two methods exist to bond a Flame to an artifact:

♣ Enchantment

This method is the more difficult to use, but also the more effective. It consists of finding an enchanted animal (see *The Bestiary*) and using its Shrine in order to enchant the artifact and harmonize it with its possessor. To do so, the character must succeed in a CHA + Concord + felt SM roll (restrictive: the Shrine score of the animal) against DIF 10. If he succeeds, the artifact is bonded with the character, who can then use its powers. If the roll is a failure, the character will have to try again with another animal. If the roll is a fumble, the character will never be able to use the object (even with the harmonization method).

Though this method is effective, it is nearly impossible to carry out because of the scarcity of enchanted animals and because of their noncompliant nature. Therefore, Inspired will typically need to use the harmonization method to bond with an artifact.

♣ Harmonization

Harmonization consists of attempting to go beyond the felt vision in a new dream or a trance. This is what Concordists call the "kingly path"; it harmonizes the character with the artifact. Though this method requires no outside resources, it is far more difficult to accomplish.

In order to harmonize with the artifact, the Inspired must succeed in a CHA + Concord + felt SM against DIF 20. If he fails, the Inspired will have to wait one month before trying again. If the roll is a fumble, the Inspired will never be able to use the artifact (even with the enchantment method).



Creating an Artifact

The creation of an artifact begins with a dream, which any "artisan" of Shape can have. The dream represents a desire for an ideal. Imagination leads the dream to establish a connection between the artifact and Harmundia.

THE DREAM

There are two schools of thought among Shapers who create artifacts: those who think that the dream is the creative source, and those who consider the shaping of the dream more important than the dream itself. Both approaches are successful, for the dream and the shaping together are fundamental elements of artifact creation.

The dream is purely theoretical. The Concordist determines the form and the physical state of the artifact, its plan, its material, its specifications and its powers. This is the artistic part of the task. If the Concordist is not inspired, nothing will happen.

In order for the dream to materialize, the Concordist must succeed in a CRE + Concord (restrictive: Shape) roll against DIF 25. The Concordist can attempt this roll once per month. A fumble means that the dream will never materialize. Fortunately for Concordists, artifacts cannot have random effects; either the artifact is the result of the Concordist's dream or nothing happens. Once again, there are two theories. The first argues that fortune is the source of the dream and that the Concordist simply reproduces this gift of the Muses. The other theory says that the Concordist himself is the source of the dream. The precise truth is unimportant. Technically, the EG can whisper the dream to the player or the latter can improvise his own dream. The choice depends on the atmosphere of the story.

THE WORKPLACE

The first challenge in artifact creation is finding the right place to work. At the present time, the only safe places are Sanctuaries; they are some of the rare sites where the influence of the Muses is still present through the Luminary's Flame. The difficulty in artifact creation is due to the fact that the Muses themselves are not present (or only faintly). The Inspired must counterbalance their absence with talent.

♣ Sculpting

This is the most difficult part of artifact creation. It consists of giving an emotion physical form. It can take a long time to obtain the right form.

The artifact builder must succeed in a CRE + Shape roll against DIF 25. The skill that would normally be used to create the object is the restrictive (for example, the skill Crafts: weaver could limit the sculpting of a tapestry).

Sculpting requires at least 3 months of hard work (it is impossible to engage in other activities at the same time) and sufficient raw materials. Whatever the outcome, the materials are used up in the process.

In case of a failure or a fumble, nothing will happen except for much wasted time and resources.

♣ Harmonizing

There is no going back. The artifact now receives its powers, as well as the conditions of its use.

The sculpted object is granted all of the capabilities that were determined during the dream. There is no changing your mind after the realization. The felt is eternally imprinted on the memory of the Inspired.

This is the easiest part of the process but also the longest. Each power requires a successful CRE + Shape roll against DIF 20 (see the table below for modifiers). Each roll, successful or not, corresponds to one month of work. If the roll is a fumble, see the 'Occult Catastrophes' chart (AGONE rulebook, p.154).

If even a single roll is a failure, the entire process must be started over again.

FORM AND STATE

Every artifact has its own **form**: the physical aspects of the object. The form of an artifact can be chosen from any work of art and can be extremely varied. Among other things, artifacts can be paintings, sculptures, garments, jewelry or weapons.

Every artifact has a **state** that is animate or inanimate. Inanimate artifacts provide their powers passively to their bearer. Animate artifacts have some sort of consciousness; they can use their own powers (without the intervention from the bearer) as soon as they are activated. Certain artifacts are both inanimate and animate: they bestow powers upon their possessor, and are also able to use powers directly.

DELEGATING THE SCULPTING

It is possible for an Inspired to conceive an artifact and then hand the work over to a Shaper. To do so, the two individuals must harmonize the felt in one collective dream; the Inspired must succeed in a CHA + Concord roll (restrictive: Shape) against DIF 15 and the Shaper must succeed in a PER + Concord roll (restrictive: Shape) against DIF 20. If both rolls are successful, the Concordist can then use the felt of the Inspired to create the artifact. If one of the rolls fails, the rolls can be attempted again the following month. If the Inspired rolls a fumble, he will never be able to convey this felt to another. If the Concordist fumbles, the Inspired will have to find another Shaper to create the artifact.

♣ Artifact Creation Example

Nathaniel is a dwarf, a member of the Square and a Shaper. His attributes are: CRE 9, Concord 9, Shape 8 and he has a Soul bonus of +5. He decides to forge an animated armor that can fight its owner's enemies independently.

He begins by dreaming up the plans. His Base is 22: CRE + Shape (which restricts his Concord) + Soul bonus. He obtains a 2, a failure. He will have to wait one month before starting the process over again.

One month later, he obtains a 9 on his roll for a total of 31, a successful dream.

Nathaniel then begins shaping the object. His Base is now 19 in CRE + Shape because his Crafts: blacksmith 5 restricts his roll. He obtains a 6 on his roll, just enough to forge the armor.

He then has to harmonize the powers of the armor. The first power is of course the armor's independent mobility. The DIF for this capability is: 20 + 7 (permanent power) + 0 (animating an object is a minor effect) = 27. With the 8 he obtains on his roll, Nathaniel succeeds in harmonizing the armor's mobility. (9 + 8 + 5 + 8 = 30)

ARTIFACT HARMONIZING MODIFIERS

Effect	DIF Modifier
Permanent power (permanent when it is activated)	+7
Active 50% of time (daytime, one hour every two hours, etc.)	+5
Power used by the artifact (animate state)	+3
Active under specific conditions (when it is snowing, possessor wounded, etc.)	+1
Must be activated each time or only usable in extremely specific conditions (possessor dying, summer rain, etc.)	-1
Causes more than 30 Damage	+5 every 10 points over 30
Colossal effect (summon an army of Ghasts, cause a solar eclipse, has an attribute + skill base of 20)	+10
Major effect (create an indestructible 30 ft. high barrier, has an attribute + skill base of 15, etc.)	+5
Minor effect (the possessor can fly, animating an object, has an attribute + skill base of 10, etc.)	0
For each power after the second	+5
For each power after the fourth	+7

The armor can also repulse Nathaniel's enemies (a major effect; the EG specifies that the armor will only be able to do so at a range of a couple of yards). The DIF for this power is $20 + 1$ (only active when the possessor is wounded) $+ 5$ (major effect) = 26. The 7 Nathaniel obtains on his roll allows him to add this power to the artifact ($9 + 8 + 5 + 7 = 29$).

The armor has to learn how to fight. Nathaniel wants it to become a true master-at-arms. The EG specifies that such an effect is colossal. Therefore, the DIF for this power is $20 + 7$ (permanent power) $+ 10$ (colossal effect) $+ 5$ (third power) = 42. Unless Nathaniel rolls two 10s in a row, he will lose 3 months of forging and 3 months of harmonizing: 182 days of work.

Sample Artifacts

ESMERALD'S MIRROR

This is a two-way mirror that allows its owner to spot an intruder amidst a gathering. The Inspired simply has to look through it in order to identify the people who should not be present, as well as those who might hold a grudge against him. The mirror can also be activated to send a telepathic warning to its owner when an intruder enters the room. This artifact looks like a normal mirror to anyone not familiar with its powers.

THE BOOTS OF THE FERRYMAN

This pair of fine blue boots enables its wearer to walk on water as if he were on solid ground. Unfortunately, the only way to deactivate the artifact is to

remove the boots. Therefore, if the wearer tries to swim with them on, his body will submerge while his feet remain on the surface.

THE STUPID MIRROR

This small mirror with its wooden handle does not have any distinguishing characteristics. But if the user looks carefully at himself, he will notice, behind the sil-vering, a realistic face staring at him with a stupid expression. If the user stares in the eyes of the face, his own face with an extremely stupid expression will appear in the mirror. The soul of the former prisoner in the mirror occupies his body, and he becomes the new prisoner.

THE SWORD OF THE ETERNAL CONQUEROR

This strange wooden sword grants its wielder an incredible presence during battles. All the opponents of the Inspired will have their DIF raised by the CHA of the Inspired each time they try to hit him. The object can only be active half an hour per day.

THE RING OF THE BLACK WIDOW

This transparent glass ring can only be used by an unmarried woman. It cannot be activated by a man. The wearer can change her appearance at will (though she must keep her size and weight). This power can only be used for one hour per day. The artifact has an animate power as well – the ring can change its possessor's appearance when it thinks it will be useful.



Book Two



The Book of Mages



1 ~ The Cipher- sorcerer

minence,

It is time for me to reveal the mysteries of the Cipher-sorcerer, its organization, rules and codes. It is time for you to learn about those who study the Dancers, drawing forth the essence of magic by manipulating their sparks. This treatise reveals the true strength of the mages. They could easily take over the reins of power in Harmundia, but are wise enough not to. Are they truly impervious to covetousness and corruption? I have no answer for this question. You should read this text for yourself and form your own opinion... But do not expect to discover all the Ciphersed secrets, for mages are masters of concealment.

Foundations

THE THREE OBEDIENCES

The goal of the founders of the order was to join the three Ascendancy obediences into one group. They even attempted to unite them all under the practice of Eclipsism, but the mages went on using the other two schools of Ascendancy. The three obediences structure the Cipher-sorcerer order more than any vertical hierarchies or geographical divisions. They can be viewed as political groups that vie for the control of the order. Though this struggle is hostile and ceaseless, it is covert. Their conflicts are most visible on a local level, where the members of the order strive to take over academies. Therefore, mages spend a good deal of time counting the distribution of Jornists, Eclipsists and Obscurantists in the Ciphersed academies.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORDER

The structure and organization of the Cipher-sorcerer has changed little since its establishment. The founding mages sought a decentralized organization that still allowed each mage to obey the laws of each realm. At the same time, the founding mages avoided siding with the numerous national factions that would tear the order to pieces. Thus, the Cipher-sorcerer is structured on two different levels of power.

The first level is national and overt. Each realm has its own High House and academies. Each High House rules the destiny of the Cipher-sorcerer in a realm and the academies are training grounds for the mages.

The second level is pervasive but secret. The head of the secret government of the Cipher-sorcerer, the Invisible Seat, lives in an invisible flying city. This government is ruled inconspicuously but forcefully by seven ancient mages. Another part of this level is the Free

Corps, mages trained to defend the order and its charter. The most famous members of the Free Corps are the fearsome Censors. This central government prevents the fragmentation of such a large organization.

An Esoteric Order

Originally founded to protect Dancers and mages, the Cipher-sorcerer has always relied on concealment, complex rituals and occult teachings. The turbulent history of the order certainly justifies the need for camouflage, but this approach is also due to the fact that Ascendancy connects mages directly with the events of the Eclipse and thus, the nature of Harmundia. In order to become worthy of such powers, the Cipher-sorcerer organized itself around many esoteric details. Its teachings therefore center on arcane concepts and a mystical philosophy.

It is a contradictory institution, united by doctrine and a central government, but spread across eleven realms and three radically different obediences. It is possible to attribute the success of the order to these contradictions. Because the government is not too intrusive, it is firmly respected by its members.

CHRONOLOGY

Year	Event
1	Emergence of Dancers Crystallization of the Shard
20	Beginning of Ascendancy
First Age	
28	Establishment of the charter
30	First Symposium: foundation of the Cipher-sorcerer
31	Independence of the Cipher-sorcerer
35 to 128	Life of the first Ciphered Martyr
Second Age	
128	Official recognition of the Cipher-sorcerer by the governments of the Realms
672	Second Symposium: Ascendancy for the elite
673 to 689	Creation of the eleven local Cipher-sorcerers

THE CIPHERED CHARTER

The charter was written before the hierarchy of the order was established. It is the guiding text for users of Ascendancy. Like an oath or a constitution, the charter has an extremely important symbolic significance. It specifies the practices and the responsibilities (moral and mystical) of the mages. Each academy and High House has a copy of the charter in a special room called the

BJORKAER, IMMORTAL OBSCURANTIST ORACLE

Bjorkaer is one of the most famous mages of all time.

He was born during the eighth century in a barbaric valley of the Horns. He was soon considered gifted by the Muses themselves for his body did not seem to age after he turned eighteen. In fact, he grew older one year every decade. Now physically more than ninety years old (and approaching his 900th birthday) Bjorkaer is a powerful oracle. He attributes his abilities to his age – his understanding of men and seasonlings is extremely profound. His predictions are always accurate and many people travel to his retreat in a grotto in the Horns to hear them.

Before granting their request, he always asks his supplicants to undergo some kind of intense pain.

DRAËLFA, JORNIST INVENTOR OF CHOREOGRAPHY

Choreography did not always exist. There was an age when mages could only control one Dancer at a time. Draëlfä, a black fey, invented the first choreographic techniques, allowing her to synchronize the movements of her Dancers. It was naturally the Jornists that gave the most support to the development of her work.

Today, Draëlfä has lost all of her memories and can no longer use Choreography. Still, she remains an extremely famous and talented Jornist. On a daily basis, she meets mages who idolize her for feats she can no longer remember nor use.

GARDOL, OUTLAW ECLIPSIST

Gardol was a loyal member of the Cipher-sorcerer for many years until he was betrayed. He was a witness for the prosecution in a case that opposed a Jornist with a powerful Censor. During the case, Gardol was under much pressure to place the blame on the Jornist. He came to believe that the latter was being unjustly persecuted by a superior, but was afraid to intervene. Gardol had happened upon a chilling aspect of the Cipher-sorcerer: a political machine, which didn't hesitate to destroy its own members.

Years later, haunted by guilt, the Eclipsist decided to leave the order and became a renegade mage. Gardol has rallied many other disaffected mages to his cause, and founded an organization called "The Eighth Code". Their headquarters are in Lorgol but their influence is spreading across the Twilight Realms.

crypt, and apprentices spend much time meditating here. Every member of the Cipher-sorcerer knows the charter by heart.

The charter is composed of seven articles that explain the duties of a mage. Some say their writing was inspired by the Muses. The articles are broad enough to cover many fields of application and are open to interpretation. Mages spend a good deal of their time at the academy studying and analyzing the Seven Articles.

The Seven Articles

Beyond the symbolic and legal aspects of the charter, the Cipher-sorcerer is subject to the magical aspect of it through one of the strangest enchantments in Harmundia.

Indeed, the seven articles are more than just beautiful lettering on precious parchments with the seal of each obedience. Each article is actually incarnate in a magical being that can manifest itself in Harmundia. They are the counterparts of the invisible government of the Cipher-sorcerer. Some mages say these creatures are Luminaries, or winged Dancers that, through repeated exposure to Choreography, have become Luminaries. These beings are called the Codes and they are like living and talking books. They visit the dreams and the thoughts of eminent mages with advice, answers, visions and questions.

The Codes have two distinct functions: the first is to record every oral and written comment made concerning the article they each represent; the second is to recruit members for the Free Corps (see below).

ARTICLE 1: PUT THE DANCER BEFORE YOURSELF AND ALL OTHERS.

The mage must protect his Dancer before anything else (even himself). These fragile remnants of the Flamboyance and the Spiritcore make Ascendancy possible. Dancers must be protected for magic to survive.

ARTICLE 2: MATERIALISTIC POWER IS YOUR ENEMY.

The mage must devote himself to the study of Ascendancy and the Dancer. He must not get involved in mundane politics. These matters concern the uninitiated, people who do not understand the empathic bond with the Dancer, which supersedes all worldly things. Nonetheless, mages are often solicited by men of power, and they must learn to resist these temptations by relying on their own power and the power of the Cipher-sorcerer.

ARTICLE 3: THE CIPHER-SORCERER IS YOUR SECRET KINGDOM.

Nothing is more important than preserving the Cipher-sorcerer, its secrets and its members. Unauthorized revelations will be punished.

ARTICLE 4: ASCENDANCY IS THE LIGHT OF YOUR SOUL.

The life of the mage is entirely devoted to Ascendancy. He must excel at it. Whatever the obedience of the mage, Ascendancy is his guide to understanding of the world.

ARTICLE 5: YOUR OBEDIENCE IS YOUR FAMILY.

The obediences shape the mage's perception of the world. The mage must respect and be loyal to his obedience. Note the relationship between Article 3, which compares the order to a kingdom and Article 5, which compares the obedience to a family. The Cipher-sorcerer always comes before the three obediences.

ARTICLE 6: YOU WILL ALWAYS BE LEARNING ON THE PATH OF YOUR LIFE.

The mage is an eternal student who must learn from those wiser than he. The student must respect and obey his masters. The mage searches for the meaning of Harmundia, of the lost Flamboyance, of the mystery of the Eternals and of the Eclipse. To do so, the mage must often travel throughout the world.

ARTICLE 7: THE ECLIPSE BURNS THE EYES OF THE BLIND.

This section is the most problematic. Is it a sign of the true purpose of the order? Should the mages be mystical searchers as well as Ascendancy users? Many members of the Cipher-sorcerer believe this section is their connection with the myth of Harmundia and the veil of the Eclipse. Others consider this section a sign that mages must forget the past and move into the future. There are many other interpretations...

A SCHOOL OF MAGIC

The main purpose of the Cipher-sorcerer is to train Ascendancy users and to assign their Dancers. The order is structured like a school, with students and teachers. The organization of the Cipher-sorcerer is the same in every realm.

There are two levels of apprenticeship before attaining mage status.

The first level is the **neophyte**. This is a person who has found his way into an academy or whose potential has been identified by a mage. Generally, neophytes live outside the academy. They have few more rights than commoners in the mundane world (but are better fed). They have to listen carefully and obey every other member of the academy. They also have to undergo a series of trials (that vary depending on the realm) before being accepted as an apprentice. These trials can be easy, for example reciting the names of all the High Mages in a realm, or they can be extremely difficult, such as finding a Dancer. This initiation period enables the mages to determine which obedience is best suited for the neophyte. There is usually an extremely difficult trial at the end. Some very gifted students become apprentices directly without being neophytes.

Once an **apprentice** is accepted, he is under the responsibility of a master, a mage who has devoted his life to teaching Ascendancy. This learning period lasts two years (the period does not have to be uninterrupted). Less talented students may have to continue for a third year. Past this point, a student is considered unsuitable

for Ascendancy. During the first year, the student accustoms himself to Dancers. During the second, he begins to learn his first spells in the obedience that seems the most appropriate.

At the end of their apprenticeship, students undergo a trial called *cryptia*. The student is left naked, with neither money nor weapons, and must survive outside the academy for six months. This trial is designed to force the apprentice to confront a series of moral choices and to put the charter into practice for the first time.

If the apprentice survives *cryptia*, he officially becomes a mage. The academy will then give him his Dancer (if he has not already found one) and gem, and he is listed in the Ciphersed records.

The new mage owes two years of work to the order, during which he is in the service of the dean of the academy. After this period, he is free to do what he wishes, as long as he respects the charter and the precepts of the High House of his realm. A mage can opt at any time to become a teacher.

This is only an example of an ideal course; generally, students have problems during their apprenticeship. Many give up because of the ruthless trials, the numerous accidents, or a pitiless master. Others finish their apprenticeship extremely quickly. Despite their laws, academies and powers, mages often have difficult careers and short lives.

THE GREAT FIGURES

The majority of the members of the Cipher-sorcerer are mages, students of Ascendancy. Some are still neophytes or apprentices, whereas others are full-fledged mages. The order also includes some great figures: artists of Ascendancy who can use the sparks of their numerous Dancers to create spectacular effects. Many members of the order aspire to be High Mages or deans.

♣ Masters

Masters are mages who have achieved a level of Ascendancy that is worth conveying to others. Successful teaching generally depends more on pedagogical abilities than true magical powers. The only requirement, which is closely monitored, is that the mage can use his magic without endangering his students.

♣ Deans

This is one of the highest offices in the order. The dean is the supreme chief of an academy. There are approximately one hundred deans throughout Harmundia. Unlike High Mages, the number of deans correlates with the number of academies. Deans apply the Ciphersed laws within their academy and are the voice of their Domain's High House.

♣ High Mages

High Mages are the most powerful mages in Harmundia. They are in charge of the order in a particular

realm. They are the elite of the Cipher-sorcerer, at once its head and its strong arm. Inspired High Mages frequently practice Choreography.

An Esoteric Facade

THE HIDDEN POWER

The Cipher-sorcerer is considered by many lords and kings in Harmundia to be a hidden power with which they must contend. Though the order was originally created to escape the worldly powers of nobility, it is now a far-reaching organization with its own laws, possessions, men and magic that is essential to the operations of each realm.

♣ Masters of the Arcane

The Cipher-sorcerer has a strong symbolic authority over the populations of Harmundia, whatever their social class. Mages are feared and respected; they are considered mysterious, powerful and different.

Though each realm and culture has its own point of view, the order is always viewed as sacred and mysterious.

It is common to see mages blessing the militias of the Mercenary Republic, or Jornists wandering Urgamand and the Liturgical Province helping the poor.

Peasants are wary of the academies, because they are often isolated and well protected. There is constant speculation about what the mages are up to in the towers. The gems borne by all mages are a constant reminder of their frightening knowledge and capabilities.

This hidden power of the order irritates the mighty because it directly counterbalances their own authority. A famous anecdote tells of a Janrenian noble whose peasants preferred paying the salt and wheat taxes to the academy than to him. In time, the lord and his family were reduced to poverty.

♣ Powerful Landowners

The Cipher-sorcerer also possesses over 150 properties in its own name. To these must be added the numerous donations of nobles and landowners for services rendered, as well as the acquisitions made by each High House, and the private property of individual mages. The total easily surpasses the holdings of any Urgamish baron.

The order also oversees a network of lands, buildings, bridges and roads, and collects the tolls and taxes from their properties. It would be one of the world's wealthiest organizations if it were united. Certain mages are increasingly aware of this potential and try to take a large-scale outlook toward the Ciphersed possessions. Who knows? Perhaps one day the Aldermen of the order will become administrators of the largest Domain in Harmundia...



☞ First-rate Counselors

The Cipher-sorcerer, since its founding, has always striven for its independence. Many powerful and ambitious people have sought to possess the power of the mages or to contest it. Mages are excellent counselors, and even secret weapons, who can resolve otherwise inextricable difficulties. The order welcomes such responsibilities, though they challenge the role of the eminences grise. Mages can be compelled or can choose (for financial reasons) to be in the service of a noble or a king. In such cases, the order will judge the actions of the mage. If the mage was forced against his will, the noble will learn to regret his actions. If the mage chose on his own, he will almost certainly meet a Censor one day... Since the beginning of the century, more mages have involved themselves in politics. This trend is not to the liking of the Invisible Seat.

☞ The Memory of Harmundia

Finally, because of its age and its role, the Cipher-sorcerer has become a massive museum of Harmundia's history. Thousands of texts, legends and half-forgotten works of art are chaotically archived in all the buildings of the order.

These texts are a part of the memory of the Twilight Realms. The academies frequently sell or rent their information to scholars or libraries. Some mages are also researchers with a thorough knowledge of the world, a knowledge they may share with nobles, merchants and even thieves... for a fee.

AN INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT?

One might be led to consider the Cipher-sorcerer an invisible government – a secret society that discreetly pulls the strings of power. Many nobles and even some realms believe this. However, most mages still respect the tenets of the order, which encourage a separation from secular power and withdrawal from the world in order to study the Eclipse and Ascendancy.

☞ The Hood

Nevertheless, there is a political movement within the Cipher-sorcerer called the Hood. The Hood wants to lead the order to take power over the entire Twilight Realms, imposing a magical dictatorship. The Hood is still a minority (less than 10% of the mages of the order), but membership has been growing rapidly for the past fifty years. For unknown reasons, the Hood has not yet been investigated by the Censors. The three mages at the head of the Hood (one per obedience) have sworn to establish their magical empire before they die. The Obscurantist leader is called the Black Cat; he is believed to be one of the High Mages of Buccaneer Haven's High House. Rumors have been circulating within the order that certain Dancers have instilled these aspirations in their masters.

☞ The Escarbuncle

Some Inspired mages consider the Cipher-sorcerer to be the most effective weapon against the Masque. Indeed, the order possesses large quantities of money, many Inspired, vast amounts of information, secure refuges and extensive knowledge concerning the Flame and Dancers. Inspired members have gathered for the last two hundred years in a secret brotherhood called the Escarbuncle. Its main purpose is to transform the Cipher-sorcerer into an organization united against the Masque. The Escarbuncle is a minority even amongst the Inspired mages in the order because the goals of this

organization conflict with certain sections of the Ciphered Charter. The members of the Escarbuncle can recognize each other because their Dancers bear a mark on their chests: a golden rain of sparks.

Certain members of the Escarbuncle are also members of the Hood. Some even advocate an alliance between these movements.

THE CIPHER-SORCERER AND THE MASQUE

For the most part, only Inspired know of the existence of the Masque, and the order is mainly composed of Dullen mages who are not aware of the schemes of the Master of the Sham. The Escarbuncle has, for the moment, preferred to conceal the existence of the Masque until the rest are prepared for the revelation. Even Inspired High Mages have agreed to use the order against the Masque without informing its members. At least for the moment.

Secular Powers

The Cipher-sorcerer cannot yet be considered a fully functional government for each and every realm.

The order is not centralized enough and still respects the second article of the charter. Therefore, the majority of its members are focused on the study of Ascendancy and Dancers, rather than on political concerns. Protecting the Dancers is one of the main sources of motivation for many mages, who devote their lives to nurturing their emotions and personalities.

Traditional power structures have been in place for over two thousand years, and they are not ready to be transformed into a universal government of magic. But maybe an Inspired mage, gifted, young and ambitious, will assert himself one day...

Finally, many lords have counterbalanced the influence of the order by setting up schools to train nobles and the bourgeoisie in the art of politics. They provide knowledge to the elite, benefit from tax exemptions and are imbued with a symbolic power.

THE INVISIBLE SEAT

Most inhabitants of Harmundia are aware of the fundamental conflict in the Cipher-sorcerer. There are eleven independent orders, one per realm, under a common name, yet at the same time there is a central government for all mages. This government is known as the Invisible Seat. It is one of the best-kept secrets in Harmundia. Even most mages only know legends and rumors concerning the Invisible Seat, and none have yet discovered its location. Certain mages seek it as a mystical quest that leads them further along the path of Ascendancy. The main purpose of the Invisible Seat is to ensure the application of

the charter in each of the eleven Cipher-sorcerers. The members of the Invisible Seat are the Free Corps, specialized elite mages devoted to the charter and the Codes, whose interventions are infrequent and perplexing.

Where is it?

Maybe it is located in Darkdream, in the convolutions of a manatee's brain? Or on the highest peaks of the Wild Reaches? Or between the roots of a Modehan king-tree? Most of the ancient texts that mention the Invisible Seat suggest that it is an invisible tower amidst the Thousand Towers of Lorgol, but even these venerable tomes are mistaken.

It is almost impossible to locate the Invisible Seat, for it is always moving. The mysterious government of the order is a flying city of colossal architecture erected upon an island enchanted before the Eclipse, carried by one hundred winged Dancers. The sparks of these creatures cast an illusion around the city that renders it invisible. The city has been flying unnoticed over Harmundia for two thousand years.

There are very few inhabitants in the Invisible Seat, but each of them is teeming with the magic of Ascendancy; therefore, they all have strange characteristics. The rulers of the Invisible Seat are the seven Archons, the patriarchs of the order. Below them are the teachers and students of the Free Corps, who live in manor-schools. The Codes, these strange incarnations of the Ciphered Charter, ostensibly defer to the Archons' authority, but in practice, they do whatever they please.

There are also Luminaries, Dancers, emissaries of the Council of the Decans, of the Darken and even the Masque (under one of his different guises). The rare Inspired mage is invited to the flying city, and even a handful of Dullen. In the last 150 years, only one young boy has met all seven Archons. His story is detailed in the *Chronicles of Lambarin*, a heavily fictionalized account of his famous deeds.

The Seven Archons

They are the true rulers of the Cipher-sorcerer. They represent a mystery for all members of the order, even for members of the Free Corps. These seven ancient mages possess many Dancers that enable them to perform earth-shattering feats of Ascendancy. They personify the history of the order and certain Censors claim are over two thousand years old. Though this may seem unbelievable, Jornists and Obscurantists have demonstrated (with radically different methods) that several dances potentially could prolong life. Other members of the Free Corps, such as Aldermen and Archivists, believe that the Archons use Luminaries instead of Dancers to practice Ascendancy.

The Archons consist of five Eclipsists, one Jornist and one Obscurantist. They communicate by magical telepathy. This symbiosis allows them to make decisions in seconds.

SYCOPHANTS

This is the most secretive and sinister branch of the Free Corps. They are spies, double and triple agents, informers and traitors. They specialize in complex intrigues, spying techniques and all manner of vile dealings. Sycophants are the eyes and ears of the Cipher-sorcerer. They are sent undercover throughout the Twilight Realms, to the Council of the Decans, amongst the minions of the Masque and the demons of the Darken. These master-spies are the political police of the order. They are also in charge of evaluating the teachers and masters. Their reports can lead to requests for Censors, dismissals and even executions. There are few Sycophants for they are extremely difficult to train and control.

TRIBUNES

These are the least numerous members of the Free Corps. Their task is to listen to rumors, demands, and the needs of each academy and mage; they then report this information to the Invisible Seat. Tribunes are often sent to oppose a cruel judgment in order to demonstrate the clemency of the Archons. A Tribune is a loyal ally of the academy in which he works. They are specialists in Ciphery law, who often defend mages implicated by the order. These diplomats are also in charge of public relations.

LATENT TENSIONS

At present, there are rising tensions between the three obediences. Below is detailed the influence of the obediences in each realm. Generally, the obedience in the majority is the one that rules the local Cipher-sorcerer. The two other obediences endeavor to broaden the influence of their stripe. These internal struggles often manifest themselves in political discussions, votes and trials. Tensions can lead to murders, intrigues and denunciations. Some Censors believe that the order is closer to disintegration now than ever before.

THE SYMPOSIUMS

These conferences of mages are organized for great events or important decisions. The dean of each academy sends a delegation of mages and can attend the Symposium himself. A Symposium is generally organized by the academy that called it. These meetings are extremely rare, occurring no more than once or twice per century.

OFFICES OF THE CIPHER-SORCERER

Here is a list of the Offices a mage can possess. Each Office has a cost as well as minimum skill requirements.

Master 3

Alphabet (Cryptic) 6, Ascendancy 7, Cipher-sorcerer 7, Dancer lore 8, Eloquence 7

Dean 5

Alphabet (Cryptic) 7, Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 7, Dancer lore 7, Resonance 8, Stewardship 7

Censor 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer (spe.: law) 6, Dancer lore 6, Law 6, Resonance 6

Reiter 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 5, Dancer lore 6, Dodge 7, Resonance 6, Weapon 7

Alderman 5

Alphabet (Cryptic) 5, Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 8, Dancer lore 5, Resonance 5, Stewardship 8, Trade 6

Acrobat 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 5, Dancer lore 8, Hunt 8, Resonance 6

Archivist 5

Alphabet (Cryptic) 7, Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 5, Dancer lore 7, Resonance 6, one Knowledge skill at 8

Sycophant 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 6, Dancer lore 7, Resonance 7, Stealth or Intrigue 8

Tribune 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcerer 8, Dancer lore 6, Diplomacy or Eloquence 8, Resonance 6



A Decentralized and Independent Structure

There are eleven local Cipher-sorcerers throughout Harmundia; each of them is independent and has its own characteristics. Laws, rituals, traditions, education and atmosphere can be radically different from one Cipher-sorcerer to the next. Most mages wear a distinctive mark that specifies which realm they belong to.

Despite these differences, each Cipher-sorcerer is organized on two levels: the academies and the High Houses.

♣ Academies

These are the pillars of the order, where mages study and are trained. Most academies offer board and lodging to their students, and often resemble monasteries. The apprentices work hard, speak little and follow the lessons of their masters and of the dean (who is often a High Mage that has chosen to abandon the political life of the High House). There are approximately ten academies per realm.

♣ Precepts

The precepts are the rules, laws and edicts that each High House provides to the local Cipher-sorcerer, based on its interpretation of the Ciphered Charter. These rules are collected in tomes like any other type of law. When a mage does not respect a precept, the council of High Mages gathers and judges the case. If it is deemed important, the High Mages can summon a Censor. If the indicted mage does not accept the judgment of the order, he can ask to be defended by a Tribune. Unfortunately for the accused mage, there are few Tribunes.

♣ Cryptic

Since the first Symposium, the mages of the Cipher-sorcerer have approved Cryptic as their language. Cryptic has always been used by scholars for international documents, but it is now deemed the perfect tool for centralizing information. This language has become the language of all scholars as well as the language of the Cipher-sorcerer. It is usually written; only a handful of mages know how to speak it. Today, every Ciphered document is written in Cryptic.

Mages know it as a part of the Cipher-sorcery skill. Non-mages must develop Cryptic as a separate Knowledge skill.

THE ELEVEN HIGH HOUSES

The purpose of this text is not to detail each local Cipher-sorcerer order, only to briefly identify their significant characteristics and to list the influence of each obedience on the realm.

♣ The Princely Communes

The Cipher-sorcerer of this realm is one of the richest and most baroque in all Harmundia. Thanks to the legal protection of Ascendancy in the communes, the mages have been able to found many academies. In the Communes, dances can be polkas, waltzes, minuets or parades. Princean Dancers are used to dancing on the gold and glass domes of the cities. Certain mages even clothe their Dancers in veils made with from the nets and flesh of dead Dancers. Other mages have taught erotic dances that would make even the most liberal Liturgical priest blush. The Princean High House is located in a glass and metal palace in Sasmiyana.

Princean mages are said to be vain, extroverted and hot-tempered. Becoming a dean or High Mage frequently involves a duel. Many of the members of the Princean order involve themselves in politics, ignoring the second article of the charter.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 10% ; Eclipsist: 30% ; Obscurantist: 60%

♣ Lyphan

This realm is quite certainly the one where the order is least represented and where the charter is least respected. The inhabitants are fierce nomads on whom wars against the Cipher-sorcerer, though they occurred more than a thousand years ago, have left their mark. Magic is not accepted in this society. The horsemen prefer vague notions of fate and destiny to Ciphered teachings.

Mages are pariahs in these wild lands. They are rarely welcomed by the locals and are considered omens of death. Most Lyphanian mages are renegades who were banished from their native realms. They generally live as recluses on the outskirts of encampments and cities.

The Lyphanian Cipher-sorcerer is ruled by Eclipsists. The members gather once a year in a secret location to exchange opinions and settle problems. There is no High House in Lyphan, only a democratic assembly where mages can debate and cast votes. There are no Lyphanian academies.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 15% ; Eclipsist: 65% ; Obscurantist: 20%

♣ Wild Reaches

Though these lands are inhospitable for Ascendancy and magic in general, the local Cipher-sorcerer is particularly active and well adapted to Wild Reacher laws and customs.

This Cipher-sorcerer is one of the first to have been founded and is very respectful of the charter's precepts. Its High House and academies are in isolated sites considered cursed by Wild Reachers. Lonely towers, ancient cromlechs or ring forts are the most adequate refuges for these mages. Though the mages are few, they are extremely well trained and entirely devoted to their High Mage, the "Grand Master", who is considered one of the most powerful mages of Harmundia.

Becoming a member of this Cipher-sorcerer is difficult because the selection process is extensive. The three obediences are equally represented under the sway of the Grand Master who strives to maintain perfect equilibrium. Wild Reacher mages are known for their otherworldliness and their lack of interest in politics.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: approximately 33% ; Eclipsist: approximately 33% ; Obscurantist: approximately 33%

♣ Buccaneer Haven

This Cipher-sorcerer is one of the most open-minded in Harmundia. Buccaneer mages love to practice Ascendancy with agile Dancers that jump and twirl from rigging to sails and from masts to figureheads. The inhabitants of this country very much respect the members of the order and often ask their advice. These mages might even be considered priests if the Cipher-sorcerer were a religion. Certain Dancers (those that dance during terrible storms in order to calm the fury of the sea) are at the center of a cult that encourages the donation of votive offerings. It is relatively easy to become a mage in Buccaneer Haven, and it is common for Buccaneer mages to spend their entire lives at sea.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 35% ; Eclipsist: 45% ; Obscurantist: 20%

♣ Empire of Keshe

All the members of the order know that the use of magic is dangerous in the Keshite Desert. This is the reason why the Keshite Cipher-sorcerer is so small; its High House and academies are isolated in the middle of the desert in fortresses and ribats. Within red limestone walls, behind the round vaulted doors, or in the luxurious gardens, Keshite mages practice a subtle form of Ascendancy that can be either deadly or rejuvenating. A few have created a caravan that serves as an itinerant academy.

The Keshite Cipher-sorcerer is famous for its deep knowledge of Dancer resonance. These mages often seek their apprentices in foreign realms.

Obscurantists are not well liked by the Keshite mages and they are not involved in decisions. They are believed to be mercenary assassins employed by the wealthiest Keshite merchants and nobles.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 60% ; Eclipsist: 35% ; Obscurantist: 5%

♣ Widowlands

The Cipher-sorcerer of the carms is dominated by an elder who established her High House in a black tower. Many medusa mages are Eclipsists, who only use Ascendancy to indulge in the beauty of the dances they invent, and to explore their relationship with their Dancers.



The Obscurantist obedience is forbidden by the Black Tower Council and by the carm order. Nevertheless, some rare human and ogre Obscurantists practice their art in the shadows of their prison cells. A few exceptions are made for medusae of noble blood, among them Lady Iriena of Scarletstone (see *The Gray Papers*).

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 38% ; Eclipsist: 60% ; Obscurantist: 2%

♣ Liturgical Province

The Liturgical Cipher-sorcerer is secretly under the sway of the Pontiff. The mages are free as long as they take part in the Liturgical rituals. A Censor, named Romurk, has begun to change this humiliating situation for the order by summoning a few Sycophants. It is important to note that Obscurantists are killed on sight without a trial by the mundane authorities of the Province.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 62% ; Eclipsist: 35% ; Obscurantist: 3%

♣ Modehan Marches

The Modehan order is one of the most powerful and well-organized Cipher-sorcerers. The Jornist High Mages, who take part in druidic decisions, aspire to a grand and respectful Ascendancy that would be used to benefit humanity. The altruistic Modehan mages often convey their righteous words and the grace of their Dancers throughout the Marches, as well as to foreign Cipher-sorcerers, in order to spread their vision of harmony. Outsiders often consider the Modehan order naïve, phony, paternalistic and prone to proselytizing.

Modehan mages, who see themselves as adopted children of the lost Muses, promote deep harmony and resonance with their Dancers, which are incredibly abundant in the Marches. There are certain cases where Jornist Modehans have rescued Dancers that were tortured by Obscurantists and have then brought them to recuperate in the lush nature of the Marches.

The Modehan Cipher-sorcerer is also famous for its collection of ancient texts, books and magical manuscripts in a library, which is said to be a replica of the library of the Invisible Seat. In this idyllic setting, near a tranquil lake, the mages always keep an eye on Obscurantists, who are obliged to leave their Dancers with the Ciphered librarians while they research.

The Small Hunt is thoroughly regulated, as are all things concerning Dancers in the Modehan Marches. Most Modehans have at one time or another seen entire families of Dancers performing on the branches of king-trees and will never forget the sight.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 70% ; Eclipsist: 25% ; Obscurantist: 5%

♣ Mercenary Republic

The local Cipher-sorcerer here is known to be particularly old and decadent. Its authorities have always

been in conflict with its members. Many consider the order unable to cope with the numerous difficulties it faces. Dancer trafficking is a common practice amongst the members of this order. On the verge of ruin, this Cipher-sorcerer awaits a savior. Will he ever come?

Nevertheless, the local order possesses one of the wonders of Harmundia: Darkdream, the itinerant city of mages. Built atop two hundred giant manatees that float on the rivers of the Republic, the majority of the inhabitants of this strange city practice some form of magic. Mages, Concordists and even Invokers must come at least once to see Darkdream with their own eyes. All varieties of Dancers, occult texts, recipes and rare opuses are exchanged, stolen, bought and sold here. Demons can be seen playing with Dancers, and Luminaries proclaim the end of the world in marketplaces. The entire city is magical.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 10% ; Eclipsist: 40% ; Obscurantist: 50%

♣ Urgamand

Since Agone of Roundrock's ascension to the throne, the Urgamish order has been expanding. Agone is convinced about the usefulness of mages to the baronies, and he has successfully combined politics with magic. There are new Urgamish academies that seek apprentices in every social class. Agone's methods have caused the Urgamish view of the order to become more positive. This Cipher-sorcerer only faces one major difficulty: a severe Dancer shortage. The Acrobats have recently been dispatched to keep an eye on the spriggans of Lorgol.

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 30% ; Eclipsist: 40% ; Obscurantist: 30%

♣ Janrenia

The Janrenian Cipher-sorcerer is no more. The order was dismantled after the war with Urgamand in 1415 because it was felt that the generals, manipulated by an Obscurantist faction, had led the realm to disaster. The women who took power after the war forbade the use of magic, and tore down the local academies and the High House. This was the first aggressive action against the order since the First Age. The Censors, the Reiters and even the Sycophants were unable to do anything to counter the will of the Janrenian population. Many members of the order were hanged or burned alive. The most sensible Janrenian mages fled the country beforehand and hid in the Lyphanian steppes. A few mages remain in hiding, laying the groundwork for the return of the Cipher-sorcerer. They are counting on the help of the Invisible Seat...

Obedience Distribution

Jornist: 35% ; Eclipsist: 40% ; Obscurantist: 25%





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The Three Obediences

ear colleague,

I have received your letter and shall now try to answer your numerous questions.

Describing the relationship between the three obediences within the Cipher-sorcerer is, of course, dreadfully difficult. It would be like writing a treatise on religion's relationship with political science and occultism.

Today, internal rivalries and alliances are ever-present and remain our foremost preoccupation. A single day does not go by without one obedience accusing another of abuse, treachery or even outright felony. One of the most difficult tasks for the Invisible Seat is to make sure that our order does not explode into a fratricidal war. Some of the High Houses go so far as to organize Ascendancy tournaments to release some of the steam that builds up between our "families".

This conflict is understandable. We have three ways of approaching Ascendancy, and life itself. The obediences are three unique perspectives on the world – this is one of our basic principles – exemplified in the profoundly different ways we treat our Dancers. Mortals put their Flame or their implanted gem into resonance with the inspiration of their Dancers, weaving an intimate relationship with them. This relationship inevitably alters the personality, the ideas and the mind of the mage. The reverse is also true, of course. A Dancer may even feel the same emotions as its master. A very long time ago, between the Eclipse and the First Symposium, this resonance was named the "line" because the first mages felt this relationship as being like a line between them, their Dancers and Harmundia, a loose but unbreakable connection that gave the mage his bearing in life. In time, the connection was symbolized by being woven into ceremonial robes; it became the white stripe of the Jornists, the gray stripe of the Eclipsists and the black stripe of the Obscurantists.

Of course, you already know this, so let us now concentrate on the details you may have overlooked.

One last thing before we continue: welcome.

Jornism

INTRODUCTION

Jornists are altruistic beings, open to the world and to others. It would be wrong however, to think that the Jornists are good-natured and generous on all occasions. What mainly characterizes a mage of the white stripe is the extreme earnestness that he applies as a doctrine. The Jornist wears a gem on his forehead to denote the transparency of his magic. The Jornist always affirms openly that he is a member of the Cipher-sorcerer order. He is proud of what he is: the interpreter of the Dancer's magic and the director of its Dance.

Most Jornists place their well-being after the needs of others, be they Dullen or mages.

They serve, in this order, the Dancers, the Cipher-sorcerer, the other Jornists, and common mortals. Jornists always fully involve themselves in whatever they're doing and assert their opinions without regard to the risks. They often occupy important jobs in the Cipher-sorcerer hierarchy, as they are known for being honest, rigorous and hard working.

Jornists are also good teachers. In the Academies, many deans are Jornists, and they always make a point of honor in passing on their knowledge. Education is the best method that the obedience has found to preserve the Ascendancy and the well-being of the Dancers. Jornists see themselves as the protectors of the Dancers. This responsibility motivates a large part of their dealings with the Cipher-sorcerer.

Choosing to be a Jornist is not an easy path. Openness and sincerity are dangerous in certain circles, and Jornists are rarely welcome at court or in the merchant guilds.

JORNIST TRADES

Jornists are the volunteer doctors of the Cipher-sorcerer. Entirely devoted to the Charter and quick to obey instructions, they only think in terms of what is best for the order, setting aside their naturally strong individuality. As a result, many governments let them openly practice Ascendancy to address the ailments of mortals by healing wounds and diseases. Certain Jornist Academies feel more like hospitals than schools of magic. Other Jornists prefer the freedom of the road and sell their skills as healers.

They appreciate art and writing poetry that expresses the warmth Ascendancy creates within each person. Some of them even form true love bonds with their Dancers.

However, Jornists should not be seen as lost lambs ready to be devoured by the other obediences. Jornists are not irresponsible or cowardly. To defend themselves, they use authority, morals, the Charter and sometimes the Free Corps. Masters of rhetoric, they excel in the challenging art of debate. They can make

charismatic leaders. Many Academies are directed by Jornists, always ready to devote themselves to the education of their dear neophytes.

THE WHITE STRIPE

The relationship that the Jornist establishes with his Dancer is called Empathy. He dives with his entire mind into the emotions of the Dancer, seeking to share the enflamed vitality that the Dancer has conserved since its creation during the Eclipse. The Dancer, an innocent creature, constantly in motion, propelled by the emotions of the creatures and people it touches, is for the Jornist a source of life, laughter and hope. With Empathy, lifelong bonds of love and friendship are forged between the Jornist and the Dancer.

In summation, the outlook of the white stripe is positive, altruistic and intuitive. Light-footed, the mage and his Dancer walk together on the path of life. Each obstacle is a test to pass or a problem to be solved, and above all an enriching experience.

JORNIST SECRETS

- ◆ An influential movement exists amongst the Jornists, the Angelic Feathers. These white stripe magicians spend their entire lives looking for the mysterious Winged Dancers. They think that these elusive creatures would be able to greatly increase the influence of the Ascendancy upon Harmundia. Some of them believe the Winged Dancers hold the secret of the Eclipse and of the Twilight.
- ◆ Some say that certain small groups inside the Jornist obedience worship their Dancers. They are supposedly led by a magician who pushed his emphatic relationship with his Dancer so far that he became one with it – an entity of flesh and Shard. This creature of immense magical powers is called the Chakral. This miracle has never been validated by the highest authorities of the white stripe, because it seems that the philosophy of the Chakral has no longer much in common with Jornist dogma.

The words of this entity can be summarized in one sentence: "Let the Shard speak out". The Chakral is a strange being. Though rejected by the other Jornists, he interests the Eclipsists and the Obscurantists who see in him a transcendent being, a possible future incarnation for all mages. The Inspired believe the Chakral is a Luminary with a message to pass on. Others think that he is in fact a Dancer that has taken control of its "master", a disquieting possibility...

- ◆ According to some sources, the Jornist High Mages are giving all the key positions in the Academies to faithful members of the white stripe. Education is the heart of the Cipher-sorcerer, and the Jornists are working hard in the shadows to obtain a monopoly on teaching Ascendancy. This is not some sort of military coup, but rather a subtle manipulation to disseminate Jornist doctrine into the education of young magicians.

CORRUPTION

It would be extremely naïve to assume that a Jornist could never be tempted by Perfidy or Darkness. There are magicians of the white stripe who are as corrupt as any Invoker from Abysm. Their innocent behavior makes them all the more dangerous. Most of these Jornists suffer from their ties with the Masque or the Darken, their minds becoming scenes of continual conflict.

Perfidious Jornists will push the truth and frankness that characterize them to a delirious level. They can become seekers of absolute truth, using torture and manipulation to impose their own beliefs on those around them. They will extrapolate their altruism to the point where they want to control everything, believing their way is indisputably the best way.

White stripe mages corrupted by the Darkness are fascinated by their newest discoveries concerning the demons. A Jornist Invoker will apply his own vision of Empathy, which becomes increasingly vicious over time. He will try to penetrate his Dancer's mind through little sadistic games, pushing it to emotional suffering. Without truly resorting to Torture, the Jornist instills an unhealthy and ambiguous relationship with his Dancer. These corrupt magicians are rare for the simple reason that few of them are inclined to practice Invoking – and Invoking is almost the only way to gain Darkening points.

SHARD ADDICTION

Unlike some of their fellow mages, most Jornists are aware of the danger of Shard addiction (see p. 28). They deal with the situation well and accept it as an unavoidable side effect of the practice of Empathy. Most of the white stripe mages therefore live with a acknowledged addiction to their Dancers.

Things are different regarding objects and places rich in Shard. The Jornists avoid using Remains, Relics and other Shard sources, knowing that they may worsen their addiction. They believe the emotions of the Shard interfere with their practice of Ascendancy.

INTERACTIONS

Eclipsists: "They are egoists, greedy and power-hungry. One cannot trust the word of a mage of the gray stripe. Especially if he is a spriggan."

Obscurantists: "We constantly wonder how the Torture can produce magic. The black stripe mages do not really have a place in the Cipher-sorcerer, even if their help may be precious in battle."

The Cipher-sorcerer: "The order is a blessing for Harmundia. Without the Cipher-sorcerer and its Censors to enforce the law, the practice of Ascendancy would be impossible."

The Menace: "Perfidy and Darkness are two mortal dangers. We do all that we can to combat them. Invokers are especially dangerous. Don't hesitate to help the Liturgicals against them."

JORNIST SPELLS

♣ Summon Mount

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 1/2 mile/one mount

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 5 rounds

The Jornist calls a mount (a horse, most of the time). If the mage already has one, it will come to him. If not, the spell will attract the nearest creature disposed to being mounted. The spell does not target creatures already mounted by someone else, nor those that are unable to approach (because they are locked in a stable for example). The Jornist has no control over the nature of the creature that answers his call. The mount could very well be a wild horse, and the spell would not tame it.

♣ Aura

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: individual/a sphere 10 yards in diameter

Duration: 15 minutes

Dance: 1 round

The sparks disappear quickly, leaving nothing but a soft amber glow, as bright as moonlight, lighting up an area about ten yards in diameter. Past this distance, it stops abruptly, as if an invisible barrier prevented it from diffusing more light.

The caster cannot be seen from outside of the lightened circle. If he moves, the light follows him.

♣ Benediction

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 target

Duration: one task

Dance: 5 rounds

The sparks of this spell inspire well-being and confidence. As the target accomplishes a task chosen by the caster, these impressions intensify, bringing with them a sensation of inner peace. The target's gestures are calm, and his hands no longer tremble, so he can work with assurance. The spell gives a bonus of 2 +3 for every 5 points of SM to accomplish a task that must not exceed one day's work (from dawn till dusk). Some Jornists have been known to use this spell to help animals and men die without feeling pain.

♣ Water

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 receptacle of 2 pints minimum

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 minute

The Jornist makes his Dancer skip around the edges of a targeted receptacle. The sparks that fall into the receptacle become up to 20 pints of fresh water. This spell does not work with flasks because the edges are too narrow to dance on. The mages of the Bowl Brotherhood, Jornists that scour the Desert of Keshe for those lost and dying of thirst, are known for wearing big wooden bowls around their necks that they use to hold the water they create.

♣ A Thousand Splinters

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 50 yards/1 wooden object

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 round

This spell covers any wooden object with jagged splinters. The only way to hold the object is to cover one's hands with something protective. Coming into contact with the splinters causes 5 Hit Points of damage (armor applies).

Anyone trying to use the object without protection receives a -5 penalty on his die rolls, and loses 1 HP per round as long as the object is held.

♣ Speak to Animals

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: 1 animal

Duration: 1 minute

Dance: 3 rounds

This spell gives an animal the power of speech. It expresses itself in the language of the mage rather than its own. This does not, however, give it extra intelligence and does not guarantee coherence. A dog, for example, will no longer bark but will still warn intruders of the danger of trespassing on its territory. It will also be able to identify someone's smell and track it. The apprentices of the Bowl Brotherhood often use this spell on camels. Over time, these beasts have developed a wide and colorful vocabulary. The spell is purported to have excellent results with medusae's snakes, but few have dared try it.

♣ Friendship

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 target

Duration: 15 minutes

Dance: 5 rounds

Sparks made by the Dancer penetrate the eyes of the Jornist, who suddenly appears sympathetic to one person. He does not necessarily know why, but the magician seems to become someone to confide in. He feels close to him. The spell is immediately undone if the Jornist becomes aggressive toward his new friend. Even though the spell is temporary, it has often been the starting point of long (and non-magically enhanced) friendships. It also works on animals; they will allow the

wizard to approach, though their reaction then depends on their particular nature. A famished lion will not hesitate to eat its new "friend"!

♣ Shield of Sparks

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 target

Duration: 15 rounds

Dance: 2 rounds

The Jornist invokes a cloud of sparks that, in a few seconds, swirl into the oval form of a luminous shield. The shield then affixes itself on the arm of the target. Technically, use the statistics for the tower shield, but with no minimum STR. In the case of a successful parry, it stops all damage automatically. The shield is indestructible – it cannot be removed by a well-placed blow nor can it be discarded by its bearer. This spell lasts longer than "Magic shield" (AGONE rulebook, p. 203) and is a little more versatile, but provides less protection.

♣ Gigantism

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 target

Duration: 1 hour

Dance: 15 rounds

The target of this spell starts growing very quickly, gaining weight and height. The target gains +1 to his SIZ and another +1 for each 5 points of SM achieved. Beings that gain 2 or more SIZ points in this manner, or who exceed SIZ 3, become immobile for the duration of the spell. Jornists often use this spell to immobilize giant-sized creatures.

♣ Food

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 15

Range: contact/1 container of at least 2 pints

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 minute

As with the Water spell, the Jornist makes his Dancer skip around the edges of a receptacle. The sparks that are produced fall inside and become food. The mage has no control over what appears, but he can be sure that the spell will produce a piece of strange-tasting meat and unusual green vegetables, all of which are steaming when they appear. There is enough to feed two people. The Bowl Brotherhood originated this spell and uses it frequently in impoverished Keshite towns, serving hot meals to the poor.

♣ Speak with Plants

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 plant

Duration: 30 minutes

Dance: 10 minutes

The Jornist gives the power of speech to a plant. The plant will express itself in the native language of the mage. However, as the plant does not possess intelligence, its speech will be limited to the expression of feelings or general concepts. A tree can tell the direction of the wind, express the tiredness in its roots or even convey an impression of serenity. If it has been the witness of an act that has affected it in one way or another, it will be capable of talking about it. For example, it will be able to tell if a lumberjack had felled a tree next to it because it is worried that the he will come back. However, the tree is incapable of spotting particular people, apart from someone that has taken care of it (like a gardener) or bothered it for long periods of time (like the lad who used to climb it ten time a day).

♣ Fantastic Harvest

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 15
Range/Area of effect: 1 mile/a radius of 1 mile
Duration: One season
Dance: 1 hour

The Jornist enchants an area so that the next harvest will be plentiful. This area must already be cultivated, and the spell cannot force plants to grow under extreme conditions. It is therefore impossible to enchant an area in a desert, for example, unless the land is already irrigated. The capacity of the harvest will be 10 times greater than what it would have been under normal conditions, and it will be of superior quality. The oasis where the Bowl Brotherhood resides is known for never having endured drought or famine, and provides for the entire region during shortages.

♣ Create Familiar

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: contact/1 animal
Duration: until the death of the animal or the mage
Dance: 6 hours

This spell transforms a normal animal (not an Prodigy), into a familiar. The creature does not need to be trained. It will instantly become the magician's best friend, obeying him faithfully, informing him of dangers and helping him if possible. The mage instinctively understands what his familiar thinks and vice versa, regardless of the distance that separates them. The animal may be of any size, though small creatures are preferred because they are easier to hide. The animal's life span is magically accelerated or slowed to match its master's. The bond between the magician and his familiar is deep; if one of them dies, the other is deeply affected, sometimes even committing suicide. *Only one familiar is allowed at a time.*

♣ Natural Enchantment

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: personal
Duration: 1 day
Dance: 1 hour

The sparks from this very complex Dance give the Jornist the ability to survive in a natural region such as a forest, a savannah or a desert (but never a city or even a cultivated area). For one day, the magician has a score of 7 in the following skills: Beast lore, Conceal, Hunt, Stealth, Plant lore and Survival. If he already has a score of 7 or more in any one, he will gain a specialty corresponding to the area he is in for the duration of the spell.

♣ Fertility

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 female target
Duration: see below
Dance: 10 minutes

The Jornist makes a selected being fertile. If this is cast on a female mammal, she instantly becomes pregnant. Other creatures lay eggs, and so forth. The Jornist does not control the nature of the father (it will be subconsciously chosen by the mother, corresponding to her deepest desires). More than one half-seasonling has been created by the casting of this spell on human females! It has no effect on male creatures.

♣ Grow Plant

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: contact/1 plant
Duration: permanent
Dance: 15 rounds

The Jornist makes a plant (or even a seed) grow to complete maturity instantly. The soil does not necessarily need to be fertile, as the plant grows roots that dive deep enough into the ground. However, the lifespan of the plant will be dependent on the quality of the soil. The spell has no size limit – it can affect an oak tree as well as a stem of grass. In addition to its applications in agriculture, the spell can be used more creatively to seal a door or make a building crumble.

♣ Repel Demon

Obedience: Jornist
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 demon
Duration: 1 minute
Dance: 1 round

This spell is rarely used, because the Dancer risks its life when the mage casts it. The Dancer must come dangerously close to the demon that the magician wants to repel, showering it with sparks. If the Dancer manages to get close enough, the demon is no longer capable of

JORNIST SPY

Joyous and sociable, you inspire confidence. People appreciate you and call on your help when in need. In their eyes, you are a friend of the family and a faithful ally. However, you are not as generous as they may think. You inform the Cipher-sorcerer of all of your patients' doings. You document their secrets in detail in one of your numerous notebooks. You will use the information later – you or another mage. Far from being a naive healer, you are truly a warrior of the shadows and the confidence that you inspire is your best weapon. Every aspect of your appearance is calculated. Your portliness proves your lack of motivation and your smile demonstrates your good intentions. Nobody sees you as a menace. They are wrong.

Origin: Urgamand

Race: human Sex: male
Age: 32 Height: 5'8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 198 lbs. MV: 3

Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0 Bonus: +1
AGility: 6 STrength: 6
PERception: 7 STamina: 6

Spirit: 1/0 Bonus: +1
INTelligence: 9 WIL: 7

Soul: 1/0 Bonus: +1
CHARisma: 9 CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes

ART: - ASC: 9
MEL: 6 AIM: 6
HP: 49 SWT: 16
DB: 0 CWT: 24

Fortune points: 2

Power of the Flame: none

Perfidy: 0

Darkening: 0

Skills

Trials: Weapon (Quarterstaff) 6, Alertness 5, Dodge 6, First Aid 5

Rogue: Hunting 2, Intrigue 5, Poisons 5, Stealth 7, Search 3

Society: Diplomacy 5, Eloquence 6, Etiquette (mages) 5, Fast Talk 5, Traditions (Urgemand) 9

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 5, Language (Urgamish) 9, Language (Keshite) 2, Medicine 5, Plant Lore 5, Surgery 5

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 5, Dancer lore 7, Concord 2, Resonance (Jornist) 7

Assets & Faults: Known family, Independent Dancer, Agile Dancer

Combat

Initiative: 14, quarterstaff 16

Melee attack: quarterstaff 15

Dodge: 12

Parry: quarterstaff 15

Ranged defence: 6

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam + DB	SIZ
Quarterstaff	+2	+2	+2	+4 (C)	+1

Armor: leather, partial (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Magic

ASC: 9

Resonance: 7, Dancer Lore: 7

ASC APT: 19

Dancer	Memory	ASC Bonus	Empathy	Endurance
Zunith	24	+2	8	6

Typical quote: "Does it hurt if I press here? Mmm, I see... nothing terrible. Don't worry, I shall heal you in a few seconds. It won't hurt. Tell me about the mission that Sire Boromion gave you. Has it anything to do with the Liturgical Navy? It isn't dangerous, I hope."

being in the presence of the Jornist. It is overcome by panic as soon as the eyes of the Jornist touch it. Unless it succeeds a WIL roll at DIF 25, the demon will try to run away as quickly as possible.

☞ Destroy Demon

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 demon

Duration: 15 rounds

Dance: 5 rounds

The sparks that fill the eyes of the Jornist enable him to destroy a demon merely by looking at it. The demon loses 5 points of Density per round as long as the Jornist's eyes remain on it (to maintain eye contact for more than one round, the mage must succeed a WIL roll at DIF 15 each round).

☞ Perfect Healing

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 target

Duration: permanent

Dance: 5 rounds

The target of this spell is instantly cured of a single physical illness, wound or handicap (the spell doesn't cure magical damage). It treats one (and only one) ailment. Someone suffering from gangrene will be cured either of the illness or the wound, but not both. Of course, the mage can use it repeatedly. The spell can even be cast after an injury has healed. For example, it can repair the internal damage caused by a Critical Wound, even after the wound has healed over.

♣ **Jornist Resurrection**

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: touch/1 corpse

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 hour

The Jornist is capable of resurrecting a fresh corpse (no older than one day). The person will come back to life with all his faculties and healed of all wounds and illnesses. The mage can perform this ritual on an Inspired, but he must do it immediately after death or the Flame will be lost (the Flame rarely lingers for more than two hours). If the Flame has already departed, the corpse will not come back to life.

♣ **Soothe Curse**

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 harmful magical effect

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 hour

The Jornist can cure a person of a harmful magical effect caused by Ascendancy. If the victim was attacked by a spell of a superior level (created by Choreography for example), the threshold of the effect to be cured replaces the threshold of this spell. If Choreography has been employed, the mage will also have to use it to cancel the magical effect. If Soothe Curse is successful, the effects of the original spell are instantly eliminated.

♣ **Thunder and Lightning**

Obedience: Jornist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: 1 mile/1 target

Duration: one hour

Dance: 15 minutes

The Jornist summons a storm that strikes with extreme violence, destroying everything in its path. The caster can control certain aspects of it, making it less violent or forcing lightning to strike a particular target, which dies instantly.



Eclipsism

INTRODUCTION

A neutral vision, detached from Ascendancy, is what characterizes the mages of the gray stripe. The Eclipsists were, a very long time ago, the founders of the Cipher-sorcerer. Today, they are very much removed from the day-to-day political struggles of the order. Eclipsism is centered on the individual and there is a clear undercurrent of egoism in the personalities of most of the gray mages. Eclipsists do not like to be confined by burdensome administrative duties, instead desiring to be as free as possible from rules and conventions. Though the authors of the Charter were Eclipsists, their inheritors have many difficulties in respecting the bylaws written afterwards by other mages.

Eclipsism is, by nature, the most practical form of magic. The mages of the gray stripe do not practice Ascendancy for spiritual reasons, or to serve an ideal. Eclipsists practice magic because it is useful to them. Eclipsists often have a more open vision than their colleagues in other obediences. They have a more natural and frank approach toward their Dancers. The result is a pragmatic magic, adapted for daily use, that is much more intuitive than the formalized Torture. Whenever you ask a mundane citizen of Harmundia to share his understanding of magic, he will almost certainly use something from Eclipsism as an example. Eclipsists are often the most accessible of all the mages.

By nature, they are individualists and political animals. They don't like to surround themselves with too many colleagues or to share great projects. Some Eclipsists are inveterate plotters, enjoying above all the political aspects of Cipher-sorcery.

ECLIPSIST TRADES

Eclipsists play an ambiguous role inside the order. Serving as great diplomats, and mediators between Jornists and Obscurantists, they tend to be very ambitious and demand high appointments, where they can exert their freedom of choice most freely. These motives stand in contrast with those of the Jornists, who feel these posts demand great responsibility, and try to balance personal gain with devotion and sacrifice.

The gray stripe mages are also natural scholars, and each generation produces a few enlightened mystics. They delight in verbal or magical sparring sessions on the nature of Dancers: the mysteries of their flesh and the powers in their blood. Their neutral vision is very useful in obtaining a superior level of comprehension. Unlike Jornists and the Obscurantists, Eclipsists rarely have a profession that uses their magical powers to the limit. Rather, Eclipsists prefer to occupy positions within the civil society of Harmundia. They remain faithful to the Cipher-sorcerer, but are less

concerned about obeying its strict and austere rules to the letter. Of course, there are some Eclipsists who are utterly devoted to the advancement of magic and to the order.

THE GRAY STRIPE

The gray stripe is a symbol of individual freedom, and it also represents analytical detachment and mastery of Ascendancy. Eclipsists do not rule their Dancers as Obscurantists do, and are not ruled by them as some Jornists are. They try to remain as detached as possible in order to get the best results from their Dancers. The gray stripe indicates great technical mastery – a learned and developed talent. Eclipsists perfect their Dancers' movements because a more precise Dance is more elegant and pleasant to see, even if this precision doesn't alter its effect. The Impulse is above all a form of training, a mechanism that must be learned and understood by the mage and his Dancer. This training is directly applicable to magical theory, and Eclipsists are the most acclaimed theorists and scientists of the order. From the study of magical phenomena, the most advanced Eclipsists attempt to deduce formal laws, which are used to refine the magical effects of the Dances.

ECLIPSIST SECRETS

- It is not unusual to find various Eclipsists forming a group and then leaving on a quest to discover one of the many mysteries of Harmundia. The most difficult quest started by an important Eclipsist group was the quest for the Spiritcore, which is a sort of constant in Eclipsism. The gray stripe mages believe the Spiritcore is the place from where all magic originates.
- Thirty-five years ago, the Eclipsists tried hard to put a stop to the troubles caused by Lershwin, without much success. Every mage knows the story of this spriggen who wanted to share magic with the people of Harmundia by making it accessible to all. Officially, Lershwin is dead and the crisis is over. What few people know is that his plans are still underway. A group of fervent adepts who trained with Lershwin are following in his footsteps...
- Eclipsists are attracted to strange theories, and stranger experiments. Certain academies overflow with mages trying, for example, to develop a way to keep a brain alive after the death of its owner. The Eclipsists have brought various creatures into the world of which they are not very proud – some of their creations have ravaged entire villages.

CORRUPTION

The gray stripe mages live perpetually under the threat of corruption. They are the easiest prey for the Masque because they often lack strong moral direction. Is going

over to the dark side so bad, when you can gain much in exchange for your soul? The Masque knows that he can play to their weaknesses and take advantage of them. The Eclipsists are easy to bait with promises of power: new Dancers, earthly riches, magical tomes, etc. Once corrupted, the gray stripe mages become manipulators, seeing all things as a source of spiritual or temporal profit. Perfidious Eclipsists tend to support might before right, and will not abide mediocrity. If they must fight to keep their privileges, so be it. Let the weak die as the strongest walk over them!

When they are drawn to the Darken, it is because of a fascination with the demons. The Eclipsists respect creatures that act only in their own interest and sell their services to the highest bidder. The smooth-talking and diplomatic aspects of the Invoker trade appeal to the mages of the gray stripe. As they become affected by the Darkening, they develop a nasty and perverse point of view, becoming eerily like the demons that they manipulate.

SHARD ADDICTION

Eclipsists are addicted to the Shard, know it, and suffer from it. This dependency damages their relationship with their Dancers because it disturbs the Impulse. They repeatedly explain to their Dancers that they do not have a dominant relationship, and that Eclipsist and the Shard both bring necessary ingredients to the practice of Ascendancy. The Impulse is the translation of this philosophy into fact. Shard addiction breaks it by shifting the control to the Dancer's side. The Eclipsist compensates by mistreating his Dancer, which is counter to the beliefs of the gray stripe (but is a good way to become Obscurantist).

Addiction to Shard in Remains and Relics is seen as an inescapable fact. Some Eclipsists are searching for the cause of the addiction in order to free themselves from it.

INTERACTIONS

Jornists: The white stripe mages waste their time practicing outdated techniques – the magic of fairy tales and bedtime stories. They should join the Eclipsists and learn the true potential of Ascendancy.

Obscurantists: The black stripe mages go too far in practicing their effective but violent magic. They need to understand the importance of establishing an equal relationship with their Dancers.

The Cipher-sorcerer: We created the order, but today we feel limited inside it. Its yoke is far too heavy and its codes too restrictive. However, one must admit that the order is needed for the smooth integration of mages with society.

The Menace: The Masque is the only true menace. We are, however, mature enough to know which side to choose when necessary.

ECLIPSIST SPELLS

♣ Noise

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 10
Range/Area of effect: 30 yards/5 yards
Duration: 3 rounds x SM
Dance: 1 round

This spell generates a noise, which lasts as long as the mage wants it to (within the limitations set by the Success Margin). The noise may be of any nature, as long as the Eclipsist has already heard it and remembers it. The spell is not able to recreate the voice of someone that the mage has never heard speak before.

♣ False Coins

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 10
Range/Area of effect: contact/10 coins
Duration: 10 minutes
Dance: 3 rounds

The Eclipsist makes a handful of coins of any value appear in his hand. All the coins look like pure gold, but are unlike any known currency. Not even an expert money-changer could divine their origin. Certain variations of this spell make the mage's profile appear on the coins.

♣ False Death

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 10
Range/Area of effect: individual
Duration: until the mage stops the spell
Dance: 1 round

As soon as the spell takes effect, the mage takes on the appearance of a dead person. He stops breathing and his heart stops beating. The spell is undone once the mage does something that reveals his trick. During the interval, all the methods to try to discover whether he is still alive are of no use. He may be cut, hit, or immersed in boiling water, but his body will react as if it no longer holds life. As soon as the Eclipsist moves or makes a noise, the illusion is broken.

♣ Cheap Stuff

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 10
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 object
Duration: 1 hour
Dance: 5 rounds

This spell gives the impression that the targeted object is of no value. The only problem is that each person has a different impression. One says that the object is broken, another finds the object particularly worn and the third finds it ugly. All will, however, agree on the worthlessness of the object, underestimating it by 1/100th of its value. This will not prevent a salesman from trying

to sell it at a good price, though the buyers will think that he is a fool and he himself may wonder how he could have the gall to ask such outrageously exaggerated price.

♣ Blinding

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 15
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/a seeing being
Duration: 5 rounds
Dance: 2 rounds

The target is temporarily persuaded that he has become blind. In reality, he has simply closed his eyes without knowing it. One of the ways of undoing the spell is to tell him this. As long as the effect lasts, the victim receives a -10 penalty to all his actions.

♣ Ice Shards

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 15
Range/Area of effect: 10 yards x SM
Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 2 rounds

The Eclipsist sends a hail of jagged ice shards shooting from his hands. They are illusions, but the target is convinced they are real, and so they cause real damage. This attack causes 10 + SM points of damage (armor will provide protection). A mage who knows this spell is immune to the effects (the damage is reduced to 0), as he knows that it is a mere illusion, but he cannot help flinching as the shards touch him.

♣ Grand Master

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 15
Range/Area of effect: individual
Duration: 15 + (5 x SM) minutes
Dance: 1 minute

The sparks given off by the agile Dancer give the Eclipsist the appearance of an important person. The people who interact with the mage are persuaded that they are speaking to an influential noble, a rich merchant, or a powerful warrior (depending on how the victims see "importance"). The Eclipsist must play along, as he doesn't know precisely how he will be viewed. Even if he blunders, he will not provoke doubts about his status – his disguise is perfect.

♣ Mind Reading

Obedience: Eclipsist
Threshold: 15
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one person
Duration: 1 round
Dance: 1 round

The Eclipsist reads the mind of the target. He is unable to learn everything about the person, only present thoughts. This is a very useful spell as one often thinks about the current topic of conversation or of something important one is trying to hide.

Eclipsist Censors are known for asking leading questions and then using this spell to read the thoughts of their suspects. A good way to resist this spell is to practice not thinking.

Ghost Mount

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: 5 yards
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 10 rounds

The Eclipsist makes a mount of his choice appear. It has the same appearance as the real thing, is capable of transporting something or someone, and has the personality of an average member of its species. A stallion will therefore be full of character, a donkey, stubborn, and so on. The mount is incapable of aggressiveness, even unintentionally. When the mage orders it to disappear, it will do so immediately, otherwise the spell expires after an hour has passed; any luggage and riders are left behind.

Object

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: 10 yards
 Duration: 15 minutes
 Dance: 1 round

The Eclipsist creates the illusion of an object. He is able to make it look like anything, provided he has seen it before, and it is a simple object (no independent or moving parts). The mage could use this spell to create the illusion of a table but not a chest of drawers. A sword may be created, but not a bow (whose string is independent). This illusion is undetectable until the object disappears.

Love

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: Line of sight/one person
 Duration: 1 day
 Dance: 1 minute

The Eclipsist persuades the target that he or she is in love with him. The feeling may have unexpected repercussions ranging from total adoration to tremendous jealousy.

Accursed Noise

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: one person
 Duration: permanent
 Dance: 1 hour

The caster creates a permanent noise inside the mind of his victim. The noise must be simple – a twinkling, a whistling or a repeated thud, but not a sentence or piece of music. There is no limitation placed on the hearing

of the target, but the effects of the spell remain very uncomfortable.

After a few days, the victim will become very irritable and in less than a month he or she could go mad. Depending on the individual, this discomfort can quickly be ignored, or provoke a state of ill being (and, in the most extreme cases, a -5 penalty to all actions).

Madness

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one person
 Duration: 1 day
 Dance: 1 minute

The target is no longer able to talk in a coherent manner, and acts very strangely. He has all the telltale signs of madness. However, a specialist would have difficulty determining the origin of the problem and would conclude that the victim was actually pretending, his behavior being too strange and illogical.

Lightning

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: 100 yards
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 5 rounds

The Eclipsist hurls an immense quantity of electricity in the direction of the target, who can try to dodge it as if it were an arrow. If the lightning touches the target, it inflicts $(25 + 10 \times SM)$ damage points. The damage is illusory, and has no effect on objects. However the target is convinced it is real and might very well die. Like the "Ice Shards" spell, a mage capable of casting "Lightning" will not be affected because he knows that it is an illusion.

Prince

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: individual
 Duration: $15 + (5 \times SM)$ minutes
 Dance: 1 minute

The mage suddenly has the aura of a very important personage in the region, someone that reigns over hundreds of people. Anyone approaching the caster will be very impressed by his aura and will act in a respectful manner. This spell works even on those that know they are under a mage's spell. They simply presume that they previously misjudged the Eclipsist, and that the time has come to rectify their beliefs. The caster's appearance does not change, just the way other people see him.

Perfect Connivance

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: one demon
 Duration: until the end of the connivance

Dance: 5 rounds

With the help of this spell, the mage creates a connivance on his own terms, in such a manner that he can obtain exactly what he wants for the minimum charge a demon would ask for the service. If the demon or the advocatus diaboli were to discover the existence of this spell, it would constitute a breach of the contract, with all the usual consequences, even if the payment had been made.

♣ False Bridge

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight

Duration: 5 rounds

Dance: 5 rounds

This spell creates the illusion of a bridge that can be crossed by the Eclipsist and the people of his choosing. Those that are not approved to cross will fall if they try. Variations of this spell create doors, spiked pits or walls.

♣ Chimera

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: 1 mile/100-yard radius

Duration: one week

Dance: 6 hours

The Eclipsist creates a perfect illusion, of the desired

shape and size. The only limitation is that he must have already seen the constituent elements. People confronted by the illusion are convinced it is real. If, for example, a castle were created, people could visit it. Witnesses would be convinced they had seen the visitors enter the buildings.

♣ Create Familiar

Obedience: Eclipsist

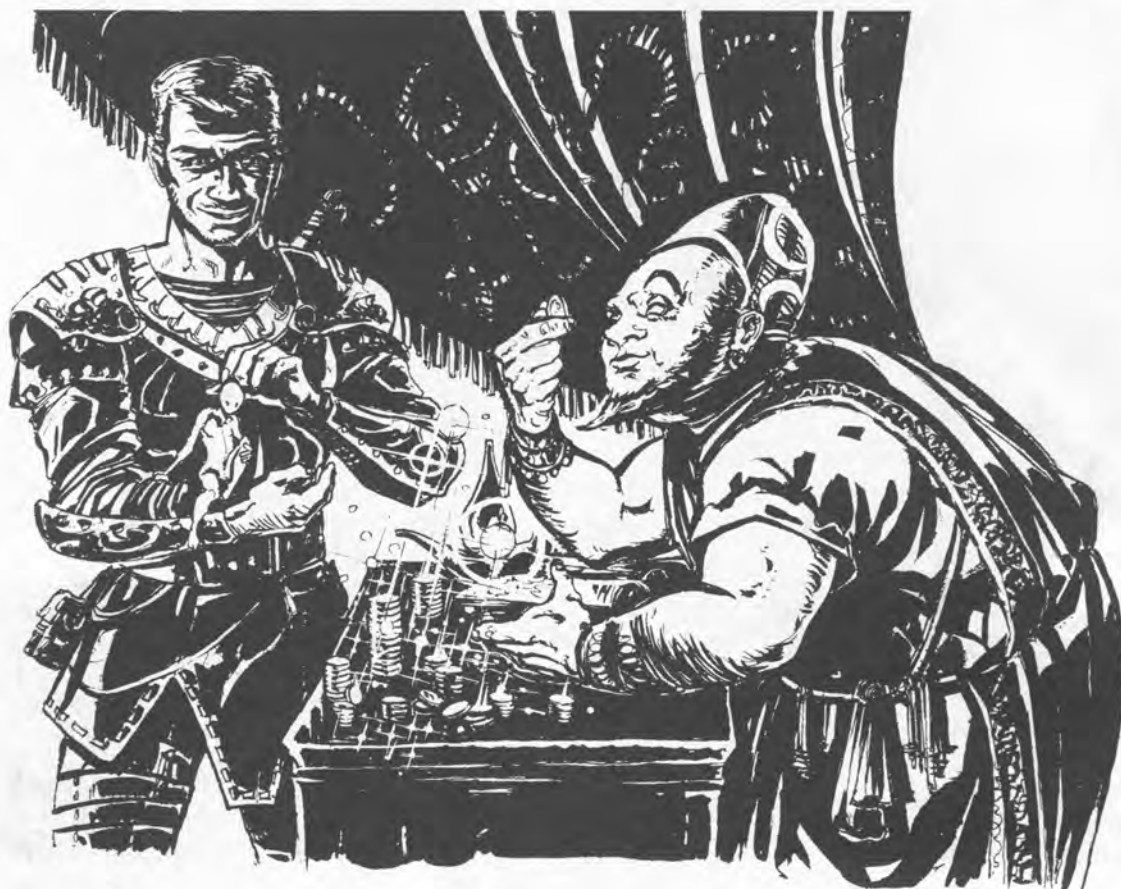
Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact/one animal

Duration: until the death of the animal or the mage

Dance: 6 hours

This spell transforms a normal animal (not a Prodigy), into a familiar. The creature does not need to be trained. It will instantly become very close to the mage, understanding his thoughts instinctively. The familiar will not want to risk its own life for the mage, but it can be convinced or bribed (usually with food). The Eclipsist will be able to use his familiar's senses and see through its eyes (up to WIL x 100 yards). The experience of the animal's amazing sense of smell and piercing vision may in the beginning be disturbing to the mage. The animal can be of any size, though small creatures are preferable because they are easier to hide. Apart from a certain affection between the familiar and the mage, there is no other particular bond that ties them together. Only one familiar at a time is permitted.



ECLIPSIST SPRITE CENSOR

You have made mystery a way of life, and you live in a world of shadows and secrets. When you intervene as a Censor, it is usually under illusions or in disguise. When one is, like you, an important Censor, one cannot abide publicity. Your nickname is "the hawk-mage", referring to the feathers that you leave behind wherever you go.

Your closest friends that know your secret often tell you that you exaggerate and are rather paranoid. But they do not know what your job as a Censor entails. Enforcing Ciphred laws is a very dangerous business. You are devoted and very serious, never taking things lightly. Any sign becomes a warning of danger that you may have to overcome. Your Dancer is hidden inside your leather doublet. A dagger in one hand, you cloak yourself in the darkness of the night, spying on your competitors and unmasking your enemies.

Origin: Urganmand

Race: Sprite **Sex:** male

Age: 44 **Height:** 3'5" (SIZ -1)

Weight: 85 lbs. **MV:** 2

Attributes

Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0 **Body Bonus:** +1

AGility: 7 **PERception:** 7

STRength: 3 **STAMina:** 5

Spirit: 1/0 **Spirit Bonus:** +1

INTelligence: 9 **WILLpower:** 9

Soul: 1/0 **Soul Bonus:** +1

CHARisma: 6 **CREativity:** 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - **ASC:** 9

MEL: 6 **AIM:** 7

HP: 42 **SWT:** 14

DB: -1 **CWT:** 21

Fortune points: 2

Flame power: none

Perfidity: 0

Darkening: 0

Skills

Trials: Weapons (sword) 5, Weapon (bow) 5, Alertness 5, Dodge 5

Rogue: Disguise 6, Intrigue 5, Legerdemain 3, Stealth 7

Society: Etiquette (mages) 4, Fast-talk 7, Traditions (Urganmand) 9

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 4, Alphabet (cryptic) 8, Astronomy 5, Language (urgamish) 9, Law 6, Plant lore 5, Season (spring) 5

Occult: Cipher-sorcery (spe: laws) 7, Dancer Lore 8, Resonance (Eclipsist) 8

Seasoning Powers

The Sap

Assets and Flaws

Censor, Ascendancy Aura, Iron Will, Paranoia

Combat

Initiative: 15, sword 15, arc 19

Melee attack: sword 13

Ranged attack: arc 13 **Dodge:** 13

Parry: sword 12 **Ranged defense:** 6

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam +DB	SIZ	Range
Short sword	0	+1	0	+2 (I/S)	-1	-
Sprite bow	+4	0	0	+2 (I)	-2	40 yards

Armor: full leather (penalty 0, prot. 2).

Ascendancy

ASC 9 **REsonance** 8

Dancer Lore 8 **Ascendancy APT:** 19

Dancer Mem. **Asc. b.** **Emp.** **Sta.**

Galifari 24 +1 4 6

Typical quote: "You do not need to know my name. You know who I am. Or you can guess, since I entered through the window. I am the hawk-mage. Ylender sends me. Judgment has been passed on your crimes: you are condemned not to use Ascendancy for one year and a day. So you have the choice, kindly give me your Dancer or prepare yourself for death. Do not even think that there is an escape."

♣ Spontaneous Combustion

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 3 rounds

The mage touches the bare chest of the target, which is filled with a sensation of heat that soon becomes unbearable. In two rounds the victim faints, sparing him the terrible sight of his body burning itself from the inside and leaving only ashes. This spell is not an illusion. Its origin is a mystery as it is not consistent with the typical repertoire of an Eclipsist. There is no way to escape this spell, apart from preventing the mage from touching your chest.

♣ Blind Puppet

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one person

Duration: 1 year

Dance: 1 day

Once under the influence of this spell, the target acts on the mage's desires. He can make the victim do anything, apart from an action endangering his own life. The victim is convinced he is acting on his own impulses, and is not conscious of being under the caster's influence. He even ignores the mage's existence, as if he cannot see him. If one mentions the presence of a strange person, constantly whispering in his ear, the victim will think that the Eclipsist is a mere ser-

vant or someone of no real importance. He will deny receiving orders from the caster.

☛ Phoenix

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 10 rounds

The Eclipsist calls an enormous illusory bird, followed by a trail of flames, which dives upon the chosen targets. The victims lose 30 HP (the armor counts as protection) and are exposed to a fire of VIR 15 for two rounds. As usual, this damage does not affect non-living matter, and a mage capable of calling a phoenix is completely resistant to this spell (but will enjoy the magnificent sight of the giant bird).

☛ Magical prison

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: 100 yards/a square of 10 x 10 yards

Duration: 1 hour

Dance: 2 rounds

The Dancer sparks gather to form a cage. Its bars shine and sizzle with energy. Touching the bars does no damage, but provokes excruciating pain. It is practically impossible to escape the cage, without using another magical method (or counter-magic).

☛ Eclipsist Resurrection

Obedience: Eclipsist

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 dead person

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 minute

The Eclipsist gives life back to a dead body no older than a month (the time limit may vary depending the state of the corpse). A new soul animates the body. All the wounds that killed him are healed (but he may remain in a coma for some time). The new being will not know what he is doing or where he is. He suffers from very deep amnesia. However, he remembers the language of his former body, and the basics of social interaction. If the former occupant was an Inspired, the new one will have a Flame, but he will have to develop it from the beginning again, as if he had just received it. Some seasonling mages suspect that these Flames come directly from the Spiritcore, and that Eclipsist Resurrection might be the first step in a new method of finding Flames.



Obscurantism

INTRODUCTION

Because of their questionable practices, Obscurantists are the least numerous mages, yet they arouse a great deal of fascination inside the order and across the Realms. To a certain extent, the black stripe mages are the victims of the terror that they construct around themselves. It makes them respected and feared throughout Harmundia, but it also impedes their ability to communicate with their colleagues. Because of this self-inflicted social stigma, they seldom occupy important posts in the heart of the Cipher-sorcerer. Historically, the black stripe mages have been opposed to the Jornists, who hold the reins of magical education and who never hesitate to put up obstacles in the paths of future Torture adepts. Jornist schemes have rarely had significant impact on the Obscurantists, who are generally self-assured individualists.

OBSCURANTIST TRADES

Inside the order, Obscurantists often have a bad reputation and are frequently misunderstood. The suffering that they inflict on their Dancers disturbs the practice of Ascendancy by other obediences. However, they are often the best defense against threats to Harmundia, and can be lethal weapons, embarrassing but necessary to the Cipher-sorcerer. The Obscurantists are very conscious of this situation and take advantage of it, making the members of the order dependant of their help. It is rare to see an Obscurantist dean, but once an Academy is under the iron hand of the black stripe, its power shines immensely.

In the mundane world, Obscurantists profit greatly from their magical powers. They are well suited for a wide range of jobs including bodyguards, mercenaries and warrior-mages. Everybody agrees that if the Obscurantists were to declare war on the Cipher-sorcerer, their power would be destructive and unshakeable.

Note: Unlike the other obediences, those who choose the path of Torture can never turn back.

THE BLACK STRIPE

The Obscurantists establish a relationship with their Dancers based on suffering: the Torture. For them, no method is too extreme provided it produces the desired results from the tiny creatures of Shard. Questioning the morality of their acts is neither useful nor logical to them. Questioning weakens the mage, who becomes more vulnerable to the cruelty and innate harshness of the world. Obscurantists see the Eclipse as the final death of beauty and harmony. Mourning the Flamboyance is nice, but irrelevant. It is much more important to adapt oneself in order to survive, and one

of the best tools for adaptation is Ascendancy. Deep down, some Obscurantists are wounded by the near-destruction of Harmundia and the coming of Twilight, but rather than deal with the emotions directly they prefer to pass on this suffering to their Dancer. Obscurantists are not the sorts of people to associate with. Most of them have tragic flaws and complicated backgrounds – abusive parents, lost loves, long strings of failures, etc. – which make them extremely sensitive to Torture. By taking advantage of their own weaknesses and personality faults, and by reinforcing them with Torture, the mages create a potent link between themselves, their Dancers and Harmundia. This process is self-destructive and irreversible.

OBSCURANTIST SECRETS

- ◆ Many Obscurantists think that Luminaries are nothing more than very powerful Dancers. They are actually researching the possibility of performing Torture on them! The Inspired who are aware of this initiative see it as one of the most dangerous schemes of the Masque.
- ◆ Their obedience has an unusually high count of practitioners of Sorcery, the Dark Art of invoking demons with the help of Dancers (see AGONE rulebook p. 236). Some of the black stripe mages have devoted their entire lives to the restoration of this ancient magic, which remains largely unexplored. Linking their Dancer with demons has always been a source of fascination for the Obscurantists. They do not understand why the Cipher-sorcerer regards it as a deviant practice.
- ◆ A very ancient faction of Obscurantists believes that the Jornists have long plotted their extinction. This organization of “reformists” responds by committing terrorist acts targeting Jornist personalities and edifices. The Jornists have always denied such accusations and blamed them on Obscurantist trickery.

CORRUPTION

For Obscurantists, there is only one form of corruption: the influence of the Masque. Despite the common belief, black stripe mages are not more attracted to the Enemy than others – but the Master of Sham is more interested in them because of their practice of Torture. When an Obscurantist is infected with Perfidy, he is inclined to amuse himself by reconstituting dead bodies and spends time drifting through cemeteries, trying to communicate with the dead.

It is, however, impossible to deny the link between Obscurantists and the Darken. The black mages make good Invokers, who toil to preserve this dark art and dream that one day it will contribute to more advanced forms of Torture. Whenever an Obscurantist is taken by the Darkening, he becomes more introverted, rarely communicating with anyone. A darkened mage

starts by only addressing himself to mages of his own obedience, eventually feeling so detached from the world that he no longer feels any need to speak. He becomes convinced that no one understands him and that he has reached a higher plane of thought.

SHARD ADDICTION

The attitude of the Obscurantists toward the issue of shard addiction is very simple: they emphatically deny it. The black stripe mages openly declare that it would be absurd to think that a little bit of Shard could affect a true mage. This line of thinking stems from the Torture and their belief in their superiority to their Dancers. To a practitioner of Torture, anything that might make a Dancer believe that it is respected or feared could lead to the loss of Ascendancy. Though the black stripe mages prefer to ignore the addiction to Shard, they are subject to it, just like everyone else...

INTERACTIONS

Jornists: The white stripe mages are our mirror image. However, the mirror is broken, and Jornists are no longer capable of making anything reflect inside it. Their magic is weak and has no real power – cute tricks for children, nothing else.

Eclipsists: The gray stripe mages do not dare to go as far as they claim to. They would merit joining us, if only they would abandon their stupid fetish for neutrality in everything they do. And even as they are, they want too much power.

The Cipher-sorcerer: We do not feel very at ease in the heart of the Cipher-sorcerer. It was not created to support our vision of Ascendancy, and we feel that the order profits from our power without truly integrating us. But remember, without the order, the mundanes would have killed us centuries ago.

The Menace: As long as invocations are kept under control one cannot truly consider the Darken a danger. The Masque, however, is an enemy that we underestimate too often.



Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/area of effect: contact/1 living being

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 2 rounds

The Obscurantist projects a cloud of sparks in the direction of the target. Upon contact with the skin, each spark produces a tiny burn. The best protection is to cover oneself. The spell causes SM points of damage.

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/area of effect: individual

Duration: see below

Dance: 5 rounds

The mage has the power to spit acid. The spell lasts until the caster uses up the discharges (determined by the SM of the spell). The attack is resolved using weapon skill: Spit. The characteristics of this unusual weapon are:

Int. +2

Att. +1

Dam: Acid of POT 5

Range: STR feet

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/area of effect: line of sight/one person

Duration: 5 rounds

Dance: 1 round

This spell inflicts intense pain on the target. The caster determines the general area of the body where it is felt. The pain has no physical effect, apart from causing a -2 penalty on all actions the victim performs, -4 to actions that require the specified area.

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/area of effect: 20 yards

Duration: permanent

Dance: 3 rounds

Sparks projected in all directions by the Dancer transform into nasty insects – meat worms, flies, cockroaches, centipedes, moths, wasps, mosquitoes, etc. – that swarm over everything within a range of 20 yards, including the caster. The spell does no damage, but induces strong repulsion in all those in the area (and may create whole colonies of insects if they are allowed to breed).

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/area of effect: 50 yards/a 10 yards radius

Duration: 5 minutes

Dance: 10 rounds

This spell creates a zone of complete darkness, inside which no light is capable of existing or penetrating. Everyone inside suffers a -10 penalty, including the Obscurantist. From the outside, it is impossible to distinguish anything inside the zone. Demons are not affected by the darkness. In fact, they feel quite good inside.



♣ Demonic Assistance

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: line of sight/one demon
Duration: 1 hour
Dance: 10 rounds

The Obscurantist is viewed as an eminent person by the demons. In his presence and as long as he watches them, their Density increases by 5 + SM of the spell and their Opacity increases by one point. The Demons have confidence in the friendly smile of the mage, making them less dangerous to him. But with demons, nothing is certain.

♣ Major Pain

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: line of sight/one person
Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 2 rounds

Great pain is inflicted on a chosen part of the body of the target. During the next round, the victim has no power over the affected part and must immediately make a WIL roll against DIF 20. If he fails, he faints. If he succeeds, he endures a penalty of -4 on all his actions until the end of the confrontation with the caster – simply thinking about the pain he has just endured is enough to cow him.

♣ Hatred

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: line of sight/one target
Duration: 1 hour
Dance: 1 minute

The target is overwhelmed by an intense feeling of hatred toward one person of the caster's choosing. According to his nature, the target may attack the target or try to overcome the emotion. In either case, he must succeed on a WIL roll against DIF 10 as long as he is in the presence of the hated being. The victim may be conscious that the hatred overcoming him is unnatural, especially if such a feeling has no reason behind it. To understand this, he must take time to analyze his feelings, which is difficult to do when consumed by hate...

♣ Gush of Flames

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: a 10 yards long cone with a 2 yard diameter

Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 5 rounds

The Obscurantist concentrates the Dancer sparks in his hands for 5 rounds. Then he suddenly releases them, creating a gush of flames in front of him that has the shape of a cone, hitting everything in its range. The fire is POT 15. Flammable materials will burn, though it is possible to extinguish it with water or sand.

♣ Reduction

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: 5 yards/one target
Duration: 1 hour
Dance: 15 rounds

The target of the spell suddenly starts shrinking. His size and weight are reduced in a matter of seconds. Technically, his SIZ is reduced by 1 point + 1 for each 5 points of SM obtained during the casting of the spell. The target's HP and MV diminish according to the new size (use the table of p. 100 of the AGONE rulebook to calculate them). If his SIZ falls below -3, the victim may even be squashed like an insect....

♣ Repulse Life

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: line of sight/every living being
Duration: 1 minute
Dance: 1 round

The Obscurantist's eyes become blood red. This gaze is so horrific that the people he looks at must roll WIL against DIF 20 or run away. Animals do not even try to resist and flee as soon as they can. Even plants withdraw from the mage's path. Demons and creatures of the Masque are not in the least affected by this spell, but rather see even greater charm in the Obscurantist.

♣ Shadows of the Damned

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 15
Range/area of effect: line of sight/1 target
Duration: permanent
Dance: 1 day

The victim of this spell sees light diminish progressively around him. Little by little, in the space of one month, he sees his world become a perpetual dusk, then night in a year, and total darkness in three years. The victim is at the heart of a sphere of darkness that will never cease its progression. At first, the shadow projects only a few inches around the victim, then one yard, and finally a radius of four or five yards. The victim can do nothing against the progression of this spell, but a successful roll of Demonology give a bonus of 2 to 5 to determining when the final phase will begin. Only very powerful magic can reverse this effect, such as the Jor-nist spell "Soothe Curse".

♣ Goodbye

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: individual
Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 1 round

The Obscurantist kills his Dancer and then disappears. He is instantly teleported to a location of his choice, where he previously shed the Dancer's blood. There is

no limit to the range of this spell, and it always works. If something already occupies the space where the mage appears, he will materialize beside or above the obstacle, or will displace it.

♣ Critical Blow

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: line of sight/one target
Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 5 rounds

The target immediately suffers the effects of a Critical Wound, but without any loss of HP. The seriousness of the wound is not determined by a die roll, but by the SM of the spell. A SM of 5 results in an effect of 5 on the Critical Wound table selected by the Obscurantist. An SM greater than 10 allows the Obscurantist to choose any effect from the table. The consequences are applied exactly as if the blow were already inflicted, the horrible wound appearing immediately on the victim. It is a "normal" wound, which will heal as per the usual rules.

♣ Destroy the Spirit

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: line of sight/one target
Duration: permanent
Dance: 1 minute

The sparks engendered by the Dancer hit the victim on the forehead. Part of his mind is invaded by painful sensations, repulsive impressions, and absurd and nasty thoughts. If the victim succeeds a WIL roll against DIF 25, he loses one skill of the caster's choice (it must be learned again from the beginning). If the WIL roll is failed, the spell attacks the foundations of his mind. The victim then loses 1 point in one of the Spirit attributes (victim's choice), plus 1 point for every 5 points of SM obtained when the spell was cast. If one of the attributes falls to 0 in this manner, the victim ends up a vegetable.

♣ Mental Slavery

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: one target
Duration: 1 day
Dance: 1 hour

This spell requires a lock of hair from the target. Once under the effect of the spell, he loses all control over his emotions, and the mage can dictate his acts and impose emotions at any time. He may choose, for example, to overwhelm the victim with desperation or even intense sexual desire. The Obscurantist must follow the victim in order to know what he is doing and therefore react accordingly or, if he feels mischievous, he can also dictate impulses arbitrarily from a remote location. In the very particular community of Obscurantist mages, "programming" violent emotions at distance is seen as bad

taste. This spell has no limit in distance and may only be broken by destroying the hair of the victim or some other magical method.

♣ Dancer Curse

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: one target
Duration: 1 hour
Dance: 15 rounds

This ignominious spell simply inflicts the great torments that the Dancer endures on the victim. To be able to cast it, the mage must have a piece of fabric from a garment of the victim, which he uses to dress his Dancer. Wounds inflicted on the Dancer will appear on the body of the target. If the Dancer is imprisoned, the victim will feel trapped; if it is killed, the victim will also die. Few mortals are able to endure as much pain as a Dancer, so if the Obscurantist desires, he may kill his victim without killing the Dancer. The victim must succeed on a roll of STA against DIF 15. If the roll fails, he dies painfully.

♣ Create Familiar

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 20
Range/area of effect: contact/1 living being
Duration: until death parts them
Dance: 1 day

This spell transforms any living being into the mage's familiar. It can be cast upon a human or a seasonling. To cast it, the mage must kill his Dancer, and mix its blood with that of the target, who becomes an extension of the mage himself. The familiar will obey his master in everything, without question, to the best of his abilities. The Obscurantist acquires the senses of his familiar and can command him from a distance (up to WIL miles) by simply concentrating. He can only have one familiar at a time.

♣ Excruciating Pain

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 25
Range/area of effect: line of sight/1 living being
Duration: instantaneous
Dance: 2 rounds

This spell inflicts indescribable pain on its victim, not limited to a certain part of the body. The victim must roll WIL against DIF 25; if the roll fails, his heart stops and he dies. If the roll succeeds, he faints for the next ten minutes.

Patches of Darkness

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 25
Range/area of effect: contact/a zone of 400 sq. yards
Duration: until the patch is used once
Dance: 5 minutes

OBSCURANTIST NOTARY OF THE MERCENARY REPUBLIC

You are the hand of Justice – its dark servant. You are often called upon to certify contracts, sealing agreements and registering deals. The Cipher-sorcerer seal is a complete guarantee in most of the Twilight Realms. The most important part of your work begins when one of the parties breaks a contract. You intervene by punishing the guilty and tracking down those that thought they could deceive the order. Of course, you must cooperate with the authorities of the realms, for you are here to assist them in their task. However, without you, the guilty would go unpunished. Like a dark angel hovering over those that would do wrong, your wrath stops all transgressions. Your Dancers, whipped and bleeding, are the swords of Justice, slicing the destinies of the guilty.

Origin: Mercenary Republic
Race: human **Sex:** male
Age: 30 **Height:** 5'8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 145 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes **Flame:** 1/0

Body: 1/0 **Body Bonus:** +1
AGility: 7 **STRength:** 7
PERception: 7 **STamina:** 6

Sprit: 1/0 **Spirit Bonus:** +1
INTelligence: 6 **WILLpower:** 9

Soul: 1/0 **Soul Bonus:** +1
CHARisma: 6 **CREativity:** 7

Secondary Attributes

ART: - **ASC:** 9
MEL: 7 **AIM:** 7
HP: 48 **SWT:** 16
DB: +1 **CWT:** 24

Fortune points: 2

Skills

Trials: Weapon (whip) 8, Alertness 7, Dodge 5, First Aid 2, Ride 5, Survival 2

Rogue: Hunt 7, Search 3, Stealth 8
Society: Eloquence 5, Fast Talk 5, Traditions (Mercenary Republic) 6
Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 4, Geography 2, Language (Mercerin) 6, Language (Keshite) 5, Language (Urgamish) 2, Law 7
Occult: Cipher-sorcery 4, Dancer lore 6, Harmony 1, Resonance (Obscurantist) 7

Assets and Faults

Multiple Dancers, Creative mage
 Headstrong

Combat

Initiative: 15, whip 14
Melee attack: whip 16
Dodge: 5
Parry: whip 14
Ranged defense: 2

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam + DB	SIZ
Whip	-1	0	-2	+1 (S)	0

Armor: partial chain mail (penalty -8, prot. 11)

Magic

ASC: 9 **RESonance:** 7
Dancer Lore: 6 **Ascendancy APT:** 19/17

Dancer	Memory	ASC Bonus	Empathy	End.
Ananke	24	+3	4	5
Nemesis	18	+2	2	6

Typical quote: "Tremble, stupid mortal, tremble! I am your loss – the sign of your last hour. Remember, at Redmoon one month ago, you signed a pact. You have broken it, and now it has become your death sentence. You thought you could toy with the Cipher-sorcerer, but we are everywhere. I have been following you for the past two days and have seen that you are not repentant. Can you smell the reek of death around you? My Dancers are impatient; they cannot wait for your pain to join theirs. The night will be long. Enjoy it while you can, for it will be your last."

This spell creates and hides "demon holes". These tiny particle of Darkness are generally hidden behind paneling, a painting or some other place that does not get much light. The mage simply has to perform the ritual again in another place to enable the passage of the demon from one Darkness patch to another. The demon may enter through the hole, or simply spy on the chosen place. Of course, he also need to Invoke the demon, the spell doesn't provide it. It may attack or hide, according to the Obscurantist's desires, and according to the restrictions of the connivance.

Obscurantist Resurrection

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 25
Range/area of effect: contact/1 dead person

Duration: WIL of the target in hours OR permanent (see below)

Dance: 1 round

This spell brings a dead body back, but only as a parody of its former self. The soul of the body is artificially attached to it, and will only remain so for a few hours unless the appropriate treatment is applied (INT + Obscurantist Resonance, DIF 20). If the soul and the body are reunited, the being may live once again as it used to, though with constant feelings of dislocation, suicidal impulses, and so on. This spell works on Inspired.

Sculpting

Obedience: Obscurantist
Threshold: 25
Range/area of effect: contact/1 living being

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 hour

The target of this spell must be immobile, because he is rarely willing. The mage must also prepare surgical implements. The Dancer's sparks fall continually within the area of the operation and are the only source of light. This spell allows the caster to "transform" a body: skin may be cut and stuck somewhere else, bones may be withdrawn and realigned in unusual positions and places, etc. The only limitations are the twisted imagination of the mage and the resistance of the victim. The victim endures 1 point of damage each time something is pulled off and another when it is stuck back on.

♣ Steal Life

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 25

Range/area of effect: a Dancer

Duration: permanent

Dance: 1 round

This is one of the rare spells allowing the Obscurantist to heal. He kills his Dancer and the target of the spell recovers any HP that he had lost plus one (i.e. his maxi-

mum HP are raised by 1). This spell does not heal Critical Wounds and does not stop hemorrhages.

♣ Mad Puppet

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 25

Range/area of effect: one target

Duration: one order

Dance: 1 day

For this spell, the mage must possess a hand-written text by the victim. The Dancer follows its contours and "writes" a unique order in sparks over the original text. The order may be general or very precise. The mind of the victim then goes into an unconscious state, where he is simply driven by old habits and urges, until the moment comes to accomplish his task. It is unstoppable, and it is extremely difficult to know when one is a victim of it. Few people can claim to have gotten rid of this curse before it was too late. This spell was used on Supreme General Amrod during the Roundrock Campaign of 1415 to make him invade Janrenia and commit unspeakable atrocities in invaded territories.





3 ~ Choreography

minence,

You already know that Choreography is the orchestration of a ballet of Dancers in order to create incredible magical effects... But do you know that only Inspired can use such methods? Only their Flames can resonate with beings of Shard such as Dancers. Choreographers are mages who master this art. They are rare and extremely powerful. Dullen members of the Cipher-sorcerer are unable to acquire this talent. I advise you to read the following for more information.

The Choreographer

The Choreographer is a different type of mage. His understanding and his use of Dancers are unique.

BECOMING A CHOREOGRAPHER

Choreography is a branch of Ascendancy that can only be performed by Inspired. It is shrouded in an aura of mystery within the Cipher-sorcerer. Members of the Order consider it the most difficult practice to master, and apprenticeships are reserved for only their finest students. The mystic aura is nurtured by the Inspired of the Cipher-sorcerer, who teach Choreography to other Flame bearers. They form an archaic and xenophobic clique within the Order and use this façade to avoid the need to provide explanations of their activities to the Dullen mages. They are aware that their art would become extremely dangerous if it were used by the servants of the Masque, and are thus especially mistrustful.

Any Inspired who has studied magic in an academy can learn Choreography. The only requirement is to be recognized as a diligent student by a Choreographer and his peers, but this is extremely rare. Usually, the Inspired mages are noticed for their wisdom, their will to fight the Masque or their understanding of Dancers.

PHILOSOPHY

Despite what many may think, Choreography is not a superior level of Ascendancy. It is, in fact, a different approach to Dancers. Whereas most mages only bond with one Dancer, Choreographers bond with a group of Dancers. Their task is to teach their Dancers that they are a community, centered on the mage.

It is a different philosophy of Ascendancy that is only available to Inspired mages because their Flames connect them to these beings of Shard. Once, all Dancers were Flames. Choreographers awaken this awareness when

BECOMING A CHOREOGRAPHER

The prerequisites are: possessing of at least 6 Dancers, having at least a 9 in Ascendancy, Resonance and Dancer lore, and bearing a Flame.

Then the Inspired mage must find a master. The problem here is that the majority are completely paranoid and hate teaching their arcane art. It is, of course, impossible to obtain help from the Cipher-sorcerer, which spends a good deal of effort trying to stop the spread of this dangerous technique. The difficulties of learning Choreography for mages are as great as those of learning Ascendancy for non-mages. Nevertheless, Choreography is so highly regarded that there is no punishment for those who teach their art without the agreement of the order. The Cipher-sorcerer generally assents if the student is a member of the organization and continues to respect the charter.

they bond with their Dancers. Choreographers have a comprehensive perception of their group. Their Dancers are autonomous and live in harmony with each other, thanks to their common relationship with their Choreographer. Nobody says that this relationship has to be healthy, however. Obscurantists can use Choreography too.

THE RULES OF CHOREOGRAPHY

♣ Dancers

The bond that links a Choreographer to his Dancers is the source of his magic. The mage uses spells that are hidden in the subconscious of his Dancers. He "talks" to their instinct and invites them, each time he casts a spell, to share a common impulse. Every Ascendancy spell is buried deep inside each Dancer. Individually, this memory is too basic to create magic, but during the collective trance of Choreography the Dancers can unite these fragments to produce a magical effect.

In game terms, once the Choreographic version of a spell has been learned by every Dancer, it is memorized the same way any other spell is. The group of Dancers behaves as a single Dancer. During character creation, the Choreographer creates only one Dancer with standard attributes. To simplify bookkeeping, these attributes are used both for rolls concerning the entire group or individual members of the group of Dancers.

♣ Spells

Technically, Choreography works the same way as Ascendancy. Moreover, Choreographic spells are similar to ordinary spells. The difference is that Choreographic spells affect more targets with much greater power.

♣ The Ascendancy APTitude

A Choreographer can control as many Dancers as his Ascendancy score multiplied by his Flame score. His Ascendancy APTitude is determined the same way as for ordinary mages, except that the particular bond connecting him to his Dancers does not enable him to use his Ascendancy bonus. A group



of Dancers reacts together to the direction of the Choreographer. Instead of adding the Dancers' Ascendancy APTitude to his ASC and his Dancer lore or Resonance, the Choreographer adds the number of Dancers in the ballet divided by three (rounded up), to it.

SUMMARY

Maximum number of Dancer =
ASC x Flame

Choreographer's ASC APT =
ASC + lower of Resonance
and Dancer lore + (number of Dancers/3)

Choreographic Spells

There are no specific Choreographic spells. They are normal spells revised in the following manner: the range,

the area of effect, the number of targets, the duration and the effects of the spell (damage, poison virulence, number of healed HP, and other quantitative effects) are multiplied by the number of Dancers.

Example: a Jornist who possesses 11 Dancers could heal up to 11 targets for (SM + 10) x 11 restored HP with "Minor Healing". The Threshold of the spell remains the same, as well as the range and the duration (you cannot multiply "at contact" or "instantaneous").

An Eclipsist Choreographer who possesses 7 Dancers could cast a "Magic Alarm" on 7 rooms of 700 sq. ft. each for 7 weeks.

The most dangerous Choreographers are quite certainly Obscurantists. One could obtain, with 10 Dancers, a "Burning Sphere" 30 feet in diameter that could wound its target from 900 yards away for a total damage of (SM + 20) x 10.

Choreographers can, indeed, become extremely powerful mages. The EG will have to explain to his players that if one of them becomes a Choreographer, they will be among the greatest mages of Harmundia, and one of the most dangerous. All mages do not seek such powers. Ultimately, Choreographers are rare, extremely rare...





4~Assets & Faults

ages are complicated characters, and interesting assets and faults are one way to differentiate them from common mortals. The ones listed below supplement those provided in the AGONE rulebook. The EG is encouraged to include them in his campaign.

Assets

SPARK SHIELD (3)

Your affinity with Dancers is such that the sparks slide off you instead of hitting you. When you make a resistance roll (ASC x 2), the DIF is 10, not 15 as it is for other mages.

USED TO DANCERS (2)

You lived in a region where Dancers were relatively common. Very early on, you learned how to understand them and to analyze their behavior. You gain +1 to your Dancer lore (but the maximum is still 10).

FAST MAGIC (4)

You have a very strong bond with your Dancer. The length of the Dance in the spells you cast is divided by 2 (if this results in a duration of half a round, the Dance will have a duration of one round, but you'll have an additional bonus of +10 to your initiative). On the other hand, you suffer a -2 penalty to the die roll on your spells when you use another Dancer. This asset is incompatible with the fault "Slow Magic".

CREATIVE MAGE (3)

You have a gift for conceiving original magical effects. You add your ASC to your intuitive APT, for a base of CRE + ASC + (Resonance or Dancer Empathy). See AGONE rulebook p. 201 for the rules on intuitive magic.

DUAL OBEDIENCE (3 OR 5)

You have a certain affinity for a second obedience. You are allied to various mages of this obedience and are capable of using their spells without penalty. The Jor-nist/Obscurantist combination is extremely rare (costing 5 creation points).

IMAGINARY FRIEND (4)

You grew up in the company of a Dancer. At the time your parents thought you had an imaginary friend, but this friendship has enabled you to establish a unique link with Dancers. You gain +1 in Resonance and +1 in Dancer Lore.

INDEPENDENT DANCER (VARIES)

One of your Dancers is especially autonomous. It can cast spells that it has memorized without your help. It must roll Empathy $\times 2$ + Ascendancy Bonus + 1d10 to successfully cast the spell. You still need to give it your permission to act, but this might be in vague terms; for example, "Cast spells to protect me when I'm asleep". In all other ways, it acts like any other Dancer. The Dancer will only take the initiative of casting spells in extreme danger. It will cast a spell on its own to assist or save you, for example casting a healing spell if you are unconscious or casting an attack spell on someone approaching you while you are asleep. The cost of this asset is 3 for Jornists, 4 for Eclipsists and 5 for Obscurantists.

ASCENDANCY AURA (VARIES)

You are especially impressive to Dancers. Your aura of authority is so strong that nearby mages find it difficult to practice Ascendancy. All those wanting to use a Dancer in a 15 yards radius around you see the Thresholds of their spells increased by 5.

This asset costs 4 for Jornists, 3 for Eclipsists and 1 for Obscurantists.

Faults

SLAPDASH MAGIC (3)

You have a tendency to overestimate your Ascendancy abilities, and you often make blunders, while believing that you are doing well. When one of your spells is unsuccessful, the negative SM is multiplied by 2, increasing the chances of a fumble.

UNDEMANDING MAGE (2)

You are incapable of reaching excellence, always satisfied with mediocre results. You cannot obtain a SM of more than 5 when using Ascendancy. If your SM is ever greater than 5, all the excess points are ignored.

INTERNALIZED MAGIC (1)

Your relationship with your Dancer is so exclusive that all awareness of your surroundings fades away. When you use Ascendancy, you never gain bonuses from the surroundings (Shard Value, esoteric architecture, etc.). On the other hand, penalties (presence of a cat, etc.) are also cancelled.

SLOW MAGIC (5)

You like to take your time when you use Ascendancy. The duration of the Dance is doubled, and if you want

to perform instantaneous magic, the Threshold of the spell is multiplied by 3 instead of 2. This fault is incompatible with the asset "Fast Magic".

ACADEMIC MAGIC (3)

You have no sense of innovation in your magic. You simply apply what you have learned. Intuitive magic is extremely difficult for you. Multiply the Threshold of spells you try to reproduce in intuitive magic by 3.

SPARK ATTRACTOR (3)

Your link with Dancers does not protect you from magic. On the contrary, you are even more sensitive to spells. You do not have the same magical resistance as most mages (ASC $\times 2$). You use the "Resistance for non-mages" rules (AGONE rulebook p. 199) and your WIL $\times 2$ roll suffers an additional penalty of -3. Your resistance to opuses and other products of the Magical Arts is normal. To compensate, add one point to your ASCendancy APT.

ENEMY OBEDIENCE (3)

You have a conflict with one of the other obediences of the Cipher-sorcerer. Their way of practicing Ascendancy is very alien to you. Everything related to this obedience causes problems: many mages have fallen out with you personally, and casting spells from this obedience is very difficult for you (the Threshold is at +10 rather than +5, +15 instead of +10, etc.).

STRICT OBEDIENCE (5)

The manner in which you employ your Dancers is very rigid, completely conforming to the principles dictated by your obedience. You are unable to cast spells of other obediences, even with intuitive magic.



THE CIPHER-SORCERER OFFICES

This is a list of Offices that a mage may buy at creation. Their costs are listed next to their names, followed by the minimum skills needed to be worthy of the office. The office of High Mage is not included. This is not an oversight – it is the kind of position that must be gained during play, as a result of many long game sessions involving complex political machinations.

Master 3

Ascendancy 7, Cipher-sorcery 7, Dancer Lore 8, Eloquence 7

Dean 3

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery 7, Dancer Lore 7, Resonance 8, Stewardship 7

Censor 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery (spe: the Charter) 6, Dancer Lore 6, Resonance 8, Law 6

Reiter 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery 5, Dancer Lore 6, Dodge 7, Resonance 6, Weapon 7

Acrobat 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery 5, Dancer Lore 8, Hunt 8, Resonance 6

Archivist 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-Sorcery 5, Dancer Lore 7, Resonance 6, One Knowledge skill 8

Sycophant 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery 6, Dancer Lore 7, Resonance 7, Stealth or Intrigue 8

Tribune 5

Ascendancy 8, Cipher-sorcery 8, Dancer Lore 6, Resonance 6, Diplomacy or Eloquence 8



Book Three



The Book of Concordists



1 ~ The Magical Arts

minence,

The most important legacies of the Flamboyance are the Free and Elder Arts. Even though they are reproductions of the Muses' creation of Har-mundia, mortals are not on an equal footing with the Muses, and the potency of the Magical Arts is very much limited by human imperfection. I know you agree with me that our brethren rarely understand the true powers and limitations of the Arts. I hope you will find all the information you need in the following texts to complete your arcane knowledge.

The Elder Arts

Despite the differences that separate the four Magical Arts, there are certain invariable elements that enable one to recognize an Elder Art opus, whatever its nature.

Elder Art opuses are permanent. Once they have been created, their effects are continuous unless they are damaged or destroyed. And even in these extreme cases, Elder Art opuses are particularly resistant to alteration. The most obvious example is Pictureworlds, some of which are over two thousand years old, immune to the passage of time.

Also, all Elder Art opuses take at least one month to produce, and creating a masterpiece takes several years. Any opus that requires such long creation times is classified as an Elder Art opus.

Finally, Elder Art opuses often require the coordinated efforts of many Concordists. Obviously the Thousand Towers of Lorgol are not the creation of just one genius architect. Unlike Free Arts, Elder Arts unite artists for unique creations. This last point is a cause of consternation for modern Concordists that study ancient secrets, for they can't fathom how the Flamboyant artists worked together instead of merely working "in parallel".

ELDER ARTS OPUSES

♫ Tune

Tune is one of the rare Arts to have never lost its Elder Art opuses. The challenge is actually performing them. A great Symphony can require three hundred Attuned, which is the current total of all Concordists in every Magical Art! It is therefore virtually impossible to perform these opuses, even the lesser ones. Modern Attuned have only been able to gather and perform fragments of these works. This limitation led to the development of Orchestra and Symphony (terms that some Concordists consider highly pompous, for they are but shadows of the true Flamboyant Symphonies and of the real

capabilities of those ancient orchestras). Another challenge is composing such an opus. Indeed, a great number of Attuned must gather for years of work that at best produce unharmonious opuses, and at worst, ineffective cacophonies.

The ancient Symphonies of the Flamboyance synthesized the magical capabilities of each performing instrument. The majority of them affected the mind or feelings; for example, inducing fits of anger or utter despair. When a Viol participated, Symphonies could also influence nature.

The symphonic fragments that modern Attuned perform may simply be elements of gigantic musical masterpieces that entertained their audiences by relating important events in such a way that the spectators experienced them on an emotional level. However, this theory is rejected by most Attuned.

In brief, Elder Tune opuses can no longer be performed because of the lack of Attuned.

♣ Shape

The Elder Art of Shape is used to craft artifacts. Most Shapers no longer know how to use these techniques, which allowed their ancestors to create the treasures and monuments of the Flamboyance.

Yet, in certain desolate regions of Harmundia, some extremely old Inspired continue to shape, cut and forge these marvels in their secluded workshops.

There are two branches of Elder Shape: one that works on inanimate objects and one that works on animate objects. Generally, inanimate objects require less effort to create but animate objects are more powerful.

Creating an artifact mainly consists of merging dream and reality. This process imbues the object with magical powers. Typically, the nature of these powers is derived from the original use of the object: a sword will enable its wielder to be more proficient, powerful or difficult to wound. In addition, the material from which the object is made helps determine its capabilities once it becomes an artifact.

SHARD

Shard is extremely rare. Today it is worth over 500 GP per ounce. The most visible consequence of its rarity is the horde of treasure hunters that sack all Shard reserves without even noticing the numerous Remains they destroy in the process.

There are no obvious signs that enable the hunters to recognize this substance other than the emotions they feel in its presence. Therefore, Shard hunters often pull down old ruins and smash ancient objects only because they "feel" something. Then they try to sell the fragments of objects they find as if they were full of Shard. For more information about Shard, see the AGONE rulebook p. 189.

The exact artifact creation process is detailed in Book One, p. 29.

♣ Vista

The purpose of the Elder Art of Vista is to create worlds. It copies reality to such an extent that the copy can be more precise than the original. Elder Vista even enables the creation of realities that do not exist and have never existed.

The primary purpose of this Art is memory. The artists of the Flamboyance worked diligently to perpetuate memories of important events. Most scenes that are represented in Pictureworlds took place ages ago. Generally, characters encountered in Pictureworlds think they live during the Flamboyance and believe that visitors have come from other Pictureworlds. Many Painters actually wonder which Pictureworld is the true world. Some consider Harmundia to be merely the creation of a melancholy artist because the Painters would not have lost their knowledge of Pictureworlds in the true world. Whatever the truth may be, no one remembers how to create Pictureworlds.

SINISTUS ONTHEVERG'S OPUS

Painter and occasional humorist, Sinistus Ontheverg is a legend in his Art. Over one thousand years ago, he was one of the last living keepers of the secrets of Pictureworlds. He created a series of Pictureworlds that are in fact sinister traps. Instead of appearing in the painted scene, the hapless spectator arrives in some dreadful location from where there is no return – the Abyss, on a desert island, sixty feet over a volcano, in a closed grotto, in the middle of a desert, etc.

Someone who knows that this Pictureworld was a trap and who scratches off the first coat of paint could discover its true destination. Rumor has it that Sinistus Ontheverge concealed the secrets of his Art in his last opus. The problem is, which is the right painting? And who would dare damage a Pictureworld on a vague rumor?

♣ Scansion

Elder Scansion opuses affect past and future events.

For the most part, these monumental creations are now impossible to read. Due to the aging of the language in which they were written, their pronunciation and colloquial expressions have been forgotten. Moreover, because most of them were written one and a half millennia ago, the subjects of these texts are unfamiliar to modern scholars. Finally, they were written for the most erudite individuals, so modern Inspired are studying texts that even their ancestors had difficulty reading!

For all these reasons, the use of elder Scansion opuses is a difficult work of exegesis, interpretation and translation.

Moreover, Scanders are extremely cautious Concordists. They are aware that looking back on the past or into the future could have disastrous consequences they would be unable to control because of their lack of knowledge. Their research is thus done only in tiny steps, and one wonders if they will ever succeed in deciphering any complete works.

Of course, Scanders are even more cautious regarding the creation of new Elder Scansion opuses. They much prefer to explore the possibilities of Union and Fusion.

MASTER XIAN LANG

His silhouette is familiar to the protectors of the Great Wall. Each morning and each evening on the first day of the week, this old stunted spriggan, bent by the weight of his years, paces the endless rampart. On this day, all the Princean sentinels, from one end of the wall to the other, will swear to having greeted him even though no horse could span such a distance in a day. The old Concordist accomplishes this exploit by using unknown opuses. Princean army officers tend to keep an eye on the way the old spriggan salutes them. If he says "nice day for a battle", the Lyphanian hordes will attack during the week, but if he gives some other salutation, nothing important will happen.

Nobody is sure of his identity, but many Concordists suppose that he is Master Xian lang, a famous spriggan renowned for his knowledge of Scansion. He is believed to have created numerous Free Art opuses, including "Backtrack" and "I Shan't be There".

Poets gather in many cities that border the Great Wall. Each year they organize a popular poetry festival. The winner does not actually win anything except that he disappears for several months...

THE TOME OF THE ORACLE

Approximately fifty years ago, an eminent specialist of Elder Scansion made an extraordinary discovery in an ancient book. Hidden within the pages of a vast heroic tale, he found an extremely powerful opus. When he performed the opus, an image of himself appeared and warned him that an opus that he had not yet discovered would trap him in an inextricable network of temporal paradoxes. The Concordist disappeared soon after searching for this opus.

It was not the first time a careless Scander disappeared after using this tome...



The Free Arts

There is less to say regarding the Free Arts. Their powers are weaker but they can be performed more quickly. The most difficult Free Arts are Improvised Arts.

Improvisations are less powerful but more versatile versions of Magical Art opuses (see AGONE rulebook p. 216).

The effects of improvisation are limited by the nature of the Art being used. It is not possible to create a Flute opus with effects that usually require the Cittern, for example, even though they are both instruments.

Tune only affects the mind and each instrument has its own specialty: the Cittern manipulates it, the Flute dominates it, the Harp calms it and the Drum excites it. The Viol is an exception – it affects nature.

Shape can only affect inanimate matter, modeling it, changing it or destroying it.

Vista only affects the elements according to the seasons: growth, dampness and hope for Spring; anger, heat and violence for Summer; despair, decay and resignation for autumn; cold and death for Winter.

Finally, Scansion affects time and fate. It is used for traveling back in time and foreseeing events.

The improvised effects must fall under one of these descriptions. A Concordist who wants to obtain a magical effect must use the appropriate Art: if he tries to perform the improvised opus with another Art, it will fail or produce dangerous results.

Use existing opus descriptions in the rulebook and this sourcebook as guidelines for creating your own opuses.

New Opuses

CREATION PROCESS

Improvisation has had many significant consequences on the Magical Arts. By discarding the Elder Arts, Concordists lost some of their ability to create truly powerful opuses. It is thus extremely difficult nowadays to create opuses with Thresholds from 20 to 25. Today's opus creation methods are greatly influenced by the Improvised Arts, so creating a new opus usually involves altering an existing magical effect and a good dose of luck in order to obtain an interesting effect.

The AGONE rulebook details the rules for learning new opuses with the help of a mentor or an Elder Art opus (see page 217).

Concordists can create their own opuses and teach them to their disciples. To do so, the effects of the opus must be tested by Improvisation and must respect the following guidelines:

- ♦ The Improvised opus must have been successfully performed at least three times in the last month.

- ♦ IP equal to two times the opus' threshold must be spent.
- ♦ The Concordist must roll CRE + Magical Art against a DIF equal to the opus Threshold. Then his SM is compared to the table below in order to obtain the opus' creation time.

OPUS CREATION TIME

SM	Duration
-11 or less	1 year
-10 to -6	6 months
-5 to -1	2 months
0	1 month
1 to 5	2 weeks
6 to 10	1 week
11 or more	1 day

If this process is completed, the Concordist can add the opus to his others. From then on, the Concordist will no longer have to undergo the x 2 multiplier to perform the opus; he simply uses his Magical Art APT as with any other known opus.

Example: Alghar the ogre is an Attuned of the Cittern who has the following attributes: ART 9, Tune 8, Cittern 9, Tune APT 18, CRE 7, Improvisation 16. Alghar wants to create a Tune opus called "Mental Opacity" that would prevent mind reading for five minutes. The EG decides on a Threshold of 10 and a Measure of 1 minute, so the final DIF is 20. During the past month, Alghar performed his Improvised opus three times ($16 + 1d10$ against DIF 20). Now he spends 20 IP (two times the threshold) to complete the creation of the opus before attempting the final creation roll: 7 (CRE) + 8 (Tune) + $1d10$ against DIF 10 (threshold). This is an easy roll for Alghar who obtains a 5, for a total of 20 ($7 + 8 + 5$). His SM is 10, so he will be able to add "Mental Opacity" to his other opuses after a week's work.



Determining the Power of the Opus

The power of an opus is determined by its Threshold. The other parameters, such as Duration, Range, Target, Area of effect and Effect, depend on the given Threshold.

- ◆ Opuses with a Threshold of 10 are weak cantrips, generally limited to "proximity" or "individual" ranges. If they have powerful effects or if their duration is long, they usually have a drawback as well (any nasty side-effect which hinders the caster without seriously harming him will do).
- ◆ Opuses with a Threshold of 15 are intermediate level. They are often similar to Threshold 10 opuses except that they do not have drawbacks.
- ◆ Opuses with a Threshold of 20 have major effects: their Area of Effect can go beyond the usual 50 yards, the damage caused is severe, illusions are nearly perfect, etc. Their Range and Area of Effect are significant: fifty yards, line of sight, etc.
- ◆ Opuses with a Threshold of 25 are nearly limitless. They are rarely permanent but are still extremely powerful (frequently, numbers cannot portray their effects). The target simply dies, or he automatically succeeds in an action. In the same way, the Range and the Area of Effect may be in any known location.

SILENTINE, SHE WHO KNOWS

Silentine is an old black fey shaman, who lives hidden in the forest surrounding Arnel. She reigns over savage tribes of humans and seasonlings that also live in the forest. She has united these tribes thanks to her mastery of Concord. Some say, in addition to being an Attuned of the Viol, she is master of many instruments as well as other Magical Arts, notably Vista. Silentine is a famous specialist of Viol and her students are now among the most knowledgeable Viol teachers.

She is no longer affected by the Call. There is gossip that her knowledge of Concord enabled her to defeat the aging process and even to rejuvenate.

As evidence of the existence of this fabled shaman, some put forward the mysterious phenomena that take place in the forest: unexpected snow, ice hurricanes, summer storms in the middle of winter, trails that disappear from one day to the next... For a time, the forest was home to a brigand encampment located a couple of hours' hike in from the edge. One day, all the brigands were found dead, skewered on an inextricable network of thorny branches.

THE HUNDRED STATUES OF THE SISTERS OF MEZDI

Amidst all the trickeries of the Sisters of Mezdi, there is one that catches the attention of all the Shapers in the Twilight Realms: the Hundred Statues.

The statues change places at will (often jumping to the most unexpected sites). These statues portray a satyr sculpting a statue of himself that is sculpting a statue of himself, and so on. Legend has it that Novostimor the satyr, master Shaper, discovered the deepest secrets of his Art and became one of the statues on which he labored so obsessively.

Legend also says that anyone who finds the right statue and figures out how to release Novostimor will have the privilege of speaking with him. The old satyr knows a lot of secrets, among them the opus "Animate Statue".

THE FOUNDERS

These four Concordists developed the Free Arts. It is said that during the Flamboyance, all the Concordists gathered to nominate the four most gifted, one from each Art. The prize granted the winners was immortality. (Many think this meant the immortality of the artworks, not one of the Concordists themselves.)

The last contest was held a few months before the Eclipse. The winners made themselves the champions of Inspiration and created techniques allowing for the perpetuation of the Magical Arts even should the Inspired become scarce.

After the Eclipse, they disappeared without a trace. Also called immortals, avatars, rememberers, and those-who-know, the Founders are at the center of more than a thousand fantastic legends.





2 ~ The Concordists

rethren,
Being a Concordist means first of all learning to handle Arts that have remained secret since the Masque brought about the Eclipse. Though secrecy should be a great strength, it is actually our greatest weakness. For to excel in the Arts one must practice as often as possible, ceaselessly develop one's talent, and constantly strive for Perfection. Art is usually an exclusive activity that leaves little, if any, time for other pursuits. The very perfection of an opus devised by one of our Elders is the best clue the Master of Sham can get about the whereabouts of one of our brethren. There are not many ways to find us, so a work of Art performed by a Concordist, who is by definition one of the best in his field, is a sign few minions of perfidy will overlook. The artist is tracked down, rooted out, and corrupted, even though it might only have been one of the Dullen who created a masterpiece through sheer luck... I beseech you, make good use of the knowledge I entrust to you. And above all, be cautious!

Generalities

THE DULLEN

For the Dullen, the Magical Arts are the stuff of legends. Tales are spun about extraordinary feats performed through the Arts in the time of the Flamboyance, but these are more than a millennia old. Nowadays, all most people actually see of Concord is the worn-out bard who passes through their village once in a while. The rest is the subject of stories told by the elders during long winter evenings.

When a Dull witnesses a magical effect of Concord, he or she is likely to think it is associated with Ascendancy, and show fearful respect by acting as though nothing happened.

THE CIPHER-SORCERER

Strangely, the members of this order are a great threat to Concordists. Mages pay attention to all magical happenings, but they have no knowledge beyond that of common people about the Magical Arts. As they cannot practice them, most think they are nothing but legends. Those that are a bit more aware think this form of magic – for it can be nothing but magic, the arts being but frivolous pastimes – was lost one-and-a-half millennia ago.

Confronted with a Magical Art effect, mages think it is at best the work of a charlatan trying to use the

Cipher-sorcerer's reputation for profit. This can cause various repercussions, including attempts to punish the insolent fellow or a request to the Cipher-sorcerer administration to designate a Censor to investigate.

The worst-case scenario is a mage witnessing a Magical Art effect and thinking it is an unknown spell. Then the Concordist is likely to be denounced as an illegal practitioner of magic. A Censor will be assigned to the case to find out who the mentor of this "renegade mage" is, and probably be ordered to eliminate the cause of the "infraction".

THE INSPIRED

Only Inspired can become Concordists, and thus Concord is on the path of extinction. Concordists have to help each other or they will lose one of their major advantages in the struggle against the Masque. The ongoing development of the Magical Arts should be a top priority for all Inspired. Unfortunately, there are ever fewer Inspired, and many know nothing about the Arts. Furthermore, directly fighting the Masque's intrigues is almost always more urgent than spreading the Magical Arts.

A long time ago, Concordists were organized into factions around the Arts they performed, some factions being subdivided into branches focused on specific aspects of their Art, like the seasons for Vista and the instrument families for Tune. Today the drastically reduced numbers have made these traditions obsolete. Gathering a company of Concordists is but a dream they all share.

Constrained to secrecy and solitude, Concordists are eager to associate with Inspired not versed in the Arts. But these Inspired rarely grasp the problems inherent in Concord, whereas another Concordist, even one studying another Art, will suffer from the same difficulties of striving for perfection and pursuing the Muses' work. Furthermore, in the small world of the Magical Arts, many stories circulate about orchestras of Attuned and the possibility of combining different Arts. All Concordists dream of rediscovering these enthralling magics, remnants of a time when everyone could perform the Arts, when the great Symphony opuses were composed.

THE MASQUE

Unlike Nyx, who doesn't care for the Arts, the Masque is highly interested in the capture and corruption of Concordists. The Tainted Arts being – along with the Snuffers (see AGONE rulebook p. 254) – among his most powerful weapons, he has long made hunting Concordists a top priority. Since his minions will not hesitate to abandon their current intrigues to concentrate on a Concordist that has attracted their notice, practicing the Magical Arts is all the more dangerous.

Population

A few numbers may help illustrate the terrible loneliness of the Concordists. Despite all their efforts to further the Magical Arts, less than a third of all Inspired are initiates. Worst yet, their numbers are dwindling. The way things are going, if the number of Inspired remains stable, fewer than a quarter of them will perform the Arts a century hence.

Today, the total Concordist population on the continent is distributed as follows:

- ◆ 120 Attuned, or a bit over twenty for each family. Fortunately, more than half of them are masters of multiple instruments.
- ◆ 40 Shapers.
- ◆ 90 Painters. Mainly seasonlings, who usually practice only one season. There are slightly more than twenty artists in each season.
- ◆ 35 Scanders. Some of them may use the foresight abilities of their Art to remain almost undetectable, so they might actually be a bit more numerous.

Tune

INTRODUCTION

There is growing intermingling between the Tune's instrument families. Less than two hundred years ago, every Attuned had a clear sense of belonging to one family rather than to the Tune itself, of being for example "of the Drum". Today, reduced numbers have destroyed this ancient tradition, though it survives in the common practice of indicating which instruments one has mastered in the Attuned's title, for example calling oneself "of the Viol and the Cittern".

There are five instrument families. Each of them necessitates a certain frame of mind appropriate to the practice of the instrument. Whenever an Attuned works with more than one instrument, he or she must perceive the "soul" – the key feelings – of each of them. This does not mean that an Attuned cannot be proficient in two apparently opposed instruments, but simply that the Inspired must be able to harmonize himself to each of them. This is not handled by rules, but Inspired should always ask themselves whether they are able to understand and respond to the instruments they play. An effete and refined Inspired that cannot grasp the beauty of the Drum's primitive savagery, for example, will be unable to become attuned to this instrument.

Here are the five instrument families and the philosophies that underline the practice of each one.

- ◆ Cittern players are interested in the mind, which they view as they would a musical score. Like a conductor

leading an orchestra to obtain a given effect or mood without modifying the notes themselves, an Attuned of the Cittern is a student of the psyche. He or she delves into the mind's deepest secrets, and then subtly directs it with small flourishes. The goal is never to compel, but to manipulate delicately. If all else fails, the victim's own strength of will is turned against itself by the music, sapping or destroying the target's capacity to think. Cold and detached, an Attuned of the Cittern studies and then uses others, never feeling any moral qualms.

- ◆ The **Flute** is a commanding instrument. It permits no reflection, only blind obedience. The musician's individuality must bow before a greater force: the will of the Muses. Attuned of the Flute are strict, harsh and merciless. Those that do not bend before them must be broken, and others exist only to be dominated.
- ◆ The **Harp** is the instrument of quiet and generosity. Those that use it are usually calm and thoughtful individuals, endowed with an acute consciousness of the fact that Harmundia is a whole that includes even the Masque and his minions. Attuned of the Harp are strangers to the concept of violence. They believe any act of destruction performed by an Inspired also destroys a part of Harmundia. Therefore, people must be prevented from such drastic beha-

vior. For them, any dispute may be resolved through understanding the suffering and problems that caused it. Then it becomes only a matter of easing the suffering and solving the problems to obtain a peaceful solution to the conflict.

- ◆ The **Drum's Attuned** see Harmundia as the sum of its violent interactions – a continuum of fierce powers in constant struggle. Drum philosophy originates in action, and leads to a desire to control and modify the forces that push people to act – aggression, fear, pain and so on. These forces are the only things of substance, and the individuals that use them or are subjected to them have no value in themselves, but only through their relationship to them. The Drum is a wild and aggressive instrument with no concern for life or death.
- ◆ The **Viol's Attuned** strive to perceive Harmundia universally as a creation of the Muses. For them, mankind is unimportant next to nature. Plants and animals are the true heirs of Harmundia. We are but stowaways the Masque compelled onboard a wonderful ship that must be protected and cared for. So the Attuned of the Viol mostly influence plants and animals. They are patient and mindful of their surroundings, though – like the nature they protect – they can become fierce and merciless against those that would corrupt them.



ATTUNED TRADES

Among the practitioners of the Magical Arts, the Attuned are the ones who can most easily rely on their talents to earn a living. They usually work as entertainers, troubadours or bards, wandering Harmundia and bringing joy to those who can spare food and lodging.

When they grow too old, or simply lose interest for their travels, they can find work as court musicians, or in theaters, taverns and other big city establishments. If all else fails, they can still ply their trade in the streets, for their art is universal and demands no effort beyond listening. Even the beggars can enjoy music.

The positions sought by the Attuned depend a great deal on to the instruments they play. Some instruments' inner logic makes it difficult for one to behave as is expected from a court artist.

- ◆ **Attuned of the Cittern** are most likely to become musicians in the employ of a powerful patron. As every rich house needs hired musicians to liven up the evenings, they are much in demand. They are prized for their keen sense of observation, their relative quietness, and most of all because the master of the household can rely on them to spy on the guests, discover what's brewing and report back. Cittern Attuned are of course rarely wrong when they appraise someone; Tune allows them to read people as easily as sheet music.
- ◆ **Attuned of the Flute** have the fewest options. They cannot comply with the stringent protocol of a great house, which demands a servility at odds with the nature of their instrument. They are happiest in a domineering position that, in addition to being more difficult to obtain, doesn't fit with the image people have of the Flute, a lower-class instrument often confused with the shepherds' pipe. The best course for these Attuned is to place themselves in the shadow of a criminal lord or some other powerful figure with a weak spirit. This way they can manipulate their so-called masters not only through the Magical Arts, but also by exercising their superior willpower. This is not without risks, however, for weak spirits draw the minions of the Masque, who may easily notice the supernatural influence of the Attuned.
- ◆ **Attuned of the Harp** make the best wandering musicians, living as much by their music as by other expertise that, though it would be of little use to a rich man, is fully appreciated by the lower classes. Taking on the aspect of one who has gone everywhere and seen everything, the Attuned becomes a kind of wandering sage who dispenses advice and a bit of music in exchange for sustenance. In addition to having a variety of skills, from first aid to plant lore, an Attuned of the Harp develops a *deep understanding* of human psychology. Having seen so many different people in his travels,

he knows how to detect problems, silent anger, and thwarted love – all those feelings that can make living so hard. He always has a solution, which earns him the gratitude of a great many people, whose simplicity is made up for by their numbers. There is no village where he isn't welcome, if not by everyone then at least by enough people that year round he can expect a bowl of soup, a piece of bread, and a cot to sleep on.

- ◆ **Attuned of the Drum** have the souls of warriors. They can be found glorifying savagery among the wildest tribes, and in military bands beating a rhythm for the horns as they sound a charge. They are so well established in military society that the Modehans and Mercerians use almost only drums nowadays to "beat out" orders. Taking advantage of this situation, the Attuned of the Drum are often made "Drum Majors" of great garrisons, teaching some measure of their Art to young soldiers willing to become instrumentalists. There are also many Attuned of the Drum among the Wild Reaches tribes or in the Modehan forests, be it as shamans, war leaders, or even as tribe chieftains. They never entirely dominate a situation, as they prefer to immerse themselves in the flow of events. So they are not inclined to make decisions, and are more at ease amplifying or moderating the enthusiasm they have generated.
- ◆ Finally, the **Attuned of the Viol** are among the most secretive of the Attuned. As they do not overly concern themselves with humanity, they often exist on the fringes of society, living among the plants and animals. Given this, their preferred vocation is obvious: foresters in the great realms. Roaming the wooded Domains for their noble masters, hunting poachers and discreetly selecting the game their employers will hunt. In less civilized countries, they become herbalists, trappers, or druids, defending the wildest areas, whose majestic beauty they have learned to appreciate better than all others.

PRACTICING THE TUNE

Being an Attuned means toiling ceaselessly at a task that is fortunately quite pleasant. On a daily basis, the Tune requires hard work, constant training – an Attuned never leaves his instrument and uses every moment to practice – and reflection on the nature of the Art and Harmundia, and on the place of music in it. The music of the universe needs many years of experiences to be heard.

In more practical terms, the Art of Tune is divided into two mutually exclusive branches: specialization in a single instrument versus the study of several.

Attuned that perform with only one instrument are usually masters of their Art. They typically leave an impressive library of new opuses and variants on known

ones. Their first quest is often the search for the ideal instrument. This leads them to Harmundia's great cultural centers to find the best instrument-makers, or on a visit to obscure tribes in the Wild Reaches in search of the perfect drum skin. The Square knows these artists well, as the final touches they need for their instruments – the ones that will fit them perfectly for life – are generally very complex enchantments, possibly requiring the inclusion of a piece of Shard.

Then they must scour Harmundia looking for the greatest masters of their instrument. Regrettably, the ever-shrinking number of Concordists has dramatically shortened this second quest. Though as the number of masters dwindles, they become proportionally more difficult to find. They often settle in unexpected places, taking advantage of peculiar acoustics or of the silence of a hidden cave. Usually, after a few years, the lonely apprentices either tire of looking for the right master or think they have nothing more to learn. So they undertake their last quest, the one that motivated all their efforts to this point.

Research in the fundamentals of Tune is the last stage in training to be a Concordist. Contrary to what one might think, this does not always entail withdrawing to a remote place in order to work alone. Though this study requires time for quiet and profound reflection, which might involve a bit of seclusion, it needs to be mixed with life experience. Concordists never create abstract works, for they are molding the very substance of Harmundia. They search for the processes once used by the Muses to create the world, and try to understand them in order to create opuses that reproduce their effects. In so doing, they need to be attentive to Harmundia's nature, to see as much of the world as possible, immersing themselves in its essence, perceiving its most secret mechanisms. Once they have acquired this experience, Attuned strive to transcend it through their Art, to somehow reproduce what they have seen, and present its profound nature to the world as music.

Those that perform with several instruments have more practical goals. At the root of their choice is first of all the desire that as many instruments are kept alive as possible. This decision doesn't necessarily imply achieving mastery of all instruments, for the Tune is not partial to mediocrity. It takes long years of apprenticeship to find out which instruments are fit for each Attuned. Though they do not need instruments from the height of the Elder Arts, an average instrument will seldom produce exceptional results, even in the most skilled hands.

These students seek out masters to teach them to play their instruments and help them determine which ones they can use best. It is wrong to think that with the appropriate master, any Inspired can tackle any instrument family. Each has its own spirit and methods, and requires an innate sensitivity. Harpists, for example, are almost unheard of in the Wild Reaches, as this untamed land seldom produces individuals calm and contemplative

enough to possess the right frame of mind. On the other hand, Drummers from this country are among the greatest in Harmundia.

THE SECRET ARTS

As the Art performed by the largest number of Inspired, tales abound regarding the Tune's Secret Arts – rumors of powerful scores with devastating effects, stories of masters having made discoveries that go beyond anything done since the Flamboyance, etc.

The Tune is also the only Art whose Secret Arts actually exist today, be they fragments of a heritage from the Flamboyance or the results of new research that is finally bearing fruit.

This is hardly a secret any more. If it is not discussed openly, it is less for fear of drawing the attention of a spy of the Masque than because of an innate desire for caution among the Attuned.

Like Choreography for mages, the Secret Arts are the ultimate consecration of Tune. Sadly, few achieve the necessary level of understanding of Harmundia to properly perform the Secret Arts. Tune itself is already a calling that requires enormous exertions while maintaining a low profile. To learn another magical Art in addition to it is so hard that Attuned gifted and motivated enough are rare. Only, the prestige and raw power that go with the practice of the Secret Arts still occasionally draw a few masters around a Conductor or a Singer to learn Union or Fusion (see p. 104 for an in-depth look at the Secret Arts).

Tune holds an impressive number of secret techniques, forgotten but never entirely lost. The best example of these is the Cantos, the outcome of centuries of collaboration between Attuned and Scanders. In the small community of Concord, this is viewed as the spearhead of the Fusion of the Arts. Many artists have begun practicing the Magical Arts just to be able to study the Fusion process, in the hope of enacting similar discoveries in their own field.

Symphony, which uses several instrumentalists and mixes instrument families freely, unites the Art of Tune. It is one of the treasures of the Flamboyance the Attuned were able to preserve, and it is a mark of prestige for them. While the Painters were losing the secrets of the Pictureworlds, the Attuned held fast to this Union, the priceless legacy of a bygone golden age.

CORRUPTION

Due to the relatively large number of Attuned, Corruption is more of a problem for this Art than any other.

The differences between the families are fertile grounds for conflict, millennia-old grudges and hatreds – so many emotions that are among the Masque favorite raw materials. The loss of the Harpsichord family to the Master of the Sham perfectly illustrates this vulnerability. Since that tragic sundering, the remaining families have lost some of their passion.

As the number of Attuned diminished, many learned several instruments to ensure the survival of every family. Today, the Tune is the Art most resistant to Corruption, mostly because the betrayal of a whole family was a strong warning. Furthermore, since this terrible victory over Tune, the Masque has seemingly rested on his laurels and turned his attention to the other Arts.

SHARD ADDICTION

As has already been mentioned, many masters use Shard inlaid into their instruments to reinforce their inspiration. For the Attuned, becoming unable to perform without an instrument or a place enchanted by the Shard can be an inconvenience, as remaining in one place is rarely compatible with their occupations. But addiction is also a mark of a superior mastery of the Art. The search for enchanted objects and places is a highly regarded and much pursued endeavor.

Quite a few stories are told about instruments whose emotions are not compatible with the family they belong to. For example, there is mention of a Harp inspiring anger and disgust for humanity. This can be a serious problem, considering how many Attuned are ready to make huge sacrifices for the benefits reaped from the precious Shard.

DILETTANTES

As a consequence of the lack of means, a new breed of Attuned has cropped up: Inspired who, without being musicians, sometimes make use of a few melodies. They achieve only simple magical effects, as they have not devoted themselves to the mastery of an instrument.

This phenomenon is a cause for frustration for most Attuned. After long insisting that all Inspired should be proficient in the Magical Arts, they find themselves in the troublesome situation of having pupils that are not wholly interested in what they are taught, and who only grudgingly practice. This makes for musicians of average skills, in no hurry to learn more, who see the Tune as a useful hobby, but certainly not as something central to their existence.

G'SHURNIL'S DRUM

Attuned giants are few and far between. One reason for this is the scarcity of instruments in their size.

G'Shurnil was one of these few Attuned. His Drum, prize of more than a century of wanderings, was built from the trunk of a king-tree. The skin, pulled taut over it, supposedly came from a tarasque the giant had fished from a boat made with his own hands.

The fine engravings running along the edges of the instrument are said to contain many opuses, which can be combined into a Drum Symphony.

Nobody knows what became of this Drum. Legend has it G'Shurnil himself destroyed it as he was eaten away by remorse at having killed a tarasque to make a mere instrument.

Yet when it thunders in the Wild Reaches, people still say, "G'Shurnil is practicing".

New Opuses

HARP

♣ True Lies

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 2 rounds

This opus turns a known or obvious falsehood into an undisputable truth in the mind of its victim. A witness might be made to think he had never seen the culprit before. Or a guard might be made to believe that a grizzled old thief is actually the Lord's new Chamberlain and so ought to be given access to the treasure chamber. The "truth" will be so deeply set that the victim will refuse to acknowledge contradictory arguments from his fellows, though he will still behave according to his personality (a ruffian will try to enforce his view through violence, while a Jornist mage will prefer debate).

♣ Comfort

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: permanent

Measure: 1 minute

This sweet melody allows its target to reevaluate difficult or stressful circumstances. The target doesn't forget the problems at hand, but views them with a more optimistic attitude. "This will not last", "it isn't so bad", "we will pull through", the Harp's music seems to whisper. The target will maintain this optimistic point of view until the situation is resolved or it changes for the worse, in which case he may reconsider his position. A useful application of this opus is to make a target forget thoughts of suicide.

♣ Un-influence

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 day (maximum)

Measure: 1 day

The target is freed from all influences, be they mental or physical, magical or profane. Choices and actions will be made according to his own volition only. Bonds that hold him will fall to the ground whenever he wishes. He will not be prone to instantly obey a superior's order (even if a lifetime of habit has made this behavior automatic), and will be impervious to blackmail. This simple melody is effective only as long as the target can hear the music, otherwise its effects dissipate.



♣ Banish Phobia

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one sleeping target

Duration: permanent

Measure: 1 hour

This opus feels a bit like a psychoanalytic treatment. The melody makes the targeted individual sift through his memory and dream about the origin of a phobia or irrational fear afflicting him. Upon waking, the target will understand his terror, and be able to talk about it and to combat it. Eventually, the affliction will be permanently removed (the fault disappearing at no IP cost).

♣ Well-being

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 hour

Measure: 3 rounds

For the duration of this opus, the target doesn't feel any ill effects of pain. Wounds are still endured, but with no associated suffering. This opus would even make it possible (though not advisable) to fall asleep on a bed of broken glass, conscious of the many cuts, but feeling no discomfort. The target is also immune to torture. In game terms, all penalties caused by wounds are ignored.

♣ The Greatest Goodness

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity

Duration: one act of goodness

Measure: 5 rounds

The target is instantly filled with the desire to do something for an individual he was thinking of when the opus was performed. This impulse guides him to do what the individual in question will appreciate most. The way to go about it will also be the easiest and safest possible. Should he follow the impulse, no harmful consequences will result for him or for the person he was thinking of.

♣ Uncanny Luck

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: until used

Measure: 5 rounds

This gentle melody surrounds the Attuned with a barely perceptible glowing aura that acts like a guardian angel. It will allow him to automatically succeed on his next action requiring a dice roll, no matter how hard it is to do and whether or not he is proficient in what he is doing. The action still needs to be physically possible (it will not allow him to jump across a precipice thirty yards wide, for example).

♣ Escape Death

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact/one target or individual

Duration: until used

Measure: 5 rounds

This lively and romantic opus creates a perceptible glowing halo around its target. When next in a potentially deadly situation (fall from a great height, sword wound, etc.), the target will be able to cheat certain death by halving the damage done. As soon as this happens, the halo vanishes. If halving the damages is not enough to stay alive, the target automatically benefits from the effect of expending a Fortune point (HP stabilized at STA +1) without actually needing to use one.

♣ Command Friendship

Instrument: Harp

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: one action

Measure: 10 rounds

The target, convinced the Attuned is his best friend, will do almost anything he asks, simply out of friendship. According to his personality, the victim may put himself in danger and accept more or less extravagant requests. It is not foolproof, and it is not an excuse to force people to do things that go against their nature. A woman may well refuse to sleep with the Concordist so as not to "ruin their friendship". A miser may sacrifice himself for his "friend" yet refuse to lend him any money, etc.

FLUTE

♣ Stuttering

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 minute

Measure: 2 rounds

This slow melody deeply permeates the mind and affects the rhythms of speech, making its victim unable to say anything without stumbling over every syllable. All bases for speech rolls (such as Eloquence or Scansion) are halved.

♣ Dissension

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one group (2 to 10 people)

Duration: 1 hour

Measure: 1 minute

This opus influences a group of associated people by making each feel hostility towards all the others,

stimulating arguments and quarrels. Used during a battle, this opus may make a unit fall out of formation as soldiers start shouting at each other.

♣ Countermand

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 1 round

The target instantly stops whatever he was doing, be it fighting, moving, etc. The opus has no effect if the target isn't doing anything (he will not stop breathing), or if inaction would have dire consequences (like risking death). Someone fighting a dangerous opponent will keep parrying or dodging the blows, for example, though he will no longer attack if possible. The effect is instantaneous, though the target may very well shrug it off, thinking he was briefly distracted by something, and resume his actions, but he had lost a few seconds – one combat round.

♣ Silence

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 15 rounds

Measure: 1 round

The target becomes silent. Someone talking instantly stops. Shouting or willingly making noise is impossible. Moving about or doing something else entirely produces the normal amount of noise, but the victim cannot intentionally do something to make that noise (e.g. running to have someone hear the footsteps).

♣ Restless

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 day

Measure: 1 minute

As long as the effect lasts, the victim cannot rest at all. Sleep and other forms of respite become impossible, and any exertion will have him remain winded or tired, unable to recuperate while the opus is active. No additional ill effects are generated (past the duration of one day), but this can still make the target's life very uncomfortable. The target becomes haunted by the melody performed, and may understand his condition is linked to the music, though this is not automatic. If the duration is extended by a good Quality Margin, you can raise the DIF of all dice rolls made by the target by 5 for the second day, 10 for the third day, etc.

♣ Paranoia

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 week

Measure: 15 rounds

This peculiar opus is mostly made of silence, occasionally broken by unpleasant high-toned whistles. When it stops, the target becomes certain that others have understood a secret in the music, but won't tell him. Perhaps this strange piece hides a melody made of sounds only special beings can hear. From then on, the target becomes convinced that enemies are everywhere, and that nobody can be trusted: They are here. They are not like us but they hide their true appearance to live among us. They plan the downfall of humanity, specifically the victim of the opus...

♣ Pain

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: 50 y./one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 2 rounds

A spasm of terrible pain seizes the target, who falls down and cannot move. This opus cannot kill, but from now on the target will have to make a WIL x 2 roll against DIF 10 every time there is a risk of exposure to this unbearable pain. Failure means the target will do his best to avoid anything that might result in feeling the pain again (such as displeasing the Concordist).

♣ Farandole

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: sound

Duration: as long as the music lasts

Measure: special

Anyone hearing this bewitching Flute melody is possessed by a need to dance and line up behind the Concordist to join the farandole of all the other listeners. The victims may do nothing but dance and laugh, as if they were reveling in some merry celebration. They follow the Flutist, displaying all the signs of happiness without any hint of weariness or exhaustion, but their eyes betray the terror they feel. As soon as the victims stop hearing the flute, the effects of the opus also stop, and the consequences of the time spent wildly dancing are finally felt: exhaustion, even death if the merciless Attuned makes them dance too long.

VIOL

♣ Animal Sight

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Measure: 5 rounds

The Concordist gains the ability to see through the eyes of a targeted animal. The target may be any type

of animal (bird, mammal, fish, etc.). This does not mean that the Concordist can modify the animal's behavior in any way. He is merely a witness to what the animal perceives.

♣ Sylvan Haven

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: 1 day

Measure: 10 rounds

The Attuned is phenomenally lucky when within a forest. He will always stumble upon those bushes that have edible berries, effortlessly find drinking water, and even happen upon dead animals fresh enough to eat. When he needs it, a hollow tree, a small natural cave, or other such cover will conveniently appear to shelter him. As long as the effect lasts, the Attuned will be safe. He will not go hungry or thirsty, and will not be attacked by wild animals (he will simply never meet any, which might pose a problem for hunting). More advanced variations of this opus are supposed to exist, which provide the same benefits in mountain or desert environments.

♣ Animal Language

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 minute

Measure: 5 rounds

By performing this opus, the Concordist becomes able to converse with an animal, making himself understood and in turn "feeling" the animal's answers. Keep in mind that the animal is not bound to care or to answer, so the Attuned had better have something to give it in exchange.

♣ Plant Wall

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: 25-yard radius around the Attuned

Duration: 2 hours

Measure: 2 rounds

The Attuned makes the vegetation behind him thick and impassable. Trees draw close to each other and are overburdened with creepers; brambles and ferns are uncommonly high and thick on the ground, etc. The resulting wall will have to be skirted unless someone is prepared to spend at least half an hour hacking his way through.

♣ Vegetal Resurrection

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: contact/one plant

Duration: permanent

Measure: 5 minutes

This short melody performed by the Concordist breathes a new life into a dead plant. This opus can be used only on a plant that still exists as such and was not entirely destroyed. A tree burnt to the ground or cut up into planks cannot be resurrected in this way, though one struck by lightning, poisoned or cut down would pose no problem. The plant must be truly dead, which can take a very long time for tall trees. Resurrection is manifested through a new vitality in the plant (new buds, etc.). This opus is not very impressive to see, but quite a few sprites would kill to learn it.

♣ Animal Control

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Measure: 1 minute

This opus is similar to "Animal Sight", with one key difference: the Attuned can command the animal's actions, even if they go against its instincts. Imagine a pig rushing to attack a band of brigands, or a wolf snuggling up alongside a tiger.

♣ Half-Sap

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: permanent

Measure: 7 hours

The Attuned weaves a link between himself and a plant similar to the one uniting a sprite and its tree. From now on, he will be able to transmit his serious wounds to the plant (a bush will withstand 1 Serious Wound, a 20-foot tree 2 Serious Wounds, a 50-foot tree 4 Serious Wounds, a 100-foot tree 8 Serious Wounds, and a Modehan king-tree will be unaffected by anything less than a giant's blows). Unlike with sprites, the link works both ways, so that the death of the tree will kill the Concordist, a broken branch will carry over as a broken limb, etc. This link will remain active until the tree is destroyed. Only one link can be active at any given time. Sprites cannot use this opus because it interferes with their Sap.

Enchanted Forest

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 25

Area of effect: a forest

Duration: permanent

Measure: 7 hours

The Concordist enchants a whole forest that will from then on react to his or her music. The forest can become thicker or clearer, make trails appear and disappear, etc. To find all the melodies to influence a forest is however a nearly insurmountable task (each possible effect must be worked on as a unique opus, though a master's instruction is not necessary).



DRUM

♣ Disruption

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 50 y./one target

Duration: listeners' next action

Measure: 1 round

This tune is composed of only one strong beat that makes all the listeners' ribcages vibrate. For the target, the vibration is so strong that all actions are more difficult, and even dangerous. If the victim was taking any action, a roll of twice the involved Attribute against DIF 15 must be made for him to continue. If this Attribute roll is a fumble, then it automatically causes an appropriate catastrophe.

♣ Sound Explosion

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 50 y./a 5 y. radius zone

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 2 rounds

The Attuned must hold the Drum pointed towards a targeted area so that the sounds emitted will go in that direction. An increasingly powerful drum roll is then played to an abrupt stop, and a terrible din wracks the area. Whether they can hear or not, anyone within 5 yards of the targeted area loses 10 Hit Points, ignoring armor, and is completely deafened. They must additionally make an AGI roll to remain standing.

♣ Defeatism

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 10 minutes

Measure: 3 rounds

This opus has a direct influence over its victim's spirit, giving distorted views of a battle in progress. The target is certain the opposition is much stronger than his side, and that his only chance of survival is retreat. From this point on, he will do anything to convince his cohorts to give up and withdraw from the engagement. The EG must determine whether his arguments have an effect on the entire battle.

♣ Weapon Aversion

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 minute

Measure: 2 rounds

The Attuned can use this subtle opus to cloud a target's judgment so much that he loses all sense of the realities of combat. The victim will conclude that his weapons are useless and will decide to fight unarmed. He will

immediately throw down all his weapons and charge the closest enemy, convinced he has made a judicious choice.

♣ Foolhardiness

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: one battle

Measure: 5 rounds

This opus generates in the target's mind an unflinching courage and a will to fight it out with the most powerful opponent at hand. This has proven quite a deadly opus, as it can make black feys try to settle a score by brawling with minotaurs.

♣ Quickening

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 round

Measure: 2 rounds

The target is carried away by the quickly accelerating rhythm. During the first round that the Concordist plays, the target's initiative is raised by one point. During the second round, the initiative is doubled and two reactions become available (but only one action). Finally, when the music stops, at the beginning of the third round, the initiative is multiplied by three, and two actions and two reactions are available to the target.

♣ The Big Sleep

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 rounds

Measure: 5 rounds

The Concordist strikes a strange rhythm, with two close beats that resemble the sound of a beating heart. The beat synchronizes with the target's heartbeat, and begins to slow down. The victim's heart follows the lead, and by the end of the second round the target becomes unable to undertake any strenuous physical actions. At the end of the third round comes sleep, and at the end of the fourth a coma. At the end of the fifth round, the Attuned stops playing, and the heart permanently stops... Should the opus be interrupted before completion, its victim would remain in the last state he entered for a time equal to his STA in hours.

♣ Musical Motion

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: as far as the sound carries/individual

Duration: that of the journey

Measure: 1 minute

The Concordist performs a repetitive rhythm that strangely provokes a desire to travel. The sound of a

means of transportation is then introduced into the music. This can be a sound of footsteps or a galloping horse (but not a bird or a coach, whose noises cannot be imitated with a Drum). At the end of the Measure, the Attuned disappears. He will reappear at the intended destination, after the period of time it would have taken to get there using the actual transport he imitated in the piece. This opus can take the Concordist as far as the sound carries from the starting point.

CITTERN

♣ Spirit Mirror

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 1 round

The Attuned becomes able to glimpse the target's surface thoughts. This can give knowledge of the target's immediate objectives, or whether a lie is being purposefully told. The Concordist cannot probe, only receive information. If the target is sleeping for example, the subject of his dreams will be revealed, and if he is eating without thinking about anything else, all that will be conveyed are the target's thoughts about the food.

♣ The Greatest Sin

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 5 rounds

The Concordist glimpses the thing the target feels the most remorse about. No details about the deed are gained, just what it is. A child who killed his father will appear as a parricide, while a man who stole something will only be viewed as a thief. Someone utterly convinced he has never done anything wrong will not reveal anything. The information gleaned through this opus is entirely subjective, depending on its target's sense of morality. An assassin might see murder as a trifle, and feel his greatest remorse at being unfaithful to the woman he loves.

♣ Protect the Mind

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: 1 week

Measure: 5 minutes

The Attuned's own mind is protected. Any mind-altering magic performed on him or her (be it Art or Ascendancy) will need a SM of at least 10, in addition to the set Quality margin (if any). Otherwise it has no effect whatsoever. This opus protects the Concordist from

madness, but does not prevent someone seizing control of the Attuned's body, provided the magic targets the muscles and not the mind.

♣ Illusion of Gigantism

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one friendly target

Duration: 1 minute

Measure: 5 rounds

This opus allows the Concordist to make a member of his Troupe appear to be a giant thirteen or more feet tall, monstrously muscular, heavily armed, and very upset and anxious to fight. The target's actual combat abilities are not augmented by the illusion. Unsuspecting observers must succeed in a WIL roll against DIF 20 not to run in the opposite direction.

♣ Illusory Sensory Deprivation

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 day

Measure: 2 minutes

The Attuned plucks the instrument's strings to fashion sounds that disable one of the victim's senses. One may easily envision the consequences of blindness during a fight, but think also of a food-taster losing in an instant his palate. The targeted sense still functions normally, but the melody loops in the victim's brain, preventing it from analyzing the input.

♣ Horror

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 rounds

Measure: 5 rounds

The Concordist makes the target relive the most morally reprehensible thing he or she ever did, this time clearly perceiving all the consequences. Prostrate and overwhelmed by guilt, the target will accept all forms of punishment, even death, without resistance. Strangely, this opus has no effect whatsoever on beings with more than 25 points in either Darkness or Perfidy. On the contrary, they seem to find it pleasant and exhilarating.

♣ Complete Amnesia

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: permanent

Measure: 5 rounds

This opus is a variation on "Mental Assault". However, it does not target the brain itself but its memories. The victim instantly forgets everything about his life, knowledge and abilities, up to and including his name and place of birth. This amnesia is permanent. Showing

MUHUL LONG-SIGHT, WILD-REACHER SHAMAN

When he emerged from the Abyss, Muhul stumbled almost immediately upon an Attuned of the Drum. He was taken with a passion for this instrument and set aside all other interests. He has since gained a tremendous amount of understanding of it. His only regret is not having an apprentice to entrust his knowledge to. His clan's last losing battle, during which he suffered a grievous wound and he had to face the fact of his own mortality, heightened these feelings in him. It seems the Decan Council has heard his prayers, since a few months ago he was made the sponsor of a young Inspired to whom he is eagerly teaching the secrets of Tune...

Origin: Wild Reaches
Race: Minotaur
Age: 55
Height: 10'8" (SIZ +2)
Weight: 787 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
 Body bonus: +1
 AGility: 5
 PERception: 5
 STamina: 10
 STrength: 11

Spirit: 1/1
 Spirit bonus: 0
 INTelligence: 6
 WILLpower: 6

Soul: 1/0
 Soul bonus: +1
 CHARisma: 9
 CREativity: 8

Secondary attributes
 AIM: 5
 MEL: 6
 ART: 8
 HP: 111
 SWT: 37
 CWT: 55
 DB: +10

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Seasoning powers: Goring, Minor night vision
Max. load: 315 **Half load:** 157 **Daily load:** 78

Darkness: 10
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Courtly: Etiquette 5, Fast talk 5, Music 10, Traditions: Wild Reaches 5
Knowledge: History & legends 2, Language: Nordik 5
Rogue: Conceal 5, Hunt 3, Intrigue 5, Poisons 4, Stealth 5
Trials: Alertness 5, Dodge 2, Weapon: Club 5
Occult: Concord 1, Tune 10

Assets & Gifts:
 Shaman, Presence, Huge, Circle I Invoking

Faults & Sorrows:
 Dependant (his apprentice), Flaring temper, Lame, Trickster

Combat
Initiative: 9
Melee attack: Club 13
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
 Dodge: 11
 Parry: Club 11
Ranged defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Club	0	+1	-1	+11 (C)	-

Armor: none

Magical Art
 Drum APT 18

Known Opuses
 Berserk (10), Overcome Fear (10), Sound Explosion (15), Quickening (20), The Big Sleep (25)

Quote:
 "Act! We must act now or wither away! Who do we think we are to wait for courage to come to us? I have seen in the entrails of the eagle, and the omens are propitious!" (He plays a drum roll, raising the spirits of his tired warriors.)

the victim things from his past or talking about them will not initiate any recollection.

☞ Heal the Spirit

Instrument: Cittern
Threshold: 25
Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
Duration: permanent
Measure: 1 hour

The Attuned carefully enters the target's spirit to bathe it in this soothing melody. All damage done by magic

to the target's mind is healed (losses of mental attribute points are cancelled, memory erased is restored). Everything relating to Perfidy or Darkness remains though, and the target even understands that he somehow enjoys this somber and unhealthy part of himself. This opus can reverse the effects of "Complete Amnesia".

Shape

INTRODUCTION

The Magical Art of Shape concerns itself with things that are concrete and solid. It doesn't care much about living things, which ceaselessly change and so escapes the grasp of the artist. Levelheaded and cautious, Shapers like to take their time.

Furthermore, their Art requires them to be in contact with matter. They need to touch it, feel it, sense its weaknesses, and grasp its potential. This almost sensual relationship with their raw materials sets Shapers apart from other Artists. Indeed, they themselves do not resist this estrangement from their fellow Concordists. They really are different, and their interests are often at odds with their Attuned and Painter brethren.

The Art of the Shape is by nature more lasting than the other Magical Arts. Whereas music or words are inevitably followed by silence, a statue or sculpture outlives the act of creation, and possibly its creator. The only Art sharing this feeling of durability with Shape, though to a lesser extent, is Vista.

However, Shapers have no desire to modify what the Muses created. This is partly because of a quasi-religious awe they have for their work, and partly out of a half-acknowledged feeling of superiority. Shapers think that the methods of Scansion and Tune, creating nothing but modifying what already exists, are both profane – how can the Muses' creations be improved upon? – yet at the same time too timid. Don't the Inspired carry within themselves the heritage of the Muses? Why then do they not take full possession of their birthright and create original works rather than merely imitating?

Their occasionally condescending attitude hides the true distress of the Shapers. Since the Eclipse, no Concordist has been able to achieve a truly permanent effect – to fashion an everlasting opus – not even using Shape. Though its opuses are more durable than those of the other Magical Arts, Shapers are far from achieving the permanence that satisfies their ambitions.

SHAPER TRADES

Shapers can't simply wander Harmundia like other Concordists. Their equipment is heavy, and traveling to and fro on a cart loaded with five tons of marble or bronze ready to be sculpted into a great statue is quite impossible.



Furthermore, sculpting takes time. The largest opuses can require years of patient toil.

So the wandering sculptor is a rarity. Unlike the high ranks achieved by Concordists of other Magical Arts, Shapers usually find more modest positions, where they are safe from the attention of the Masque and have free time to do what they love most.

The most common trade among Shapers is the craftsman. Being a potter or carpenter ensures an adequate income, allowing a Shaper to sell works of great quality and peacefully practice sculpture. Though these positions provide nothing extraordinary in comparison to the responsibilities sought by the Attuned of the Flute or Cittern, they guarantee serenity and a precious anonymity.

Another option is becoming a minor artist commissioned by private individuals in towns and villages, and perhaps once in a while by someone higher-up. In this role, the Shaper makes statues, busts and all kinds of works of art, from monuments celebrating the glory of a past hero, to the bas-relief above the doors of the town, or even a simple souvenir for a loved one. This type of work rarely brings great wealth, but it ensures steady revenues, while maintaining a low profile for the artist.

Then there are the rare Shaper court artists. Those that accept these public positions almost never do it out of ambition, but rather because they feel the must use their skills responsibly. For these Concordists, Shape is a weapon to be wielded against Corruption. Statues can spy on discussions in a palace, tapestries can monitor entrances to private rooms, and so on. High-profile Concordists know they expose themselves to constant danger and that their actions are almost suicidal, for inevitably they are spotted and destroyed. But their sense of responsibility as Inspired offers them no alternative.

Finally, the most prestigious career is with the Square. Being invited to join this order is the crowning achievement for a Shaper. The Square dwarves, though fierce traditionalists, sometimes admit members from other races as associates (though never into the higher ranks). Collaboration with the Order of the Square is a great catalyst for any Shaper, as the secrets of the order, the means at its disposal, and the high standing and security enjoyed by those who work under its authority improve the artist's quality of life inestimably.

PRACTICING SHAPE

A notable particularity of Shape within the Magical Arts is the clear distinction between its mundane side – sculpture – and its mystical aspects. The link between the two is not as strong and absolute as between music and Tune, or poetry and Scansion.

Focused on material results, Shapers are sculptors first and foremost. Whether or not they have a talent for Shape, if they can't produce a work of art, then they won't ever produce a work of Art (an opus).

Hence, the first apprenticeship a master Shaper must pass through involves nothing magical whatsoever, only the study of the mundane art of sculpture.

The next step in training goes in the exact opposite direction. It involves studies with teachers who know almost nothing about sculpture – the theoreticians of Shape. To them, the mundane art is nothing. Their awkwardness with a hammer and chisel is a way to conceal their nature as powerful Inspired Concordists. Their lack of skills hides tremendous scholarship, and knowledge of almost all the Shape opuses, though they can't actually perform them. These masters, by serving as vessels for all the information about Shape, are the best guarantors of the Art's persistence. Who would suspect a mediocre artisan to be one of the repositories of the considerable secrets of a Magical Art?

This division between the mundane and the magical is an efficient teaching technique. A Shaper apprentice alternates between mundane and magical teachers, inconspicuously learning everything he needs for the practice of his Art, compiling from successive masters more than he could ever have learned from only one.

Better yet, for once within this secret and enclosed world of the Magical Arts, the Dullen are not excluded from the system. Though they cannot teach the Shape, many excel at sculpture, and so may both share precious teachings and unknowingly play a part in fashioning some magical opuses. Though they lack Inspiration, they are full-fledged artists. Why forbid their participation in major works?

Finally, Shape is divided into three clearly separate yet inextricably interwoven groups. First, there are the mundanes who merely teach sculpture. They live normal lives, but secretly contribute to the survival of the Magical Art. Then there are the theoreticians of Shape. They are always Inspired, though they do not always have a talent for mundane arts and crafts. They do not learn to perform opuses, but help others do so.

Lastly, there are those who both learn and practice the Shape. Researchers and warriors in the crusade against the Masque, they benefit from advanced teachings, thanks to the wealth of knowledge spread among a variety of professors.

THE SECRET ARTS

Unlike the other Magical Arts, Shape doesn't have any Secret Arts. There is no practice drawn from Shape whose superior effects could surpass the Art itself. Shapers do however possess a number of secrets and techniques they would not entrust to others, but these are only remotely connected to the Art of Shape itself.

Most of these techniques involve the use of Shard. A few of the greatest Shapers know enchantments that allow the merging of a fragment of this substance with a Shape opus, making the opus almost permanent. Though extraordinarily complicated, these techniques are in no danger of being lost. They are of immense

interest to the Square, which will provide attractive compensation to Inspired willing to use them for the order.

Some Inspired working for the Square know a technique that allows one to model an opus in the presence of Shard, heightening the supernatural effects. There are many other opuses that allow one to "recycle" the magical energy of the Shard so as to strengthen the magic of the Shape. The only drawbacks of these techniques are the relative length of the necessary rituals, the amount of materials needed and the difficulty in preparing the appropriate circumstances. Permanent results, despite the work of several centuries, are uncommon and unpredictable... nearly unverifiable.

ENCHANT FROM THE SHARD

Art: Shape, Elder Art
Threshold: 25
Area of effect: unlimited
Duration: varies
Modeling: 1 month to 1 year

This enchantment allows the Concordist to "filter" a temporary Shape opus through the Shard, making the opus last longer. Unfortunately, the duration is not controlled by the Concordist. This opus is not included in the list given in the present volume because it is not governed by the standard rules of the Shape. One might indeed wonder whether it is governed by any rules at all...

As long as this opus is active, the opus it has been used on also remains active.

The modeling time is one month for a Shard with a Value of 1 to 3, three months for a Value of 4 to 7, six months for a Value of 8 or 9, and a year for a Value of 10.

This opus keeps going forever if the Shaper rolls less than or equal to the Shard Value on 1d10. If the roll is greater than the Value, the opus will last for any length of time between a few weeks and a few centuries (EG's decision).

CORRUPTION

For Shapers, corruption is a fate worse than death. Their empathic relationship with matter and the horrible way they defile it when under the influence of the Master of Sham makes corruption insufferable. Should their paths cross with a minion of the Masque, their first reaction will be flight, for fear of being drawn into the downward spiral of corruption. Unfortunately, Shape gives them no efficient means to fight such beings, and in most cases the Decan Council must be called on to send someone to save the Flame of the Concordist before it is destroyed. Recovering the Flame spells the death of the Inspired. On the rare occasions when a Shaper succumbs to corruption (meaning that he had no opportunity or not enough courage to end his life), a hunt begins. He must avoid all cities, where artisans are

called upon to discover the whereabouts of the "tainted one". The hunt does not stop until the problem is solved, one way or another... To this day, the methods of the Shapers have met with relative success, as only a handful of tainted beings have succeeded in breaching even the most superficial secrets of this Magical Art.

SHARD ADDICTION

Curiously, Shard addiction is almost a taboo among Shapers, a shameful disease never openly discussed. All the great masters that are able to enchant from the Shard are addicted to some extent. It is difficult to gather information about the problem, let alone find ways to fight it. Additionally, Shapers, being naturally reclusive, can become highly addicted without anyone being aware of it.

Shapers asked about Shard addiction will either reply with confused answers or they will completely deny the phenomenon.

DILETTANTES

There is no clear distinction between full-fledged Shapers and Inspired who only practice Shape as a secondary interest. What little knowledge dilettantes may have obtained is both a small step toward a true renaissance of the Art and a limited liability should they fall in the clutches of the Masque. Dilettantes help spread knowledge without putting the greatest secrets at risk, and therefore are well regarded.

NEW OPUSES

♣ Perceive Enchantments

Threshold: 10
Area of effect: one medium-sized object
Duration: instantaneous
Modeling: 1 minute

The Concordist is able to see whether an object is enchanted, which may mean it holds Shard, or it is a Relic, or it is under the influence of a spell or opus. With a Quality Margin of 5, the Concordist can know the enchantment's nature (Shard, Relic, Art, or Ascendancy). If the Quality Margin is 10 or more, an estimate of the magical effects can be obtained ("this sword is more effective in combat than normal", "this chair is a magical trap", etc.). With a Quality Margin of 15, all that can be learned about the object is revealed. The rule for material resistance still applies (see AGONE rulebook, p. 216).

ZAPAKOED THE HIDDEN

Zapakoed is a poor Widowlands artisan. Once a famed sculptor, he used to do first-rate work for the noble families of Estezia. Unfortunately, his success attracted the attention of a Marionette. Warned in time, he faked his own death and ran away. He has since remained hidden, fearful but not broken, in a small potter's workshop. Should adventure come calling again, he would undoubtedly rise to the occasion. But for now he is slowly wasting away...

Origin: Widowlands

Age: 36

Weight: 126 lbs.

Race: human

Height: 5'5" (SIZ 0)

MV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0

AGility: 6

STamina: 6

Body bonus: +1

PERception: 7

STrength: 6

Spirit: 1/0

INTelligence: 5

Spirit bonus: +1

WILLpower: 5

Soul: 1/0

CHARisma: 9

Soul bonus: +1

CREativity: 9

Secondary Attributes

AIM: 6

ART: 9

SWT: 16

DB: 0

MEL: 6

HP: 48

CWT: 24

Fortune points: 2 **Flame powers:** none

Max. load: 84

Half load: 42

Daily load: 21

Darkness: 0

Perfidy: 0

Skills:

Courtly: Craft (Pottery) 5, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette (Widowlands' medusae) 5, Sculpture 10, Traditions (Widowlands) 5

Knowledge: History & legends (Shape) 7, Language (Ophidian) 5

Rogue: Intrigue (Shapers) 8, Stealth 5

Trials: Alertness 7, Dodge 5, Weapon (Dagger) 3

Occult: Concord 5, Shape 10

Assets & Gifts:

Famous, Remain of Flamboyance (an animated gargoyle), Common sense

Faults & Sorrows:

Presumed dead (but doesn't care)

Combat

Initiative: 14 **Melee attack:** Dagger 12

Ranged attack: - **Ranged defense:** 6

Melee defense:

Dodge: 12

Parry: Dagger 10

Weapon

Dagger

Init.

0

Att.

+2

Def.

0

Dam.

+1 (I)

SIZ

-

Armor: none

Magical Arts

Shape APT. 20

Opuses: Replica (10), Remodel (10), Perceive Enchantments (10), Modify Matter (20), Matter Memory (20), Animate Statue (20)

Quote: "Well... I mean this wouldn't be very cautious of me, would it? Then again, you may be right... I don't have much left to lose, do I?" (he smiles sadly)

Hide Matter

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 30 minute

Modeling: 1 minute

This opus allows a Shaper to make an object's surface indiscernible from its surroundings. The object becomes transparent to the point of invisibility. If the object is moved, the illusion is rendered ineffective and the object becomes visible again.

Shrink Matter

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 5 minutes

Modeling: 5 rounds

This highly impressive opus reduces an object's volume by half. The object is not bent or deformed in any way and remains identical, albeit smaller in scale, like a model of itself. The shrunken object retains all its properties, though adapted to its new size. A weapon, for instance, would receive a lower damage rating. At the end of the opus' duration, the object expands back to its original size, even if it is enclosed within a smaller object. In

this case, the object with the lower resistance breaks.

The opposite opus, "Expand Matter", also exists. It doubles the size of the object, and has the same duration, threshold and modeling time.

Close Lock

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: one lock

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 2 rounds

The Concordist permanently closes a lock, melding its mechanism together into a solid block. The lock is now impossible to open with a key or to pick, and is more resistant (it gains 5 points of Solidity).

Animate Statue

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 1 minute

Modeling: 5 rounds

The Shaper breathes the semblance of consciousness and the ability to move into a statue. Probably developed from the black fey ability to "midwife" souls, this opus produces only a comparatively weak and temporary

ANIMATED STATUE

STR 12, AGI 1, MEL 4, HP 40 (wood)/80 (stone)/120 (metal)

Init. 6, Att. 10, Def. 1 (doesn't defend itself), Dam. 15 (C).

The statue is immune to the effects of Serious or Critical Wounds. It stops moving when its HP are reduced to 0 or once the opus expires.

effect. The animated object is only able to protect the Concordist and to obey a few very simple commands ("sit", "stand", "attack", etc.).

♣ Command Matter

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: special (one task)

Modeling: 1 minute

The Shaper gives a mental command to a chosen object, which animates and tries to obey to the best of its abilities. A sword may lose its rigidity and seize its wielder's arm, a chair may start running while carrying its occupant, but a book will do no more than snap open and closed; it will not be able to fly, nor to bite (as it has no teeth). A statue animated in this way will have the same attributes as those listed for the "Animate Statue" opus above.

♣ Liquefy Matter

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 10 minutes

Modeling: 1 minute

This impressive opus enables the Concordist to turn any object within reach to liquid. The liquid's volume will be the same as that of the original object, though it can be divided between many receptacles. The liquid retains the appearance of the solid matter. When the effect expires, the liquid becomes solid again, reforming the object. If some of the liquid is no longer in contact with the rest, then the object is obliterated.

♣ Mind Link

Threshold: 25

Area of effect: one large object

Duration: a year and a day

Modeling: 1 month

This opus links an object to the Shaper, who can now receive sensory input through the link. The perceptions will vary according to the object's nature and purpose. Most objects will convey an extraordinarily precise sense of touch, but a wall will relay visual images only if it has a window, a garment only if it has a cleavage (because its purpose is "to reveal"), etc. Sounds will not be conveyed by a wall unless it is either soundproofed or designed with holes for spying on conversations. The same concept of a "metaphorical link" applies for other senses as well.

Vista

INTRODUCTION

In two important ways, Vista is distinct from the other Magical Arts. First, in the diversity of its techniques and effects – a Vista opus may as easily create luxurious foliage as destroy all life for miles around.

Second, the majority of Inspired Painters are seasonlings. They believe their own season is pre-eminent, and expend great efforts attempting to demonstrate this. Though the Decan War has been over for a long time, relations between seasonlings of different seasons remain strained.

As a result, Vista is a jumbled Art – undefined, with a limited sphere of influence, and obscure theories and practices.

The greatest masters of Vista are seasonlings, who specialize in one season at the exclusion of all others. They take no interest in the works of their brethren from the other seasons...

Ephemeral, though very much alive, Vista is a disparate and disorganized Art. Research is made in multiple directions without being coordinated to attain any specific practical or theoretical goals. This makes the opuses difficult to discover, with a very slow renewal rate. And fundamental research, so pervasive in the other Arts, is here infrequent and ineffective.

But there is logic behind this apparent disarray, unknown to those involved in it. Over time, Vista, beyond being a "friendly" battleground for the Decans, is an extension of the will of the Ladies of the Seasons. Each race performing Vista uses it as a tool to demonstrate the superiority of its season. Caught in the middle are the humans, usually as arbitrators or witnesses. They must avoid becoming catalysts for the tensions running rampant within the small world of Vista Concordists.

The human position in the middle of this battleground has its benefits. Centralizing information and using their versatility, they have reached the pinnacle of research into opuses connected with several seasons. Their next major challenge is to convince the greatest Painters of the quality of their results. Being mainly seasonlings, these Painters will probably react very badly to the loss of their dominant position due to techniques they obstinately reject.

PAINTER TRADES

The many approaches to Vista make it problematic to describe all the different ways of life enjoyed by its practitioners. Each season has its own particularities, and their combinations make for even more new approaches...

However, some generalizations can be made. The most natural trade for a Concordist of the Vista is, obviously, to be a painter. Surprisingly, only a minority of them are in this vocation. One reason for this is that, unlike humans, seasonlings view this Magical Art as more than a supernatural tool. It is to them a religion or philosophy through

which they hope to find a link to Nuence, and thus recover their ties with the Ladies. One might even wonder whether Vista is anything more to them than a way to pay homage to the Ladies that gave them life. Many of them become shamans or healers, throwing their strange colored powders into the air to produce extravagant displays of smoke and fire, awaiting a time to display the true nature of their Art. Spring seasonlings often become mediums of great power, helping in births, performing fertility rites, and manufacturing a variety of drugs, from aphrodisiacs to healing balms. Seasonlings of Summer become emissaries of war, striking the tribe's enemies with a thousand small mishaps: sunstroke, drought or lightning. Seasonlings of Winter are usually witches, warlocks, and other sinister characters. They are able to bestow terrible curses, and usually earn their living less through the help they provide than by the fear they inspire. As for those who practice the Vista of Fall, who can tell?

In the big cities, Painters become charlatans or urban shamans. The wealthiest are also found among merchants, providing colors and pigments to their brethren in the arts (be they mundane or magical).

There are also instances of Painters serving criminal organizations with their powers, abusing their opuses to sow death and destruction as arsonists and murderers. There are as many possibilities as there are Concordists, especially for the more adaptable humans. They do not favor one aspect and are able to use their Art in ways that are unthinkable for the seasonlings, who have an almost holy reverence for Vista.

PRACTICING VISTA

Despite the apparent muddle in the practice of Vista, there are two well-established schools: the pigmentists and the illustrators.

Rather than performing the Art itself, the pigmentists are hard at work creating its essential tools, the Pigments. They constantly seek methods to make these precious substances more pure and powerful. Rather than improving their pictorial skills, looking for the perfect line or brushstroke, they concentrate on hues, shades, light, and on ways to express the colors of reality in their palette. The seasonlings of Spring and, rumor has it, the Fallen, are at the forefront of this research. However, every seasonling race has its own pigmentists, if only because they provide the bulk of the available Pigments.

For illustrators, the goal is to express the work of Nuence through colors and lines. One must master the strokes in order to master Vista. Research into illustration – finding the perfect style – has supplanted the quest for the secrets of the Pictureworlds. As this extraordinary technique seems to be lost forever, the illustrators have become specialists at performing opuses. Their repertoires are often extraordinarily vast, as if collecting all the known opuses would allow them to pierce the inner mysteries of Vista, and find the underlying principles of Concord. Illustrators hope, through sheer erudition, to penetrate the secrets of Vista. Concordists of this school are more common among humans, and to a lesser extent among the seasonling races of Winter and Summer.

THE SECRET ARTS

Vista holds very few secret techniques. Additionally, the only ones that can be said to have achieved real and useful results are so shrouded in precautions as to be inaccessible. Two people can boast to have succeeded in obtaining practical results by mixing Pigments from different seasons in precise quantities. A great obstacle is that this technique is met with an unflinching opposition by the seasonlings, who are still the greatest master Painters. The advent of this technique would spell the



end of their dominance over Vista, and the traditional partitioning of the seasonlings and their seasons. It is not even certain that seasonlings would be able to perform opuses from other seasons. So, since they cannot participate in the research, let alone achieve meaningful results, the seasonlings dismiss it as a myth. As for the two humans responsible for most of the findings in this area, fearing an extreme reaction by the seasonlings – especially by the seasonlings of Summer – they remain in hiding and keep their encouraging conclusions to themselves.

Even today, there are rampant rumors about the rediscovery of the secrets of the Pictureworlds, though nothing decisive has been unearthed. It would seem that these secrets are truly beyond the means Painters currently have available.

CORRUPTION

Amidst this turmoil, the only thing saving the Painters' community from Corruption is its membership. Being mostly made up of seasonlings, more aware of the dangers of the Masque than humans, they put up an unexpected resistance that is not related to the practice of their Art. The humans, who follow their lead, are protected.

Most problems originate from the betrayal of the Lady of Autumn. Fall opuses have a bad image and there are quite a few corrupted artists who have time and again made the Tainted Vista very powerful, even discovering some secrets unknown to "normal" Vista. A few can create hideous parodies of Pictureworlds that, despite their ugliness, are more or less functional. Even the forces of Darkness have undertaken research, obtaining many awe-inspiring results, of which the famous Artificer of Abysm is an example.

This looming danger is still overshadowed by quarrels between the seasonlings, many of who refuse to even believe that Vista could be the source of the Artificer's powers.

DILETTANTES

Amateur practitioners of Vista are uncommon. Mostly they are Ascendancy mages who find this Magical Art a useful addition to their repertoire. Eclipsists tend to specialize in Summer and Obscurantists in Spring.

The true Painters attach no importance to these dilettantes, as they are too focused on internal politics to ponder the passing fancies of mages.

SHARD ADDICTION

Shard addiction is a phenomenon almost unknown to the Painters. Although some use implements laden with Shard daily, they either aren't aware of its influence or they are able to hide it. As the use of Shard is uncommon in Vista, addiction concerns only about half a dozen individuals and generates no curiosity.

NEW OPUSES

SPRING

☛ Ensure Offspring

Season: Spring
Threshold: 10
Range: contact
Duration: target's normal gestation
Sketch: 1 minute

This Pigment, when projected on a human or animal target's belly within one day after conception, will ensure full-term growth and the birth of a healthy offspring. This opus even works on barren women.

☛ Rain

Season: Spring
Threshold: 10
Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed
Duration: 1 hour
Sketch: 1 minute

The Concordist starts a gentle spring rain. The rain is light and warm, and does not hinder visibility, making it overall quite pleasurable. Rain (natural or magical) is necessary in order to perform the "Flood" opus.

☛ Create Spring

Season: Spring
Threshold: 20
Range: contact
Duration: permanent
Sketch: 5 rounds

This Pigment allows the Painter to create a gusher of water from any kind of ground, even the most arid. The spring will produce one quart of water per minute and will flow naturally toward the nearest river. It will never dry up.

☛ Thorn Swarm

Season: Spring
Threshold: 20
Range/Area of effect: 20 y./one target
Duration: instantaneous
Sketch: 2 rounds

The Concordist must have a few bramble seeds to mix with his Pigment in order to perform this opus. An impassable bramble bush shoots out from under the target's feet. The victim cannot move and is scratched by thousands of thorns. One point of damage is inflicted each round (preventable only by full armor) until the victim escapes by rolling either an AGI or STR roll at DIF 20.

☛ Extend Spring

Season: Spring
Threshold: 20
Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed
Duration: 1 day
Sketch: 1 hour

There is one additional day of Spring this year. The extra day will come on the first day of Fall. It will be an extraordinarily mild day, a bit wet, with a lot of budding flowers and green grass. Spring seasonlings will feel exceptionally good and get a +1 bonus to all their actions that day. There is no worse insult to a Fallen than performing this opus.

♣ Flood

Season: Spring

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 mile radius zone

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 1 minute

This opus may be performed only if it is already raining. The rain suddenly becomes much stronger, drenching the area in a downpour that makes visibility nonexistent, creating rivulets and torrents of mud. The water level rises, producing a flood, the severity of which depends on the lay of the land. Then the rain stops and the water slowly trickles away, leaving behind a devastated place.

♣ Foliage

Season: Spring

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/1 building (or equivalent target structure)

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 1 hour

While the Concordist sketches, the vegetation around the target starts to grow and becomes more and more luxuriant. New species appear, covering the walls with exotic flowers and thick creepers. When the sketch is complete, the area is entirely covered by the plants, hiding the building under lush foliage. This jungle vegetation can seem very out of place in the current climate.

♣ Miraculous Growth

Season: Spring

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: contact/1 person

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 1 day

The Concordist carefully draws the target's missing limb (it doesn't matter how long ago it was severed or how much was amputated). When the recipient puts the sketch beside his or her stump, it disappears. The target experiences a tingling feeling and a small replica of the drawing appears on the tip of the stump. This offshoot grows noticeably, and after a few hours the missing limb is back. This opus does not allow the resurrection of someone who has been decapitated.

SUMMER

♣ Imbue with Light

Season: Summer

Threshold: 10

Range: contact

Duration: 1 hour

Sketch: 1 round

This common opus creates on an object or a limb a light source about as bright as a torch. It is impossible to turn the light off before the end of the opus. Anything solid, living or not, may be targeted by this simple opus, but it has no effect on liquid.

♣ Storm

Season: Summer

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed

Duration: 15 minutes

Sketch: 1 minute

A torrential summer downpour starts immediately. Apart from soaking everything uncovered, it has no unpleasant effects. A storm (natural or magical) is necessary in order to perform the "Lightning Strike" opus.

♣ Friend of the Day

Season: Summer

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: individual

Duration: until the sunset

Sketch: 10 minutes

The Concordist is granted some characteristics possessed by ogres. When standing in sunlight, he gets a +1 bonus to all his actions. On the other hand, he becomes irritable and quick to anger, sometimes without good reason. An ogre under the effect of this opus gains the advantage without any additional penalty. With a Quality Margin of 5, the bonus can be raised to +5, but the Concordist's sight becomes terribly bad in darkness (he is considered blind in penumbra).

♣ Sunstroke

Season: Summer

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 2 rounds

The target gets sunstroke and must roll STA x 2 against DIF 20 or will faint. Even if the roll is a success, the victim suffers from nausea and fits of dizziness (-2 to all actions for the next 20 - STA minutes).

♣ Drought

Season: Summer

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: contact/3 acres

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 1 hour

This lengthy opus allows the Painter to strike arable land with the unchecked harshness of the sun, damaging all the area's cultivation and fertile soil. All the season's harvests are lost.

♣ Maturity

Season: Summer

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: contact/one plant or young animal

Duration: permanent

Sketch: 1 minute

The target instantly reaches physical maturity. A young tree may break things that would prevent it from growing, displace the earth as its roots extend underneath, etc. For weaker plants or animals, any impediment to their growth will result in deformities akin to those that would have occurred had they truly matured without ever moving from the spot. For example, if a kitten grows magically to adulthood when it is in a small box, it will become a shrunk cat.

♣ Extend Summer

Season: Summer

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed

Duration: 1 day

Sketch: 1 hour

Summer lasts one day longer this year. The fifteenth day of Fall becomes surprisingly hot and sunny, brimming with vitality, complete with bountiful nature and the buzzing of many insects. Summer seasonlings will feel exceptionally good and get a +1 bonus to all their actions this day. Of course, the Fallen strongly resent anyone taking such liberties with their already shortened season...

♣ Lightning Strike

Season: Summer

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 5 rounds

This opus can only be performed if a storm has broken. The target is struck by lightning and instantly dies. If applicable, the victim may use a Fortune point to survive. In this case, the following Critical Wound is sustained: multiple burns and nerve damage, AGI permanently -2 and gains the soul fault Disfigured.

FALL

♣ Clouds

Season: Fall

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed

Duration: 1 hour

Sketch: 1 minute

A dark and foreboding cloud cover suddenly fills the sky. The weather becomes oppressive, but apart from complaints from the people, there are no other effects. Clouds (natural or magical) are required in order to perform the "Hailstorm" opus.

♣ Carpet of Leaves

Season: Fall

Threshold: 10

Range: contact

Duration: permanent

Sketch: 3 rounds

This opus, when performed in autumnal surroundings (with dead leaves on the ground), significantly increases the thickness of the crimson carpet in a 250 square yard area around where it is performed. This effect will hinder the actions of everyone within the area, halving their movements and applying a -10 penalty to all acrobatic skills.

♣ Golden Serenity

Season: Fall

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 50 yards/10 people

Duration: 6 hours

Sketch: 1 minute

All of the opus' targets are filled with a sense of quiet nostalgia for the Fall. Toil and struggle suddenly seem futile and useless because no matter what, Winter always triumphs in the end, destroying the pitiful efforts of mortals. Undertaking any action requires a WIL roll against DIF 15. Targets are still able to defend themselves if attacked.

♣ Addiction

Season: Fall

Threshold: 15

Range: contact

Duration: 30 days

Sketch: 2 rounds

This Pigment, once projected over one kind of food or drink, makes a substance terribly addictive. Anyone who consumes some once must do so again at least every other hour or suffer violent fits of shivering and other terrible withdrawal symptoms. This occurs even if the chosen substance normally isn't addictive at all (like water, for instance).

♣ Last Stand

Season: Fall

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 50 yards/10 people

Duration: 6 hours

Sketch: 1 minute

This opus is the opposite of "Golden Serenity". It can only be performed in a desperate situation. The spirit of the Fall enters the targets, but though they know they toil in vain, they resolve to bring as many enemies as possible down with them, meeting their end in a desperate blaze of glory. The targets are immune to fear and ready to try anything, preferably something suicidal that might result in a dazzling deed.

♣ Feel the Fall

Season: Fall

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 5 rounds

The Concordest quickly draws the target, and when the sketch is complete, perceives the influence of the Fall over him or her. Spells and opuses of this season can be identified in this way and magical effects due to Fallen powers are revealed (draakens using their protean ability, mortals bewitched by a morgana, and so on...).

♣ **Bad Wound**

Season: Fall

Threshold: 20

Range: contact

Duration: one round

Sketch: 2 rounds

This opus, performed on an edged weapon, will sheath its edge in a strange sort of rust (temporarily and with no lasting effect on the weapon). The next wound dealt automatically becomes infected and provokes a fast-spreading gangrene if it is not treated within the hour.

♣ **Weep for the Lady**

Season: Fall

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 15 minutes

Sketch: 5 rounds

The target suddenly understands the tragedy of the Fallen, bound to a Lady who went mad, and suffering atrociously at the hands of the Masque. The pain is unbearable. The victim must immediately roll WIL against DIF 25. Failure means trying to end one's life by any available means. Success indicates the victim is only horrified and understands what the Fallen must endure. As long as the effect lasts, the target will be entirely devoted to helping these "poor creatures". This can be viewed in many ways: slaughter them to end their sufferings, drag them to the Isle of Autumn, etc. Note that the opus does not becloud its victim's thinking so much that he will trust these perfidious beings...

♣ **Hailstorm**

Season: Fall

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: 2 miles/500 yards-radius

Duration: 15 minutes

Sketch: 5 rounds

This opus can only be performed if there is thick cloud cover. With an apocalyptic din, huge hailstones pour down over the targeted area. Visibility becomes nonexistent, movement is extremely difficult (roll AGI x 2 every round to remain standing), and those foolhardy enough to defy the elements take three points of damage each round (partial or full armor will provide protection). When the storm abates, the vegetation is laid to waste and everything made from weak materials (glass, old wood, etc.) is wrecked.

WINTER

♣ **Snow**

Season: Winter

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed

Duration: 1 hour

Sketch: 1 minute

Clouds rapidly hide the sky and gentle flurries appear. The ground is swiftly blanketed in white. The effect is quite picturesque and the snow will not rise above one or two inches. It is enough to cause a few slips, but not enough to really hinder movement. Snow (natural or magical) is required in order to perform the "Ice Tornado" opus.

♣ **Severe Asthma**

Season: Winter

Threshold: 15

Range: contact

Duration: 24 hours

Sketch: 5 rounds

This opus creates a growing coldness inside its victim's lungs, cutting pulmonary capacity in half. The victim will tire twice as fast, will be able to carry only half the normal load, and will have to rest for one minute after each minute of hard exertion (like combat), or ten minutes after each hour walking.

♣ **Chill**

Season: Winter

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 5 rounds

The target catches a chill. A runny nose, coughing and light fever set in within minutes. Contrary to some beliefs, this can be quite a serious illness, as it can turn into a case of "Red Cough", an attenuated version of Slow Death that makes the afflicted character cough up blood until a pulmonary hemorrhage slowly brings on death by asphyxiation. (VIR 15, Periodicity 1 week. Two consecutive failures turn it into Red Cough, VIR 20, Periodicity 1 month, same effects as Slow Death).

Avalanche

Season: Winter

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one snow slide

Duration: instantaneous

Sketch: 5 rounds

This opus can only be performed near a snow-covered slope where such a phenomenon is possible. As soon as the sketch is done, the snow starts to move and an avalanche forms. Its trajectory is controlled by the Concordest. Use the "Falling" rules on p. 178 of the AGONE rulebook to determine the effects (the surface is considered soft). The base damage is 6d10, and a successful Acrobatics roll could reduce it.

DUN SUNG, OBSCURANTIST AND VISTA DILETTANTE

After spending more than five years in the Abyss, this Obscurantist embarked on a slow campaign of revenge against the person responsible for his exile. His first move was to keep quiet so as to let his enemies forget him. With this in mind, he found a job as an apprentice to a master of Vista. As he lacks real motivation, he is unlikely to become a great artist. But this is of little concern to his master, an eccentric giant living deep within one of the forests of the Princely Communes.

Origin: Princely Communes

Race: Human

Age: 27

Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)

Weight: 137 lbs.

MV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0

Body bonus: +1

AGility: 6

PERception: 6

STamina: 1

STrength: 6

Spirit: 1/1

Spirit bonus: 0

INTelligence: 6

WILLpower: 10

Soul: 1/0

Soul bonus: +1

CHARisma: 1

CREativity: 10

Secondary attributes

ART: 5

EMP: 10

AIM: 6

MEL: 6

HP: 34

SWT: 11

CWT: 17

DB: 0

Fortune points: 2

Flame powers: none

Load: 84

Half-load: 42

Daily load: 21

Darkness: 10

Perfidy: 0

Skills

Courtly: Painting 5, Traditions (Princely Communes) 6

Knowledge: Alphabet (Septentrian) 4, Language (Kiemnite) 6, Language (Keshite) 1, Surgery 1

Rogue: Intrigue 5, Stealth 6

Trials: Alertness 7, Dodge 7, Weapon (Ogre sword, two-handed) 7

Occult: Concord 1, Cipher-sorcery 1, Dancer lore 10, Demonology 10, Resonance: Obscurantism 10, Vista 3

Assets & Gifts:

Known family (son of a prince), Good schooling (+30 spell pts), Multiple Dancers (3), Rank in Laeghdoved's Hai Shul (Eldin: +12 skill pts), Circle I Invoking (dark Gift).

Faults & Sorrows:

Back from the Abyss, Leper (compliments of the High Devils), Presumed dead, Terrible enemy (his father the prince, responsible for his sojourn in the Abyss), Obsession (revenge), Trickster (dark Sorrow).

Combat

Initiative: 13

Melee attack: Ogre sword 15

Ranged attack: -

Melee defense:

Dodge: 0

Parry: Ogre sword 15

Ranged defense: 0

Weapon

ogre sword (two-handed) +0 +1 +1 +6 (S/C) 0

Armor: full plate (penalty -14, prot. 14)

Ascendancy

ASC APT 20

Dancer	Mem.	Asc.	B	Emp.	Sta	Asc.Pot.	Int.Pot.
Horror	12	0		8	7	20	19
Terror	14	+6		2	7	26	13
Torch	18	+4		2	7	24	13

Spells

Horror: Strike blind, Concealment

Terror: Portal, Concealment, Instill fear, Fiery breath

Torch: Fiery touch, Fiery breath, Own shield, Burning sphere, Portal

Magical Arts

Vista APT 9

Opuses

Extend Life (Summer, 15)

Quote: "Revenge! I want nothing else! And I will have it, so I swear by all the High Devils of the Abyss! So I have already sworn before them..."

♣ Numb a Limb

Season: Winter
Threshold: 20
Range: contact
Duration: instantaneous
Sketch: 1 round

This quick opus creates a small area of freezing cold, located in one of the target's limbs. The affected limb immediately becomes numb and useless, and will have to be amputated if it is not warmed in the next hour by an adequate heat source (no smaller than a medium sized campfire) for at least five minutes.

♣ Extend Winter

Season: Winter
Threshold: 20
Area of effect: the region where the opus is performed
Duration: 1 day
Sketch: 1 hour

Winter begins one day early this year. The last day of Fall will be a freezing and shiny day, full of ice and snow. Winter seasonlings will feel exceptionally good and get a +1 bonus to all their actions this day. Fallen will feel no mercy toward the performer of this opus.

♣ Freeze

Season: Winter
Threshold: 25
Range/Area of effect: contact/one target
Duration: instantaneous
Sketch: 3 rounds

The target is instantly frozen. If the target was alive, it is killed. This opus can have an effect on a volume equivalent to a Size of +3. If cast on a larger target, only part of the being is frozen (which is probably enough to be lethal anyway). Used on an object, this opus produces the normal effects of intense cold – stone may burst, but most metal will be unaffected.

♣ Ice Tornado

Season: Winter
Threshold: 25
Range/Area of effect: 3 miles/five yard diameter zone
Duration: 1 hour
Sketch: 1 minute

This opus can only be successfully performed if it is already snowing. A whirlwind appears, joining heaven and earth through a raging column of ice shards, hailstones, and bitter snow. Everything within the area of effect takes thirty points of damage from the cold and the randomly flying projectiles. Creatures with a Size less than +2 will be lifted from the ground and carried through the air, then plummeting from a height of about 1,500 feet, to almost certain death.



Scansion

INTRODUCTION

More than any other, Scansion is a secret Art, or rather an Art of secrets. It enables perfect stealth, allowing its practitioners to be in places where and when they shouldn't, and even to avoid troubles before they actually come into being. This ongoing exercise in foresight makes Scanders slippery and elusive, hard to contact when they choose not to be found. For many Concordists, the elusiveness of the Scanders is a sign of their cowardice; they are seen as people deserting their duties, leaving the others to fight the Masque's influence and the Darken's endless schemes. The Scanders themselves acknowledge their elusiveness. Their actions are often limited to small and seemingly haphazard events: a word spoken in a crowd, a small trip to a safe place followed by a quick retreat into a hidden den where they can develop their Art. Indeed Scanders, being conscious that their apparent inactivity brings upon them the enmity of the other Concordists, are all the more prone to secrecy.

There are two reasons for the estrangement of Scansion from the other Magical Arts.

First, Scanders act infrequently, but with optimal efficiency. Also, whereas other Concordists need mere seconds to perform an opus, Scanders sometime spend days generating an effect. Additionally, their mastery over time and consequence allow the Scanders to know the result of taking or not taking a particular action. The most powerful among them search centuries in the past or months in the future to untangle the web of cause and effect, and predict exactly what difference their influence will make. Then a barely noticeable action, a word or simply being somewhere at a given time, is enough to send the future on a completely different course. It is a known course, planned a long time ago, whose possible outcomes they have checked and rechecked, that they may watch over for years. As they know that they play with time, which can erode even the sturdiest plan, they tend to limit themselves to a given chain of events they can watch over for as long as it takes, so that everything goes according to what they have planned. Indeed, "according to plan" could be the Scander motto.

The other reason Scanders keep separate from other Concordists is not due to their apparent inaction, nor a lack of understanding of their methods by the other Concordists. The estrangement is the result of a quiet air of superiority possessed by Scanders that creates a gulf between their Art and the others. Scanders always give good advice. When they predict the failure of a plan, no matter how carefully and minutely prepared, no matter how apparently foolproof, they are consistently right in the end. When they want to stay hidden, one needs an incredibly complex plan to have the barest hope of

finding one of them. Additionally, their very peculiar frame of mind, which drives them to careful planning, systematically checking each step, is a source of frustration for most people. Nobody enjoys having someone minutely inspecting their plans and questioning their decisions, least of all someone with the affected coolness and conspicuous apathy of a Scander.

Scanders are aware of this state of affairs and the causes behind it. As, ultimately, they are only human, or maybe because for once their foresight can't help them avoid it, they make do. Better yet, some cultivate their reputation as insufferable spoilsports, incessantly criticizing others and giving bad omens. Also, for a diviner, limiting the number of intercessors allows for a clearer view and better control over events to come.

Finally, the Scanders are not so unhappy in their isolation. They have set up the ivory towers from which they may serenely contemplate the past and the future, and sometime initiate small, discreet and well-planned actions.

SCANDER TRADES

One might believe that Scansion is simple to practice, as it necessitates no more than ink, paper, and a bit of inspiration. Paper and ink can be procured easily enough, and inspiration is, after all, the Inspired's province. However, practicing Scansion can prove to be complicated.

First, if the environment is inadequate, the performance of this Magical Art will be difficult. The proper circumstances are unique for each practitioner: one will need perfect acoustics, another absolute silence, a third a lively atmosphere, etc. No master can teach this; only experience will allow each Scander to discover what best suits him. Stanza is a capricious Muse, elusive, easily scared off, always fleeing those who attempt to pursue her.

Second, poetry cannot rely on technical virtuosity. A good hand at calligraphy doesn't help, nor an extensive knowledge of language. The qualities that make a great poet and a great Scander are terribly mysterious – each Concordist has his own solution, one that may not be fitting for his colleagues.



Third, poetry doesn't have the universal and direct appeal of Tune, Shape and Vista. For an uneducated peasant, the sight of a man declaiming verses is a meaningless experience, whose aesthetics cannot be appreciated. While a statue, a portrait or a refrain are easy to grasp, a quatrain, even short and concise, doesn't always resonate with listeners. To move an audience with words only, one must resort to the less pleasant and sometimes dangerous technique of satire. But mockery is not without risk; first and foremost to the Scander's own pride. This practice constitutes an additional risk for, by peeking into the future or past, a Scander can deliver murderously biting satires. A balance must be found to please the audience without giving too much offense.

There are other career choices, no less satisfying, and much more accessible.

The simplest is to find work among the counselors of mighty personages. Constantly craving intelligent advice and indulgent toward the apparently harmless hobby of their "counselor-poet", nobles are grateful for Scanders, who can foresee the results of decisions with superior accuracy, not only because they can look into the future, but also because they are used to minutely analyzing causes and consequences. Scanders inherently have better insight than most people even without the help of their Art; they are able to "guess" the needs of those

around them. Getting this kind of office is all the easier for someone with eloquence.

However, as always when a Concordist involves himself within the spheres of power, there are great risks, for power attracts not only the Inspired, but also the minions of the Masque and the Darken. There is the constant danger of being exposed, though a counselor is less likely to attract attention than an Attuned of the Flute, for instance.

There also is a wide range of possibilities for Scanders in the occult trades: sorcerers, seers, oracles, fortunetellers, shamans, etc. Scanders fit these roles perfectly, for even when they cannot successfully predict the future, they can still rely on a bit of psychology and the persuasiveness.

PRACTICING SCANSION

Scansion has closed in on itself, and Scanders keep their distance from other Concordists. They are a very homogeneous group, organized by those who hold the most precious secrets of the Art. The group is united by a bond that transcends material interests: the otherworldly experience of seeing into the future. The small society of Scanders could not hope to survive without the cooperation of all its members. The hostility of others, even veiled as it is, would be too heavy a burden.

The first step for any Inspired wishing to become a Scander is to find a mentor. Unlike the other Magical Arts, this trial is crucial to future success. It is a rite of passage the whole community of Scanders observes attentively, expecting at least a complete summary of the methods used by the supplicant to find and convince his future master. Often, a group of Scanders makes the journey to witness for themselves the ups and downs of this quest.

The great masters are, of course, almost impossible to approach and put insuperable obstacles between themselves and their prospective students.

This form of testing may seem absurd, but it is necessary for two essential reasons: first, it is an opportunity for the pupil to learn the limits of the Art he intends to perform. Time changes and varies continually, always setting one off on unexpected tracks. By overcoming the foresight of his potential master, the student demonstrates his understanding of this first truth. Those who can't cope with the ever-changing nature of time are thus spared further disillusionments.

Second, this trial serves as a live test of the masters' defenses. Have they covered their traces well enough, are they sufficiently hidden? Or will the first minion of the Masque noticing their existence be able to track them down and capture them?

Once initiated into the mysterious society of Scanders, the Concordist weaves his first predictions. The first and most fundamental opus is Prophecy. How will the Concordist die? Who or what will kill him? How will he be reached? Has his knowledge of these events changed the future? In what way? Those who cannot work out the answers to these questions are viewed with disdain by the others.

There is a schism growing among the Scanders based on their attitude toward their powers. On one side are the elders, who uphold caution, and advocate a detailed and comprehensive analysis of every action. On the other is a new generation of Scanders who see the Art not only as a tool for knowing the future, but also as a terrible weapon to be wielded against the Enemy. This weapon allows fast and effective actions, not only by predicting the future and understanding the past,



but also by using the mastery over time to improve one's opportunities. This can be dangerous for those who use it, as knowledge of things to come can paralyze a person. The knowledge of one's own death is terrifying indeed.

Fortunately for the future of Scansion, this rift is accepted by both sides. The more cautious adepts admit that the active and determined approach of the new generation obtains more unpredictable results, which is a good if somewhat disquieting news for Sanders. Members of the new generation know they need their elders, who have mastered the most powerful opuses and often have an extraordinary ability to analyze causes and consequences, sometimes without even performing an opus.

THE SECRET ARTS

Be they attempts to regain some of the prestige lost to Concordists, or truly powerful manifestations of master opuses, Scansion is – after Tune – the Magical Art with the most impressive works in the Secret Arts. The greatest Scanders came out of hiding to help discover the Cantos. They are the ones that have achieved the most complete mastery over Fusion, well beyond what has been obtained by the Attuned. Their many and powerful opuses are unfortunately very difficult to understand. Those who would be initiated into Cantos must first learn Scansion, and endure all the trials devised by the masters of this Art. This doesn't sit well with the Attuned, but as learning Cantos through Tune is even more difficult, they can't really complain about their Scander collaborators. As usual, there are tales of other attempts at Fusion, notably with the Shape, but there is no evidence of successful results. As for Union, it seems the Scanders have never done research in this direction, or at least these investigations have remained confidential.

CORRUPTION

Until recently, corruption was almost nonexistent among Scanders. Their excessive caution leads them to check details over and over before any action is taken. With the arrival of the new generation, these precautions are being abandoned, and at least half a dozen betrayals have occurred.

But the great brotherhood of Scanders is still largely unfathomable to the Masque. The corrupted are usually unmasked as soon as their treason is noticed, often before it even occurs. The Tainted Scander is at best ostracized from the brotherhood, and more often taken to the Decan Council where his Flame is... recycled. The ancient poets carefully scanned the situation, and came up with the following insight: Corruption is the only method that could allow the Masque to triumph. All of his other schemes – seizing power, organizing wars or revolts, stealing Flames – will be no more than diversions when all is said and done. If, however, all the Inspired fell prey to Corruption, victory will be within reach for the Master of Sham.

THE FOUR FOUNDERS: THE TRUTH

At the end of the Flamboyance, there was a gathering of the greatest Concordists. At that time, the still-numerous Inspired were not concerned about the fate of the Magical Arts, even in this great assemblage of Artists.

However, an ominous Scander appeared, foretelling a threat that would weigh heavily upon the Magical Arts. Jeered by his peers, he departed. Some Concordists believed his warning and decided to find ways to create new branches of the Magical Arts – simpler and faster, but less effective.

Legend says that there were four of them, one for each Art, but in fact, there were over thirty (mostly Scanders).

They withdrew and studied the problem in secret for a long time until two of them became Luminaries. The first decided to found a Sanctuary (which is now buried under the statues of the Sisters of Mezdi); the second began to wander throughout the Widowlands, giving advice to every artist he encountered.

No one knows what happened to the rest of them, but thanks to these two Luminaries, the Free Arts were created.

The Sanctuary and the Wandering Luminary are the sources of the great love for the arts in the Widowlands.

SHARD ADDICTION

For Scanders, the addiction has an unexpectedly communitarian aspect. They usually settle near a powerful source of Shard, strong enough to influence a place rather than an object. This place becomes not only a source of inspiration, but also a place for experiments to see whether it is possible to escape the Shard's influence.

These communities are quite rare given the scarcity of powerful enough Shard. Additionally, Shard doesn't always help Scansion because the opuses, though benefiting from the inspiration, inevitably go in the same direction, toward the Shard's primary emotion. Scanders find this too limiting; rather than heightening the inspiration, the shard simply makes it more focused. The places selected for these experiments attract only a few people, and those that cannot perform without the Shard's influence are looked upon with pity, if not outright contempt.



NEW OPUSES

♣ Dead Language

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: 1 day

Word: 1 minute

The Concordist is able to read and understand a dead language. He cannot write it or speak it fluently, though he can copy from texts he has access to or read them aloud.

♣ Sense Danger

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: 1 minute

Word: 2 rounds

By declaiming a few verses, the Scander experiences a strange feeling of tension that lets him know if he will be in danger within the next minute. The precise nature and source of the danger remain hidden, but he knows instinctively whether something will happen.

♣ Time Stasis

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 1 minute

Word: 2 rounds

This fast and rhythmic declamation allows the Scander to target an opponent and reduce his movement and coordination by half. All the results obtained by the target for physical actions are halved (rounded down). After thirty seconds (five rounds), the victim may make an AGI x 2 roll against a DIF 20 to try to reduce the penalty to only a quarter (rounded up).

♣ Bad Omen

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Word: 3 rounds

The Scander creates a mental image of the target's death inside the target's mind. This death will not necessarily happen, but it is a possible outcome of real events, and shocking enough that the victim must succeed in a WIL roll against DIF 20 not to go catatonic for the next ten minutes.

♣ Visual Disturbance

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 round

Word: 1 round

This opus creates in its victim's mind an image of the failure of the action he is currently attempting. In addition to the disturbance caused by the vision, it makes the target doubt his own abilities. The action's difficulty is raised by ten points.

♣ I Shan't be There

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: instantaneous

Word: 1 minute

The Concordist is saved from the next dangerous situation he would have had to deal with. He is simply not there. Once this opus has been declaimed, the EG must arrange things so that the next time danger befalls the troupe, the Concordist is home sick, out of town, delayed somewhere else longer than expected, or subject to some other happenstance that allows him to evade the situation.

♣ Skin-deep Aging

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: permanent

Word: 1 minute

Unlike the "Aging" opus, this declamation directly targets its victim's appearance, making him look ten years older, without changing his metabolism. Depending on the victim's age, hairs may turn gray, white or fall out altogether, wrinkles deepen, and body hair may become sparse for elderly people or thicker for children and teen-agers.

♣ Backtrack

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: individual

Duration: see below

Word: 2 rounds

With this opus, the Concordist is able to go back one minute into the past. He vanishes and appears in the place where he was one minute before. He keeps a complete memory of the last minute he just lived, which is about to happen for everyone else.



YOREN A'TLAHWK, POET-MERCENARY

Yoren A'Tlahwk is one of his generation's most famous ogre poets. He wanders Harmundia's battlefields, lauding the beauty of combat and the greatness of weapons. He is huge, and his scarred face is known to every garrison commander on the continent. Going from battle to battle, he became known not only as an exceptional poet but also as a kind of "lucky charm" that always brought victory to his side. He has also unveiled several conspiracies to win or lose wars by political maneuvering. His favorite foes are Ascendancy mages. He hates them with a vengeance, as he feels their meddling in combat minimizes the bravery and strength of warriors who are defenseless against their magic. Yoren is a leader of the new generation of Scanders who value action above thought.

Origin: Modehan Marches

Race: Ogre

Age: 33

Height: 6'7" (SIZ 0)

Weight: 287 lbs.

MV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0

Body bonus: +1

AGLity: 5

PERception: 6

STamina: 8

STrength: 8

Spirit: 1/0

Spirit bonus: +1

INTelligence: 5

WILpower: 5

Soul: 1/0

Soul bonus: +1

CHARisma: 9

CREativity: 11

Secondary attributes

ART: 12

EMP: -

AIM: 5

MEL: 6

HP: 59

SWT: 19

CWT: 29

DB: +1

Fortune points: 2

Flame powers: none

Seasonling assets: Noon blaze

Load: 224

Half-load: 112

Daily load: 56

Darkness: 0

Perfidy: 0

Skills:

Courtly: Music (Drum) 1, Poetry 10, Traditions (Modehan) 5

Knowledge: Alphabet (Moden-Hen) 5, Language (Modehan) 5, Language (Keshite) 5, Season (Summer) 5, Surgery 5

Rogue: Intrigue 1, Gambling 5

Trials: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Dodge 3, First Aid 5, Weapon (Ogre sword) 6, Weapon (Tower shield) 6, Weapon (Brawl) 5, Weapon (Composite bow) 4

Occult: Concord 2, Cipher-sorcery 2, Scansion 10, Tune 1

Assets & Gifts:

Flamboyant attribute (Creativity), Presence, Keen, Famous

Faults & Sorrows:

Dark secret (killed a Censor), Disfigured, Flaring temper, Obsession (harm the Ascendancy mages), Paranoid (all mages want him dead)

Combat

Initiative: 12, Ogre sword 14, Tower shield 8, Brawl 8, Composite bow 16

Melee attack: Ogre sword 14, Tower shield 12, Brawl 13

Ranged attack: Composite bow 9

Melee defense:

Dodge: 0

Parry: Ogre sword 14, Tower shield 18

Ranged defense: 0

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.+DB	SIZ
ogre sword	+2	+1	+1	+6 (S/C)	0
tower shield	-4	-1	+5	+3 (C)	1
brawl	-4	+1	-	-2 (C)	-
composite bow	+4	0	-	+8 (I)	100 y.

Armor: partial chain mail (penalty -8, prot. 11)

Magical Arts

Tune APT 13

Scansion APT 22

Opuses

DRUM: Berserk (10).

SCANSION: Erosion (10), Step ahead (15), Fast Healing (15), Prophecy (15), Premonition (15), I Shan't be There (20).

Quote: "Battle! Here is the event that gives meaning to one's life. Talk not to me of the cowards living in cities!

"Expectation: Success!

"Apprehension: Disgrace!"



3 ~ The Secret Arts

rethren,

Long were the Magical Arts a province where everyone was free to concoct unique experiments, charting new territory as they went along in original directions. Concordists sought new ways of using the Muses' magic, and their variegated approaches brought many memorable opuses into being, some successful and some hopelessly flawed.

But with the growing influence of the master of Perfidy and the creation of the Tainted Arts, these experiments and mistakes became dangerous and we had to organize more strict guidelines for research. Our performances became standardized and many interesting endeavors were forgotten. Still some remnants of past splendors survive. Two major principles of this research are known at present: Union and Fusion.

Union enables us to combine the creativity of several Concordists to perform a common opus. The most classic examples are, for the Tune, the practices of Orchestra and Symphony.

Fusion is the process through which we combine different Arts. The most successful example today is Cantos, an integration of Tune and Scansion. If you wish to defend your Flame and best pursue our mission to protect Harmundia I advise you to master these Secret Arts.

Union

Several Concordists may combine their talents to produce stronger effects. This process has precise rules: the Concordists must be assembled in groups and follow the directions of one artist so that their efforts do not cancel each other out.

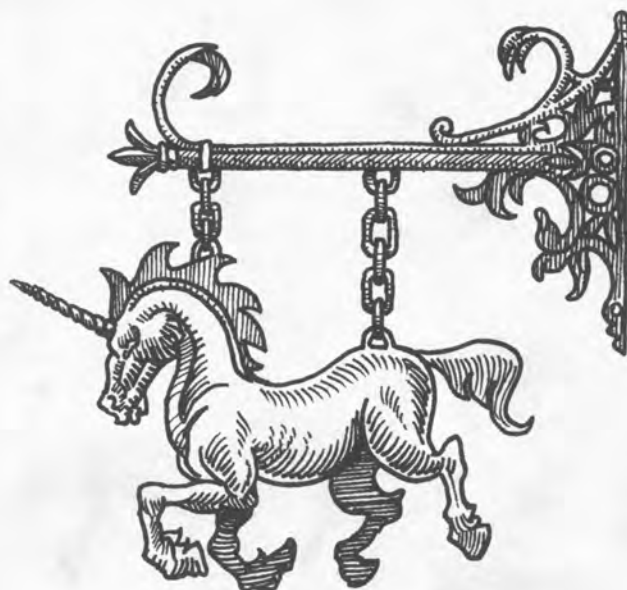
THE OPUS-MASTER

To perform Union, one Concordist, the opus-master, must succeed in a Direction roll. This roll is made using the ART attribute and the relevant Magical Art skill.

The roll's Difficulty is 5 times the number of Concordists involved in the opus. The more Concordists you have, the more powerful the opus will be.

Before making the roll, the opus-master may choose a Quality, which is added to the Difficulty and provides a bonus to the group opus roll(s) that will follow.

If the opus-master not only directs and coordinates the other Concordists, but also takes an active part in the performance itself, then the Direction roll gets a -10 penalty.



If the Direction roll is successful, the performers must in turn attempt their opus roll(s). If the Direction roll fails, no other rolls are necessary – the Concordists are just wasting their time and their poorly coordinated efforts will not merge into a united opus.

GROUPS

When performing Union, Concordists are divided into groups. A Concordist can belong to only one group at a time.

For Shape and Scansion, there is always only one group, comprised of all the Concordists of that Art. For Tune, each family of instruments involved in the opus comprises one group. For Vista, there is a group for each season involved.

RULES FOR UNION

Direction APTitude = ART + opus-master's relevant Magical Art skill rating,
-10 if the opus-master also takes part in the performance

Base Union APTitude for a group =
Lead Concordist's ART attribute
+ lowest rating (among all the group's Concordists) between relevant Art and relevant Magical Art skills,
-5 if the opus-master also performs within the group

Group roll = Base Union APT
+ 1 die per Concordist
+ possible Direction Quality bonus

Each group makes a separate opus roll. The number of groups is not a factor in the Direction roll; only the total number of Concordists is taken into account.

When there are several groups, the Quality bonus for Direction may be split between the groups as the opus-master sees fit before the group opus rolls are made.

THE UNITED OPUS

In each group, one Concordist plays the part of the lead. His ART attribute is used for the group's opus roll.

The skill rating used is the lowest score among the relevant Art and Magical Art skills of all the group's Concordists.

The Base for the roll is the sum of this skill rating and the lead's ART.

When the performance takes place, each Concordist in the group rolls a die. The Lead Concordist's roll is Open; all others are Closed.

If the opus-master is also performing in the group, he gets a -5 penalty to his performance roll.

The results of all the performance rolls are then added to the Base and compared against the Threshold (s) of the Opus.

Union usually allows one to perform the standard opuses of a Magical Art with much more effective results. By striving for a high opus Quality, and raising the Threshold accordingly, united Concordists may increase the opus' effects as per the usual rules (AGONE rulebook, p. 214).

ORCHESTRA

The Union of Tune is called the Orchestra. A long time ago the technique was in widespread use, but dissensions between the instrument families slowly put an end to these moments of harmonic unity.

When two Attuned try to play simultaneously nowadays, the result is more often Discord rather than Concord. The main problem with Orchestra is organizing these differences – the counterpoints, the rhythms, etc. – into a coherent whole.

For Tune, the opus-master is called the conductor, groups are called ensembles, and the lead Concordist in each ensemble is called the “First” instrument (First Cittern, First Viol, etc.).

Each ensemble in the Orchestra is made up of all the Attuned playing a particular family of instruments.

SYMPHONY

Given the scarcity of the Attuned and the split between the families, most Orchestras are made up of only one ensemble or group.

These Orchestras perform the usual Tune opuses, though at a very advanced level.

But a few rare Orchestras carry on the almost lost art of Symphony, wherein Attuned from different families assemble to perform opuses beyond the scope of a single instrument family. Through Symphony, the true power of Union is achieved.

Some Symphonies need only one ensemble, but even those cannot be performed by a solo Attuned; the symphonic effect is unleashed through the harmonic combination of several instruments of that ensemble’s family.

And the most impressive Symphony opuses are performed by gathering instruments from different families.

Orchestras with more than one ensemble often include Drums, as this family is especially suited to accompany other instruments.

SYMPHONY OPUSES

Symphony opuses have a threshold for each family of instruments necessary to play it. The opus quality is added to each threshold to obtain the Difficulty for each groups’ rolls.

♣ Deep-rooted Grudges

Instrument: Symphony
Threshold (Drum): 10
Threshold (Cittern): 20
Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
Duration: 10 minutes
Measure: 3 rounds

The target suddenly becomes infuriated. He remembers all those that did him wrong, foremost those nearby, who he starts to shout at, reproaching past misdeeds – however minor – as if they were the most heinous crimes. He demands compensation, remains unsatisfied even if it is offered, and behaves in a progressively more paranoid manner. Unless placated (CHA + Diplomacy or Fast-talk roll against DIF 15 + opus

Quality), the target will soon resort to violence and will not hesitate to murder someone, even if normally a stranger to this kind of behavior.

Naturally, if the situation is tense to begin with and the target is already resentful of someone, violence will erupt very quickly, even if attempts are made to reason with him.

♣ Bestial Fury

Instrument: Symphony
Threshold (Drum): 10
Threshold (Viol): 20
Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target
Duration: 5 minutes
Measure: 1 round

The target suddenly becomes enraged and rushes toward the closest individuals, intending to kill them on the spot. The target is immune to pain (penalties for serious or critical wounds are ignored) and will fight to the death with +2 to attack rolls and +2 to damage.

♣ Voluble Nostalgia

Instrument: Symphony
Threshold (Flute): 15
Threshold (Cittern): 15
Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
Duration: 10 minutes
Measure: 2 rounds

Under the influence of this opus, the target is overwhelmed by memories and a desire to share them with whoever is willing to listen. For example, upon embarking on any action, the target will feel compelled to say aloud “this reminds me of the time when...” and tell an anecdote more or less relevant to the situation.

The fondest memories will be remembered first, but anyone who asks the target about the past will automatically be answered, and even the most embarrassing or compromising recollections will be gleefully confided.

♣ Bliss

Instrument: Symphony
Threshold (Harp): 20
Threshold (Flute): 15
Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
Duration: 1 hour
Measure: 1 round

The target is seized by a simple and boundless happiness, having no desire other than to stay where he is and enjoy the moment. Breathing the sweet air and sighing with contentment, the target is completely lost in daydreams and cares not at all for what might happen around him.

The effects of this opus are so powerful that its victim will consider violence against him (verbal or physical) to be a part of this newfound perfect happiness, welcoming blows or insults as if they were the caressing rays of a spring sun.

Lunacy

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Flute): 15

Threshold (Drum): 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: permanent

Measure: 3 rounds

The victim starts to exhibit slight derangement: absurd slips of the tongue, weird visions, strange desires, eccentric behavior, fits of giggles, etc. Nothing extreme, but enough to discredit just about anybody. Furthermore, the victim will suffer a modifier of -1 to all rolls for actions requiring focus.

Safe Conduct

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Harp): 15

Threshold (Drum): 10

Threshold (Viol): 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 day

Measure: 30 minutes

For one day, the target of this opus is protected from all the creatures of the Domain where it is performed. No human, seasonling or animal will attack the recipient. The effect is dispelled if the target takes up arms or starts doing something aggressive. This opus will affect creatures of the Masque, but not those of the Darken.

Harmony

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Harp): 25

Threshold (Viol): 20

Threshold (Flute): 15

Threshold (Cittern): 15

Range/Area of effect: a Domain

Duration: 1 month

Measure: 30 minutes

A magical breath blows over the Domain where this opus is played. Here and there, innocuous or beneficial supernatural events manifest themselves. Dancers are more numerous and more visible. Enchanted creatures and plants abound. The inhabitants take all this quite well and remember the spiritual heritage (traditions, cults, legends, rituals, etc.) of the area a little better.

As long as the effects last, the Domain's rating in Soul is raised by one point and its rating in Dark Soul is lowered by one point.

Military Disorganization

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Flute): 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one military unit

Duration: a battle

Measure: 5 minutes

One troop of soldiers is enchanted by the opus. It becomes completely unable to maneuver and is rendered useless – and possibly dangerous – to its army. At best

the unit is routed. At worst the army's movements are impaired. The unit's soldiers are still able to flee (in a disordered fashion) rather than put their lives in danger.

War Frenzy

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Drum): 25

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one military unit

Duration: 5 minutes

Measure: 10 minutes

All a troop's soldiers are seized with an intense desire to destroy their nearest opponents. They launch themselves into battle unhesitatingly and will not be satisfied until blood is shed. They will disregard any penalties due to Serious Wounds (but not Critical ones). As soon as someone dies – on either side – the effects of the opus stop, though the fighting will most likely continue.

Legitimate Authority

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Harp): 30

Range/Area of effect: a Domain

Duration: 10 days

Measure: 30 minutes

The Lord's influence in the Domain where this opus is played is suddenly strongly reinforced in the hearts and minds of all his subjects. Collective behavior is improved, and the possibility of riots or rebellions is lessened. The Domain's rating in either Dark Body or Dark Spirit (EG's choice) is reduced by 1 point for the duration of the opus.

Nature's Bounty

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Viol): 30

Range/Area of effect: a Domain

Duration: 1 month

Measure: 30 minutes

In the Domain where this opus is played, nature suddenly becomes more plentiful. Crops are increased and game abounds, all to the benefit of the Domain's population and finances. The Domain's rating in either Body or Spirit (EG's choice) is increased by 1 point for the duration of the opus.

Collective Amnesia

Instrument: Symphony

Threshold (Cittern): 30

Range/Area of effect: a Domain

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 30 minutes

A recent event (less than 24 hours old) is erased from the memory of all inhabitants of the Domain in which the opus is played. If asked directly about it, they must roll INT + WIL against DIF (25 + opus Quality) to overcome the block on their memory. The erased event may have a precise location (an assault on a castle) or not (the passage of a caravan).

Fusion

By venerating all the Muses simultaneously, some early Concordists sought a complete art that approximated the perfection of creation. This was the birth of Fusion. While the techniques of Union is still preserved to a certain degree, the secrets of Fusion are mere traces left by iconoclastic Concordists who tried to invent a new art by combining elements of different Arts. Only a few scraps of the fused arts have survived or are being reinvented nowadays. Among these, only one is formalized enough to be usable by player characters: Cantos.

CANTOS

Cantos combines Tune and Scansion into one Art. Words and music are joined in vibrant magical opuses. The temporal aspect of Scansion is merged with Tune's influence on the living. Thus Cantos opuses mainly affect a target's body and senses.

Performing an Opus

Cantos APTitude is found by calculating the average of a Concordist's Scansion APT and Tune APT (with Singing as the branch used for the Music skill when calculating the Scansion APTitude).

Example: a Concordist with ART 9, +1 Soul Bonus, Poetry 7, Music (Singing) 5, Magical Art (Scansion) 7, and Magical Art (Tune) 7, will have a Scansion APT of 15 (ART + Soul bonus + lower of Scansion and Poetry) and a Tune APT of 17 (ART + Soul bonus + lower of Singing and Tune). His Cantos APT is therefore 16.

Accompaniment

To perform Cantos, no accompaniment is required, since the music comes from the singing voice (the Music:

Singing skill). The use of one or more instruments to accompany the song, however, makes the opus easier to perform.

To accompany a singer, one need only be a musician, though not necessarily an Attuned. For the accompaniment to be effective, the musician must have a Music skill for his instrument equal to at least half the Singing skill of the Concordist.

If a Cantos Concordist performs an opus without accompaniment, the roll suffers a -2 penalty. If the Concordist accompanies himself (by playing an instrument for which he has a Music skill rating equal to at least half his Music: Singing rating), the roll is made with no penalty. If the singer is accompanied by other musicians (each having a Music skill equal to at least half the singer's rating), he gets a +1 bonus for each musician (with a maximum of +3).

Discord

An Attuned cannot use Discord on a Concordist performing Cantos. Ambient sounds, however, play an important part in calculating the modifiers for the Cantos rolls, so the use of an instrument (that is not accompanying the singer) may upset the performance of the opus.

On the other hand, an Attuned may try to use Cantos in a Discord action against a Tune opus. In this case, the Discord roll suffers a -5 penalty, reflecting the differences between voice and instruments.

CANTOS OPUSES

Cantos opuses combine a poem with music. The time required to perform a Cantos opus is called the Breath.

Sensory Awakening

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Breath: 2 rounds

The target's senses are suddenly heightened. He gains +1 to his Alertness skill for the duration of the opus.

Captivating Aria

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: that of the chant

Breath: 1 round

Once the opus begins, the target is subjugated and cannot take any action beyond staying still and listening to the Concordist. The victim is however aware of being under a magical influence. As soon as the Concordist stops singing or the target is disturbed (attacked, searched, etc.), the effect of the opus stops.

CANTOS APTITUDE MODIFIERS

Site rich in Shard	+Value
Site favorable to Inspiration	+2
Site unfavorable to Inspiration	-2
Accompanied by three or more musicians	+3
Accompanied by two musicians	+2
Accompanied by one musician	+1
A cappella (no accompaniment)	-2
Perfect silence (apart from the accompaniment)	+2
Lots of noise (in addition to the accompaniment)	-2

♣ Soprane Deafness

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Breath: 1 round

This opus makes its victim completely deaf. All hearing-based PER and Alertness rolls automatically fail, and there is a -20 penalty on all other rolls for which hearing is a factor (such as dodging a projectile you cannot hear coming).

♣ Soprane Blindness

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Breath: 2 rounds

This opus makes the victim completely blind. All vision-based PER and Alertness rolls automatically fail, and there is a -20 penalty on all other rolls for which sight is a factor (such as using weapons).

♣ Tone Deaf

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Breath: 2 rounds

This opus inflicts partial deafness on its victim, who can now hear only what the Concordist permits. For example, a guard under the influence of this opus continues to hear his colleague's snores and ambient sounds, but does not hear the clash of weapons in the next room. When performing the opus, the Concordist must specify whether the victim will hear "everything except such and such types of noises" or "nothing but such and such sounds". Once the effect is underway, these specifications cannot be changed.

♣ Healing Hymn

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: contact/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Breath: 1 minute

Filled with a feeling of well being, the target regains 2 HP if he has suffered no Serious Wounds, and 1 HP otherwise. The target can also disregard Serious Wound penalties, and automatically succeeds on the WIL roll for a third Serious Wound.

♣ Lullaby

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 15 minutes

Breath: 2 rounds

The victim is overwhelmed by an insidious torpor and falls asleep unless there is a good reason to stay awake. If the target stays awake, the opus causes a modifier of -2 to all rolls involving alertness or focus, and the victim will have to make a roll of WIL x 2 against a DIF 15 every minute or doze off.

♣ Tone Blind

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Breath: 3 rounds

This opus inflicts partial blindness on its victim, who can now see only what the Concordist allows. For example, a guard under the influence of this opus could be made to see the scenery as normal, but not a band of thieves passing right in front of him. When performing the opus, the Concordist must specify whether the victim will see "everything except such and such things or types of thing" or "nothing but such and such things (or persons)". Once the effect is underway, these specifications cannot be changed.

♣ Perfect Beauty

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: 10 y./one target

Duration: 30 minutes

Breath: 5 rounds

The target now sees the Concordist as the most desirable creature imaginable. He is willing to do almost anything to obtain the Concordist's favors. Once the opus' effects are over, the victim will of course realize the deception.

♣ Epic Lay

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 hour

Breath: 4 rounds

THE ORCHESTRA OF TLAWK

This wonder in the Modehan Marches bears mentioning here.

Near to the Frabourg Forest, in a rocky clearing that has incredible acoustics, seven Attuned (two drummers, two flutists and one of each other instrument) gathered to protect the great Symphonies. Not only did they work without quarreling (quite rare for Attuned), but also their training produced strange enchantments. Animals come to the clearing to sing the opuses they once heard. There are, for example, huge drum-frogs, nightingale flutists that have learned to whistle in rhythm, and harp-spiders that feed on the sounds they produce. Even plants reacted to the music of the Attuned, such as whining-willows, which can perfectly imitate the music of the viol. Most incredible of all, some stones are capable of simulating the sound of the Cittern.

This enchanted place has begun to fall into harmony and is now able to "play" certain fragments of Symphonies that were performed by the orchestra of Tlawk. Though the last member of the orchestra died a long time ago, the clearing still echoes with the sounds of Tune.

The target gets a five-point increase to one Body attribute (Concordist's choice). When the opus' effects wear off, the target loses 2 HP. If the effects are increased through the opus quality, the subsequent loss of HP is increased accordingly. The attribute cannot go above 10 points.

THE UNIT OF BEATIFIC RESEARCH

At the present time, there is only one place in Har-mundia where Cantos is closely studied: the Nunnery of Holy Threnodies in the Liturgical Province (see *The Gray Papers*). Three Inspired, Sister Constance, Sister Perfection and Sister Crystal, originated this project. The guinea pigs brought to the nunnery by the Liturgicals were rarely consenting. Many other sisters were subjected to great distress after the Cantos sessions and some went mad. One sister, Margelen, was unable to bear the suffering: she lost her faith and fled the convent. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to retrieve her, the sisters returned to their research. They are in possession of every known Cantos opus, and are busy creating new ones. Three are almost usable – they just need "a little more research" (i.e. the sacrifice of a dozen more guinea pigs).

SISTER MARGILENA OF ASCALANDRE

On a cold winter morning, an Urgamish baron received an unexpected visit from a fugitive Liturgist nun in full regalia. Laughing at her explanations, he imprisoned the young woman and seized the opportunity to take advantage of her in every way his perverted mind could come up with.

Eventually, he made a fatal mistake in letting his prisoner sing, and discovered the terrible powers of the Cantos. The young woman put all the castle's inhabitants to death before vanishing.

A renegade of the Liturgist theocracy, she is said to come from a mysterious convent whose practices turned her away from religion. She has now found a haven in the depth of the Moscan Forest, where she awaits Inspired willing to learn the Art of Cantos. But woe to any males who dare appear before her – none have survived. This has gone so far that the Decan Council, unwilling (or unable?) to contend with her powers, has sent a female emissary to collect the Flames "liberated" by the young Liturgist.





4 ~ Assets & Faults

Assets

ARTISTIC SYNERGY (1)

You have an obvious gift for Union. Whenever you perform an Opus with others, the group you belong to gets a +2 bonus to its roll.

PERFECT VOICE (1)

You have a knack for singing in tune on the first try. You suffer no penalty when performing Cantos *a cappella*.

AFFECTIONATE MASTER (1)

You still keep in touch with the person who taught you the Magical Arts. He or she sees you as a gifted disciple and has maintained a friendly relationship with you. This mentor may be of great assistance in the future, but may also ask you to perform some favors at times...

PATRONAGE (1)

Your artistic talents have attracted the attention of a wealthy patron who now sponsors your creations. He may be a noble, a merchant or a representative of an institution (such as a guild). You have some duties to him, largely compensated by the good word of mouth your work gets and the money you are paid. Additionally, you get the skill Intrigue (Patronage) at a rating of 5.

GIFTED CONDUCTOR (2)

You have a gift for Orchestra and great talent as an opus-master. You get a +2 bonus to all Directing rolls and, contrary to the usual rules, you can wait until all groups of musicians have made their rolls before allocating the modifiers allowed by the Quality of your Direction.

MELODIC WILLPOWER (3)

You are able to concentrate on a melody, disregarding any noise that could disturb you. Ignore all penalties for surrounding noise when performing Tune, Scansion, or Cantos. Another Attuned trying to use Discord while you perform suffers a -5 penalty.

PROTECTED BY A MUSE (3)

You are partially immune to the effects of one (and only one) Magical Art. Your resistance to the chosen Art is (WIL + CRE) x 2.

VIRTUOSO (4)

You have such a gift for one of the Arts that you can perform its opuses in half the required time (rounded up). You get a +10 initiative bonus when performing opuses in the given Art.

This asset cannot be taken along with the fault "Finicky Artist".

Faults

ARTISTIC STIFFNESS (1)

You are unable to combine your Magical Art talents or perform with others. Union and Fusion are beyond you. You cannot work within an Orchestra, use Symphony or perform Cantos.

INSULATED FROM CONCORD (1)

You are unreceptive to the influence your surroundings may have on the performance of the Magical Arts. However strong the Shard or the Inspiration of a place, you never get these bonuses added to your rolls. On the positive side, the penalty for working in an unfavorable environment is halved for you.

COMPETITOR (1)

Another Concordist trained in the same Art sees you as a rival. He will constantly try to prove he is your better, and will do anything to prevent you from finding new Opuses. Combined with "Hostile Master", possession of this fault could indicate that your master has broken all contact with you because he sees you only as an ambitious opportunist that must be discredited.

ARTISTIC SLOPPINESS (2)

You tend to rely too much on your innate talents, and not enough on training. You sometime botch up the end of an Opus because you are too confident in its success. If you get a negative SM, you must subtract an additional 5 points in order to see whether a fumble occurred and how catastrophic it is. This fault cannot be combined with "Finicky Artist".

ARTISTIC LAZINESS (2)

You are unable to exert yourself in order to produce an exceptional Opus. Giving your best exhausts you too much. Whenever you perform an Opus, you cannot exceed a Quality of 5. This fault cannot be combined with the fault "Overly Demanding".

SLOW LEARNER (2)

You have a hard time memorizing new opuses. You require twice the normal time to learn one and the Threshold is raised by five points whenever you perform it.

A POUND OF FLESH... (2)

Inexplicably, you feel your Art as something inside your body, and performing an opus is for you an intense physical exertion. You lose a number of HP equal to Quality + 1 (maximum 30 HP) whenever you perform an opus.

FINICKY ARTIST (3)

You take twice the standard time to perform your opuses. However, if you get a fumble, you can add 5 to your SM to reduce the catastrophe.

If you attempt an instant opus, you multiply its Threshold by 3 instead of 2.

This fault cannot be combined with the asset "Virtuoso", nor with the fault "Artistic Sloppiness".

OVERLY DEMANDING (2)

Be it out of vanity or perfectionism, you never perform any Opus with a Quality less than 5 (though you can still get the basic magical effect if you choose not to amplify the parameters of the spell - see AGONE rulebook p. 214). This fault cannot be combined with "Artistic Laziness".





Drama

Requiem for a Dead Mage

*"O mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps! Levons l'ancre!
Ce pays nous ennuie, ô Mort! Appareillons!
Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe!
Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!"*

*"O, Death, old captain! Time has come! Weigh the anchor!
O, Death! This country wearies us! Let's set sail!
The fire scorches our wits so that we intend to dive,
To dive to the bed of the chasm, Hell or Heaven, whichever it may be.
In the deep unknown to find novelty!"*

— Charles Baudelaire

This Drama takes place in Lorgol, during Fall 1450.
One way or another, the Troupe will be dragged into a strange situation
that concerns the Urganish Cipher-sorcerer.

The Plot

SYNOPSIS

On the first day of Fall 1450, Draedonius, a famous Obscurantist from Lorgol, died. The Cipher-sorcerer immediately shrouded the death in secrecy. Minuetto, one of Draedonius' most gifted Dancers, has disappeared. The Censor of Roundrock, Malarmel, has begun an investigation to determine exactly what happened and to make sure Draedonius was not the victim of a conspiracy seeking to capture Minuetto.

The mage Slakent, Draedonius' successor, is aware that Draedonius had an apprentice named Laliana, who has not been seen since the death of her master. He suspects her of being involved. She was not a registered apprentice, so to tutor her was, according to the order's laws, a serious offense.

If ever this were to be proved, Draedonius would be discredited and his possessions would be seized by the Cipher-sorcerer. Slakent does not want to lose Draedonius' legacy – especially his Dancers. He therefore cannot search for Laliana officially and is hunting for her without the authorization of the Cipher-sorcerer.

The situation is even more complicated than Slakent thinks. Laliana is not guilty of Draedonius' murder. Minuetto is the source of the problem; and this is not the first time it caused trouble. It already eliminated its two previous owners...

IN DAYS OF YORE

The story of Minuetto is enlightening. Captured twelve years ago, it was "adopted" by Irik Conversa, an old Jornist of Lorgol. Conversa lived in one of the Thousand Towers, Phalaen Tower, which features twinkling lights resembling white moths at nighttime. A deep bond connected these two. When Irik died of natural causes in early Fall 1445, Minuetto was devastated and decided to let itself die on its master's body.

♣ The Melancholy Waltz

But Vernashope, Conversa's inheritor, took over. He settled in Phalaen Tower and, little by little, tamed Minuetto. He discovered the Dancer's extraordinary abilities and strove to restore its taste for life.

Unfortunately, despair became the Dancer's primary emotion. In the early Fall of 1446, one year after Draedonius' death, Minuetto was troubled by suicidal tendencies. It then commenced a complex Dance, inspired by its deep anguish; suddenly, a branch of the Borrowlight Tree smashed through the side of Phalaen Tower.

The tree stabbed Vernashope in the heart, killing him instantly.

♣ The Memory of Souls

As the Dancer realized it had caused the death of its master, it attempted to commit suicide by impaling itself on one of the tree's black thorns. But it did not die; it only got a piece of the thorn stuck in its heart and gained a new power, the Memory of Souls, which gave it the ability to summon ghosts of the past.

Weighed down by despair, Minuetto began to haunt Phalaen Tower while invoking the ghosts of its memories, in the form of Irik Conversa and Vernashope. Soon, the tower was considered haunted and everyone began to avoid it.

♣ The Power of Despair

One spring day in 1447, an audacious Little Hunter named Tern Fool used a seasonling ritual to protect himself from the tree and entered Phalaen Tower. There, he discovered and captured Minuetto, whom he sold for a large amount of money to the Eclipsist Jurangon. It took quite a while for the latter to resonate with Minuetto, and the Dancer had to grow accustomed to Impulse for it only knew Empathy. But after several months, Minuetto became Jurangon's favorite Dancer, and gradually the mage was afflicted with the despair the Dancer radiated.

In early Fall 1448, disaster struck again. A despondent Jurangon freed his Dancers and threw himself out of the tower onto one of the jagged Borrowlight's branches. Minuetto returned to Phalaen Tower, living with its ghostly replicas of its former masters. This was the only place where, thanks to the Memory of Souls, it could transform its despair into nostalgia. Jurangon and Tern Fool joined this ghostly assembly.

♣ A One, and a Two and a Three...

During Winter 1449, some Little Hunters informed Tern Fool that Minuetto had been seen amongst the ghosts of the Phalaen Tower. Puzzled, the spriggan returned to the tower in the Spring and captured the Dancer once again. But Tern Fool saw Jurangon's ghost and began to suspect the Dancer of having caused the disappearance of the mage. Nevertheless, his obsession with making money prevailed. He sold the Dancer to an Obscurantist, Draedonius.

Minuetto was happy to endure Torture. Full of sorrow, the Dancer began to punish itself through pain. It considered Draedonius a redeemer, who would expunge its faults. Unfortunately, their common relationship became a destructive spiral: Minuetto wanted more and more pain, whereas Draedonius, fascinated by the Dancer's capabilities, became exponentially more disgusted with himself. This state of affairs reached its climax in the beginning of Fall 1450, when Draedonius committed suicide. Minuetto, having lost yet another master, returned to Phalaen Tower once again.

Change of Tempo

During the last months of his life, Draedonius had been secretly teaching Laliana, an Attuned Inspired, who wanted to learn Obscurantism in order to fight the Brotherhood of Senses. This Urgamish clique, originally Liturgical, aspires to impose pure reason upon Harmundia, and has been responsible for the destruction of many works of art.

Marcus One-Shot, the leader of the local Brotherhood, is a Marionette of the Masque who used his group to capture Concordists in order to corrupt their Flames.

Laliana was identified by a member of the Brotherhood while investigating him. She was imprisoned in an underground cell, and though she is resisting their ministrations, her will is faltering.

WHAT IF...?

There are numerous ways to involve your Troupe in this Drama, depending on the relationship between your Inspired and the Cipher-sorcerer.

If one of your Inspired is an Obscurantist, you can make him Draedonius' heir (you will have to remove Slakent from the story).

If one of your Inspired is a Censor, he could have been summoned to investigate the murder of Draedonius.

If one of your Inspired is a Little Hunter, he can be one of Tern Fool's friends. He will want to help Tern discover the truth.

If one of your Inspired is an Attuned, he may have met Laliana and can be curious about her disappearance.



Lorgol

The new capital of Urgamand is a strange city. It is located far from the center of the realm, and its atmosphere is rather somber because of the slums and the rogues and above all, because of the Borrowlight Tree. But the First Baron Agone has imposed his decision, so most Urgamish nobles have accepted his choice of Lorgol as the capital.

Consult the following pages for a precise description of the city: AGONE rulebook, pp. 52, 55, 274, 276.

Lorgol is ruled by a triumvirate: Lady Kerielle (the burgomaster), Sir Gotran (head of the militia) and Admiral Escadol (head of the Watchers).

THE PORT

This is the most cosmopolitan part of Lorgol. There are citizens from every realm and of every race. The south part of the city is made up of canals, warehouses, taverns and piers. The harbormaster's office is where all naval trade is tracked and taxed. It is the headquarters of Admiral Escadol who commands the Watchers. This elite corps is composed of fewer men than the militia, but its members are far more experienced and they are also good sailors. They are capable of naval actions with their own frigates. Moreover, they are sponsored by the naval taxes and are far better equipped than the militia.

The Lorgol lighthouse is financed by the Cipher-sorcerer in exchange for control of the Thousand Towers.

THE HIGH QUARTER

This area, where the wealthiest inhabitants of Lorgol live, is located in the eastern part of the city, next to the roads that lead to the Mercenary Republic. Most of the beautiful buildings were built by dwarven architects.

The Citadel is at the center of the High Quarter; it is where the Lorgol militia is based and where the First Baron, Agone, rules. He usually leaves daily affairs to his chamberlain because he is devoted to resolving complex problems – international relationships, interactions with the Cipher-sorcerer, etc. – and is often traveling.

Sir Gotran, the commander of the militia, is responsible for security in Lorgol, but the slums are still extremely dangerous.

CENTER ALLEY

This is the merchant district of Lorgol. It is a long avenue located in the center of the city, between the

slums and the High Quarter, and it connects the port to the Thousand Towers.

The Council House is the heart of Center Alley; this is where Lady Keriell runs the city administration.

The New Spark Inn, a famous Eclipsist academy, is located between Center Alley and the slums.

THE SLUMS

The western part of Lorgol is disreputable. Running from the Thousand Towers plateau to the sea, it is a labyrinth of small dark streets, malodorous lots, and dim alcoves. This area is a rogues' paradise, for the militia does not dare go there at night.

There are several thief-princes in Lorgol, all of who fight to control the slums. Rumor has it that Agone himself is at the head of one of the gangs, but this seems quite doubtful, for the First Baron would have little time for such activities.

THE THOUSAND TOWERS

The plateau on the north side of the city is covered by a labyrinth of enchanted towers. This is where Agone planted the Borrowlight Tree (a progeny of the first Borrowlight). In the last 30 years, it has grown to a colossal size, covering most of the Thousand Towers. The black tree is called Nigrescent Wood or Treenebra by the inhabitants of Lorgol. Most now avoid this area. Only powerful mages, Little Hunters and seasonlings dare to approach Nigrescent Wood.

Phalaen Tower is located in the western part of the Thousand Towers.

THE UNDERGROUND

Many rumors and legends concern the underground network of Lorgol. Some say there is a necropolis where restless dead rise to attack those who intrude upon the underground. Others say there are monsters living beneath the port. It is even said that demons from the Abyss lurk here... Indeed, strange creatures have been spotted in the upper levels of the underground network.

There are thousands of entrances to the underground: sewers, cellars, catacombs, etc. Many rogues use this network to hide from the militia.



Characters

SLAKENT, GREEDY MAGE

Who he is

This Obscurantist is a tall and broad man with short blond hair. He considers maintaining one's appearance an obligation for the powerful and is always smartly dressed.

Slakent is an ambitious, determined and heartless man. His only motivation is his obsession with profit. He uses Torture remorselessly but without pleasure. He knows the value of Dancers.

What he knows

He is convinced that Laliana is an ambitious young wench who only sought Draedonius in order to steal his occult knowledge. He does not suspect her of having killed her master. Slakent knows that Malarmel will not spare him (because Malarmel is a Jor-nist); however he also knows that he has nothing to reproach himself with (well, almost nothing).

What he wants

He wants to recover the inheritance of Draedonius (including Minuetto, of course).

He also wants to take vengeance on Laliana because he is convinced that she stole from him. But Slakent knows that no one must discover Laliana's existence

SLAKENT

Race: human
Sex: male
Age: 43
Height: 6'1" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 186 lbs.
MOV: 3

For Slakent's attributes, use those of the Obscurantist Censor archetype (see AGONE rulebook, p. 133). Slakent is not an Inspired; add 1 extra point to each Skill in order to compensate for his lack of a Flame.

Magic
ASC: 10
ASC APT: 22
Dancer lore: 8
Resonance: 8

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Empath.	Endur.
Erdwin	24	+4	6	6

Typical quote: "You must understand that I am counting on your prudence. Since this morning, everybody is talking about your involvement. Well, it is in the past... So, tell me, what did you discover?"

because if ever the Cipher-sorcerer knew, he would lose all his rights to Draedonius' legacy.

Nothing can discourage him from recovering Minuetto, even the story of the Dancer's "curse". If Slakent feels that the Inspired are trying to fool him, he will make them understand that they are making a big mistake. No one mocks an Obscurantist.

TERN FOOL, JAUNTY LITTLE HUNTER

Who he is

Tern Fool is one of the most famous Little Hunters of Lorgol. This Eclipsist is easily identifiable by a long braid of dark hair clipped in a golden triangle that is supposed to help him attract Dancers. This small (even for a spriggan) and stocky Hunter likes wearing colorful and eccentric clothes. His mischievous look suggests resourceful and roguish behavior.

He has always been independent and he is said to have trafficked in Dancers in order to survive when the Brotherhood of the Minuscule (a band of Small Hunters, active during Agone's youth) still existed.

He has sold several exceptional Dancers in the last few years, but, as he lives extravagantly (he loves parties and gambling), he is not rich.

What he knows

Tern knows the secret of Phalaen Tower; he has developed a spell (DIF 20) that gives him protection against the ghosts. Moreover, he knows a seasonling ritual that slows down the movements of the Borrowlight Tree. Unfortunately, this ritual only works in springtime.

The Hunter also knows that Minuetto radiates an aura of nostalgia and sadness and that he only seems happy in the Tower.

Tern is aware that Draedonius was working on activities other than his normal duties for the Cipher-sorcerer. He sold a mediocre Dancer to the mage that was not been recorded by the Order. (This Dancer now belongs to Laliana.)

What he wants

Tern suspects that Minuetto is dangerous but he does not want to reveal this to anyone because if a Censor found out, he could be found guilty of having killed Draedonius.

He prefers not getting involved in this situation; however, he will support the Inspired in their investigation.

If he trusts the Troupe, he will help them directly.

If he feels that the Inspired will give him away, he will point them toward other leads (the archives of the New Spark Inn for example – see AGONE rulebook p. 103).

If Malarmel suspects him, Tern will hide within the Thousand Towers. In this case, he will negotiate with the Troupe, assisting them if they help him escape possible punishment.

TERN FOOL

Race: spriggan

Sex: male

Age: 52

Height: 4'2" (SIZ -1)

Weight: 101 lbs.

For Tern's attributes, use those of the spriggan Eclipsist Dancer Huntress (AGONE rulebook p. 135). Tern is not an Inspired; add 1 extra point to each Skill in order to compensate for his lack of a Flame. In addition, Tern has these skills: Etiquette (the slums) 8, Gambling 8.

Assets and Faults

Famous, Creative mage

Magic

ASC: 9

ASC APT: 18

Dancer lore: 7

Intuitive APT: 18

Resonance: 7

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Empath.	Endur.
Lubaro	20	+2	6	4

Typical quote: "What d'ya say, fat snout? Me? A Dancer trafficker? You betta be jokin'! By Agone's gem, you should be car'ful. All me bizness is legal. And I do good bizness 'cos I'm good at it."

MALARMEL, JORNIST CENSOR ON A MISSION

Who he is

For his attributes and appearance, see AGONE rulebook p. 275.

What he knows

He suspects Slakent of not being completely innocent and wants to investigate further, so he has petitioned the Cipher-sorcerer has delayed the succession process. Unfortunately for Malarmel, Slakent is a red herring.

What he wants

He wants to clear up this situation and catch the murderer of Draedonius. The day after the arrival of the Troupe, Malarmel will suspect a connection with Jurangon's death. He will then want to question Tern Fool, who will stay hidden.

If the Inspired thwart Malarmel's investigation, he will accuse them of obstruction of justice, and will try to find a way they may have broken the Ciphe-red laws.

FANDOR DIM, THIEF-PRINCE

♣ Who he is

This tall, thin ogre is the head of a network of spies and thieves. His gray eyes and pale skin add to his charisma, but his appearance is more fascinating than beautiful. Fandor prefers to be underestimated; this is how he has already avoided several murder attempts. Indeed, his enemies often forget that he is not only an intellect but also an athlete. He veils himself in an aura of mystery even though he is actually quite honest and straightforward. In Lorgol, many persons of note have used his services in order to obtain secrets... and more.

♣ What he knows

He has met Laliana and he respects her for her determination, though he is not aware of her exceptional talents (as a Concordist and an Obscurantist). Fandor Dim also knows that Tern Fool has been spending large amounts of money since he sold a Dancer in 1447.

♣ What he wants

If possible, he wants to help Laliana. But he does not want to risk the concealment of his network. He wants to maintain his image as a powerful crime lord. If the Inspired seem kind, he will help them, especially if the help doesn't cost him anything.



FANDOR DIM

Race: ogre
Sex: male
Age: 44
Height: 6'2" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 182 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 9
PER: 6
STA: 9
STR: 9

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 5
WIL: 6

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 6
CRE: 3

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +2
HP: 59
MEL: 9
SWT: 19
CWT: 29

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none

Perfidy: 3
Darkening: 6

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (ogre axe) 6, Alertness 6, Dodge 6, First aid 5
Rogue: Conceal 5, Disguise 7, Gambling 5, Intrigue 8, Poison 8, Search 3, Stealth 7
Courtly: Eloquence 8, Etiquette (the Slums) 8, Fast talk 5, Trade 5, Traditions (Urgamish) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgaric) 2, Language (Urgamish) 5, Language (Keshite) 2, Law 6, Plant lore 2, Season (Summer) 5, Surgery 5
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Dancer lore 1, Demonology 1

Seasonling power: Noon blaze

Assets: Spy network, Secret hideout

Combat
Initiative: 15, axe 16
Melee attack: axe 15
Dodge: 11
Parry: axe 13
Ranged defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Ogre axe	+1	0	-2	+10 (S)	0

Armor: partial scale mail (penalty -4, prot. 7)

Typical quote: "So. You want to know where young Laliana is? 'Tis true, the damsel knows many things... things she shouldn't tell anyone. I see you understand me. She came to me to do business and I swore I wouldn't say a word. Well, I didn't actually swear... she paid me. So I can't tell you anything, though you seem honest. I think I know what you can expect from me; now, what can I expect from you?"

MARCUS ONE-SHOT, AGENT OF THE MASQUE

♣ Who he is

He is officially an alderman of the Preceptorial Fraternity who works as a scribe and a private tutor in Lorgol. With his severe look and short blond hair, Marcus resembles a typical member of the Preceptorial – a stern teacher whose motto is “learning through discipline”. In fact, Marcus is a Marionette (see AGONE rulebook, p. 253) and he is the head of the local Brotherhood of Sense.

♣ What he knows

He considers Art an abomination. Artists are liars and fools, unable to live worthwhile lives. Pure common sense is the only virtue. Marcus wants to destroy

the Muses and their creations, for he thinks that the Masque is the avatar of Perfection. Marcus is aware of the existence of the Inspired (whom he mistakes for Concordists). He captured Laliana before she could organize her attack against the Brotherhood of Sense. He is confident that she will succumb to contact with the Rot (see below) and become an agent of the Masque.

♣ What he wants

To capture and corrupt Concordists so they will become agents of his master. He also wants to use the Brotherhood of Sense to spread Perfidy and destroy works of art.



MARCUS ONE-SHOT

Race: human
Sex: male
Age: 45
Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 180 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 8
PER: 8
STA: 6
STR: 5

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 8
WIL: 8

Soul: 0/2
Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 7
CRE: 2

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: 0
HP: 50
MEL: 7
SWT: 16
CWT: 25

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Perfidy: 38

Darkening: 7
Corrupt powers: Masquerade

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 7, Alertness 7, Dodge 7, First aid 2, Survival 2

Rogue: Intrigue 7, Search 3, Stealth 7

Courtly: Eloquence 8, Etiquette (scholars) 4, Fast talk 5, Trade 7, Traditions (Urgamish) 8, Traditions (Liturgical) 4

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 7, Geography 4, History 6, Language (Urgamish) 8, Language (Keshite) 3, Language (Sacred tongue) 5

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Concord 2, Dancer lore 2

Assets & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows

Eidetic memory, Light sleeper, Spartan, Doggedness, Smooth talker, Foresight, Blasé, Disabled senses (taste, smell and touch), Acrimony, Grandiloquence, Hand confusion.

Combat

Initiative: 17, dagger 17

Melee attack: dagger 17

Dodge: 15

Parry: 16

Ranged defense: 7

Note: when Marcus uses 'Foresight', he can either gain a +5 defense bonus against one attack per round, or a +5 initiative bonus.

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)	-1

Armor: partial leather armor (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Typical quote: "Oh yes, lack of restraint is the sign of decadence. Only discipline can save our souls – an absolute rigor at every moment. Believe me, the control I learned at Preceptorial saved me. It is now my burden to convey order and obedience to all."

LALIANA, CONCORDIST IN DISTRESS

♣ Who she is

Laliana is a temperamental free thinker. Since her master was killed by the Brotherhood of Sense, she has sworn revenge.

She amassed large amounts of money and influential supporters thanks to her artistic talent and her beauty.

However, Laliana is a solitary soul who only relies on herself. She has developed numerous talents. Indeed, as Tune was not enough for her struggle, she made a deal with Draedonius to initiate her into Ascendancy. She chose Obscurantism for she desired powers that could destroy her enemies.

The corruption of the Masque has aged Laliana. When the Inspired find her, she will appear to be sixty years old. But, in spite of her white hair and her

wrinkles, she has kept the energy and dynamism of her true age. Her bright eyes and athletic figure contradict her apparent age.

♣ What she knows

Laliana suspects Minuetto of having affected Draedonius in a strange way, but she does not really care. The death of her master rather suits her, for only he knew she had become an Obscurantist.

♣ What she wants

She wants to survive, to conceal her magic abilities and her Dancer. But, most of all, she wants to eliminate the Brotherhood of Sense in all the realms.



LALIANA

Race: human
Sex: female
Age: 26 (looks 60)
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 143 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/1 Body bonus: 0
AGI: 7 **PER:** 7
STA: 6 **STR:** 7

Spirit: 1/0 Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 5 **WIL:** 8

Soul: 2/0 Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 9 **CRE:** 7

Secondary attributes

AIM: 7 **ART:** 8
ASC: 8 **DB:** +1
HP: 48 **MEL:** 7
SWT: 16 **CWT:** 24

Note: when the Inspired find her, she is affected by Slow Death (Virulence 8). She thus has a permanent Serious Wound.

Fortune points: 2 **Flame powers:** none
Perfidy: 16 **Darkening:** 5

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 7, Weapon (rapier) 5, Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Climb 3, Dodge 9, First aid 2, Survival 5

Rogue: Acrobatics 3, Disguise 5, Intrigue 2, Search 3, Stealth 5

Courtly: Etiquette (the Slums) 3, Fast-talk 6, Music (flute) 8, Music (cittern) 8, Traditions (Urgamish) 4, Traditions (Mercerin) 5

Knowledge: Alphabet (Armguardic) 1, Language (Urgamish) 5, Language (Mercerin) 5
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Concord 5, Dancer lore 5, Resonance (Obscurantist) 5, Tune 9

Asset & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows

Young, Lightning reflexes, Elusive dancer, Orphan, Flaring temper, Obsessed (fighting the Brotherhood of Sense), Disciple, Premature aging

Combat

Initiative: 14, dagger 14, rapier 16
Melee attack: dagger 16, rapier 14
Dodge: 14
Parry: dagger 14, rapier 13
Ranged defense: 7

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)	-1
Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+4 (I)	0

A armor: partial studded leather (penalty -2, prot. 5)

Magic

ASC: 8 **ASC APT:** 17
Dancer lore: 5 **Resonance:** 5

Dancer	Mem.	ASC bonus	Emp.	End.
Pumpkin	20	+5	2	5

Magical Arts

ART: 8 **Tune:** 9
Music: cittern 8 **Music:** flute 8
Tune (cittern) APT: 18 **Tune (flute) APT:** 18
Opuses (cittern): Thought Transference (15), Recall Memory (15), Alter Memory (20).
Opuses (flute): Order (10), Ban (15)

Typical quote: "Great, but there's no time for congratulations. We better get out of here before any other servants of the Enemy arrive. Let's move!"

MINUETTO, CURSED DANCER

♣ Who it is

Minuetto was originally a joyful Dancer, but its tragic history has deeply affected it, so it is now extremely melancholy. It is identifiable by a musical note drawn under its left foot and a black mark on its chest.

♣ What it knows

Minuetto is probably the only one aware of its tragic history, but it will be unable to tell anyone. It emanates nostalgia when it is in the Tower and will emanate sadness and despair if it is captured.

♣ What it wants

Rest. It only feels relatively at peace when it is in Phalaen Tower amongst the ghosts of its past. If it is captured, it will cause the death of its master in a couple of years, at the beginning of Fall. Minuetto accepts this fate. Only extremely powerful magic that affects memory could free it from this malediction.

MINUETTO

Memory: 42
ASC bonus: +6
Empathy: 10
Endurance: 9

Special ability: Memory of Souls

After a fifteen-minute Dance, Minuetto is able to create a ghost that resembles someone it knew. Nigrescent Wood must be in proximity, otherwise the ghost will vanish in a few seconds.



Overture

AN EVASIVE EMPLOYER

The simplest way to draw the Inspired into this adventure is for Slakent to hire them. He will offer them either a talented Dancer (21 points to distribute), two normal Dancers (14 points to distribute) or a favor from the order (nothing impossible – a character may ask to become a neophyte, for example).

The case is problematic. He will portray Laliana as a former lover who seduced him in order to steal valuable documents. He can describe her exactly, and he knows that she recently stayed at the *Red Lantern*, an inn located in the slums. Slakent wants the Inspired to find her and bring her back alive. He would take care of this himself but he has much official business to deal with.

The Inspired can notice that Slakent is lying (PER + Fast talk against DIF 18). If they question him a little, he will end up by telling the truth: Laliana stole his most talented Dancer, Minuetto, which is easily identified by a black mark on its torso. He wants to recover this Dancer more than anything else.

AT THE ACADEMY

The Inspired can gather much information at the New Spark Inn, either by questioning the students and teachers (CHA + Intrigue or Fast talk, restrictive Cipher-sorcerer), or by checking the archives (INT + Cipher-sorcerer, restrictive Alphabet: Armgardic).

If the Troupe obtains any information, they must succeed on a CHA + Cipher-sorcerer (restrictive Diplomacy) roll against DIF 20 so that no one notices their investigation. If the roll is a failure, the Inspired are spotted by a NPC.

♣ About Slakent

- ♦ DIF 18: Slakent is the legal inheritor of Draedonius, a mage who recently died.
- ♦ DIF 20: Draedonius and Slakent have been the targets of several fruitless investigations. They are quite definitely not the most honest members of the Cipher-sorcerer.
- ♦ DIF 22: Draedonius is supposed to have committed suicide, but the Censor Malarmel is carrying out an investigation.

If the Inspired are not discreet, someone will relate their investigations to Slakent, who will begin to mistrust them.

♣ About the dead mages

- ◆ DIF 13: Draedonius, an Obscurantist, committed suicide on the first day of Fall 1450.
- ◆ DIF 18: Jurangon, an Eclipsist, died under similar circumstances in 1448.
- ◆ DIF 22: Vernashope, a Jornist, died the same day in 1446.
- ◆ DIF 24: Vernashope was the legal inheritor of Irik Convisra, a Jornist who died of natural causes in 1445.

If the Inspired are not discreet, someone will relate their investigations to Slakent, who will question them suspiciously.

♣ About Minuetto (archives only)

- ◆ DIF 13: A Dancer named Minuetto, recognizable by a black mark on its chest and a note of music on its left foot, was registered under Draedonius name, during Summer 1449.
- ◆ DIF 14: The Hunter who captured Minuetto is called Tern Fool.
- ◆ DIF 16: The same Dancer was registered, in Spring 1447, under Jurangon's name.
- ◆ DIF 17: The Hunter who captured Minuetto for Jurangon was Tern Fool.
- ◆ DIF 21: Rondo, a Dancer with the same capabilities as Minuetto, was registered under Irik Convisra's name and then Vernashope's. It had no black mark, only a note of music on its left foot.

If the Inspired are not discreet, their investigations will be related to Tern Fool, who will decide to meet or avoid them, depending on their approach.



First Movement: Laliana

IN THE SLUMS

The *Red Lantern* is easy to find, but if the Inspired are too well dressed, they will probably be attacked on the way. Brigands rarely fight to the death, and shouldn't cause the Troupe too much trouble.

Master Lauzster, the innkeeper, does not remember Laliana (she altered his memory before leaving) and he keeps no guest register. The two other employees of the *Red Lantern* do not remember her either.

However, on a successful CHA + Eloquence roll against DIF 15, the Inspired will find a couple of regular customers who do recall the young lady.

- ◆ DIF 12: Several people remember "a cute brunette who walked around with a cittern". She stayed a couple of months at the inn.
- ◆ DIF 14: Laliana was taciturn and irritable. Oddly, she spent most of her time hanging around the Thousand Towers.
- ◆ DIF 16: Laliana left the *Red Lantern* two days ago. No one knows where she was going.
- ◆ DIF 18: Laliana was in contact with Fandor Dim, a thief-prince.
- ◆ DIF 20: Laliana was investigating the theft of a painting.

The Inspired will probably try to meet Fandor Dim. The Etiquette (slums) or Intrigue skills will be useful here. Money (used with the Trade skill) can also be of assistance.

Fandor will agree to meet the Troupe if he feels that their request is important. He will then send a messenger to lead them through the labyrinthine streets. If you wish, Eminence, the Inspired could encounter Fandor's rivals who would try to convince the Troupe to work with them instead of the thief-prince. If the Inspired still want to deal with Fandor, they will eventually be led to a damp cellar that Fandor uses for meetings. The cellar is only lit by a small window; nevertheless, there are as many comfortable armchairs as the number of members in the Troupe. Several minutes later, the thief-prince will enter through a secret door. He will not sit down, preferring to make the most of his height during their discussion. He will act overconfident, reminding the Inspired that they are on his turf.



The cellar is surrounded by ten hidden men armed with rapiers and crossbows. Five are already pointing their quarrels at the Inspired through tiny holes in the cellar's walls. The five others will appear rapidly if there is trouble. The Troupe should therefore show respect to Fandor...

The thief-prince will ask the Inspired to tell him their request. He will listen to them without interrupting. If the Inspired are convincing, the ogre will reveal a certain amount of information...

- ◆ DIF 12: Laliana has already contacted Fandor several times. Their contacts concerned art theft.

- ◆ DIF 14: Laliana is fighting a sect that steals and destroys works of art. Fandor agreed to help her (because destroying valuable objects is contrary to the spirit of thievery).
- ◆ DIF 16: With Fandor's help, Laliana wanted to attack the Brotherhood. She could finance the attack but she wanted to check her information first.
- ◆ DIF 20: Laliana was investigating Marcus One-Shot, a member of the Preceptorial Fraternity who lives in Center Alley.

If the Inspired pay Fandor well, he will order a couple of his underlings to shadow them and help in case of danger. He knows how to protect good clients.

THE CAVE OF THE ROT

In order to find Laliana, the Inspired will have to inquire about Marcus One-Shot. This alderman is extremely hateful toward artists. He considers art a perversion that must be destroyed. Marcus is devoted to reason and discipline.

Once a week, at nighttime, a dozen Brothers of Sense gather at Marcus' house. They enter through the back door. Each member reports what he has done and seen during the past week. Marcus then gives specific orders to them. Finally, the group burns a painting, an instrument, a book or a sculpture. For the moment the local Brotherhood only destroys minor works of art, but Marcus hopes to find more valuable targets soon.

Every evening, Marcus goes down to his cave to see Laliana, who is chained and guarded by a Rot (AGONE, p. 253). The Rot is used to corrupt the Concordists Marcus captures.

The Inspired can discover (on a successful CRE + Hunt roll at DIF 17) a secret entrance that leads from the Center Alley sewer to the cave of the Rot.

If the Inspired attack while the Brothers are still meeting, they will all (except for Marcus) transform into Grinning Puppets (AGONE, p. 252) and attack the Troupe. As soon as Marcus feels threatened, he will flee the combat. Thanks to his 'Foresight' ability, the Inspired will probably not catch him this time.

In the cave, the Inspired will find a much-aged Laliana and her Dancer. Moreover, the EG can decide that Marcus has kept a Corrupt work of art. It will be up to the Inspired to decide whether to destroy it or keep in a secure place.

Second Movement: Minuetto

WITHIN THE THOUSAND TOWERS

The Thousand Towers are a place of mysteries and enchantments. Before arriving at Phalaen Tower, the Inspired will face bizarre creatures and unexplainable phenomena. The EG should choose which of these encounters will be the most disturbing for the Troupe.

♣ Shard

As the Thousand Towers are a Remain, the entire area is full of Shard (from value 3 to 10). The Emotions radiated vary, so there is no Emotion strong enough to leave its imprint on the Inspired. However, those who stay in one place for a few minutes may be affected by the influence of the Shard. Unless spending an entire day in the same place, resistance is rolled with a +10 bonus, because of the diverse assortment of emotions. These are usually benign: joy, curiosity, ambition, generosity, greed, etc. Some contend that the mages who live in the Thousand Towers in order to benefit from the power of the Remain often become haunted by the chaotic medley of emotions.

♣ Nigrescent Wood

The true source of danger in the Thousand Towers is the Borrowlight Tree that Agone planted. This thorny tree is black, such a deep black that it absorbs surrounding light. Therefore, the tree is always enveloped in a hazy atmosphere. Even with a powerful source of light, a -1 penalty to actions due to darkness, should be applied to rolls made while among the Thousand Towers. Nigrescent Wood is nearly indestructible. Only magic seems to affect it, and it resists like a living being with WIL 15.

Moreover, the tree is able to grow and move at will. If an object or a being is in the way of a branch when it grows, the object will be speared and trapped by the ethereal branch. In this situation, the only way out is either to cut the branch (the thorns would then become solid and wound the person) or to wait until the branch moves on.

In certain places (such as Phalaen Tower), Nigrescent Wood's roots and branches slowly move. In other places, the Borrowlight Tree is calm and grows normally. It is difficult to say which is more dangerous – the faster the branches move, the more chance there is to be imprisoned by them, but the quicker they move on.

♣ A Mysterious Encounter

This is only an encounter suggestion for the Thousand Towers area. The EG can, of course, decide to use other encounters.

Pader Fayn, an Eclipsist and Invoker, has summoned four Opalins that he used as guardians for the last two days. The connivance the demons demanded said that they could stay to throw rotten eggs on the first eight people they saw. As Pader Fayn did not have enough time to keep an eye on them, he gave them the eggs and asked one of his apprentices, a dwarf named Udgall, to stay with the demons.

The Opalins are lying in wait on a footbridge between two towers. Of course, the Inspired will pass right underneath...

A couple of yards before passing under the overpass, the Inspired will hear Udgall warning them: "In the name of the Cipher-sorcerer, and for your own safety, halt!" Udgall will refuse to say more. He explains that he is only there to warn them but that they can continue "at their own risk" if they want to.

Udgall is only an apprentice of the Cipher-sorcerer. He will not tell the Inspired his master's name, nor will he warn them about the Opalins. He does not yet have a gem or a Dancer, but he will tell them to check in Ciphered records at the New Spark Inn to verify his identity.

If the Inspired succeed in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 22, they will notice small silhouettes moving around on the footbridge. If they continue the way they were going, a bombardment of eggs will fall upon them. The Inspired will not be wounded... but they will stink.

Udgall will remain serious and, sighing, will say: "I warned you". He will do his best to prevent the Troupe from attacking the Opalins. "Please. Once again, you are acting recklessly." At the same moment, the Opalins will be roaring with laughter. The demons will stay on the overpass if there are less than eight members in the Troupe. If they are attacked, they jump into the closest shadow and return to the Abyss.

If the Inspired attack the Opalins in spite of Udgall's recommendations, he will warn his master, who will feel somewhat resentful towards the Troupe.

If the Inspired attack Udgall, they will face serious problems; indeed, they will be transgressing the most basic Ciphered laws, and it will only be a matter of time before Malarmel is on the scene.

THE POOHRK SENTRIES, OPALINS

They look like winged frogs, the size of dogs. Their dark yellow skin resembles an old banana peel and they smell dreadful.

Alertness: 10
Density: 25
Dodge: 7
MOV: 1/9 (flight)
Opacity: 5
SIZ: -2

5 in each attribute

PHALAEEN TOWER

This simple 30-foot tower contains three round rooms, one per floor, connected by a staircase. The roof is conical. Only the windows on the top floor are wide enough for someone to pass through.

Branches from Nigrescent Wood, enter and leave the Tower through the walls as if they didn't exist. Though these branches move slowly, they are quite strong – yet another reason to avoid the tower.

The Value of Phalaen Tower Shard is 8. Its primary Emotion is nostalgia, and the two secondary emotions are pride and discontentment.

Every night, the tower seems to be surrounded by a cloud of luminous spots that resemble moths. Against the somber background of Nigrescent Wood, this ballet of fireflies seems all the more fantastic.

Each night through the small windows, ghostly figures can be seen inside the tower – Minuetto's ghosts.

It is difficult to enter the tower. It is even more difficult to move around inside it. The Inspired will have to succeed on an AGI + Dodge roll against DIF 10 (every round) because of the branches. On a failure, the character is wounded by the thorns – he will lose 1 HP and undergo a -6 penalty to all his actions that round. The damage caused by the tree ignores all armor (even magical armor). If the roll is successful, the character only suffers a -1 penalty to his actions for the round (because of the concentration required to dodge the thorns).

Neither the ghosts nor Minuetto are affected by the tree.

There are two ways to reach Minuetto: climbing through a window on the third floor or entering through the main door... and fighting the ghosts.

♣ Climbing

This way is extremely dangerous, but the windows are a way to reach the third floor, where Minuetto is located, while avoiding the *ghosts*.

The branches that emerge from the walls of the tower can trap those who try to climb. In order to climb successfully, the Inspired must roll AGI + Climb (restrictive Dodge).

RESULT

- ♦ 16 or less: a fumble. The Inspired is impaled on a branch. He immediately suffers 25 HP of damage and must succeed on five STA + Climb rolls against

DIF 16 in order to remain still while the branch moves out of the way (for each failure, the Inspired suffers an additional 5 HP of damage).

- ♦ 17 to 25: a failure. The Inspired is obliged to go back down. The thorns wound him for 3 HP of damage.
- ♦ 26 or more: the Inspired reaches the third floor; he only loses 2 HP.

A black fey can easily fly to the third floor. It will require only two rounds but she will have to roll STA + Athletics against DIF 15 to flap her wings long enough. On a failure, the black fey will have to succeed on an AGI + Dodge + 5 roll in order to enter the tower through the closest window while avoiding the branches (use the table above for the result).

THE GHOSTS

These creatures do not really exist. They are slightly transparent and luminous, and they will not speak. They wander the Tower as if they were alive (mages are studying invisible books, Tern Fool is setting imaginary traps, etc.).

Their appearance is based on Minuetto's memories of them:

Irik Convirsa looks like a smiling old man. He is completely white: white robe, beard and hair.

Vernashope appears to be Modehan. He has long dark hair, tanned skin and wide brown eyes. He seems thoughtful and preoccupied.

Jurangon is to be a handsome forty-year-old man. He wears ostentatious court clothes. He seems to be worried, for he is constantly looking around.

Draedonius' ghost is somber and tortured. Older than the others, he wears a long black robe. His smile is cruel.

♣ Fighting the Ghosts

The five ghosts, the four mages and Tern Fool, wander the three floors. There is always at least one ghost with Minuetto on the third floor.

The ghosts automatically attack whoever enters the same room they are in. There is no way to hide from them, except for Tern Fool's spell. Then only, on a successful AGI + Stealth roll against DIF 15 (one roll per Inspired and ghost) can someone avoid being spotted.

Of course, the ghosts are not the only danger in the Tower. The Inspired will have to avoid the branches each round. Moreover, they will have to find their way up to the third floor (PER + Hunt against DIF 15).

Reaching the third floor requires four rounds: one to cross the first floor (an empty wrecked room), one to climb up to the second floor, another to cross the second floor (an old library), and one last round to reach the top floor (Irik's room).

FIGHTING GHOSTS: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ghosts do not have true attributes (except SIZ 0 for the mages and SIZ -1 for Tern Fool).

Each combat round, they will seem to be casting complex spells (and their invisible Dancers will radiate many sparks), but their only attack is a powerful electric shock. Their attack base is 15 and the damage caused is 1d10 + SM (or 2d10 + 5 + SM if the target is wearing metal armor).

Their defense base is 15, but the only way to dispel them is either to cause 20 points of magical damage in one spell, or 20 points of physical damage in one blow.

Minuetto will be immediately aware of the "death" of one of his ghosts. It will begin to Dance in order to replace it (the spell takes 15 minutes to cast).

CAPTURING MINUETTO

The Dancer is not reticent. It can be easily captured by any member of the Troupe (DIF 12). The true difficulty is to face at the same time the tree and the ghosts. Once Minuetto is captured, the ghosts will stop attacking the intruders and will return to wandering the tower. However, the branches will not stop.

If Laliana is present, and if the Inspired have explained Minuetto's story to her, she will attempt to alter the Dancer's memory. She will perform a slow requiem on her cittern, to soothe the souls of the dead. The Nigrescent thorn in its heart will then slowly sprout out of the Dancer's body. Hopefully, an Inspired will help Minuetto extract it. The wound will exude black blood for a moment.

Minuetto has lost the Memory of Souls but it has recovered its will and its good temper. It will begin to dance joyfully. Its Memory is halved, but Minuetto remains an exceptional Dancer.

If one of the Inspired is an Attuned of the cittern, he could assist Laliana in performing her opus more effectively. In this case, Minuetto would only lose 10 Memory points.



Finale

The Troupe opened many doors during this Drama. How will they close them?

MINUETTO

If the Dancer is not healed, its curse will continue. Hopefully, an Inspired will end the malediction someday.

MALARMEL

The Censor needs a culprit in order to save face. Though the Troupe will investigate this affair more quickly than he, they will have to account for their discoveries eventually. Moreover, Malarmel wants to take care of Tern Fool and Laliana. Tern is partly responsible for the death of a mage, and Laliana is a non-registered mage. Depending on Malarmel's discoveries and the characters' explanations, these situations may be resolved with minimal fuss... or not.

TERN FOOL

He is willing to take some responsibility for Jurangon's death. The Inspired could be his intermediaries with the Censor. The situation could be resolved to Malarmel's satisfaction by barring him from practicing Ascendancy for a couple of months. Tern Fool would have to hire some apprentices to help him stay in business...

FANDOR DIM

If the Inspired promised money or offered their services, the thief-prince will soon ask for his payment. Laliana could surely contribute, for she possesses large amounts of money hidden in Lorgol.

Moreover, Fandor Dim could help (illegally, of course) Tern Fool and Laliana escape Malarmel's clutches.

SLAKENT

The Obscurantist cannot believe that the Inspired would break their deal, even though he planned to betray them from the beginning. If the Troupe decides to keep the Dancer, Slakent will become one of their mightiest enemies.

If Laliana has become their ally, Slakent will give her away to Malarmel and will try to convince the Censor that the Inspired are accessories.

On the other hand, if the Inspired are honest and if they stay on good terms, Slakent could use his influence on the local dean to help Laliana enter the Order.

LALIANA

The Concordist will, depending on her situation, either leave Lorgol to fight other Urgamish Brotherhoods, or stay in town to finish her magic training. She will never forget the debt she owes the Inspired.

If Marcus One-Shot has fled, she will pursue him. She will not ask Slakent to rectify her situation with the Cipher-sorcerer. She is not afraid of being a renegade.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SENSE

The Brotherhood has been usurped by many agents of the Masque; this is a good way to incorporate corrupt Concordists, such as Egon Scampa into the Drama (see *The Gray Papers*).

This group still has many humans and seasonlings who are truly devoted to the destruction of works of art. The struggle against this sect can become a long and arduous campaign.



INSPIRATION ALLOTMENT

Each of the following deeds earns two IP for each Inspired (only one IP if the character would not have succeeded without help):

- Understanding Draedonius' death (connecting it to Jurangon's and Vernashope's deaths)
- Freeing Laliana from the Rot's cavern
- Dismantling the local Brotherhood of Sense
- Capturing Minuetto in Phalaen Tower
- Finding a way to release the Dancer from his despair.

Each of the following deeds earns one IP for each member of the Troupe:

- Killing Marcus One-Shot
- Assisting Malarmel in his investigation
- Resolving Laliana's situation with the Cipher-sorcerer
- Resolving Tern Fool's situation with the Cipher-sorcerer
- Returning Minuetto to Slakent

Subtract one point from this total for each major NPC (Slakent, Tern Fool, Laliana or Fandor Dim) who has good reasons to hold a grudge against the Inspired at the end of the Drama.

Depending on individual performance (ideas, role-playing, etc.), you can award one or two additional IP.



Appendix



Spells
& Opuses

Ascendancy

OBEDIENCE

J: Jornist

E: Eclipsist

O: Obscurantist

RANGE

C: Contact

P: Proximity

S: Line of Sight

I: Individual

Sp: Special

DURATION

Ins.: Instantaneous

Per.: Permanent

ORIGIN

RB: Rulebook

G1: Grimoire, volume 1

SPELL NAME	OBEDIENCE	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	DANCE	ORIGIN
A thousand splinters	J	10	50 y.	Per.	1 round	G1
Accursed noise	E	20	Sp.	Per.	1 hour	G1
Acid rain	O	20	S	Ins.	1 round	RB
Acid spit	O	10	I	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
Affliction of the Dancer	O	15	S	5 mn	4 rounds	RB
Aura	J	10	I	15 mn	1 round	G1
Benediction	J	10	C	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
Blind puppet	E	25	S	1 year	1 day	G1
Blinding	E	10	S	5 rounds	2 rounds	G1
Blow-pipe	E	15	40 y.	Ins.	1 round	RB
Blurred sight	E	10	S	1 mn	1 round	RB
Body purification	J	15	Sp	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Bolt	E	10	C	1 day	2 mn	RB
Branding a Dancer	J	15	C	Ins.	10 mn	RB
Burning sphere	O	20	90 y.	Ins.	6 rounds	RB
Burns	O	10	C	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Cause pain	O	15	P	5 rounds	1 round	RB
Cheap stuff	E	10	S	1 hour	5 rounds	G1
Chimera	E	20	Sp.	1 week	6 hours	G1
Clairvoyance	J	20	Sp	Sp.	Sp.	RB
Cloud of vermin	O	10	20 y.	Per.	3 rounds	G1
Concealment	O	20	P	5 mn	3 rounds	RB
Create familiar	E	25	C	Per.	6 hours	G1
Create familiar	J	20	C	Per.	6 hours	G1
Create familiar	O	20	C	Per.	1 day	G1



SPELL NAME	OBEDIENCE	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	DANCE	ORIGIN
Critical blow	O	20	S	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Dancer consolation	J	10	C	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Dancer curse	O	20	Sp.	1 hour	15 rounds	G1
Darkness	O	10	50 y.	5 mn	10 rounds	G1
Demonic assistance	O	15	S	1 hour	10 rounds	G1
Destroy demon	J	25	S	15 rounds	5 rounds	G1
Destroy the spirit	O	20	S	Per.	1 mn	G1
Discern the flame	J	15	S	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Distort appearance	E	15	1 or C	1 hour	5 mn	RB
Eavesdropping walls	O	15	Sp	1 hour	5mn	RB
Eclipsist resurrection	E	25	C	Per.	1 mn	G1
Enchanted projectile	E	20	90 y.	Ins.	2 rounds	RB
Exacerbate emotion	O	20	P	10 mn	3 rounds	RB
Excruciating pain	O	25	S	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
False bridge	E	20	S	5 rounds	5 rounds	G1
False coins	E	10	C	10 mn	3 rounds	G1
False death	E	10	I	Sp.	1 round	G1
False trail	E	10	Sp	1 hour	1 hour	RB
Fantastic harvest	J	15	Sp.	1 season	1 hour	G1
Fertility	J	20	S	Sp.	10 mn	G1
Fiery breath	O	15	P	Ins.	1 round	RB
Fiery touch	O	10	C	Ins.	1 round	RB
Food	J	15	C	Per.	1 mn	G1
Friendship	J	15	S	15 mn	5 rounds	G1
Full illusion	E	20	90 y.	1 hour	1 mn	RB
Ghost mount	E	15	P	1 hour	10 rounds	G1
Gigantism	J	15	S	1 hour	15 rounds	G1
Goodbye	O	20	I	Ins.	1 round	G1
Grand master	E	15	I	Sp.	1 mn	G1
Grow plant	J	20	C	Per.	15 rounds	G1
Gush of flames	O	15	Sp.	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Hatred	O	15	S	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Ice shards	E	15	Sp.	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Illusory echo	E	10	90 y.	2 rounds	5 rounds	RB
Illusory reflection	E	15	S	1 mn	2 rounds	RB



SPELL NAME	OBEDIENCE	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	DANCE	ORIGIN
Impression of truth	J	10	I	5 mn	3 rounds	RB
Increased vigor	E	10	I	30 mn	2 rounds	RB
Instill dread	O	15	S	10 mn	1 round	RB
Instill fear	O	15	P	10 mn	1 round	RB
Invisibility	E	20	I or C	10 mn	6 rounds	RB
Invisible arm	J	15	S	5 mn	5 rounds	RB
Jornist resurrection	J	25	C	Per.	1 hour	G1
Jump	E	10	I	5 rounds	1 round	RB
Lightning	E	20	100 y.	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Love	E	20	S	1 day	1 mn	G1
Luminous halo	E	10	S	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Mad puppet	O	25	Sp.	Sp.	1 day	G1
Madness	E	20	S	1 day	1 mn	G1
Magic alarm	E	15	Sp	1 week	30 mn	RB
Magic shield	J	15	I	5 rounds	1 round	RB
Magical prison	E	25	Sp.	1 hour	2 rounds	G1
Major healing	J	20	C	Ins.	5 mn	RB
Major pain	O	15	S	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Mental slavery	O	20	Sp.	1 day	1 hour	G1
Mind reading	E	15	S	1 round	1 round	G1
Minor healing	J	15	C	Ins.	2 rounds	RB
Minor pain	O	10	S	5 rounds	1 round	G1
Natural enchantment	J	20	I	1 day	1 hour	G1
Noise	E	10	30 y.	Sp.	1 round	G1
Object	E	15	10 y.	15 mn	1 round	G1
Obscurantist resurrection	O	25	C	Sp.	1 round	G1
Opening	E	15	C	Ins.	3 rounds	RB
Own shield	O	15	I	2 mn	1 round	RB
Patches of darkness	O	25	C	Sp.	5 mn	G1
Penetrate obscurity	O	10	I	1 hour	1 round	RB
Perfect connivance	E	20	Sp.	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Perfect healing	J	25	C	Per.	5 rounds	G1
Phoenix	E	25	S	Ins.	10 rounds	G1
Play of darkness	O	10	P	5 mn	2 rounds	RB
Play of light	E	10	90 y.	5 mn	1 round	RB
Portal	O	25	I	Ins.	1 hour	RB

SPELL NAME	O	T	R	D	D	O
	B	H	A	U	A	R
Potency	O	15	I	15 mn	2 rounds	RB
Prince	E	20	I	Sp.	1 mn	G1
Protective aura	J	25	I	1 mn	2 rounds	RB
Pyrokinesis	O	20	40 y.	Ins.	2 rounds	RB
Reduction	O	15	P	1 hour	15 rounds	G1
Refuge	O	25	I	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Repel a damned	J	20	S	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Repel a demon	J	20	S	1 mn	1 round	G1
Repulse life	O	15	S	1 mn	1 round	G1
Resist extreme temperatures	J	15	I	10 mn	1 mn	RB
Sanctification	J	25	P	3 days	1 hour	RB
Sculpting	O	25	C	Per.	1 hour	G1
See through a wall	E	10	C	1 mn	1 round	RB
Shadows of the damned	O	15	S	Per.	1 day	G1
Shield of sparks	J	15	C	15 rounds	2 rounds	G1
Sleep	E	20	C	1 hour	2 mn	RB
Soothe curse	J	25	S	Per.	1 hour	G1
Speak to animals	J	10	Sp.	1 mn	3 rounds	G1
Speak with plants	J	15	S	10 mn	10 mn	G1
Sphere of silence	J	20	I	2 mn	2 mn	RB
Spontaneous combustion	E	25	C	Ins.	3 rounds	G1
Steal Life	O	25	Sp.	Per.	1 round	G1
Strike blind	O	10	S	1 day	1 round	RB
Summon mount	J	10	Sp	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Surge of terror	O	25	S	1 hour	10 rounds	RB
The eight steps of the spider	E	15	I	30 mn	2 rounds	RB
Thunder and lightning	J	25	1 mile	1 hour	15 mn	G1
True illusion	E	20	S	30 mn	2 mn	RB
Truth	J	20	P	5 mn	1 mn	RB
Vigor	J	10	I	30 mn	2 rounds	RB
Water	J	10	C	Per.	1 mn	G1
Wholesome sustenance	J	10	C	5 mn	3 rounds	RB
Zone of silence	J	15	S	5 mn	2 rounds	RB



THE MAGICAL ARTS

June

INSTRUMENT

H: Harp

C: Cittern

F: Flute

D: Drum

V: Viol

OPUS NAME	INSTR.	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	MEASURE	ORIGIN
Allure	H	20	Sp.	30 mn	5 rounds	RB
Alter memory	C	20	P	1 day	1 mn	RB
Animal control	V	20	P	5 mn	1 mn	G1
Animal language	V	15	P	1 mn	5 rounds	G1
Animal sight	V	10	P	5 mn	5 rounds	G1
Appeasement	H	10	Sp.	1 hour	2 rounds	RB
Ban	F	15	P	1 day	1 mn	RB
Banish phobia	H	20	P	Per.	1 hour	G1
Benediction	H	15	C	1 week	5 mn	RB
Berserk	D	10	S	Sp.	1 round	RB
Chaotic behavior	D	15	P	5 mn	4 rounds	RB
Comfort	H	15	P	Per.	1 mn	G1
Command friendship	H	25	P	Sp.	10 rounds	G1
Complete amnesia	C	25	P	Per.	5 rounds	G1
Countermand	F	15	S	Ins.	1 round	G1
Defeatism	D	15	S	10 mn	3 rounds	G1
Dementia	D	15	P	10 mn	5 rounds	RB
Disruption	D	10	50 y.	Sp.	1 round	G1
Dissension	F	15	S	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Emotion discharge	F	10	P	10 mn	3 rounds	RB
Enchanted forest	V	25	Sp.	Per.	7 hours	G1
Escape death	H	25	C	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
Farandole	F	25	Sp.	Sp.	Sp.	G1
Fascination	F	15	P	1 hour	1 round	RB
Foolhardiness	D	20	S	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
Game of seasons	V	10	90 y.	1 week	30 mn	RB
Grasping roots	V	10	50 y.	1 mn	2 rounds	RB

SPELL NAME	INSTR.	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	MEASURE	ORIGIN
Half-Sap	V	25	I	Per.	7 hours	G1
Heal the spirit	C	25	P	Per.	1 hour	G1
Horror	C	20	P	5 rounds	5 rounds	G1
Hypnotism	F	20	P	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Illusion of gigantism	C	15	S	1 mn	5 rounds	G1
Illusory sensory deprivation	C	20	S	1 day	2 mn	G1
Inner beauty	H	10	P	1 day	2 rounds	RB
Kindred spirit	H	15	P	10 mn	2 rounds	RB
Leader	D	20	Sp.	30 mn	1 mn	RB
Mental assault	C	25	P	Ins.	1 round	RB
Musical motion	D	25	Sp.	Sp.	1 mn	G1
Order	F	10	P	1 round	1 round	RB
Overcome fear	D	10	I	30 mn	2 rounds	RB
Pain	F	25	50 y.	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Paranoia	F	20	S	1 week	15 rounds	G1
Plant hostility	V	15	25 y.	1 round	1 round	RB
Plant wall	V	20	Sp.	2 hours	2 rounds	G1
Prison of plants	V	15	Sp.	1 hour	3 rounds	RB
Protect the mind	C	15	I	1 week	5 mn	G1
Quickening	D	20	S	1 round	2 rounds	G1
Recall memory	C	15	P	1 round	1 round	RB
Restless	F	20	P	1 day	1 mn	G1
Rule nature	V	25	S	15 mn	5 rounds	RB
Silence	F	15	S	15 rounds	1 round	G1
Sound explosion	D	15	50 y.	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Spirit mirror	C	10	S	Ins.	1 round	G1
Stuttering	F	10	P	1 mn	2 rounds	G1
Sylvan haven	V	10	I	1 day	10 rounds	G1
Temper alteration	C	10	P	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
The big sleep	D	25	P	5 rounds	5 rounds	G1
The greatest goodness	H	20	P	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
The greatest sin	C	15	P	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Thought transference	C	15	S	5 mn	1 round	RB



SPELL NAME	INSTR.	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	MEASURE	ORIGIN
True lies	H	15	P	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Uncanny luck	H	20	I	Sp.	5 rounds	G1
Un-influence	H	15	S	Sp.	Sp.	G1
Vegetal resurrection	V	20	C	Per.	5 mn	G1
Weapon aversion	D	15	S	1 mn	2 rounds	G1
Well-being	H	20	P	1 hour	3 rounds	G1

SHAPE

Aera of effect

AERA OF EFFECT

U: Unlimited

S: Small object

M: Medium-sized object

L: Large object

*: Elder Art opus

OPUS NAME	THRESHOLD	AERA OF EFFECT	DURATION	MODELING	ORIGIN
Alter condition	10	M	1 day	5mn	RB
Alter state of matter	15	S	1 mn	4 rounds	RB
Animate statue	20	M	1 mn	5 rounds	G1
Close lock	15	Sp.	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Command matter	20	M	Sp.	1 mn	G1
Crack lock	15	S	Ins.	1 round	RB
Decay	20	M	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Enchant from the Shard*	25	Sp.	Sp.	Sp.	G1
Hide matter	15	M	30 mn	1 mn	G1
Liquefy matter	20	M	10 mn	1 mn	G1
Matter cohesion	10	S	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Matter memory	20	M	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Mind link	25	L	Sp.	1 month	G1
Modify matter	20	M	1 hour	1 mn	RB
One with matter	25	I	1 hour	1 round	RB
Perceive enchantments	10	M	Ins.	1 mn	G1
Remodel	10	S	Ins.	1 round	RB



OPUS NAME	THRESHOLD	AERA OF EFFECT	DURATION	MODELING	ORIGIN
Replica	10	S	Ins.	1 hour	RB
Sharpen a blade	10	M	1 hour	2 rounds	RB
Shrink matter	15	M	5 mn	5 rounds	G1
Weakness	10	U	Ins.	1 hour	RB

VISTA

Season

Spr.: Spring

Su.: Summer

F: Fall

W: Winter

SPELL NAME	SEASON	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	SKETCH	ORIGIN
Addiction	F	15	C	30 days	2 rounds	G1
Avalanche	W	20	S	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Bad wound	F	20	C	Sp.	2 rounds	G1
Bitter cold	W	15	90 y.	1 hour	1 hour	RB
Blinding light	Su.	10	S	5 rounds	5 rounds	RB
Carpet of leaves	F	10	C	Per.	3 rounds	G1
Chaotic vegetation	Spr.	20	Sp.	30 mn	5 rounds	RB
Chill	W	15	P	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Clouds	F	10	Sp.	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Create spring	Spr.	20	C	Per.	5 rounds	G1
Cure a wound	Spr.	10	C	Per.	3 rounds	RB
Decay	F	15	C	Per.	3 rounds	RB
Drought	Su.	15	C	Ins.	1 hour	G1
Ensure offspring	Spr	10	C	Sp.	1 mn	G1
Extend life	Su.	15	C	1 hour	2 rounds	RB
Extend spring	Spr.	20	Sp.	1 day	1 hour	G1

SPELL NAME	SEASON	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	SKETCH	ORIGIN
Extend summer	Su.	20	Sp.	1 day	1 hour	G1
Extend winter	W	20	Sp.	1 day	1 hour	G1
Feel the fall	F	20	S	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Fertility	Spr.	10	Sp.	1 day	1 round	RB
Flood	Spr.	25	S	Ins.	1 mn	G1
Foliage	Spr.	25	S	Ins.	1 hour	G1
Freeze	W	25	C	Ins.	3 rounds	G1
Friend of the day	Su.	15	I	Sp.	10 mn	G1
Golden serenity	F	15	50 y.	6 hours	1 mn	G1
Hailstorm	F	25	2 miles	15 mn	5 rounds	G1
Heat	Su.	15	90 y.	1 hour	1 round	RB
Ice missile	W	15	S	Ins.	1 round	RB
Ice tornado	W	25	3 miles	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Ignition	Su.	20	S	Ins.	1 round	RB
Imbue with light	Su.	10	C	1 hour	1 round	G1
Last stand	F	15	50 y.	6 hours	1 mn	G1
Lightning strike	Su.	25	S	Ins.	5 rounds	G1
Maturity	Su.	20	C	Per.	1 mn	G1
Miraculous growth	Spr.	25	C	Ins.	1 day	G1
Numb a limb	W	20	C	Ins.	1 round	G1
Plant death	W	10	C	Per.	1 round	RB
Rain	Spr	10	Sp.	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Severe asthma	W	15	C	1 day	5 rounds	G1
Snow	W	10	Sp.	1 hour	1 mn	G1
Storm	Su.	10	Sp.	15 mn	1 mn	G1
Sun spell	Spr.	20	Sp.	1 hour	1 mn	RB
Sunstroke	Su.	15	S	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Thorn swarm	Spr.	20	20 y.	Ins.	2 rounds	G1
Toxin	F	15	C	Per.	1 round	RB
Veil of autumn	F	20	I	1 hour	2 rounds	RB
Weep for the Lady	F	25	P	15 mn	5 rounds	G1
Winter armor	W	20	I	10 mn	2 rounds	RB
Withering	F	10	C	Per.	Sp.	RB



SCANSION

OPUS NAME	THRESHOLD	AERA OF EFFECT	DURATION	WORD	ORIGIN
Aging	20	C	Ins.	5 mn	RB
Backtrack	25	I	Sp.	2 rounds	G1
Bad omen	15	P	Ins.	3 rounds	G1
Dead language	10	I	1 day	1 mn	G1
Erosion	10	S	Ins.	1 mn	RB
Fast healing	15	C	Ins.	2 ronds	RB
I shan't be there	20	I	Ins.	1 mn	G1
Perceive the past	20	Sp.	Sp.	1hour	RB
Premonition	15	Sp.	Sp.	20 mn	RB
Prophecy	15	Sp.	Sp.	1 hour	RB
Psychometrics	15	C	Sp.	3 rounds	RB
Sense danger	10	I	1 mn	2 rounds	G1
Skin-deep aging	20	S	Per.	1 mn	G1
Step ahead	15	I	5 mn	1 round	RB
Time slip	25	I	1 hour	5 rounds	RB
Time stasis	15	S	1 mn	2 rounds	G1
Visual disturbance	15	P	1 round	1 round	G1





THE SECRET ARTS

Cantos

OPUS NAME	THRESHOLD	AERA OF EFFECT	DURATION	BREATH	ORIGIN
Captivating aria	10	10 y.	Sp.	1 round	G1
Epic lay	25	P	1 hour	4 rounds	G1
Healing hymn	15	C	Ins.	1 mn	G1
Lullaby	15	10 y.	15 mn	2 rounds	G1
Perfect beauty	20	10 y.	30 mn	5 rounds	G1
Sensory awakening	10	P	5 mn	2 rounds	G1
Soprane blindness	15	10 y.	5 mn	2 rounds	G1
Soprane deafness	10	10 y.	5 mn	1 round	G1
Tone blind	20	10 y.	5 mn	3 rounds	G1
Tone deaf	15	10 y.	5 mn	2 rounds	G1



Orchestra

OPUS NAME	INSTR.	THRESHOLD	RANGE	DURATION	MEASURE	ORIGIN
Bestial fury	D/V	10/20	S	5 mn	1 round	G1
Bliss	H/F	20/15	P	1 hour	1 round	G1
Collective amnesia	C	30	Domain	Ins.	30 mn	G1
Deep-rooted grudges	D/C	10/20	P	10 mn	3 rounds	G1
Harmony	H/V/F/C	25/20/15/15	Domain	1 month	30 mn	G1
Legitimate authority	H	30	Domain	10 days	30 mn	G1
Lunacy	F/D	15/15	S	Per.	3 rounds	G1
Military disorganization	F	25	S	Sp.	5 mn	G1
Nature's bounty	V	30	Domain	1 month	30 mn	G1
Safe conduct	H/D/V	15/10/15	P	1 day	30 mn	G1
Volatile nostalgia	F/C	15/15	P	10 mn	2 rounds	G1
War frenzy	D	25	S	5 mn	10 mn	G1



OTHER AGONE TITLES



RULEBOOK

An epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms



GAMEMASTER SCREEN + MAP OF THE TWILIGHT REALMS

A four-panel screen
and a beautiful, full-color, map of Harmundia.

KING OF SPRING



A ready-to-play Drama for a Troupe of four to six Inspired.
With the coming of winter, all doors and shutters in Gloomwind are locked tight. The inhabitants live alone with their fear, as their baron suffers from his curse. The pall of death has fallen upon the Barony of Melif once again...

As the Troupe goes to the assistance of the Baron of Melif, the Inspired attract the attention of unexpected enemies. War is at their gates. The Legions of the Seasons begin to confront one another openly, and to target the members of the Troupe.

What did the Inspired do?
Are they victims of someone's sinister machinations?
Or of destiny itself?

THE GRAY PAPERS

From the Lightning-Dragon Crest to Abhorrent Peaks, this sourcebook present ten ready-to-play Domains. Here, the Inspired will discover new manifestations of the Masque... and a glimmer of hope.

This sourcebook also cover Domain creation and management rules, and a big scenario in which the Inspired will visit three different Domains.



COMING SOON

THE BESTIARY (JANUARY '02)



This sourcebook presents the fauna and the flora of Harmundia, the creatures that inspire fear and wonder in the Twilight Realm. Animals, plants, Prodigies and other unknown servants of the Masque are detailed here.

This sourcebook also contains animal training and plant lore rules, as well as new ready-to-play archetypes and a long scenario that will lead the Troupe on the tracks of the Phoenix in the Desert of Keshe.

The Grimoire

Volume 1

The Muses are the creators of Harmundia. Since the dawn of time, Concordists have paid homage to them with their opuses. But today the Concordists are few in number.

Most mages do not concern themselves with the Magical Arts of Tune, Scansion, Shape or Vista. Instead they use the sparks of their Dancers to develop powerful spells.

But the Enemy draws near, and neither the Cipher-sorcerer order, nor the Concordists are able to deal with the threat alone. The Arts have been tainted and the order is corrupted!

There is only one hope...

It is time for you to rediscover the Arts of Magic.



The Grimoire Volume 1 contains all the knowledge necessary to complete a player's understanding of Ciphred Mages and Concordists, as well as additional information for the Eminence Grise revealing the most powerful secrets of Harmundia, including the Square and the Cipher-sorcerer.

This sourcebook will disclose the techniques of the most potent mages, numerous new spells and opuses, the fundamentals of the devastating practice of Choreography, the methods of artifact creation, and other arcane mysteries reserved exclusively for the most experienced players.

The Grimoire also describes numerous new assets and faults, and includes "Requiem for a Dead Mage", a lengthy drama set in Lorgol.