

Peripheral Code

Writing in the Margins of Ars Magica

Issue 3, Autumn 2017



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Bedford Castle Model: photo Simon Speed; labelling and trimming by hchc2009 - modified from

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BedfordCastleModel.JPG>

A labelled version of Bedford Castle model. Sculptor:- Aron McCartney.

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Hermes Trismagistus!



The third issue of *Peripheral Code* is important in two ways. First, it's the largest issue yet, packed with resources for your ongoing *Ars Magica* campaigns, with adventures, and even entire sagas. But second, and more important: I didn't write any of it.

That may seem like a weird thing to say, but if you've ever tried to edit a fanzine, blog, or magazine of any kind, you know that the editor is always the contributor of last resort. Magazines like *Peripheral Code* depend on contributors, and if there aren't any contributors (or not enough), it's the editor that has to make up the difference. I created half a dozen columns for *Peripheral Code*, but only one of them appears in this issue, and that one is written by regular contributor James Seals, not me. A diverse collection of voices makes this a better magazine, and I'm very much encouraged by your willingness to contribute to the *Ars Magica* community by way of *Peripheral Code*.

Let's talk about what you have in your hand, starting with Tom Nowell's "Covenant of the Green Knight." The idea of a potential covenant site for magi to explore is something I first saw in *Sub Rosa*, and every time I read such an article, it made me want to play *Ars Magica*. Exploration is something that often gets left out of our favorite RPG in favor of lab work and Hermetic politics, but Tom's covenant site, inspired by medieval poetry, buttressed by research, and including Faerie hooks that create more stories, will make for a great play session for you and your troupe, whether they are a batch of newly-Gauntleted magi seeking a home or experienced magi looking for vis.

Leon Bullock's "Cult of Knowledge" is a Bonisagus-inspired mystery cult, so that's something new right there. Leon details new magic which allows magi to put their own memories and even personalities into physical objects which long outlive them, sort of like a Hermetic Holocron. You can imagine all the great stories this can create in your saga, before we even start to wonder how the PCs can duplicate this feat for themselves.

Christian Andersen's "Politics of Wind, Wave, and Ice" explores a saga idea presented in *Guardians of the Forest* and offers suggestions for how it might play out among the various gilds, covenants, and other factions of the Rhine. *Guardians of the Forest* presents a tribunal in Autumn, but Christian's saga ideas are all about bringing the tribunal back to a vigorous and expansive Summer. Frankly, it makes the tribunal much

more attractive to new magi, and therefore to new players.

Cathelineau's first article for *Peripheral Code* (last issue) was a new way to generate Faerie characters, but this time we get a whole adventure. "The Siege of Bedford" places the PCs in the middle of one of the most famous battles of the 13th century, one conveniently early in the *Ars Magica* period. Cathelineau has fleshed out the siege with subplots and supporting cast, creating a sandbox adventure that gives the PCs latitude to do as they wish (though they'd better hurry).

But if an adventure is not enough for you, Mark Baker has written an entire *campaign*, complete with overland maps filled with locales and adversaries, all keyed to a detailed encounter list. When Mark asked me what sort of article I might like to see in PC, we soon began talking about the original *Dragon Magazine* and the *Minarian Legends* column which built on and expanded the board game *Divine Right*. Inspired by that column, Mark has presented us with "The Bastion of the North," a lost covenant in northern Britain circa 1066. Again, exploration is center stage, but there's plenty of action and interaction in this expansive and imaginative sandbox.

"Bastion of the North" is thematically linked to Mark's larger project: a complete manuscript for *Ars Magica* 6th Edition. Now, such a manuscript is bound to be contentious, and *Peripheral Code* is not the place for such a thing to be printed. But I was intrigued enough by "Bastion of the North" that I wanted to know what changes Mark had decided to make. He's given us a brief outline of those changes and his motivation for making them, along with the first chapter of the manuscript. That's more than enough to get us talking. Think of it as a collection of major house rules. What would you do, if you were writing a new edition?

Finally, James Seals has given us "Make Straight in the Desert," the first *Ars Magica* fiction to appear in *Peripheral Code*. It's got an apprentice of House Tremere on his Gauntlet in Africa; do you really need to know more? I'm so excited to print this story; I wish I could do an entire collection of *Ars Magica* fiction. James also gives us a writeup for the protagonist of his story, Heron Moros discipula Ktistés of Tremere, so you can drop him right into your saga.

I invite you to write to *Peripheral Code* at jason.tondro@gmail.com. Tell me what you think. Did you like the adventures, campaign ideas, and other resources in this issue? Did you miss any of the columns from previous issues? (I'm not looking for compliments here; rest assured I'd rather have other people write those columns than me!) What would you like to see in a 6th edition... or do you even want one? And keep those submissions coming in. Our guidelines are at the end of this issue.

Jason Tondro





The Covenant of the Green Knight

By Tom Nowell



In the tale of Gawain and the Green Knight, the Knight's manor is said to be in the wilderness of the Wirral peninsula. As the story was written in a northwestern English dialect, this may have been the author's way of saying the story takes place "over the hills and far away" – the furthest place their readers can possibly think of as a real location. What if there really is a mystical place at the tip of the Wirral, and what sort of covenant would be there?

Mundane surroundings

The Wirral is part of the County Palatine of Cheshire, and belongs to the Earl of Chester. In 1220, the current Earl is Ranulf de Blondville, who is in Damietta as part of the fifth crusade, and is due to return to England at the end of the year. The peninsula was converted into a hunting forest in the 1120s so most of the area is wild.

There were quite a few villages listed in the Domesday book, the ones around the coast are still inhabited, and there is a priory in Birkenhead at the northeastern edge. The peninsula itself is bounded by the river Dee to the west (marking the border with Wales) and the Mersey to the east. To the south-east lies the walled city of Chester. Chester was founded by the Romans as a military camp (called Deva), and ancient ruins there may intrigue magi. It is defended by a castle with a stone tower. In the city centre is an abbey with the shrine of Saint Werburgh, who is the patron saint of the city and is associated with a miracle bringing geese back to life.

Across the Mersey, there is a natural harbor where the village of Liverpool has been granted the right to hold a market. The St John's market was granted its charter by King John in 1215 while he was desperately trying to raise funds. It makes a good market for those trying to buy the goods a covenant will need, and is a place where you may be able to arrange passage to Hibernia.

The Forest Itself

Much of the Wirral is covered with woodland and moorland, with farms around the edge near the coast. There are few wolves and bears left in England, but this is a sufficiently wild place you may still encounter them. Rain regularly sweeps over from the Irish Sea, keeping the land lush and green.

The Green Knight

In the story, the Lord Bertilak has a castle where Gawain stays while trying to find the Green Knight at the Green Chapel. Bertilak is the Green Knight in disguise. While Gawain stays there, Bertilak agrees to share what he gains from hunting if Gawain will share what he gains while resting. Clearly there is some custom relating to sharing what is found at this castle. This can be reflected in different ways in your game – perhaps the Green Knight insists on people sharing a portion of what they find on his land, or punishes those who take without sharing. Perhaps he is more interested in the quest, and wants people to leave behind part of what they came looking for. He could be more metaphorically inclined and require people to share a story or poem of their time on his land before they can leave.

The Green Knight himself has two notable powers in the story – the ability to survive what should be a fatal wound and the ability to inflict a fatal wound with a single stroke of his axe.

Bertilak, the Green Knight

Faerie Might: 40 (corpus)

Characteristics: Int +1, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str +5, Sta +1, Dex+2, Qik 0

Size: +1

Virtues and Flaws: Large, Cognizant within Role, Faerie Sight, Faerie Speech, 2 x Great Strength, Humanoid Faerie, Observant, 3 x Improved Characteristics, Improved damage (axe), 1 x Greater Faerie Power, 3 x Personal Faerie Powers, Greater Immunity (metal weapons), Puissant Pretense, Sovereign Ward (people who share freely)

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Trusting +2, Upholds bargains +3

Combat: Axe and heater shield Init +2, Atk +18, Dfn +11, Dmg +16 (including +5 from improved damage)

Soak: +10 (green armour) / +2 (hunting leathers)

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-6), -3 (7-12), -5 (13-18), Incapacitated (19-24), Dead (25+)

Pretenses: Area Lore: Wirral 5 (hunting), Awareness 5 (prey), Brawl 6 (knights), Carouse 4 (feasts), Charm 3 (noble ladies), Etiquette 5 (faerie court), Faerie Speech 6 (oratory), Folk Ken 3 (wirral natives), Hunt 5 (men), Intrigue 3 (against rival lords), Leadership 6 (knights), Ride 6 (destriers), single weapon 9+2 (axe)

Powers:

Felling stroke 2 points, Init -4, Corpus or Animal depending on target - Kills a human or animal of no more than size +4 with a single touch of his axe. (Greater Power - PeCo(An) base 30 +1 touch +1 size for total level 40, cost of 4 points reduced to 2 by intricacy)

Puissant healing 4 points, Init -5, Corpus – heals all wounds the Green Knight has suffered, which will not reappear until sundown, by which time the Knight should be elsewhere. (Personal power - CrCo 35, heal all wounds, +2 sun duration for total level 45, cost of 5 points reduced to 4 by intricacy – counts as two sets of personal powers virtue)

Shift Human Shapes 0 points, Init -1, Corpus – allows him to change between the noble Lord Bertilak and a heavily armoured Green knight at will.

Equipment: Green armour of a strange type of iron, an axe, a shield with the heraldry of a black tower on a green background, a lance, a faerie destrier.

Vis: 8 pawns of Corpus

Appearance: a sinister knight of unearthly appearance (as the green knight) or a jovial noble lord in hunting gear (as Bertilak). His virtue Greater Immunity (metal weapons) makes him appear a mighty warrior who couldn't be felled by a weapon, but cosmetically he appears to be wounded while ignoring the injury. An Intelligence + Awareness roll Ease Factor 6 will reveal his axe is obviously supernatural when used to attack.

The Green Knight and how he enforces the covenant sharing with him will have a major impact on how the covenant functions. A Knight who says you must leave behind in his lands a portion of what you were looking for may force magi to stay within the covenant and its surroundings. A vicious knight may tell a magus he can take an apprentice he finds in the forest – as long as he leaves behind a part of the apprentice, forcing the apprentice to choose between leaving behind a body part (missing eye or missing hand flaw) or part of their Gift (minor supernatural or hermetic flaw). A poetic knight may request people to leave behind some record of what they found, requiring literate characters to leave behind a letter or diary entry which will build up into a large library one day, and requiring illiterate grogs to sing songs or recite poems about the covenant every time they need to leave.

Possible Boons and Hooks

- **Chase** (Minor surroundings boon) – nearly all of the Wirral is a chase, so if the covenant has the right to gather from this they benefit from a chase befitting a mighty lord.
- **Mystical Portal** (Minor site boon) – a portal to Arcadia could be within the Green Knight's lands, and explain why the Green Chapel can be hard for mortals to find.
- **Evil Custom** (Minor site hook) – if the Green Knight insists on people leaving behind part of what they find on his lands, on pain of losing body parts, then an evil custom is present.
- **Faerie Landlord** (Major surroundings hook) The land belongs to the Green Knight, but if the covenant has an agreement that doesn't count as "Molesting the fae" they can be his tenants.
- **Monster** (Major surroundings hook) If the covenant doesn't have an agreement with the Green Knight but are living near his land, then the Green Knight is a powerful, looming faerie threat that could strike at any minute.
- **Seclusion** (Minor site boon) If the covenant is really at the north end of the Wirral, they will be far from any travel routes – only those deliberately questing for the Green Chapel will come close.
- **Legendary Site** (Minor surroundings hook) If people come questing for the Green Knight or seek his chapel, then this hook ensures a supply of questing knights while also offering a boost to the covenant's laboratories.
- **Manor House** (Free choice, buildings) The physical structure is most likely to be a fortified house befitting a lord's hunting estate. There is little need for a castle, and a large military structure might attract the attention of the Earl of Chester's men.
- **Centralized Kingdom / Church Territory** (External relations minor hook) If you are not on the Green Knight's land (for the King would have difficulty exerting control on faerie lands), then ultimately any land the covenant owns will be answerable to the King or the Church.
- **Faerie Court** (Minor surroundings hook) If the Green Knight is one powerful faerie noble with an equally powerful rival somewhere else nearby, maybe there is a faerie court the covenant can interact with.
- **Healthy Feature** (Minor site boon) Either a healthy sea breeze or idyllic forest surroundings can make for a healthy environment.
- **Regio** If you wish to use the Green Chapel as a regio rather than a site in arcadia, it can be a minor hook if people enter it for quests, and the covenant isn't certain what will happen, or a major hook if the Chapel sends





out creatures to harass the covenant or forces quests upon them. The non-magical regio minor hook will probably apply as well.



If the covenant is at the base of the Wirral and much closer to Chester there are the possibilities of:



- **Roman Ruins** (Minor surroundings hook) Ruins from the ancient Roman city of Deva or any nearby military camp, and any associated temples, make for an opportunity to loot dressed stone blocks and to look for ancient magical secrets.



- **Seat of power** (Major surroundings hook) The Earl of Chester is resident at his castle from the end of 1220 and will take an interest in any wealthy or militarily powerful groups close to his home.



Suggested combinations

- Chase, Aura, and Healthy Feature boons with either Faerie Landlord or Monster hook.
- Mystical Portal and Evil Custom.
- Seclusion and Legendary Site.



Settling the covenant

A covenant wishing to base itself in the area will need to make one important choice at the start – how they wish to deal with the Green Knight. Any deal will need to be carefully worded to avoid accusations of molesting the fae. If they do not wish to make a deal, they face having a powerful faerie who can violently punish anyone violating his customs.



The covenant also gets to choose where they wish to settle – they can go for a coastal location, or deep in the forest for the strongest auras, or they can go for the southeast of the Wirral close to Chester.



Existing covenants

A summer covenant will already have a deal with the Green Knight in place, and will have enough friends at Tribunal to not face charges of molesting the fae too often. An autumn covenant will have the strength to use its deal as a model of how the Order can coexist with fae, and try to get the peripheral code changed. A winter covenant could have an ancient bargain written into the peripheral code, and other covenants muttering how it should never have been allowed and they should be encouraged to stop taking apprentices and go extinct.



Old autumn or winter covenants may remember a time from before the Wirral became a hunting forest and the area having many well-populated villages. The covenfolk may be from now-abandoned villages and begrudge the Earls of Chester.

The age of the covenant will also reflect the traditions that have built up regarding the Green Knight and his custom. Covenants where an entire generation of grogs have been born and raised knowing the deal will have rituals to appease the knight that every grog has memorized, and new recruits will face a difficult time if they try to leave. A deal with a poetic knight who asks people to leave a record of what they found will lead to a huge library of letters and diaries, chronicling every strange occurrence that has ever been seen in the area, forming an encyclopedia of faerie lore and area lore. Older covenants may have chapter houses, so a house in Chester could be available for those needing urban contact, or nearby tidal islands full of migrating birds could have a chapter house to look out for sea travelers and harvest vis.

Using the covenant in stories

A covenant based here has a ready source of intrigue with faerie courts and faerie lords. If you use the Green Chapel as a regio, all sorts of quests could be located here. Knights of the Green Stone (from *The Mysteries Revised Edition*) will certainly stop here on their travels. The forest allows opportunities to interact with faerie and magical animals, so bestiary stories from *Realms of Power: Magic* can come into play and magi seeking familiars may show up.

Sea travel to Hibernia or the west coast of the Loch Leglean tribunals is available from nearby villages and towns, and you won't find a closer spot to explore the Isle of Man from. Depending on where in North Wales you choose to set Cad Gadu, the Domus Magna of Ex Miscellanea could be anywhere from three days to a month's travel away. This allows for a range of Hermetic visitors and involvement in the politics of three tribunals and a Domus Magna.



The Cult of Knowledge

by Leon Bullock

"All other magi jealously guard their knowledge, but we few know that true power comes with sharing amongst a trusted few. Just as covenants are formed to harness material resources, we join together to harness the power of our shared knowledge."

Caranius ex Bonisagus

Introduction

This mystery cult was created by a Bonisagus magus who was horrified by the loss of knowledge caused by the fall of an empire. He realised that one day the Order of Hermes would fall, and he wanted some method of preserving the wisdom gained during its reign. He, and like minded fellows from other houses, gathered together as many texts as they could, creating hidden caches in far-flung locations. During the schism war, they travelled from covenant to covenant trying to copy as many texts as they could. They even hired mundane scribes to obtain mundane knowledge. As they shared these texts with each other, they realised that there was a flaw in their reasoning. If all of society fell, as one day it must, no-one would be able to read the texts they were preserving. Even if the knowledge was found, it would still be lost.

The focus of the group changed; they looked into various ways to bind spirits into place as teachers or automata, or even binding a magus into a knowledge cache. Near despair, Caranius realised that perhaps he could magically copy himself as magi copy texts. Could a person's mind and memories be copied into something else? After several self-initiations into a new mystery cult he created, he discovered his answer.

New Virtues

Caranius Memory (minor, hermetic)

Allows the imprinting of specific memories into inanimate and engraved objects. A specific, vivid memory is isolated by the magus. This memory is then "imprinted" into a non-living object where it remains until the duration expires. A person with this virtue who touches the object will gain the memory as if it were their own. See the spell *Imprint the Vivid Memory* for examples.

Memories imprinted into specially prepared enchanted items will remain active until they are overwritten or the item is destroyed. If a person is trying to experience a single memory and is holding an item or items totalling more than 1 memory, they need to make

a Concentration roll to experience the correct memory.

Int + Concentration + stress die vs. (3 x the total number of memories)

On a botch, they experience all of the memories at once and become disorientated for (total number of memories) rounds.

Caranius Knowledge (major, hermetic)

(Replaces Caranius Memory)

Allows the engraving of knowledge (abilities) and memories into objects. See Caranius Memory for rules on objects and activation. This is a lab-activity; one season in the lab accumulates (lab total - 20) experience points towards a specific ability. For example, a lab-total of 95 would allow a magus to put 75XP for a single ability into an item. You must open the device for enchantment as normal and pay 1 pawn of Creo or Mentem vis per 10XP put into the item. Only a single ability may be entered in a single season. This lab activity must be completed in a single season. Only the lab total of the lead magus is counted. A magus can only engrave up to half of his XP in any ability – the only exception is languages. When activating a knowledge item, you must make an opposed roll of your Concentration against your Intelligence to succeed. While using the item, you must maintain concentration. Information in an item is used instead of your usual ability – virtues which give bonuses to the ability are ignored while you are using the item.

An item engraved with knowledge can be used as a study source – it is a summa with quality (Creator's Com + User's Finesse) and a level equal to its ability level. The student does not need to share a language with the creator or have any specific abilities to learn from a knowledge.

The lab text created during the engraving does not give any information about the ability, and when used gives a +20 bonus to storing the same amount of XP of any ability into an identical item.





Caranius Remnant (minor, hermetic)

Allows you to create a lesser version of your mind and imprint it into an object. Enchanting a remnant is identical to crafting a Lesser Enchanted Creo Mentem Device of level (35 + 10 x Intelligence) with a minimum level of 35. The lab text created does not contain information about the person; it gives a bonus to a magus creating a remnant of the same intelligence in the same type of item.

The remnant gains your current personality traits and characteristics from the start of the season. The target object must include eyes if the remnant is to be able to see and needs additional effects to communicate with the world. The remnant knows it is a remnant and is happy being so, but contains no personal memories of the creator. It does not possess imagination and can only complete simple tasks. The remnant cannot learn new abilities, though it does have a temporary memory of the things it does while active. Each time the remnant is de-activated, it forgets all new information it learned – including people it spoke to. The remnant resets itself every sundown and sunup. The remnant cannot assist in lab activities, but can add its Intelligence to the Safety of a lab if otherwise unoccupied. The remnant has a base Concentration of 0 and can access abilities engraved into it using Caranius Knowledge. A remnant is not alive and does not have the Gift. A remnant is a type of enchanted device, not a magical creature – it does not have Magic Might. A remnant is legally an object.

Caranius Reflection (major, hermetic) (Replaces Caranius Remnant)

Allows you to make an exact copy of your mind and engrave it into an object. The new mind (or Reflection) has completely independent thought and emotion and can form its own opinions of people and events. The Reflection cannot learn new abilities, though it can keep track of superficial things such as names and day-to-day events. The Reflection is constantly active but must make Concentration rolls for carrying out multiple activities. The object needs eyes for the Reflection to see, and the Reflection needs additional effects to communicate with or influence the world around it. With the right effects it can assist in lab work, or it can add its Intelligence to the Safety of a lab if otherwise unoccupied. The Reflection cannot act as the lead magus in a lab activity. A Reflection is alive and does not have the Gift. A Reflection is a mixture between a type of magic device and a magical spirit. A Reflection could be legally classed as a person. A Reflection does not have Magic Might. The main differences between a

Reflection and a Remnant are:

- A Reflection can make use of other enchantments through linked triggers or vocal triggers and use Finesse to control them.
- A Reflection remembers people and its interactions with them.
- A Reflection does not need explicit orders.
- A Reflection can form relationships with people.
- A Remnant makes use of enchanted knowledge, which is limited to half the magus' ability. A Reflection is a copy of the magus' mind and uses their full ability.

Enchanting the Reflection

It takes the magus an entire season to identify which of their abilities the mind will possess. This generates a project map with a total equal to the XP needed. The magus then needs to spend 2 continuous seasons crafting the Reflection, using 4 pawns of Creo or Mentem vis in the first season. If they are interrupted for more than the allowed 10 days, or they take a break between seasons, the creation fails. The original project map can be used to start again.

The magus then needs to spend seasons engraving their knowledge into the Reflection – each season they can place XP into it equal to their CrMe lab total. This requires lab-total/10 pawns of Creo or Mentem vis each season.

When the knowledge is entered, the map is used to cast a ritual of completion, during which the map is destroyed and the Reflection awakens.

The project map is a permanent Arcane Connection to the magus who created it; after the process has been completed, the Reflection becomes a permanent Arcane connection to the magus.

Example Map

Brutus of Bonisagus

Int +2, Per +1, Pre 0, Com +1

Ability	Level	XP
Magic Theory (Enchanting)	6	105
Latin (Hermetic usage)	5	75
Craft Goldsmith (Rings)	5	75
Teaching (Magic)	3	30
Artes Liberales (Geometric)	3	30
Order of Hermes Lore (Magi)	3	30

Map Total 345

Assuming Brutus has a lab-total of 70, he can place 70XP per season into the item; therefore it will take him 5 seasons and 35 pawns of vis to enter this knowledge

into the Reflection. This gives a total time of 8 seasons (1+2+5) and 39 pawns of vis. The Reflection then needs Imaginem effects to talk to people and Rego effects to move things; the overall total may be 11 seasons and 45 pawns of vis. This seems like a lot of vis, but is comparable to purchasing a specialist at covenant creation (Com 1 + Teach 3 + MT 6 would cost 10 build points, equivalent to 50 pawns of vis). The downside to this is that it requires a magus' time and is a permanent connection to him. However, it is a legacy which will never die. Also, as the reflection does not need to sleep, it can be active both day and night.

Spell

Imprint the Vivid Memory

CrMe

R:Touch; D:Variable ; T:Individual

Places the specified memory into an object; the object stores the memory until it is activated. It then creates the memory in the person's mind. The memory will last in the item until the duration expires. Anyone touching this item will gain the benefit of this memory. This spell has variants for each of the Hermetic durations:

momentary, diameter, sun, and moon.

Base 5, +1 Touch

Engraved item

Store the vivid memory

CrMe 24

R:Personal, D:Sun, T:Ind; Constant effect

This item can contain a single memory, placed within it by the *Imprint the Vivid Memory* spell, and will maintain it forever.

Base 10, +2 Sun; +3 Environmental Trigger, +1 for 2 uses

Example Engraved Item

Iron Key of Memory

(Opened for 5 pawns, 2 effects enchanted)

This small iron key can contain two vivid memories, each within its own container. The person holding the key has to concentrate to distinguish which memory they want to experience.

Store the vivid memory (i) (CrMe 24)

Store the vivid memory (ii) (CrMe 24)





Politics of Wind, and Wave, and Ice

by Christian Andersen

How to Use This

This article uses the “Wind, Wave, and Ice” saga ideas from *Guardians of the Forest* page 112 as starting point, and explores how the various covenants, gilds and individual magi act and respond to each other and the unfurling saga plot. The canon used in the article is *Guardians of the Forest*, as well as *Through the Aegis* - because of Collem Leonis covenant. Although not directly referred to, the Vitkar from *Hedge Magic, Revised Edition* as well as the Muspelli from *Rival Magic*, are good for inspiration for the Nordic magic. The article assumes familiarity with at least the covenants and gilds of *Guardians of the Forest*. The other sources are less vital to the understanding of the saga arc.

Furthermore this article does not define or require specific truths about the magicians of the north. Important questions needing answer for a saga such as this include:

- Is there an Order of Odin?
- How many Nordic wizards are there?
- What is their power and capabilities?
- How organized or united are they?
- What is their knowledge of and attitude to the Order?
- What are their goals and ambitions?
- How do they react to the various actions of the Rhine; raids, probing attacks, investigation, diplomatic missions, trade, full-scale war?

These may readily change as a saga progresses, in the wake of activities of the Rhine magi be it investigation, diplomacy, or war. This article makes no assumptions either way except that most things are unknown at the start of the saga. The goal is to make provisions either way in the treatment of the political climate.

Following the more general treatment of various covenants, magi, and gilds, a set of issues for the Tribunal of 1221 get the saga going.

Notable Magi

In the Rhine Tribunal book *Guardians of the Forest*, as well as *Through the Aegis*, a number of magi have interests or activities involving them in a Wind, Wave, and Ice saga arc. These are presented in brief here alphabetically, with rank, house, gild affiliation, and lineage if relevant. Subsequent mention of these magi will be with name alone, in sections about covenants, gild, and Tribunal of 1221.

- Baliana of Bonisagus, Journeyman, Collem Leonis, member of Ash, mentee of Occultes
- Daria la Gris of Tremere, Master, leader of Triamore, co-leader of Apple
- Erik Ribecus of Tylalus, Journeyman, Waddenzee, member of Ash, enemy of Estrid Daneson
- Estrid Danesson ex Miscellanea, Journeyman, Oculus Septentrionalis, member of Apple, filius Henri de Tours enemy of Eric Ribecus
- Freki of Bjornaer, Journeyman, Collem Leonis, member of Hawthorne
- Henri de Tours of Jerbiton, Master, leader of Oculus Septentrionalis, co-leader of Apple, pater Estrid Daneson
- Julia of Tremere, Journeyman, Collem Leonis, member of Apple
- Lucas von Beck of Flambeau, Journeyman, Waddenzee, member of Ash
- Murion, Prima of Bonisagus, Praeco and Archimaga, Durenmar, leader of Oak
- Occultes of Bonisagus, Master, Durenmar, leader of Linden, mentor of Baliana pater of Pancrestis
- Pancrestis of Bonisagus, Journeyman, Heorot, member of Oak, filius Occultes mentee of Philipus Niger
- Philipus Niger of Flambeau, Archimagus, Protector of Durenmar, leader of Ash, mentor of Occultes
- Signum Irruptus of Cramon, Master, leader of Heorot, member of Ash
- Stentorius of Tremere, Archimagus, leader of Fengheld, member of Oak
- Tiberius of Flambeau, Journeyman, Collem Leonis, member of Ash

Gilds and Attitudes

The gilds of Rhine tribunal are very important political tools to use when running plots. With membership based on interests and opinions, they span across the normal division of Houses and covenants. Each of them have agendas and attitudes towards the overall theme of the Wind, Wave, and Ice saga arc. While their differences keep each other mostly in check, it is important to not make the Rhine completely conservative and unchanging, as it will quickly grow stale. Being guided by traditions and memories of greatness is fine, and while some factions slowly degenerate, others pick up the torch and endeavour to breathe life into what has died while achieving new, great things. To ignite the sparks of activities for the saga, certain factions from different gilds need to find common ground and work across gild barriers.

Ash

The Ash gild is one of the most active gilds, and perhaps the greatest player in the game of the North. It is favoured by brave and outwards looking — but also aggressive — magi. With an official agenda of dealing with the mundanes in a firmer manner and stepping out of hiding, and the less official goal of combating the Order of Odin, one expects the Ash gild to be on the frontlines. Parts of Ash gild have an interest in the Order of Odin conflict while other parts focus on mundanes, but there is some overlap. Led by Philipus Niger, the magi with a focus on the gild's unofficial goal think actions speaks louder than words, but their lack of a coordinated effort effectively means nothing much gets done. In essence, they don't know enough about the enemy (or even if there is one) to strike decisively. Also, their efforts are often thwarted politically by more or less all other gilds.

Of the published magi of Ash gild, only Philipus Niger has the Order of Odin as an outspoken goal. Lucas von Beck and Erik Ribecus actively raid and plunder the coast of Norway, but pay little mind to which local wizards they destroy and what opposition they face. They seem more opportunistic and focused on personal gain. Troll-seeker Signum Irruptus also has overlapping interests with the overall plot, as the Jotunnar of Scandinavia may be involved. Both Baliana and Tiberius have an interest in the North; being less martial in their respective approaches, they fit the philosophy of the Hornbeam Initiative (see insert) well.

Oak

The Oak gild is the keeper of traditions and has the stated goals of cementing the Rhine Tribunal's

What is this Hornbeam Initiative?

The Hornbeam Initiative is a new movement embracing the call for activities into the North, drawing together individuals from different gilds with similar or comparable interests and goals. It is the invention of enterprising young magus Titus of Flambeau (a non-canon character), filius Indulius from Fengheld. Named after the strong hornbeam tree (which has the Shape & Material boni of "strength" and "versus hostile magic") the initiative mimics the gilds and may one day grow into a true gild in its own right. The Hornbeam Initiative seeks to confirm the glory and greatness of the Rhine, through exploring new lands and new magic, searching and observing, and responding in kind. To use and evolve that which has merit, to use diplomacy where it makes sense, or fight those asking for it. Titus hopes to enlist the cooperation of those Oak members who sincerely want greatness but are not blind to change. He hopes to cooperate with the cooler heads of Ash gild and enlist their proactive approach. The peaceful Linden gild may even see the initiative as means to limit the troublesome Ash members. Magi who are genuinely interested in Northern traditions and creatures rather than mindless conquest can find an outlet for their wants. Remembering that the relatively new Apple gild also had humble beginnings, a movement such as Hornbeam should not see massive resistance. Of course, the most conservative magi will attempt to sabotage it, but factions from several gilds who are not completely satisfied with the political workings of their peers may see opportunities here. The Hornbeam Initiative should be seen as a social club for magi wishing to cooperate across gild boundaries, to evolve alongside the changing times. Finding out whether there is an Order of Odin, what their strength is, and whether they are potential enemies, rivals, allies or can be ignored is a major priority. The greatness of the Rhine will be cemented if this riddle can be solved, if the Rhine's magi either conquer them, integrate them or simply annex Scandinavia.

greatness. Their agenda is somewhat vague, and by being the oldest, largest, and most conservative gild they effectively block most change because "it could make things worse". However, a significant part of Oak gild must necessarily be more open, or else they are doomed to enter a spiral of degeneration leading to death. The more outward looking members are open to





expansion and evolving Hermetic Theory.

Of the published magi of Oak gild who have outspoken priorities for the North, the most notable is Murion. Hers is more an interest in expanding the Rhine's northern borders and achieving greatness for the Rhine (and more importantly Durenmar) rather than any real fear of or interest in a possible Order of Odin. Pancrestis, on the other hand, has a magically inclined interest meshing well with the Hornbeam Initiative. Stentorius may be indirectly involved because of House Tremere's preference for being prepared. Both the Apple gild's activities in promoting transport, communications, and stocking provisions (see later) as well as the Hornbeam Initiative has his support. However, this is quiet and discreet support, perhaps through intermediaries or by suppressing opposition, without him ever voicing his opinion about the matter or making a direct stand.

Apple

The Apple gild as a whole does not have any interest in any Order of Odin, but expansionist policies of the Rhine are worthy of their support, in order to pursue their own agenda. New territories with little or no previous Hermetic influence need to be colonized with Apple methods rather than Ash, or any other for that matter. Supporting preparations for a full scale campaign into Scandinavia means developing routes for trade, transport, and communications. Stockpiling of wealth, armaments, and provisions needs to be at the only logical staging point: Oculus Septentrionalis. And while the build-up of material is going on, Apple gild promotes its own wealth and power in the northern frontier. Even though Apple gild has little interest in the workings of the Hornbeam Initiative, they see benefits supporting each other to suppress the Ash members wanting a heads-over-heels assault.

Of the published magi, the entire covenant of Oculus Septentrionalis needs to support this Apple gild fueled idea of stockpiling material in Lübeck, otherwise they will sell short their own reason for existence and instead inadvertently support the more violent Ash politics. Daria la Gris and Julia see overlap in opportunities for both of their respective covenants, the Apple agenda, and House Tremere's preparations for crisis. It is likely that no crisis with the Order of Odin ever arises, and the Rhine does not use the stockpiled materiel and Oculus Septentrionalis' silver on a mercenary force. But House Tremere aims to subvert the leadership and have these resources on hand for other eventualities.

Linden

The Linden gild strives for peace and cooperation between the Rhine's magi, and peaceful solutions for conflicts. Many also oppose the growing inactivity and stale conservatism of many Oak members. They prefer the more peaceful activities of Apple gild, and as such they typically oppose Ash policies. Murion's recent call for action in the North coincides with Linden's wishes to end apathy, but they fear it may start an unnecessary conflict and internal strife. Linden can support most of what the Hornbeam Initiative stands for, but few openly do so in order to avoid causing a rift. Quiet support can perhaps divert the energy of the more moderate members of Ash and the more active members of Oak towards constructive goals. They would happily support finding a definitive answer to the Order of Odin's presumed existence, as well as help integrate any useful magics found. But they only consider diplomatic solutions acceptable, not martial ones. If the Hornbeam Initiative discovers a hostile rival organization, Linden's support will become reluctant or even falter. However, Linden can't risk staying out of the matter, since improper first contact can spark a conflict which could have been avoided.

Linden gild includes an outward looking minority actively striving to seek out foreign magic to learn from or assimilate. This is spearheaded by published magus Occultes; most of his named allies such as Pancrestis and Baliana have joined other gilds.

Hawthorne

The Hawthorne gild has a focus on the protection of the wilderness. Members are mostly from House Bjornaer, and therefore by extension influenced by Crintera. Much of what is stated here is also true for Crintera's role in the saga. Hawthorne gild has no specific wishes to find or wage war against a presumed rival order. Their main concerns are about limiting mundane growth in order to protect the wilderness, a matter where the Wilderist and Harmonists factions disagree wildly in methods. The spread of Christianity is believed to have limited the power of any Rune Wizards still in existence, and by limiting the spread of the Dominion, House Bjornaer would create potential sanctuaries for the Order of Odin. So it would seem that Crintera and Hawthorne's preferred activities are yet again detrimental to the workings of Ash and Apple gilds, as well as the other way around. But it will be in Crintera's nature to oppose both the spread of mundanes as well as assaults on magical sites. If some of them can be convinced that the investigative approach is the one least damaging to their goals (or might even benefit them), they could

work with the Hornbeam Initiative. A Hornbeam advocate could even turn the situation upside-down and suggest that if Hawthorne works together with Hornbeam to scout and secure magical sites, it will combine efforts to find or keep out hostile Rune wizards as well as safeguard them against intrusion.

Of the published magi, only Freki has interests in this direction, as she seeks to scour the North for shape-shifting traditions. Although barely an official covenant, Sinus Wodinis (see later) and their unnamed members might be involved as well. Since Birna's lineage originates in Pomerania, perhaps others from that tradition ventured into Scandinavia and developed in parallel with the magi Bjornaer? Or maybe the local traditions have something interesting to offer? For an even more complex saga one could integrate the saga arc "The Crintera Schism" (*GotF*, page 111-112) to combine the eastern frontier and local traditions with the northern frontier.

Elder

The Elder gild is the gild with the least amount of interest or involvement in the saga. With their focus on faeries, they will not be averse to change but may resent an invasion of the North — be it by the fire and sword of Ash or the commerce of Apple — bringing ruin to the fae. Anything Hawthorne does is likely to be opposed as well, so this may drive Elder gild to support peaceful plans for the North. A really clever cooperative effort of Apple and Elder might be a peaceful, commercial dealing between magi and mundanes complemented by the spreading and telling of stories specifically crafted to empower existing (or even create new) urban or domestic faeries. Rather than destroying the faeries of the wilderness, the mundane growth supports those fae able to adapt. No published magi of Elder gild seem relevant to Wind, Wave, and Ice.

Involved Covenants

Even though a significant portion of Durenmar, perhaps throughout the entire Rhine, agree on the principle of action into the North, they have a hard time agreeing on details of how, when, where, and even why. Usually this means next to nothing will be done; however, things are stirring in these new times.

Several of the Rhine Tribunal's northwestern covenants are directly involved in various ways in a Wind, Wave, and Ice saga as well as with each other. Covenants not directly involved in Northern issues may still have members from Houses and Gilds with opinions and personal agendas connected with the greater plot. These are mentioned in brief under their own

headers, as well as where their support or opposition affects other agencies. With the criss-cross of Houses, covenants, and Gilds, there is bound to be cross references and repetition.

Durenmar

The attitude of Durenmar is coloured mainly by three members of great consequence. Between the three of them they have many allies and supporters, however their different goals and internal schisms severely hampers progress.

Murion has great ambitions for Durenmar and the Rhine. Although this endeavour is not of great importance to her, the resulting expansion and looting coincides nicely with a coordinated offensive against the North.

Philipus Niger on the other hand feels more strongly for this issue. Although the official agenda of the Ash Gild has a focus on a firmer hand in relations with the mundanes, Philipus Niger fronts an unofficial faction wanting active warfare against the rune wizards. Based on his stat block (with errata) he has already personally had hostile contact with northern wizards.

Finally there is Occultes, former Librarian of Durenmar and passed over as Primus. He has a genuine wish to investigate and explore exotic magic, which the Hermetic frontier of Scandinavia ought to be ripe with. Notable support may come from Fengheld, through both the Linden Gild as well as Stentorius. As a rival of sorts to Murion, Occultes may get support from the Fengheld-Durenmar powerplay. Besides, many Oak members see Stentorius as a better candidate for the role of Praeco.

Oculus Septentrionalis

The Summer covenant "The Eye of the North" was created specifically to monitor the situation with the speculative Order of Odin in Scandinavia, at the initiative of the Ash Gild. Apple Gild soon hijacked the project to their own ends. This drove away the single remaining Ash Gild member who subsequently founded Waddenzee Covenant. Oculus Septentrionalis has a focus on mundane relations in Lübeck as well as mercantile ventures, but have made peaceful contact with local hedge wizards. The covenant's leader Magister Henri de Tours of Jerbiton, co-leader of Apple Gild, is married to a Swedish mystic skilled in divination. And Journeyman Estrid Danesson ex Miscellanea is a recently assimilated Scandinavian Wizard.

With the covenant heavily influenced by Apple gild agendas, the magi here vastly prefer a less-than-violent method of acting in Scandinavia; however they are very





interested in expanding the Rhine's territory there — provided they don't have to share too much. This is why they have made a head start but work discreetly.

Situated in a busy trade city, Oculus Septentrionalis' demand that new members have the Gentle Gift seems reasonable and effectively keep the wrong sort out.



Political opposition towards Oculus Septentrionalis comes mainly from Ash Gild and specifically Philipus Niger, who thinks they aren't doing enough. Philipus Niger pushes for Oculus Septentrionalis to install a Mercere Portal to Durenmar in order to assist in an invasion of the North. Also, Crintera resents both their proximity as well as furthering the spread of the mundanes and by extension the Dominion. Finally, a great deal of Oak Gild resist change of any kind and don't believe there is a threat from Rune Wizards, so they claim Oculus Septentrionalis' reason for existing is invalid.



However, their role is "eye" not "fist", so Oculus Septentrionalis need not be actively waging war, and can claim their trade is a perfect cover for observation and probing into unknown lands. Apple Gild reasons that wealth, relations, and infrastructure is vital to prepare in advance of any conflict, and many of the more level-headed Ash members must agree. House Tremere generally applauds this kind of preparation, and they have members in Apple, Ash, and Oak Gild to support the covenant's continued existence. Covenants such as Fengheld, Triamore, and Collem Leonis all have members from this category. However, as a show of good faith, they expect to see silver on hand to hire mercenaries, warehouses stockpiling supplies, and ships ready for communications and troop transport. Waddenzee also supports these actions, since it gives them even better victims to plunder.



The factions of Oak and Linden Gild seeking to learn from Northern traditions and have peaceful relations favor preparations and continued investigation rather than the coordinated, direct action desired by Ash Gild. Consequently, there is not enough political pressure to demand change to Oculus Septentrionalis' situation.



Waddenzee

This relatively young and weak covenant originates from Ash Gild magi who were outmanoeuvred from Oculus Septentrionalis, and some animosity must be expected. However the leading Ash Gild magi here are profiteering opportunists, and they effectively leech off the riches from Oculus Septentrionalis by way of piracy. They are also the only covenant known to actively go into the North, however only for raiding and small skirmishes rather than serious investigation or warfare.



Without seeming too eager, they support Oculus Septentrionalis' current situation, and also welcome an increase of material brought into Lübeck, giving them more potential victims to plunder. They have little desire for heavy and coordinated Hermetic scouting and warfare, because plundering ships laden with magical resources easily leads to charges of Code breaking. And ships with combat capable magi itching for a fight are not their favourite targets. Their optimal situation is a status quo, but they are weighing the risks of supporting an increase in mundane support material to Oculus Septentrionalis against added Hermetic activity in their hunting grounds.

Triamore

While not directly involved in the conquest of the North, nor even interested in it, Triamore's current leadership connects them to Oculus Septentrionalis via the Apple gild. The covenant's leader Daria la Gris of Tremere, co-leader of Apple gild, supports the preparations for the Order's venture. House Tremere has great interest in being prepared for all eventualities, and in keeping tabs on the mundane world. While many Tremere magi in the Rhine are members of Oak or even Ash gild, the activities of Apple gild fits the agendas of an Assessor (*HoH:TL*, p133) nicely. Together with the likeminded Julia from Collem Leonis, the enterprising Daria seeks to further her House's goals by an increase in production and trade with Lübeck. She intends to sell her supplies at a significant discount "for the good of the Rhine" in order to retain a claim on them, should the need for them arise because of another crisis. It is in Triamore's best interest to control and limit the pirate activities of Waddenzee.

Crintera

This is the Domus Magnus for House Bjornaer, only has members from this house, and is dominated by Hawthorne Gild. Most of Crintera's involvement is similar to that of the Hawthorne gild.

Sinus Wodinis

On *GotF*, page 19, top left column, there is mention of Sinus Wodinis -- a secret Bjornaer covenant only recently discovered by Crintera. This is a fact easily overlooked when reading the sourcebook. This is the only mention of the matter in canon, so all else is purely speculation on this author's part. It must have been founded some time ago, and if still in existence in 1220, they must not have met any serious resistance from local wizards. As for whether there is an Order of Odin or not, this covenant requires a Storyguide decision

about what to do and how to use it. In this author's recommendation, the group of Bjornaer magi settling in Norway in secrecy must have had a reason to, and therefore by extension a constructive interest in local, magical sites, creatures, and traditions. They are more likely to support the Hornbeam Initiative. Also, if any magi Bjornaer should be interested in dealings with exotic shapeshifters outside Hermetic lands, as opposed to fighting them like in Pomerania, it would make sense for these magi to be located here. They could be convenient allies for Freki.

Collem Leonis

Collem Leonis is a Second Spring covenant from Through the Aegis, and therefore not part of the canon of Guardians of the Forest, but a subsequent addition. The introduction of this Rhine covenant does not contradict anything published.

The primary hook of Collem Leonis, as well as the mcguffin linking them to the Wind, Wave, and Ice saga, is the covenant's Uncontrolled Portals Hook, which they both guard and investigate. With both a faerie aspected and magical regio concerned with Nordic magic and creatures, Collem Leonis' role is highly mutable. However, in the saga described here, the uncontrolled openings of the regio thematically called Jotunheim are the most relevant. It gives this covenant a solid role in investigating Nordic wizards or creatures as well as providing a potentially dangerous backdoor to the heartland of the Rhine Tribunal. Should conflict arise the front is no longer neatly placed at the Baltic coast, with the potential for more covenants becoming involved.

Baliana searches for answers to whether there is an organization of rune wizards, whether they pose a threat or are a potential source for knowledge or even allies, and what their capabilities are. Any potential knowledge must be utilized to their full extent or integrated, and if need be the wizards can be assimilated. Any threats must be met with well-prepared force, and unnecessary conflicts must be avoided. Hence, she opposes the typical Ash methods, but feels Linden gild is too weak and careful and Oak too passive. She knows she needs to be on the frontline to get the best information. Tiberius is also of Ash gild but seeks no conflict with mundanes. Rather, he focuses solely on protecting against threats from mythic, Nordic creatures. Freki has similar goals to Baliana, however she is only interested in Nordic shape-shifting traditions. If there are any connections to Birna's lineage, she wants to avoid conflict as seen with the Pomeranian traditions. Julia is an assessor and keeps an eye on

mundane powers for her House. In practice, preparing and stockpiling for conflict is also a priority and well within her merchant ventures. Both the portals as well as the Baltic pose a potential front, and she readily joins in the Apple gild's plans for Oculus Septentrionalis.

Heorot

Heorot is a brand new covenant, seeking recognition as members of the Rhine at Tribunal 1221, and as such not officially a covenant until then. All three members are deeply involved in the investigative side of Wind, Wave, and Ice in their own way. Pancrestis directly fits the activities of the Hornbeam Initiative, although solely in a researching capacity. As he fears going into the wild he is ideally partnered with Baliaala for fieldwork. The other members are less well-defined in canon but can easily conform to plots involving an Order of Odin. Heorot is actively supported by Oculus Septentrionalis as they have a better alibi for continuing their Apple-influenced activities if Heorot performs more active investigation into the Nordic matters.

Tribunal of 1221

In the 1220s significant change in the Rhine is beginning to affect Hermetic society. Bound by tradition and lofty ideas, magical power is based in the deep, primordial forests, virtually unchanged for centuries. But now, magi are beginning to wake up — some quicker than others — to either fight the changes or adapt and make the most of it. A number of Tribunal issues concerning the Wind, Wave, and Ice saga are covered below.

- Murion's call for action
- Heorot is introduced
- Opposition to Oculus Septentrionalis' role
- A Mercere Portal to Lübeck
- Apple gild's preparations for war

Murion's call for action

Praeco Murion finally yields to Philipus Niger's long standing wishes, as she calls for the Rhine to lead the campaign into Scandinavia. But why? Murion hardly believes any rune wizards pose a significant threat, but in reality she does not know for sure. Change is coming, and a stale Tribunal will die. Murion likely represents the least conservative faction of the Oak gild, and truly wants the Rhine to flourish and regain old glory and power. More importantly, Scandinavia is a frontier, unused by Novgorod to which it nominally belongs. Before Novgorod steps in to colonize and protect their westernmost territories, she wants the Rhine to make a





move and expand. Vis-hungry and aggressive Normandy also has a history of being plagued by raiding rune wizards, and they are perhaps the most imminent threat. The Rhine needs to act before any of them get bright ideas.



Murion is supported by a minority of Oak gild as well as Ash gild magi in this endeavour. Hawthorne and Elder are likely to oppose, for fear of losing magic and faerie resources respectively, but rarely agree and support each other. As mentioned earlier, one or the other may be neutral or even lend mild support to certain initiatives. Parts of both Linden and Apple can support less-violent actions, which again can mean more Oak but less Ash members throw in their support.



Heorot is introduced



A major point for a Rhine Tribunal is new covenants, and this is notoriously difficult due to the need for a magus' support from all other covenants. Heorot is founded in Novgorod and merely wants to change Tribunal, effectively moving the borders. Oculus Septentrionalis is a strong supporter, even though the two are geographically close. Waddenzee sees more potential victims. Crintera violently opposes, both due to proximity and for fear of unwanted attention from the Danish King. Most other covenants have less at stake, and support or opposition should follow the goals of the gilds. Novgorod has no direct say in this move right now, but the issue may arise at the following Grand Tribunal.



Opposition to Oculus Septentrionalis' role



Oculus Septentrionalis' trade activities meet with massive opposition and accusations, because they do not seem to fulfil their obligations to the Tribunal. In fact, their whole reason for existing is challenged. Ash gild and perhaps Murion's faction of Oak are behind this critique, as they feel nothing is done, and they call for a more aggressive approach. As pointed out, Oculus Septentrionalis is the Eye of the North, not the Fist, and they hide behind this fact. However, little serious investigation has been done. They have had peaceful contact with several Danish wizards, but their activities seem limited to the heavily populated and Christianized areas, not the wilderness where the Order fears Rune wizards might be hiding.



The Hornbeam Initiative chooses to support Oculus Septentrionalis' agenda, meshing with Apple gild's activities. With more focus on preparations, establishing lines of transport and communication, storing materiel and silver, and having a mercenary force on hand, the aggressive Ash line of approach is limited, leaving more room for Hornbeam's activities.



A Mercere Portal to Lübeck

This issue is linked to the previous one about Oculus Septentrionalis' role; Philipus Niger insists Oculus Septentrionalis establishes a Mercere Portal to Durenmar. If they are at all serious about fulfilling their intended purposes to the Tribunal, a Mercere Portal is needed in order to use Lübeck as a staging point for an offensive in Scandinavia. Oculus Septentrionalis can hardly refuse, and they secretly admit such a portal would be a boon to their trade. However this is a huge matter, and someone must arrange for both financing of the vis as well as the practical issue of who will enchant it. Given sufficient time and vis, a magus Mercere can be hired to come and build it. But who will foot the bill? Oculus Septentrionalis may be rich, but they can't pay in silver, which everyone knows they have. Because Oculus Septentrionalis' role has not been funded by annual Tribunal resources, it is not given that they must pay for the Portal themselves. Whether or not they have rich vis sources in Scandinavia is anyone's guess. And if external sources insist they build a portal, which they point out was not part of the original founding charter for their covenant, Oculus Septentrionalis expects these matters to be dealt with elsewhere.

As if this was not more than enough, the Durenmar-Fengheld powerplay further muddles this issue. Fengheld has long yearned for a Mercere Portal of their own to the Forum of Hermes, in line with many other great covenants. This has long been politically blocked by Durenmar for various reasons using different excuses. One of these excuses — a lack of space in the Forum — can be argued by Fengheld to have been untrue, if Oculus Septentrionalis builds a portal. However Durenmar can counter with claiming that space was reserved for this very reason, for a higher priority for the Order than a shortcut for Fengheld.

Philipus Niger may raise half the vis within Ash gild, Murion may raise the other half through Durenmar and Oak gild. Fengheld itself may find the full amount of vis outside gild interests. But location is a more volatile matter than financing. The portal has two termini, and one of them must necessarily lie in Oculus Septentrionalis lest it defeat its own purpose. But who gets the other one? Traditionally all Mercere Portals in the Rhine connect to Durenmar, and tradition weighs heavily. However Fengheld challenges many matters, and there is nothing against building their own portals — other than price. Fengheld may offer to pay, but insist the route is to their covenant. Many from Oak and Durenmar will oppose this, but it is not really a matter to vote on. Oculus Septentrionalis would like to stall the matter, to better keep up their own agenda before all sorts of magi come waltzing through. An argument is

that secrecy and discretion is vital to their operations in Lübeck, so installing two portals is refused. This is a delaying tactic of theirs, but it may spark ideas instead. However they intend to keep up their good relations with Fengheld, and dare not risk angering Durenmar.

The issue need not be resolved at Tribunal of 1221, especially because a lot of vis is needed to bankroll the project. So the matter is most likely unresolved for the time being, but many different outcomes are possible, shaping the further development of politics. A route to Durenmar will be a blow to Fengheld and prompts them even more to challenge Durenmar at every turn. If the route is made to Fengheld instead, a majority of magi will be in uproar over the breach of traditions, while many others relish the fact that Fengheld finally gained the upper hand. If both Durenmar and Fengheld build their own portal then the political waters remain relatively still, although this is a serious drain on the vis resources in circulation for years to come. Many magi from both covenants may resort to selling books of their own or services rendered cheaper in order to raise the vis needed.

Apple gild's preparations for war

This matter is directly linked to the debate about how to proceed with the activities in the north, and what Oculus Septentrionalis' role should be. As a continued alibi for existence other Apple gild magi — notably Daria la Gris — seek to join in (and get a piece of) the Baltic trade. For use as a staging point for a Hermetic campaign, Oculus Septentrionalis' stockpiled silver needs to be invested and flow towards other parts of the Rhine. If a sizable mundane force needs to be raised quickly, armaments, provisions and other material needs to be on hand. Spearheaded by Daria la Gris and Julia, there will be a regular influx of wares from the mundane influence zones of Triamore and Collem Leonis respectively. Since foodstuffs spoil and other wares degrade over time, Oculus Septentrionalis needs to sell the goods stored, which are replaced at the next shipment. To keep being useful the magi of Oculus Septentrionalis can't very well refuse this. It means more storage space is needed and more work for the merchant fleet, but in the end they stand to gain both politically and economically.

Cleverly suggested to sound as the only alternative to uncoordinated raids led by Ash magi, there is ample support together with a lack of coordinated opposition from otherwise neutral parties. The resolution of this matter is seen as a huge victory for Apple gild over Ash. And Ash gild can hardly bear a grudge since they must admit that prepared material would be a welcome

resource when conflict comes knocking.

Besides resources, Apple gild seeks to improve lines of communication and transport. They call for more Redcaps and additional regular routes, an initiative most welcome by Boris the Redcap in Lübeck. An increase in cargo ships is welcome by Waddenzee, who sees more opportunities for piracy. If this situation is not foreseen by Triamore, then the issue is sure to be on the agenda at the following Tribunal.

Tribunal results

There are many variables such as what the players want from the saga, how the sagas political power balance is, and what players actively do. The dominant activities and politics depend on which gild — or faction within gilds — have the power in your saga. If Ash dominates the raids, and a hard line continues, Linden will oppose this, and it may or may not create a conflict with Nordic wizards. If Apple dominates, the commercial ventures continue, and stockpile resources for a crisis which never may happen or use it for peaceful expansion, supported by Linden. If Murion's faction of Oak prevails, something happens, but if the conservatives dominate nothing is done! In this author's humble opinion, a full scale war is less interesting than investigating foreign magic and forging diplomatic ties with rival wizards, along with the occasional skirmish, with the balance shifting from degeneration towards proactivity, from heedless war towards a rational, measured approach tipped by the Hornbeam Initiative.

The Following Years

As for the years following the Tribunal, it is difficult to gauge how things evolve in the different sagas running the saga, depending on power balance between the guilds and which activities are undertaken. A lot depends on which truth about the Order of Odin the Storyguide decides upon. Rather than a lengthy description, a few bullet points sum up the expected points of interest, alongside some perhaps-or-perhaps-not points. In any given saga there may be more of one thing and less of another.

- Increased transportation of goods into Lübeck. Apple gild's trade ventures and stockpiling is supplied by Triamore and Collem Leonis.
- Increased piracy by Waddenzee because of the increase in trade. This leads to accusations and legal cases against Waddenzee.
- Increased exploration by Estrid Danesson, doubling as trade expeditions. Using trade as an alibi for being discreet, it furthers Apple gild's agenda





- Increased raids by Ash gild. However, for probing attacks to gain any information they need solid leads about local magical traditions, creatures, and places. Whether they want to or not, they may need help from their sodales from Oculus Septentrionalis or the Hornbeam Initiative.
- Increased exploration and research by magi from the Hornbeam Initiative. The more open-minded magi from most any guild may work together, or in parallel sharing knowledge. Ideally these magi want to be best prepared for and influence Hermetic politics for expansion, colonisation, diplomacy, and warfare in Scandinavia.

Tribunal of 1227

The following Tribunal is held one year early in preparation for the Grand Tribunal of 1228. Among issues for the regular Tribunal is the selection of representatives and items for the agenda for Grand Tribunal. Grand Tribunal itself is unlikely to deal with matters of the Wind, Wave, and Ice saga. If anything, Murion wants to keep the Rhine ahead and others out. And with Heorot's origin in Novgorod and subsequent move, she may even claim Scandinavia is under Rhine's control and argue that the ongoing activities prove they are serious about the matter. Representatives from Novgorod may voice their opinions about this and about Heorot.

As with the years following Tribunal of 1221, there are a myriad of variables, but a number of issues seem likely to appear on the agenda. These are listed below in no particular priority.

- Status of Oculus Septentrionalis. Ideally their warehouses receive a steady stream of material, have a ready fleet, and their coffers are full. They are ready to mobilize quickly in the face of a crisis. Discussions are likely about whether this is enough, if it is really necessary, and when to use the resources for the next step.
- Decisions about the Mercere Portal. Either Durenmar prevails or Fengheld steps up their powerplay. But it is recommended to have a portal built rather than keep drawing the matter out.
- Rules against piracy. Arguments can be made that Waddensee's piracy damages the preparatory efforts for war. Daria la Gris wants a policy outlawing Waddensee's activities. If not, then supply ships may be protected by Apple gild magi, leading to future local skirmishes between magi. And this does not further the move made for the North.
- Hornbeam's discoveries. Magi from the Initiative are bound to have made discoveries, and in line with their

philosophy they share knowledge, tactics, tools, and lab texts with their sodales, to be better prepared for what is to come.

- Future policy. Depending on what has been found in Scandinavia, the Tribunal may need to decide on a course of action. It is recommended that at least something of interest has been found by one or more groups at this time. If local traditions are negligible, they can be ignored or ousted during colonization. If they are of significance, should the Rhine pursue the diplomatic or the martial route? And should Nordic magic be investigated and integrated, or eliminated?

The End?

And what then; how and when do things end? This author admits he has never seen a saga run a full course, they always fizzle out before coming to a real end. Depending on which of the countless possible outcomes are relevant to individual sagas, a Wind, Wave, and Ice saga should achieve closure. The truth about the possible Order of Odin and Scandinavian Rune Wizards should be discovered. If war is the case, it should be resolved with victory or truce — defeat does not sound like a desirable end. If diplomatic solutions are relevant, the Order of Hermes forges ties with a possible ally or rival Order, or simply assimilates the traditions. If the Hornbeam Initiative plays a decisive role, it may become a full fledged gild in its own right during the proces.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my gaming group for exploring the ideas in Wind, Wave, and Ice in our current Rhine saga. Special thanks goes to Rasmus, the player of Titus of Flambeau, for inventing the whole concept of the Hornbeam Initiative.



The Siege of Bedford

By Cathelineau

Introduction

This article is a scenario, so it is to be reserved for the eyes of a Storyguide. If you do not intend to run this adventure for your troupe, you should stop reading.

This adventure is designed for a small group of adventurers. It takes place in England during the summer of 1224. It is a time of great turmoil in England. King Henry is a young man unable to hold the reins of his kingdom. The great officers fight against each other, reviving resentment and rivalries which go back to the death of Prince Jean, more than fifteen years earlier.

It is based on the historic siege of the Bedford fortress, which is a turning point in the history of the Plantagenets kings, the end of the last eddies of the war of the barons. The presence of one or two Magi is highly recommended. That said, particularly talented or creative companions can still succeed.

The Quest

What are we doing here ?

There may be several reasons for an alliance to get mixed up to the English civil war. Remember that to intervene in mundane affairs is strictly forbidden by the Order of Hermes. Below you will find some ideas to involve your group of players. Depending on your saga, choose from the suggestions below the one that suits yours best (you can, of course, imagine another).

- A fairy being who is on good terms with the covenant sends them a message thanks to an enchanted animal. She is in anguish because there is no news of Lady Reanna, an old friend of hers. Lady Reanna turns out to live in England, in the Bedford area. For this variant, the fairy has already met the player characters; pick one they ran into before or invent one (a powerful local fairy maid, a hunter lord of the savage woods, an old elf scholar).
- A long-dead maga, and a friend of a parens, left in Bedford, hidden in the library of the castle, a work of great value. Julbeth de Bonisagus was a whimsical woman, known to conceal her discoveries, making sure that they were only transmitted to the most deserving. From what we know of her book, Julbeth's masterpiece, *The Forgotten Arcane*, is from the very hand of the deceased magician, and would contain the basis for a Hermetic Breakthrough of the very first importance. What maga would not be tempted by this?

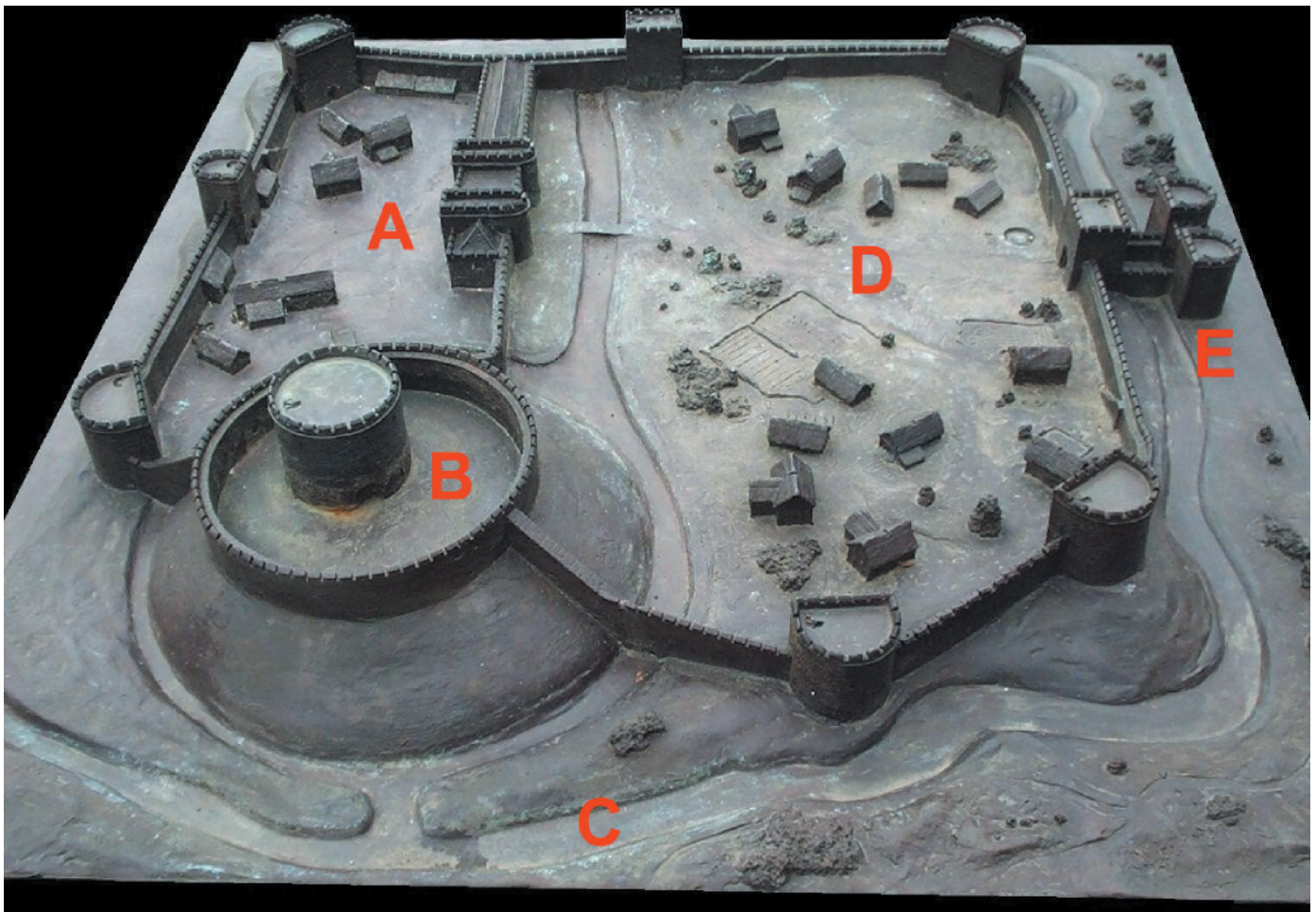
- Bedford may or may not be an ancient Roman site. However, the magi have heard rumors about an ancient mercurial sanctuary, whose erection dates back to the time of the Roman occupation of the island of Britain. The former occult temple would be concealed beneath the foundations of the Bedford fortress. If they want to discover the truth, they must do so quickly, because the battle that takes place there will destroy forever what may still be hidden there.
- A knighted friend of the covenant is bound by oath of allegiance, either to King Henry or Falkes de Bréauté. He asks for the assistance of the magi because he particularly fears for the life of his overlord. The magi might wish to help this overlord, but the greater fear is that their knight friend loses his life in this story. They will have to make sure he survives. For that variant, be sure to include in the story a baron that the magi have already met in previous years.

Historical sequence of events

The following is a summary of the historic course of Bedford's siege. If the players roll a good score on their travel tests and they did not linger on the way, you can get them to arrive, as quickly as possible, between August 1 and August 9, which leaves them enough time to think about and develop action plans. If they have lost time, they will reach Bedford between 10 and 14 August, in the final phase of the siege, and they will have to improvise in the middle of a regular battle.

- The siege starts on 15 June. The King's army is supplied with arms and ammunition by orders sent to all the provinces. Henry III has more than 3,000 fighters. He encircles the castle of Bedford, held by a garrison of about 300 men. At this moment Falkes de Bréauté is trying to gain political power in London, certain that his main fortress can stand a full year.
- During the following two months, about 200 attacking men are killed. Casualties among the defenders are minimal. Assaults are launched every week, but the defenders stand firm and Henry III prefers, at first, to weaken and starve the besieged. But the patience of the young king (and his counsellors) diminishes day by day.
- August 12th in the morning — the day of the assault which, succeeding in conquering the walls of the





A – inner bailey; B – keep; C – moat, fed by the River Great Ouse; D – outer bailey; E – gatehouse

gatehouse, allows the soldiers of the king to invest the outer bailey and its outbuildings, oven, stables, and warehouses.

- On the morning of the 13th of August, the outer bailey falls at the price of heavy losses; the king orders a new assault, which enables him to seize the inner bailey. The besieged warriors (150 footmen, 30 knights) take refuge in the keep, refusing to surrender. They resist so well that they capture ten prisoners.

- August 14 in the morning. One of the walls of the keep collapses thanks to the efforts of undermining. A fire is put into the keep at the hour of vespers, from which the women who occupy it are allowed to escape.

- The next day, August 15, after a night breathing smoke, the last defenders (60 footmen and 20 knights) surrender. All are hanged, with the exception of two knights who have the idea of vowing to join the order of the Templars.

- After the siege, Henry III demands (through the mouth of Hubert de Burgh) that the castle of Bedford be destroyed to the foundations.

- Three days later, a letter from the Pope arrives to ask the King to immediately cease hostilities against his

Christian vassal, far too late to save the lives of the besieged.

Travelling to the site

There are not many boats that are ready to cross the English Channel. The kingdoms of France and England have cold, not to say frosty, relations. Their warships will board any boat, suspecting it of espionage or piracy. Only smugglers will agree to accept unknown passengers (or those with the Gift), after charging a high price of course. It may be safer to take a more neutral Breton merchant vessel, or a Hanseatic coach enjoying relative immunity, and which anchors from Bruges, Amsterdam or Bremen.

Of course, if the covenant is established in Great Britain, the magi do not need to take a boat. They will simply walk or ride to Bedford. Remember that a standard group of travellers may only cross 20-30km per day – a mounted group of grogs should go as fast as 40-50km per day, should the weather be mild and the terrain clear (and both would be surprising in Great Britain). From a south coast harbour like Weymouth or Dover, the ride is about 250km.

As England is in great turmoil, it is an ideal opportunity for the Storyguide to tell the disadvantages and horrors of the war. Villages are regularly burnt by troops of looters. The communities live in terror, and even the abbeys are not reassured. The lords spy and fight from one region to another. Trade is going badly. It is probable that the magi of the Stonehenge Tribunal are particularly affected; they will emerge from their covenants less often than before, preferring to hide themselves in the hope of better days.

The magi may hear some tales about recent activities

in the English kingdom, but all that is told is not truthful: the nearer you get to Great Britain, the more important is the news. One of the characters may roll a Com + Folk Ken (peasants) + Stress die or Com + Intrigue (rumours) + Stress die and simply consult the following table (there is no difficulty rank). Allow a first attempt overseas, another on arrival in England, and a last attempt during the crossing of the country.

Local Redcaps may sort between real information and false rumors. It is still necessary to find a Redcap (Per + Organization Lore:Stonehenge Tribunal

Score	Rumours overseas	At the harbour / aboard a ship	Rumours crossing Great Britain
0-3	England lives in dark hours. The principal ministers of the crown are only waiting for an opportunity to seize new lands. (True)	The King of Scotland, who married a sister of the young King of England, rallied his troops to help his brother-in-law. It's only a matter of time before he arrives in England — but maybe he wants to conquer rather than help. (False)	Epidemics of plague occurred in the villages looted. It is said that all of Northumbria is decimated. (False)
4-6	Falkes of Brétauté sent a few envoys to Rome, in order to obtain papal support. (True) The young king Henry has been excommunicated, for Christians must not make war on brothers in faith. (False)	The young king struggles to assert himself between two main strong figures of his regime: the high justicar Hubert de Burgh, and the hero of the war of the barons, Falkes de Bréauté. (True)	The king is under the control of the archbishop of York, an ambitious and faithless man who owes his office only to his talent for intrigue. He is a dangerous intriguer who will lead the country to its ruin. (False)
7-9	Meanwhile, King Louis of France reinforces his hold on the lands his father Philip Augustus wrung from the kings of England. (True)	The civil war devastates the kingdom. London has burnt to ashes. (False)	Hubert de Burgh is the leader of the king's army and the main ruler of England. Most of the lords bow to him. Falkes de Bréauté is his ultimate rival. (True)
10+	The Anglo-Saxon rebels concluded a pact with King Louis of France, who has not forgotten his ambitions on English soil. He would like to reign on both sides of the Channel, and has already sent an armed contingent to Dover under the orders of a worthy knight. (False)	Falkes de Bréauté tried to capture the king during the winter. He was dispossessed of all his castles, but still holds the capital. (True)	The king mobilized all the forces of the kingdom to set an example with the castle of Bedford. His army will not raise the camp. He has sworn that there will not be one stone left. (True)





(members) + Stress die vs. 6) and get their help. England is still infested with Hedge wizards and showing a sigil will not necessarily be enough to gain respect (Com + Code of Hermes (politics) + Stress die vs. 9).



The Town of Bedford

When players' characters approach the Bedford area, read the following:



As you get closer to Bedford, you feel the wind of war blowing: plumes of smoke rise here and there, to your left and to your right, as you descend the last hills. An army lives on the country; it probably sacks the fields it can not plunder.



The local villagers look terrified, refusing to speak or fleeing your sight. The few hamlets on the road are deserted, as if abandoned. You cross several columns of peasants a little farther on. Soldiers wearing red and gold livery force them to carry sacks of grain, water and wine bottles, wood, or tanned skins.



The soldiers clearly are King's servants (Per + Area Lore: England (politics) + Stress die vs. 3).



Bedford is an open market town without walls. A few miles away you can admire the mighty fortress of Bedford, one of the most powerful castles in England. Despite its broken battlements, it still proudly stands planted on the banks of the Great Ouse river.



Between the village and the castle, you immediately notice an accumulation of simple tents protected by a palisade; some of these tents, packed near the village, are really large pavilions, with red and gold fabrics, topped by banners showing a golden lion rampant. This undoubtedly is the royal camp.



The town lives in a state of permanent war. Suspicious pikemen question all travelers at the entrance to the main street. The inhabitants are rather gloomy and conceal their sadness at seeing their chatelaine being so cruelly locked up. Even the merchants, whose products are requisitioned, complain. War, robbery, rape, and acts of fornication delight the local demons (the Dominion aura has dropped to 2).



former soldier, he settled in Bedford with money from looting after the war of 1217. He married a girl of the country and established his business. His establishment is filled with soldiers and knights whose tents have been destroyed or burnt. None of them pay for their stay. The innkeeper is therefore rather embittered. He laments all day long, worrying about the future of his tavern. He has several waitresses and valets at his service (including his children), but the food supplies have decreased greatly, and he has begun to run out of beer. He no longer knows which saint to devote himself to.

Abrahms of York is a Jewish trader specialized in embroidery exchange. His merchandise has been taken by the king's men, and he comes every day to protest loudly in front of the tents of the army — to no avail. He is accompanied by a caravan of merchants from his community, whose goods have also been stolen, but who are less brave than he. Abrahms does not want to give up being compensated. It is probable that King Henry was not even informed of this story -- the Jews and all their possessions are supposed to be the personal property of the king, and if he heard of that theft, he might consider himself despoiled. In the group of Jewish caravaners, Rabbi Ruben has theoretical knowledge in supernatural sciences, which could help him to unmask the potential magi.

Meshibial is a minor demon, an inspirer of jealousy, which strives to make the situation worse. It urges the peasants to recriminate against the bourgeois of the town, the bourgeois to envy the nobles, and the knights to covet the possessions of the locals. Most often, it hovers in the cellar of a small house on the outskirts of the city, a modest thatched cottage whose occupants have lost faith since long before its arrival. It has probably made a bargain with the young servant of the family, Annalyse, who secretly wishes to take the place of her mistress in the conjugal bed. Meshibial is in the middle of a dilemma: should it abandon its games with the locals and take advantage of the arrival of the royal army to torment more fortunate people?

The Royal Camp

The military camp encircles the castle on three sides: north, west and east (the south is crossed by the Great Ouse river. On the south side, there are only a few scouts, a detachment of pikemen, and two mangonels). The royal tents are located at a respectful distance, in the north, where the characters should quickly arrive if they follow the road. The camp is surrounded by palisades and overlooked by a few watchtowers. The siege engines send stones to shatter against the walls and towers of Bedford's fortress.

Townfolk

Master Boris is the tavernier of the main inn (The Morning Rooster). He is a man of about forty years, somewhat overweight and with thinning hair. As a

The army is still large (still 2,000 commoners, 200 knights, nearly 300 crossbowmen, 5 engineers for each of the 6 mangonels, and 10 men for the powerful trebuchet), with a big train (200 Squires + 50 servants of the palace court) and numerous civil auxiliaries (at least 50 valets, 20 cooks, 20 carpenters, 10 monks, nearly 200 prostitutes, beggars and other fortune tellers, not counting donkeys, mules, and 250 horses). All in all, it represents about 3,000 men and women: enough mouths to cause famine in the whole barony.

The royal camp (local Divine aura of 3) is the closest to the town. The royal tent is shadowed by two powerful three-story siege towers, which will throw stones over the ramparts if they are brought closer. For the time being, they serve as a point of observation. A trebuchet stands a few meters away; it's a massive, powerful, impressive war engine.

Many assaults have been launched on the walls, but they have always been pushed back. The king's troops have nearly two hundred dead in the last six weeks, and among the fighters still standing, many are wounded; morale is rather low. This is why Hubert de Burgh advocates a rapid final assault fast, betting that the defenders are also exhausted. The assault will be given when the undermining tunnel that was started from the west camp collapses walls near the high court. The entrance of the mine is guarded by ferocious pikemen obeying Sir de Burgh's orders. They may kill any trespasser. The tunnel is going more or less right toward the west walls of Bedford castle. They are lit by smoky torches. With the typical rain of England's country, the tunnel is packed with mud.

From the surrounding area, caravans of workers bring back blocks of stone for the siege engines, lumberjacks bring wood for the barricades and to repair the ram. Most of the raw materials and goods aren't paid for by the army. The surrounding trees have all been cut. In addition, sheriffs simply take food, drink, or deliveries of sheets, draperies, and wine for the king.

A Typical Assault

At dawn, the mangonels (2 at each front) continuously bombard the ramparts north, west or east. The trebuchet hits anywhere with its incredible range. The siege towers that frame the royal tent do not participate in the combat, unless it is the decisive assault. During the last hours of the morning, the armies advance, attacking the ramparts with ladders. In the royal camp, men prepare or repair a powerful ram covered with soaked skins, which can be used during a secondary attack directed towards the barbican. The process is repeated every two or three days.

The Royal Camp

The camp is full of soldiers, servants, and squires. The numerous knights all have different coats of arms; we can distinguish the Norman lords from the Saxon barons. The first are arrogant, speak French, and wear heavy armor and bear high quality weapons (mostly two-handed swords). The latter, suspicious and revengeful, put on coats of mail and caps of fur, express themselves in a rustic Anglo-Saxon, and more often wield an axe.

However, they are all faithful servants of the crown; de Burgh chose them because of their allegiance, and they put their differences aside. All spend their days supervising the next assaults, discussing the course of the war with each other, or crossing swords in the surrounding wastelands. Some of them participate in the king's hunts when the one is organized.

Many tents may hide goods of great value: robes, garments, jewels, chests full of gold (or, more often, silver) coins. Some of the noblemen travel with their more precious properties, like an elegant horse, a silk habit, of sword in Damascus steel, or an iconic painting presenting a beloved saint. Of course each baron, count, or duke has a ton of well-paid guards and servants (you may use a Grog or a Companion profile for them).

Remember the soldiers speak Anglo-Saxon, the knights prefer French, and scholars knows Latin. By visiting the military camp, the characters have several options to investigate, interrogate, or explore. You will find here a few, but the Storyguide may follow any idea from the players:

- Request an Interview with the King (Com + Etiquette (royal) + Stress die vs. 3, +3 if no good reason, +3 per Gifted character, +3 per Blatant Gifted character). Botch: the newcomers are suspected of being spies of Sir Falkes de Bréauté.
- Cross the River (Sta + Swimming (rivers) + Stress die vs. 6, +3 by night, +3 if tried in front of the barricades or walls as the sentinels shoot arrows at you). Failure: you are spotted too early to reach the middle of the Great Ouse river, and you have to turn back before being turned into a pincushion. If the alert has been given and some characters have already passed, they will be in very bad trouble. Botch: an arrow hits you for +5 damage. You are driven to shore, where your companions may try to help you.
- Pass the Barricades (Dex + Stealth (infiltrate) + Stress die vs. 6, +6 by day). Botch: you are spotted by one of the camps. Expect a rain of arrows.
- Sabotage the Siege Engines (Dex + Guile (talkative) +





Stress die vs. 9, or Com + Legerdemain (sleight of hand) + Stress die vs. 6, +3 if no one distracts the guards, +3 if the machines are in action). Botch: the attempt is discovered and guards try to capture the perpetrator!



To travel across the lines will not be easy, as you can see. But if the players have some experience in *Ars Magica*, they may find some innovative means to pass the king's army. This is especially true if the players include one or two inventive magi (there is no doubt an Auram or Imaginem specialist would have one or two tricks to abuse the guards).



But the centre of the camp may not be easy to distract. Duping the royal guard may be hard, thanks to the Divine aura spread by the many monks and Church servants. Don't forget the many saints relics held by the knights, the priests, and the king himself (he bears a ring with bone fragments from Saint George). Of course the place is full of more mundane impediments (war dogs, hordes of warriors, plenty of spies, observers, and robbers). If the characters manage to enter the royal pavilion, read the following:



When you enter this vast tent, you cannot restrain a look of surprise. Until now, the camp seemed to you muddy, dirty, and soaked by the rain. The contrast with the luxury that reigns here is all the more striking. The ground, covered with straw, is decorated with thick carpets or bear furs. Several chairs arranged here and there, near large oak chests, constitute the essential part of the furniture. Many people here watch you with suspicion: knights, whose tunics bear their coat of arms, put their gauntlets on the pommel of their swords. Counselors and tonsured priests mumble prayers in a corner of the tent. Women dressed in silk outfits and with elegantly styled hair turn towards you, their looks full of curiosity. At the center of this refined world, Henry III, the young king of England, is immediately recognizable.



Outstanding characters



King Henry III

King Henry, who was passing through the region, wished to witness with his own eyes the fall of Bedford, which he intended to use to send a message to the other recalcitrant barons. Yet he still hesitates about the decision to be taken, should the castle's inhabitants surrender.



One can find him in the royal tent talking with his advisers, including Hubert de Burgh, who does not leave him alone, or in the northern part of the camp, near his tent, climbing to the

summit of one of the two siege towers, or admiring the big trebuchet in action. He can also take some free time to ride around the surroundings under solid escort, at the request of his young sister, lady Isabel, who is very bored; or, he may enjoy a good time with a courtesan of his suite, in which case no one should disturb the lovers!

Pre	+1	Com	+1	Int	+1	Per	+1
Str	0	Sta	+1	Dex	0	Qik	0

Looks: with all the weight of his seventeen years, the very young king of England is already a strong and well-built man; he might pass for handsome, if his left eyelid wasn't drooping. He sits down on a fur chair, in his clothes sewn with gold, embroidered with the majestic lion of the Plantagenets. (Per + Folk Ken vs. 6: He has drooping shoulders and a hesitant look, betraying how he feels overwhelmed by the weight of his crown)

Motives: his tumultuous past still marks him. He seeks to restore royal authority, but he needs a lot of help. That is why he follows the advice of his justiciar by attacking directly the possessions of Falkes de Bréauté, a man who made himself a legend in the kingdom. Very emotional, Henry also has great empathy and is easily persuaded, yet he is also aware of the duties of a king and will do everything to give back to England its glory of yesteryear.

Background: son of King John Lackland, he inherited a torn kingdom. Even in his minority, he had to promise to respect the Magna Carta, fight the rebels of Wales, and prevent the King of France from seizing the throne of England, and renounce any claim to the Duchy of Normandy. Since then, he has been trying to reunite the English island.

Hubert de Burgh, High-Justiciar

Pre	+1	Com	+1	Int	+1	Per	+1
Str	0	Sta	+1	Dex	0	Qik	0
						Might	10

Looks: Hubert is a mature man of about fifty with a face marked by several scars: sparse white hair frames his forehead. Despite the look of an old soldier, he is rather intimidating with a shady gaze, straight nose, and grave air. He wears several daggers in his belt and carries a long two-handed sword. (Int + Intrigue vs. 6: he conceals a thick coat of mail under a long tunic; several guards and knights of the court follow the least of his orders)

Motives: He has great influence on the young king, whom he used and abused to oust his rivals and remain the only strong man in charge of the power in England. He allies himself with Archbishop Langton, who was in the pay of Prince Louis during the War of the Barons. His objective is to destroy Falkes of Breauté, his main rival.

Background: a former regent of England during Henry's minority, he has remained the king's favorite advisor. He was briefly a jailer in Rouen, guarding Arthur, brother of the current duchess Alix of Brittany (Arthur drowned in the Seine). Because he defended the Poitou, Hubert spent 10 years in captivity in France before escaping. He remained loyal to Henry III during the War of the Barons of 1216-1217, and is his sole current regent (the two others recently died).

Simon Langton, Archbishop of York

Langton forced each English bishop to provide a servant for every inch of their strongholds, and raised a special tax on church property for the sole purpose to help finance the siege. He hopes that such an expense will not be wasted. That is why he keeps a scrupulous account of the events each day. He will refuse any request for mercy from the besieged, but will be obliged to spare any knights who ask to become Templars (historically only a few did).

Pre	-1	Com	+3	Int	+2	Per	0
Str	0	Sta	+1	Dex	0	Qik	-1

Looks: looking in his mid-forties, the paunchy archbishop wears the robes of his office and never gives up his crook, which he leans upon to walk. His hair is white, his forehead wrinkled, and his face haughty. He expects the respect due to his prestigious office, which makes him one of the pillars of the kingdom.

Motives: Simon Langton is the primary papal representative in England. He fights to defend the Church's interests. But his own personal privileges are important too. He serves the king as long as this serves his personal interests. He may immediately excommunicate any man who dares oppose him – as he did Bedford's defenders.

Background: Simon is the brother of Stephen, the previous archbishop of Canterbury, who opposed late king John Lackland. Simon was elected bishop of York, then disposed by papal maneuvering. Both brothers fought on the French side during the War of the Barons. The excommunicated Simon went to Rome and was pardoned. Now he tries to make Henry forget the past. Simon Langton might or might not be accompanied by Brother Gonzaga de Morella, a tonsured Dominican monk of forty years, a model of piety and morality; Gonzague has the virtue True Faith and is particularly suspicious towards people who are out of the ordinary. He is determined to root out heresies and sorcerers from the people of God.

Isabel, Princess of England

Pre	+3	Com	0	Int	+2	Per	0
Str	0	Sta	-2	Dex	+1	Qik	+1

Looks: a ten year old young girl, sister of the king. She wears a rather simple dress for her noble position. She has few pieces of jewellery. (Per + Folk Ken vs. 9: she hates her brother's advisors. This child is already a talented speaker and she probably will be a pretty lady in a few years. Her belt is decorated with refined Welsh symbols.)

Motives: she wants to stay in the royal court, doing nothing and enjoying her life. She supports the council members when they work for the king's prestige, but she fights them when they tell her about marriage of convenience. Her 11-year-old sister married the Scottish king, and her 9-year-old sister married Sir de Burgh's son last April.

Background: as she doesn't accept the idea of an arranged marriage, Isabel called her half-sister Joanna (the 30-year-old princess of Gwyned) for help. Joanna gave her a fay belt. As long as she wears it, Isabel is assured to remain free and without an old husband. (How does it work? Does it ensure her fiancé dies?)

Should the player characters manage to speak to the king, they should try to change Henry's mind. Here are some ideas, but once again, let the players first have the opportunity to imagine their own possibilities:

- **Delay the Next Assault** (Int + Strategy (sieges) vs. 6, +6 if Hubert de Burgh is there, +3 if Simon Langton is there). Botch: the final assault is launched right away!
- **Negotiate with the Defenders** (Com + Etiquette (nobility) or Guile (talkative) vs. 9, +3 if Hubert de Burgh is there, +3 if Simon Langton is there). In case of success, the king allows the characters to speak with the defenders. Botch: the characters are arrested as Falkes de Bréauté's supporters.
- **Go Back to London and Let Sir De Burgh Besiege the Castle** (Pre + Artes Liberales (Logic) vs. 12). Botch: the King not only remains, but his determination to exterminate the rebels grows; he might order to shoot on sight anyone who wants to get out of the castle, including the women.





The Besieged Fortress

Bedford is one of the most powerful fortresses in the kingdom of England. Rebuilt a few decades ago, it has large enclosures and enough food to last at least a year. However, the last two months of siege have been tough, both for its walls and for its inhabitants. The towers are pockmarked with holes and impacts, the inner yard and the upper yard are strewn with large blocks of stone everywhere, while most interior buildings carry the stigma of fires.

The exterior enclosure of the castle borders an outer yard of a large area where several buildings with thatched roof are scattered. Some of the poultry and animals have already been killed by the projectiles, but there are still horses, pigs, and chickens. The barbican is a small fort that keeps the drawbridge. It and all the walls are flanked by towers in pitiful condition. This defensive system is reinforced by ditches except on the side of the Great Ouse.

Another enclosure separates the inner yard from the outer yard. On that side, the buildings (armory, granary, chapel) are also damaged. Only the keep, with its thick walls, seems intact (except for some traces of rock impacts). It is a tower about thirty meters in diameter and it dominates the whole square. It is composed of five floors, served by a single spiral staircase.

On the ground floor of the keep are the kitchens and the cellar. On the first floor, the armory and a dormitory occupy most of the space available. It is decorated with draperies bearing the coat of arms of the Bréauté family. On the second floor, the comfortable banqueting room, furnished with chairs, large tables and tapestries, reminds all that it is a stately home of importance. All the besieged eat there together.

If the player troupe reaches this level, read the following paragraph:

As soon as you enter the room, you immediately feel a general tension. The high ceiling is supported by thick pillars of massive stone and covered by soot; its blackness crushes the chamber. On your left, a monumental chimney and fireplace devours thick logs, throwing a threatening red light on the scene. The flames struggle against the shadows that creep into the recesses of the dining room, crawling between the chairs and the tables. Between two narrow windows, which scarcely allow you to perceive bands of the sky, a long vertical banner displays the haughty griffon of Bedford's lineage.

Housekeepers sweep the ground strewn with straw; they are thin and tired. Their gestures are jerky and nervous. Three maids see to the cups,

baskets, and bottles on the tables, keeping their heads down, trembling with a hardly contained fear. Two guards frame the entrance with their spears and cast you cautious glances.

An elderly woman with wrinkled skin, wearing a faded blue dress, paces the room, handing out her advice and instructions. She wears a white veil that hides her gray hair. She gives orders to the staff to prepare the next meal, but stops when you arrive.

This is Martha, the former nurse of the brothers William and Falkes de Bréauté, a woman of about fifty who has retained a certain influence over them. She is particularly sad since her own children died in the service of their brethren. However, she has no choice but to hide her grief with courage. She takes refuge in everyday tasks. She is (in a way) the governess of the castle's personnel and manages the problems, relations, and conflicts of the staff.

On the upper floors, several bedrooms (most of which have a locked door) offer comfort to the privileged few (knights and noble women). The turret over the summit is a remarkable observation post.

The main entry points are the gates of the barbican or the breach that was made in the west wall, but the doors cannot be opened from the outside, and the breach requires skill in Athletics (climbing) and Stealth (move) to be crossed. Defenders are tired but still sufficiently determined to forbid access to the castle.

At this stage of the siege, the fort is held by a maximum of 300 men (less if the characters have fallen behind) of all social classes (most of them peasants, some mercenaries, one chaplain, a few squires and knighted noblemen) and about 100 women (mostly peasant women, a few maidservants and ladies). The local Divine aura is level 3 (maybe 4 in the little chapel dedicated to Saint Egwin).

Outstanding Characters

William de Bréauté

William is everywhere at the same time, defending the ramparts, making an inventory of the equipment and reserves, supporting the soldiers, and repulsing the assailants himself. He only grants himself a few hours of sleep at the end of the night when his second, Sir John Dugan, takes over. Players may meet him inspecting the warehouses, refining defense plans in the armory, or near the doors during an assault, pushing back the ladders.

Pre	0	Com	0	Int	0	Per	-2
Str	+3	Sta	+1	Dex	+1	Qik	+2

Looks: a thirty-year-old man, this lord wears a brown beard and his long hair covers his large neck. Badly shaved, his face is tired from days of deprivation,; he does not seem at his best. (Int + Nobility Lore (politics) vs. 6: He tries to hide his fatigue to urge his men to stand firm. William will never surrender. His courage inspires respect amongst his knights. They will probably follow him to the death.)

Motives: William, as a landless knight, occupied Bedford Castle when an officer of the king came to ask him to return the keys to its former owner, Sir de Longchamp (who was a traitor during the War of the Barons). William refused to betray his lord; he did not desert the fortress and incarcerated the king's messenger.

Background: the de Bréauté brothers come from a Norman family of minor nobility. William's elder brother, Falkes, has remained faithful to the crown at all times, and has won brilliant victories both against the French who landed in England in 1216-1217, and against the English barons and Welsh princes years later. Becoming a prominent lord, Falkes drew the fierce hatred of many advisors to the king, all eager to seize his baronies.

Captain John Dugan

Dugan, captain of the stronghold, is not a good tactician, but he fights like a devil until noon, then drags civilians into the yard for maneuvers or weapon handling, in anticipation of an imminent breach in the walls. He replaces his master William whenever he has to. If the characters don't meet William, they surely will meet the good John. The soldiers know him very well and would fight to the death at his side.

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

Looks: this vigorous man, in his thirties, never separates himself from his two swords. With his neglected appearance – badly shaved, always casual clothes — one might take him for a vulgar mercenary, if he did not wear a signet ring. (Per + Folk Ken vs. 6: he is extremely protective of Lady Reanna and worries about her, whether she is present or not. He is infatuated with her.)

Motives: John Dugan is the captain of Bedford's guard, a man whose duty has been at odds since he recently fell in love with Lady Reanna. The trust that his master has placed in him honors and obliges him. For now, he feels obliged to pay his debt to his lord. He would like to protect his love, but what would become of the garrison

should he desert? There is no perfect remedy. Hopefully he will find one before the last assault.

Background: he was born in 1202 in a poor peasant family and was noticed by Sir Falkes while he was trying to steal bread. Taken under his protection, John was trained in combat, then became a true knight (although he has no proper fiefdom) in 1219.

Margaret of Bedford

Margaret, wife of the famous Falkes de Bréauté, stays in the main room of the keep, on the first floor. Here she serves as mediator for the conflicts and disputes that erupt in this enclosed place. After two months, everyone is on their last nerves, but she retains a calm that forces respect. She has a refined upper-story bedroom where she and her husband had good moments (when that beloved husband wasn't planning to become the most powerful man in the kingdom). She may be speaking with Wilfried of Xanthen, the German chaplain, who is also her confessor. Wilfried is around fifty; he hates acts of violence and prays every day for a happy ending.

Pre	0	Com	+1	Int	+3	Per	0
Str	0	Sta	0	Dex	0	Qik	+1

Looks: she is a woman about twenty-five years of age, with blue eyes and pale skin. She wears a fine woolen dress and leaves her abundant black hair flowing loose upon her shoulders. At her belt, a heavy bunch of keys and a collection of various utensils tinkle. (Per + Awareness vs. 6: a silver seal representing a griffin is worn on her right hand)

Motives: married very young to a first husband she adored, she wished like her husband to support the Magna Carta that gave the nobles' council more power. Once her husband died, she remarried with Falkes de Bréauté. She hopes to see her brother Richard help her by coming from London with her husband and an army, but she suspects that this hope is a fantasy, and she will plead for an honorable surrender if it can save some people.

Background: her first husband was killed during the War of the Barons at the Battle of Lincoln. Like her two younger sisters and her brother Mark (former hero of the Poitevine campaigns), she supports the effort to place the feudal lords above the crown. She has been residing for a few years at Bedford, the last big castle of her husband Falkes. Although theoretically dispossessed of these lands, she has reigned over them for the last few years (since 1220).





Lady Reanna

Lady Reanna “of Straffeld” (as she introduces herself) prowls the halls of the castle; it takes luck to stumble upon her (each time the characters move, roll a stress die: on a score of 12+ (9+ at night), they meet Lady Reanna — this may give them time to explore the place). She asks many questions but gives evasive answers when asked about herself. She merely explains that she came to hide at Bedford because she feared the tumult of the war (which is only a half lie). If her questioners are insisting, she tells her story of being a Northumbrian refugee, but she is unable to cite details on this region even though it is close, which will betray her.

In reality, she is a fairy, a powerful supernatural creature, but she is disturbed by the conflict – to the point she sought refuge in an inhabited castle. In case of extreme necessity, she will try to use the spells listed below.

Pre	+5	Com	0	Int	0	Per	-2
Str	-2	Sta	+4	Dex	-1	Qik	+2
Might	20						

Looks: maybe in her twenties, Lady Reanna is a frank and direct young woman who says what she thinks. She is rather small and has ashy brown hair. Her look is disturbing and she has a funny accent. (PER + Folk Ken vs. 9: she hides her true identity!)

Motives: in reality a local fairy, protector of life and spring, Lady Reanna took refuge in Bedford’s castle to avoid being molested by the king’s men. She will do everything to avoid bloodshed and fighting, both for herself and for others. She only wishes to be able to quietly return to the neighboring woods. Should she learn how they have been cut down, she probably would faint, become a fury, or die.

Background: she only recently arrived in Bedford. Local people don’t know her very well. Although no one hates her, she is too different to be truly and fully accepted. She claims to be from Northumbria. No one has questioned her presence here, for there are many other refugees from all parts of England, who are sympathetic to the rebellion, seeking refuge at Bedford.

Additional Advice

Other Characters

Don’t hesitate to flesh out places with more people than listed here. You may find some of the following ideas useful:

- A great inquisitor, Camillus of Tarenta, travels across the country with his large retinue. Behold, trespassers of the Christ’s will!
- Minions of the French king may spy the king Henry. One of them is Marie Tannier, a very pretty woman seducing poor Henry; de Burgh must be watching her conspicuously.

Charm	Might Cost	Effect
<i>Indolence of the Favoured Mortal</i>	1	Reanna winks or sends a kiss to a character within earshot. Whatever the next action he or she undertakes, he or she will have a -3 penalty.
<i>Blessing of the Wooden Touch</i>	2	Reanna touches a crafted item. It is transformed into a wooden thing with the same shape. No effect against living things or natural elements.
<i>Misty Damsel’s Masquerade</i>	10	<p>Reanna takes on the physical appearance of a character (human or animal) she has already seen and whose name she knows. The disguise also modifies her voice and her scent. She must improvise the behavior of her new identity, which can betray her.</p> <p>The copied person or animal finds himself instantly displaced to a Faerie regio filled with golden rabbits, songbirds, and one meter high field flowers. Here the charm’s target will wander some time before reappearing on the right bank of the Greater Ouse, a short distance from a recently cleared wood.</p> <p>Should Reanna find herself face to face with the person being copied, the enchantment instantly breaks.</p>

- Hedge wizards protect Bedford or defend the royal court from external influences. Consider Gwyydian, an old fashioned druid from Cornwall, Ralf Svenson, a Viking farseer, or the fearful Magdalena, a death-whisperer. The English sorcerers may have tricky ways to hide their powers, especially in a king's court.
- Lady Aelys of Wales is a proud and beautiful young countess, hidden behind the walls of Bedford's fortress. Former lover of a traitor, she is eager to forget her past and ready to literally do anything to obtain the king's pardon – even to become his mistress. She may betray Sir William or support a surrender.

It's a Trap

The characters may have been tricked into coming to Bedford by a jealous maga. One of her agents (a filius, grog, or friend) is wandering in the area, eager to tell her about the players' characters tribulations.

Tell Me More

The siege of Bedford is a big step in the process of transforming the kingdom of England into a modern state. There are many sources describing the siege, its causes, and consequences. Don't hesitate to describe the last hopes of the defenders, their last stand, and the harsh decisions sealing their destiny. It's the end of feudal rebellion in England. (Not necessarily good news).

You easily can find reconstructions of the fortress on the Internet. In particular, the article on Wikipedia presents a complete model of the castle's site (replicated below).





Tir Beornthryth, Bastion of the North

by Mark Baker



Overview

The Bastion of the North campaign is set in Cumbria in the year 1065, specifically in the Debateable Lands between and around the rivers Sark and Esk. Players are recently gauntleted magi who are interested in the local lands because of local ties or curiosity about the legendary treasure of Tir Beornthryth. The game will involve exploring the local lands, becoming involved in stories as the characters uncover unusual places or circumstances, finding clues about lost magical power and setting up a covenant in dangerous and chaotic times.

This is a good campaign setting for new players of Ars Magica as the nature of the setting and antagonists gives a focus for the game and the violent nature of the world allows players who are used to more combat in their roleplaying to experience some of that while being introduced to a more storytelling style system.

Storyguides will need to add adventures into their game to suit the story flaws of their players, and will also need to create statistics for the NPCs contained within this campaign (at least mentally) depending on the play style of the game. Storyguides may also need to create some general floorplans and statistics for the creatures in Tir Beornthryth.

Books Needed

This campaign is designed for *Ars Magica 5th Edition*. It is useful but not necessary to have the *Hedge Magic*, *Realms of Power: Magic* and *Realms of Power: Faerie* books, but relevant magic powers are given where possible.

History

The Schism was devastating for the Tribunals of Loch Legain and Stonehenge less for the destruction of life and property but also the destruction of memory. Those few who were alive during the Schism are uncertain about the part they played, how events came to pass, the order of how things occurred, or if they occurred at all. For magi of that generation, only confused and chaotic memories remain, many of which do not match their experience with the world as it is. Only the fireside

stories of hedge wizards mention anything of the leviathans waking from the deep under a cacophony of shrieking stars or the sun ripped from the sky and thrown into the land. Any remainder of those days has disappeared into the hidden places of the earth and are now best avoided by those who value their lives.

After the Schism, the only survivors in the Stonehenge Tribunal were a scant handful of Hermetic apprentices. While eventually those apprentices learned and prospered, Hermetic society in Britain is still small two generations later. Barely a dozen gauntleted magi claim membership in the Order of Hermes in the Stonehenge Tribunal, though factions of wizards with Hermetic powers are said to hide in the deep forests and hills, away from the eyes of the Order.

While Stonehenge grows slowly, the Tribunal of Loch Legain has gone silent. Emissaries from Stonehenge have found no trace of Hermetic magi, nor of any of the covenants referred to in the scant documents and fading memories of those times. Redcaps occasionally venture north to Carlyle and Edinburgh, but no evidence has been found of Hermetic magi in the north, though powerful hedge wizards form Orders of their own. Rumor has it some of them may even have the Parma Magica.

In early 1064 Albertus the Scrivener of House Bonisagus took a holiday from the politics of favour trading to revisit his adventuring youth. Opening a ruined passage in Cad Caedfal, the most prosperous of the Stonehenge covenants, Albertus came across something interesting; the working laboratory of some long forgotten mage. Albertus broke through the layers of wards and discovered a number of magical items and texts, but also intriguing hints into the forgotten history of the Order. In those notes, Albertus read of the powerful covenant of Tir Beornthryth, Bastion of the North, and how it had been cast from the Order. Reading the scraps of parchment that remained, Albertus felt long buried memories begin to stir along with a name: Arthbodu. Even as he mulled the matter over, Albertus overheard in gossip that the upcoming Tribunal would recognise the gauntlet of a few young magi. A burning curiosity turned into a budding plan...

Character Creation

The player characters are recently gauntleted magi who have a tie to the lands in Cumbria where the game is set. Perhaps they have mundane ties and are related to the local clans, or are from nearby. They could be driven to discover the lost magic of the Order or even be the gauntleted apprentice of Albertus the Scrivener, the old mage who may act as a mentor for the player characters.

Characters should pick the area they were raised in prior to their apprenticeship. If raised in the Cumbria or Cumberland areas, they are most likely to be Briton and speak Gaelic and English. If from Northumbria or the southern English kingdoms, they are likely to be Anglo-Saxon and speak English and Danish. If they are from Cumbria, which is suggested, having characters born into local clans is a good way to invest the characters in the mundane world.

The trade and diplomatic language of Scotland is Latin. The language of the nobility is Gaelic, and the most common language in Cumbria is English. Characters should be created with this in mind, but Hermetic Magi (with their knowledge of Latin) are able to communicate within Scottish lands if speaking with NPCs who deal with outsiders. Danish is another common language, especially for those who wish to trade with Ireland, the Isle of Man, or the Kingdom of the Isles.

Characters may not choose the Diedne Magic virtue.

House Rules

Copying: Summa or Tractatus that deal with magic in any way can only be written or copied by those who can use the same Abilities or Arts.

Combat: Each character may move up to ten meters on their turn and take an action on their initiative count each turn. Group Combat should not be used in this campaign. Leadership is not a skill in this campaign.

Social Skills: There are now only three skills, Charm, Guile and (new skill) Intimidation.

Laboratory Work: Characters may spend seasons on laboratory activities without needing a laboratory, though they need shelter from the elements. If using this option, their laboratory total is their (Magic Theory + Technique + Form + Aura)/ 2.

Languages: At Character creation, when taking a childhood package, gain another language at rank 4. Latin is a Living Language and may be studied freely by any character after character creation, but cannot be taken as part of a childhood package.

Exploration

An important difference in this saga is exploring. Players should be given a blank hex map to begin the game with which they can fill as they explore the countryside and encounter objects. Only the storyguide should have access to the full map from the beginning of the game.

Each hex represents 250 meters. It takes around 2.5 minutes to travel from one hex to the next. Difficult terrain may increase this time by double or more. Running, riding at speed or flying can decrease this time to one minute to move from one hex to another, though each minute spent so doing requires a fatigue roll.

Characters can see up to a kilometre or more in fair weather, but most areas are not flat; there are many hills, wetlands and light forests that block vision. Assume that characters can see into their own hex and the terrain of the next hex without trouble, and can see further if they move to higher points. At night characters can only see into their own hex, unless the moon is bright and there is little cloud cover whereupon they can see as per normal. There are enough hills, bushes, and long grasses that characters attempt to use stealth in most areas of the map.

In some hexes there are points of interest. Some are obvious and cannot be missed by walking into the hex or an adjacent hex. Some points of interest are subtle, meaning they must be found and are not automatically encountered. If the characters walk through the hex they may accidentally discover the point of interest with an Awareness roll set by the storyguide. If a point of interest is subtle, but characters have a clue as to the existence of something in the area, they may investigate the area. This takes around half an hour. This automatically succeeds in finding the encounter so long as characters are in the right hex when they begin to explore and there is nothing else stopping them from doing so.

It is possible to get lost by walking through areas that block line of sight to recognisable points of reference, like a town, notable hill or river. If it is possible to get lost, roll a Survival roll of EF 9 to reorient. If the characters succeed, the storyguide indicates they are not lost and indicates the hex they are in. If the characters fail the storyguide indicates the players should stop tracking hexes and track the characters movement themselves by describing relevant local features.





Encounters

Each time a group of characters enters a new hex roll a simple die. If the result is a 0, there is an encounter. Otherwise, there is no encounter. Roll on the following encounter table, then on the Complication Table if appropriate. Some encounters may create new points of interest for the map; for example rolling a 6 (Those who Pray) and 0 (Benevolent) may have the characters encounter a small shrine to a saint or Celtic spirit that is venerated by the locals. The creature, saint, or its cult may offer food and drink due to it being a special day, and will be there when the characters return. These encounters do not need to take up large amounts of game play but may be interesting to give breadth to the campaign. There are large areas of the map where storyguides can create more points of interest specific to the needs of their players; for example a character with the Heir story may have their clan lands within a specific hex that has nothing else within it, or even where a location already intersects.

The Encounter rules are designed to give assistance to storyguides to create appropriate encounters, not to throw large numbers of encounters at characters to slow them down. If characters are travelling quickly on a well-travelled route while already in a story then these rules may be dropped or modified. They may only have one random encounter, or one chance of a random

encounter every four hexes instead of each hex, or so on.

Note that the lands are not empty other than encounters. Assume that hexes near settlements will have farmers, peasants or slaves working in them in some respect, such as moving animals to new ground, picking berries, harvesting wood, transporting goods or any number of normal agricultural activities. That being said the lands themselves are relatively poor, so do not support large numbers of people.

Magical Encounter Table

The Magical Encounter Table may also use the Complication table, below. When considering which creatures to use, look over the hex map and note nearby magical beings. If rolling near the Giant Mound for instance and an encounter is generated consider having a hungry giant looking for food to bring back to its lair.

Complications

The Complication table is designed to give ideas for the storyguide for what the encounter involves or may have affected the encounter, and may create more ongoing stories or points of interest. Apply the complication to the encounter, roll again, pick, or discard entirely if desired.

Roll	Encounter
1	Magical Encounter. See Magical Encounter Table, Below.
2	NPC. The PC's encounter an NPCs who is moving around the map for reasons of their own. They may have others with them.
3	Animals. The PC's have an encounter with 1d10 local animals, such as a stray cow, a fine hawk, dog or cat.
4	Peasants and Slaves. The PC's have an encounter with a number of those who toil.
5	Traders and Merchants. The PC's come across merchants who may be willing to trade with them.
6	Clerics and Cultists. The PC's come across a collection of religiously affiliated people, such as a pilgrimage, hermit, or travelling clerics.
7	Warriors and Knights. The PC's come across a band of warriors who are pursuing their own business.
8	Lords and Ladies. The PC's encounter one of the ruling classes such as a clan chief and their retinue.
9	Bandits and Raiders. The PC's encounter a group of criminals such as bandits or thieves.)
10	Roll Twice (Two or more groups are encountering each other with the PC's as the third party, or a third party interrupts the PC's and a second party.)

Roll	Magical Encounter
1	Magical NPC. One of the magical NPC's from the campaign is encountered.
2-5	Magical Encounter. A magical creature is encountered, such as a monster, spirit, animal or object. The creature is pursuing its own goals, which may involve the characters in stories, or just be hungry.
6-8	Fairy Encounter. A fairy or group of fairies is encountered. Fairies may be trouping, such as moving on procession, or individual. In both circumstances they will try to drag the characters into stories.
9	Infernal – A demon or infernal creature is encountered upon its own business. Unless it has encountered the PC's before it may pretend to be a normal creature, or just torment the characters for its own amusement.
10	Divine – A holy person, angel or divine creature is encountered. While upon its own business it may consider how the characters could best serve it's divine plan.

Roll	Complication
1	Malevolent. The encounter is dangerous because they have decided to do violence or destruction to others and are willing to do it.
2	Angry. The encounter is angry and may need to be negotiated carefully or violence may ensue.
3	Grumpy/Depressed. The encounter is annoyed or upset.
4	Lovelorn. The character is pining and distracted.
5	Opinionated. The character is going to have their say and they'll say their piece.
6	Ambivalent. Character is entirely Ambivalent to the PCs.
7	Chatty. The character needs to talk.
8	Friendly. The encounter is open to conversation and free with information.
9	Goodwill. The encounter is in a good mood and will be helpful to the characters.
10	Benevolent. The encounter is in a very good mood and will go out of their way to be helpful to others.

Era and Tribunal Notes

Due to the small number of Order magi in Stonehenge (Including the PCs, less than 20) and the general breakdown of the Order of Hermes, the Code is interpreted loosely in this Tribunal and at this time. Magi are closer to the mundane world and interact regularly with mundanes, at least through associates. While only a few magi live as lords, most magi live with and interact with the communities they were born in, as much as the Gift allows them to, and most own land and resources legitimately within the community.

There are very few books available to magi other than those who write them, and the Roots and the

Branches have yet to be rediscovered or rewritten.

Only wealthy covenants and individuals possess any books at all, and even then it is rare to have many. The majority of magi study the Arts from vis, and a thriving vis trade takes place at Tribunal to assist with this. Magi seek to trade enough vis at Tribunal to allow them to study through the year, or travel to trade at other covenants.

The majority of magi are Anglo-Saxon, Welsh, or Briton, but there are some magi of Danish or Swedish descent from those Vikings who settled through the 9th and 10th centuries.





Pre-Schism, Cumbria would be the Loch Legean tribunal, but as no contact has been made with Loch Legean that matter is one which is yet to be a political issue. The setup for the games assumes the characters are within the Stonehenge Tribunal, but they can ignore this if they desire.



Money in the form of coins is practically unknown in the wild areas the characters are in, and not often accepted as legitimate barter. Characters should instead barter goods or animals. Vis has no price, as with the scarcity of books it is worth greatly more to magi.



The Order does not exist to police itself. It exists to allow for communication and trade between far flung covenants; there are no roving Guernicus seeking to uncover Hermetic crimes nor do magi tattle to Tribunal about their woes. If magi have scores to settle, they settle them personally, with Tribunal being an exciting market fair, chance to reunite with old acquaintances, give gifts, show hospitality and largess, rather than being a courtroom drama.



Major Plotlines

There are three storylines that will force the characters to respond, and storyguides should feel free to add others as characters adventure around. There are many more hooks for adventures scattered through the lands that may become major plotlines if the characters interact with them.



Tir Beornthryth

The first and major reason for being in the area. Characters are enticed with stories of a lost covenant with ancient power. They must first find the covenant, then unlock it by finding the four gateway stones. Only then can they explore the Thirteen Towers of Beornthryth and unlock the mysteries hidden within, but doing so is dangerous for any but the most prepared.



The Hedge Wizards of the Debateable Lands

The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte are a powerful coven of magicians that seek to control the magical world in Cumbria. Many of the magical resources of the area are known to and are claimed by them; they will investigate any lost vis harvests. Any obvious magic will bring the attention of the Sorcerers and the characters will need to deal with their schemes in some way. When the PC's encounter the Sorcerers, they may realise the Sorcerers are the descendants of Hermetic magi.



The Sorcerers have rivals in the Witches, but the witches are scattered and focused mainly on beneficent magic for the local people. The two groups dislike each

other but walk carefully; the Folk Witches are (more) liked than the Sorcerers by the mundane folk, but the sorcerers are vastly more powerful.

The Conquest

In 1066, William the Conqueror takes control of England. While his mundane forces are busy pacifying the local lands, the magical aid he brought with him causes the Stonehenge magi who survived the attack to head north, seeking protection from any who will give it to them. Dealing with a wave of refugee magi is difficult, but the attacks and counterattacks of the mundane forces will affect the PC's if they don't make any changes.

The Mundane World of the Debateable Lands

Cumbria is loosely controlled by Malcolm III, King of Scotland. The Debateable land (an anachronistic appellation for the area the campaign lies in) lies near the Solway Firth, between the Rivers Sark in the west and Esk and Liddle in the east. The Debateable Land is within the Scottish Lowlands and is generally mild hills and plains covered in grass, wooded land, and moors, as well as some dangerous wetlands known as mosses.

Most of the people of the area are Briton or Anglo-Saxon, though some Danish descendants remain from the earlier Viking age. The majority of the people are cattle and sheep herders who drive their herds to different pastures, though feudal land tenure in the English style is growing more common as land is being put aside for crops.

Buildings are, unless mentioned otherwise, made from wood, mud and thatch. They usually have a central firepit, and the roof at the centre of the hut is open to let smoke escape. There are no castles, though the occasional wooden fort or hall may be in use. Powerful clan chiefs have sturdy wooden fortifications, but most do not live permanently in any one location. The local people are excellent horsemen, and border ponies are small, tough, and able to negotiate the difficult wetland terrain.

Life in the Debateable Land is precarious and generations of attacks from every direction has established a culture of violence and revenge. The clans have no love for each other and even less love for people further away; stealing from others to provide for the family is lauded and admirable while living a starving, meek life is derided. Sometimes the clans band together to raid other clans, east into Northumbria, south into England, or north into Scotland, but clans raid whoever is nearest and has something to steal. Most

families split their herds or lands amongst all of the sons when the father dies, which means the sons are sometimes left in a position where they must raid to survive. The raid and counter-raid is such a constant battlefield in the Debateable Lands that no-one feels it is changeable or in any way bad. While the clans are thieves, they don't tend to go out to commit murder for its own sake; accidental killings between thieves and those who defend the herds happen, but are usually repaid with weregild, and if the weregild is not paid then the families might go to war with each other, challenge each other to duels, or mistreat the others until they can be forced to reconcile by a greater party.

There are three major clans in the area, with minor clans being allied to a point to the major clans. Clan members, herds, and farms can be anywhere on the map due to intermarriage. The three clans are the Armstrongs, Grahams, and Bells. Clan Graham is a strong and powerful clan with lands further north along the Esk River in Lothian and are descended from Danish settlers during the heyday of the Viking age. Clan Armstrong is related to the old Earl of Northumbria and is also descended from Danish settlers, but is now the most powerful clan in the Debateable lands. Clan Bell is descended from the native Breton clans and they live mainly in Cumberland to the south, with their most powerful and influential location being the nearby city of Carlisle. The clans are in a permanent state of wary aggression with each other and do not unite easily. The King of Scotland, Malcolm III, is more often in Cumberland to the south or raiding Northumbria during this time, though he may well ride through the area from time to time. Malcolm is not loved by any of the clans, but they do fear his wrath, and he is fair with splitting the rewards from raids. If Malcolm calls for raiders into the south or east, all of the clans may answer.

When dealing with the supernatural, the clans are practical. They believe that supernatural creatures await the unwary, that sorcerers steal souls, and that magic is dangerous. That being said, they also believe that wizards are a necessary evil to be able to hold back the dangerous supernatural world, and not having a witch or sorcerer with the clan is tantamount to suicide. The Clans also pray to saints and keep to pagan practices, gaining blessings from fairies or magic spirits whilst attending church and seeing themselves as Christian. They see no problem with this system of dual belief.

While clans raid for cattle and sheep first, they also regularly take slaves as mistresses, house slaves, and farm slaves. Slavery is common, with many slaves either being taken on raids or bought from Norse traders. Free servants are very rare and most slaves

are partially free but bound to certain agreements or how and where to live. Most people who are not of the local clans are going to be slaves taken from England, Scotland, or bought at markets from Ireland.

Rumours and Movement

It is important that the PC's are given hooks to explore the world as well as exploring the world themselves. Any time characters encounter anyone they may come across a rumour about local points of interest. As an example, having a drink at a tavern could give a rumour or hear a story from a local, or perhaps an NPC could be walking through town on their own business. These rumours do not need to point to locations, but might just serve as foreshadowing for later.

There should always be interesting rumours or things going on to keep the game moving.

Introductions

Read out the following boxed text to begin the game.

You are sitting at the place of honour at a great feast in the crumbling courtyard of Cad Caedfal. It is the Tribunal meeting, the one held every seven years where magi gather to trade, scheme, and socialize. All the magi of Stonehenge are here; one from each of the Houses. They sit on logs, stand, or lay with their cloaks underneath them as they relax and chat with each other. A great spit has two boars being turned slowly by a sweaty apprentice as another one keeps the meat tender by rubbing oil and salt onto the roasting flesh.

You have all passed the Gauntlet and sworn the Oath of Hermes before the Tribunal. You are ready to begin your life as a free mage, no longer a slave and apprentice to your masters. But what will you do? The thought is one that has come to you all over the last few years, but nothing has yet been set in stone.

As the main course is served with the meat on a trencher of bread, you take a swig of your ale and survey those around you.

Now is a good time to describe what the characters look like and describe how they are interacting with others.

After the food is eaten with cheer and conversation and a number of cups of ale and wine have been drunk, each of your masters stands up in turn.

In the Stonehenge Tribunal it is a long held tradition that the master will pass on an item as a gift to the student.





This item is one of great importance, as it is usually the item that was passed on to the master from their master, or used by the master for a great deal of time. For example, a favourite cloak, a good pair of boots, or an embroidered tunic are appropriate gifts. If the item has a lineage, its lineage is listed for the interest of the others at the feast, often with clapping and sighs as the stories of their owners took place. There is no shame in receiving a gift with no lineage, because it begins a new lineage, so long as it is something the master values. These are Arcane Connections to the master and the lineage and show the trust the master has in the apprentice. Apprentices can be insulted by getting a cheap trinket at the market, or worse, vis, which is a not-so-subtle hint they are lacking and need to make up for it. These items are not usually magical items, as this is indicating the new mage needs help rather than is trusted to do things on their own.

After the speeches are done and sweetmeats are brought around, the rest of the Tribunal happens without pause. Magi speak on the dangers of the Normans, and rumors that Order mages from the Continent are in discussions with Duke William prompts calls for magi to throw their support behind Harald Godwinson, a matter that brings angry words and recriminations from those Harald has wronged in the past. Even as the voices begin to raise, you are tapped on the shoulder by a greying, bearded magus in a brown robe. His hood is up, covering his head from the light drizzle of the evening. It is Albertus the Scrivener of Bonisagus, one of the oldest magi of the Tribunal. He beckons you away from the growing argument.

You follow him for less than a minute until you are outside the broken walls of Cad Caedfal. He moves slowly but surely, leaning heavily on his staff as he moves but breathing heavily. He is a very old and frail man now; it seems like there's less of him every day. The firelight of the feast is in the distance, and he waves an inkstained hand absently. A silver snake flickers from his fingers for a moment and turns into a small white flame that illuminates you all. 'Salve, sodales.' Albert bows to you, holding his long grey beard so it does not flop forward. 'I wanted to speak with you for a moment.' He carefully takes out a scroll from his pack. You can't make out much of it in the light from his hand, but you can see yellowing paper covered in faded script.

'I have here something interesting. Something that you might be interested in. But tell me, are you interested in returning to your covenants, to engage

in that?' he waves his hand at the feast, the yelling now growing louder, 'or finding something a bit exciting? I'm talking about a lost covenant filled with power. A land of danger and intrigue. Adventure!' He grins hopefully.

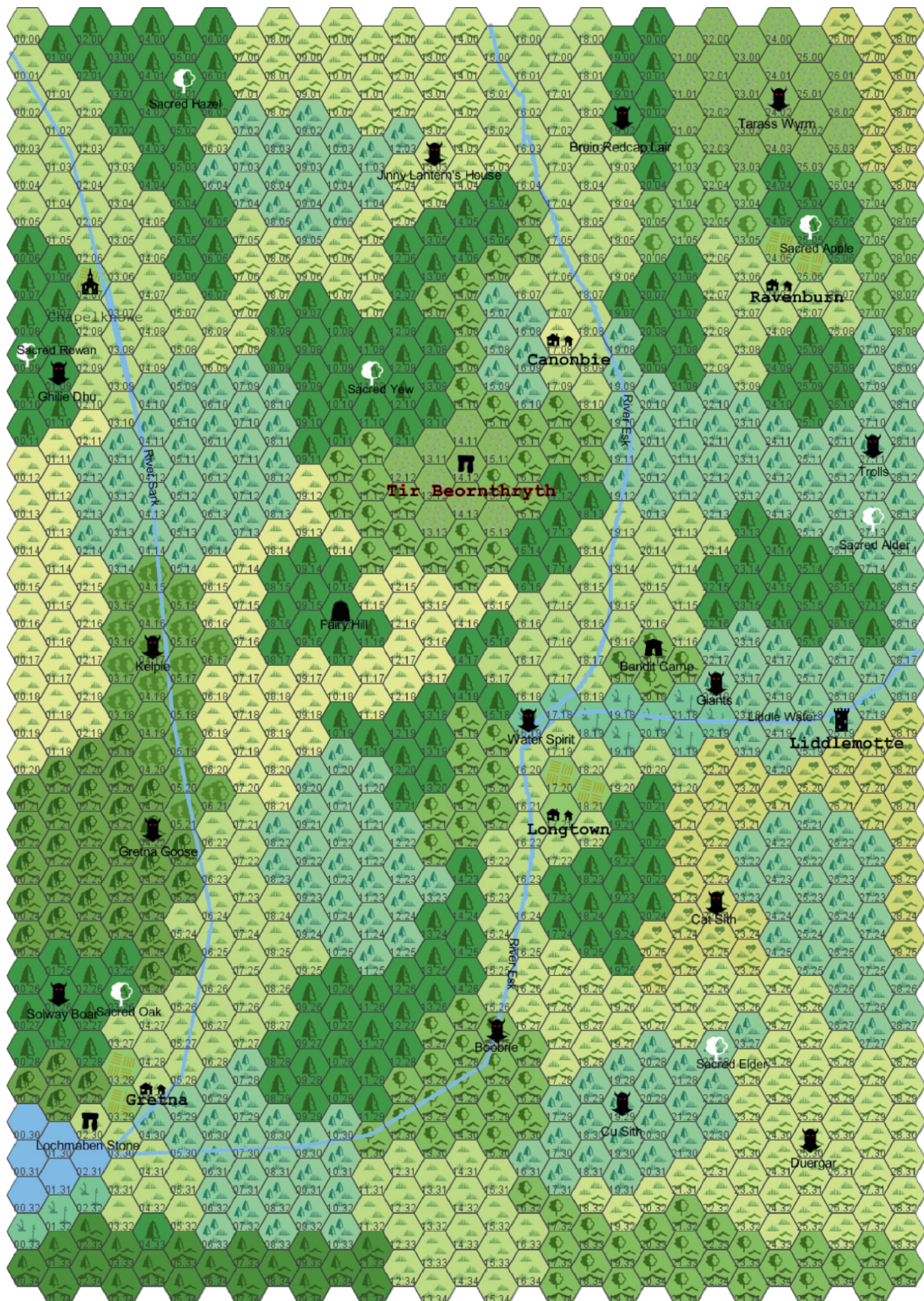
Albertus will tell them everything he knows except about his mysterious extra memories, trying to get them to join in. He wants to also be involved, as he's curious about the covenant lost in the Schism, but makes it clear he isn't going to be joining them on monster hunting or trap dodging; those years are a little behind him. He brings some resources with him in the form of vis, but he hopes to find the covenant and begin investigating it as soon as possible. He can teleport them all to a place nearby. He wants to leave at dawn tomorrow. He doesn't bring up the idea of forming an official covenant, but if it makes the PC's happy he will be an equal member so long as he gets to abstain as much as possible. If they agree, he will give them all 5 pawns of whatever vis they want and get them as drunk as possible.

If the characters agree, he will give them an old piece of glass which they can speak to him through, which they should use once they have found Tir Beornthryth or wish his advice. He will teleport them in the morning to hex 18.11, where the game begins.

Why Albertus?

Albertus is a useful character to assist new players to the game. He is the wise old mentor for those who need it, and otherwise he'll stay out of the way. If the players are new to the game and confounded by the options available, Albertus can give characters some ideas about what to do next without insisting they do anything.

If the players don't want an old mage as a mentor, they could come across the letter about Tir Beornthryth in another way instead, perhaps finding it on a drunken adventure through Cad Caedfal. Albertus is interested in Tir Beornthryth as his locked memories are there, so will be one of the surviving magi after the Harrying who begs asylum. Regardless, Albertus should not be used as a stick to force characters to do anything; even if the characters ignore Tir Beornthryth for their own matters, he will merely go about his business and assume the characters are doing what they want, and not fault them from it; he was young once, too.





Hex Key

Unless stated otherwise, the Debatable Lands area have a Magic Aura of 1. Characters with their names bolded have an entry in the Non Player Characters section indicating more about their powers and goals. Many of the vis sources indicated in the map below do not list an official amount of vis; this is dependent on your game. It is suggested that each source provides 1 – 4 pawns of vis every year, with the vis most desired by the characters being available.

05.01 – The Sacred Hazel

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

The Sacred Hazel is bushy, thick, and glowing with life. It is an Intellego vis source and a Tree of Virtue, so parts of the tree can be enriched to serve as magical items by those who know how.

If awakened, the spirit of the Hazel (Pleasant +5, Calculating +5) will want to re-unite the Council of Trees and work together with the humans who inhabit the land, hoping to find a place for all to work together. It may reward the characters for awakening the other trees.

19.02 – The Bruin Redcap Lair

Aura: Fairy 3

Location: Obvious (Broch) Subtle (Redcap Lair Underneath)

Description: The Bruin Redcap lair lies underneath the ruins of an ancient, crumbled hill fort. Underneath the broch, the Redcaps make their home, where they boil the blood of their victims and die their caps. The redcaps regularly leave their lair in the twilight to hunt for lone travellers or small groups. Redcaps can and do breed with humans when they don't feel like eating them, which is not a pleasant experience for the woman involved.

There are a number of redcaps equal to three times the amount of player characters in the game, and they are a regular hostile encounter until dealt with. Each year they can replenish their number by compelling a thief or murderer to boil their hat in another's blood, gaining immortality and fairy might. Their chief, Bruin, is dangerous, cunning, and old. If the truth can be compelled from him, he reveals that his clan were forced to swear a bargain to protect and hold the stone by a boy-wizard named Arthbodu, with the compensation that they can use the power of the stone for their own ends. The Tarrass Wyrms came and took the stone, ruining the broch above when it did. The redcaps knelt before the wyrms, and now any treasures

they find they must offer to it. If it does not want them, they may have them. The wyrms come to them to take what treasures it wishes on the longest night of the year.

24.02 – The Tarrass Wyrms

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Subtle

The Tarrass Wyrms live curled up in an ancient burial mound in the Tarrass Moss. The Wyrms tend to sleep curled up around the stone.

The Wyrms travel around the Moss, but rarely goes further unless it has good reason. Being intelligent, the wyrms want to increase its magical power by consuming vis and gain security by controlling the nearby creatures. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte leave a portion of their vis harvest for the wyrms each winter and the Redcaps serve the Wyrms when it bothers to use them for tasks.

On the longest night of the year, it visits the Redcaps; on the shortest night of the year, it goes to eat any poor traveller it can find. More than one brave clansman and knight have been devoured by the Tarrass Wyrms.

Adventure: The Stone of Travel, Korrigan Karv

One of the four Gateway stones is located in this hex. Korrigan Karv's stone lies horizontal within the barrow where the wyrms sleep, and it sleeps curled around the stone. Korrigan Karv is not happy at the dragon's lack of respect for it and its endless imprisonment in the stone (he can't leave the stone until he regains Might through sacrifice) and would appreciate being moved.

13.03 – Jinny Lantern's House

Aura: Fairy 3

Location: Subtle

Jinny Lantern lives in this misty area of the moors in a mud-and daub house. Nearby she has a small but beautiful herd of sheep and cattle as well as a garden plot. There is a vis source here; the animals are magical. The first calf born each year is pure white and grows to full size within a year. If its horns are cut off, the horns are worth 4 animal vis, and can be treated as items of virtue after being properly prepared.

Jinny Lantern is a fairy. While once she would pretend to be a sensual and attractive young lady and use her powers to charm men into the wetlands and mosses to drown, she is in the process of being changed by circumstances to be a somewhat more beneficent fairy, one who only kills men who have harmed women or little children. This change has been made by Rozenn the Witch of Ravenburn, who

understands Jinny's nature to a degree and has brought about the change by gradually having the stories about Jinny change. Regardless Jinny does not like men and will not deal with them.

With women, Jinny is more benign and can be bargained with. She is an adept healer and midwife, and children born with her aid gain the Fairy Blood minor virtue. She fears the Tarass Wyrms and avoids the Sorcerers of Liddlemottle, though she is on good terms with the Witches of the area. She is skilled with Magic Lore and is usually in the process of enriching a Herb of Virtue.

Adventure: Toil and Trouble

Jinny is curious about Felicia Half-Elven's plans, as the lesser fairies in the area have told her Felicia is always speaking with King Dalriada. Felicia has made overtures to her to see if they might be able to become allies, but Jinny is uncertain as she feels Felicia's plans might harm women. She wants characters to find out what Felicia's plans are in full. If Felicia's plans will harm common women, Jinny will recruit the characters to trap Felicia.

25.05 – The Sacred Apple

Aura: 2

Location: Obvious

This giant apple tree lies near the town of Ravenburn and is quite visible from the town. It is a Creo vis source and a Tree of Virtue. It is the favorite tree of Ravenburn and all of the villagers love and protect it. People even go there to pray to the tree to protect them and have a pagan belief the apple will shade them in the afterlife; perhaps it does. Rozenn the Witch uses its fruit for vis for her potions and can use her Magic Lore to enrich parts of the tree to gain more magical powers (See Ravenburn). It is a vis source unknown to the Sorcerers of Liddlemottle through failure of observation.

The Sacred Apple spirit, (Cheerful +3, Energetic +3) is easily excitable, and enthusiastic about life if it is awakened from its dormancy. It wants to explore, and would love the characters to guide it around the land some time.

02.07 – Chapelknowe

Aura: Divine 3 (4 at the Altar)

Location: Obvious

There is a small walled monastery of two dozen monks here. The buildings are made primarily of wood with a small, squat church made of stone at the centre. On the inside of the walls are platforms, and a regular rotation of monks watch the nearby fields just like soldiers on patrol.

On the surface, the monastery appears as it should be; the monks say regular prayers and put up those who wish to stay for a day before moving on. Being out of the way, it is seldom frequented by visitors. This is preferred by the monks, who try to shuffle on visitors as soon as possible. Those who inquire may realize the monks are not literate, speak plainly, and have little idea of theology.

The monks here are hiding a few secrets. The first secret is that they are heretical. Not only are the monks married, with women and children living at the monastery, they have little idea of how to be monks and no earthly authority allows them to be monks. They are not pretending for any dastardly purpose; the men do want to be monks, but have never been trained in any monastic or religious tradition. The actual monks of this chapel died of disease decades ago and Chapelknowe was abandoned. The monks who reside in Chapelknowe now are a small group of knights who fled the battle at Dunsinane in 1054. Fleeing the murderous forces, the group prayed fervently and were given a vision by St. Cuthbert of them and their families at Chapelknowe. The saint then protected the knights, who travelled invisibly to their homes, collected their families, and finally reached Chapelknowe where they rested and healed.

The knights swore to serve God for the remainder of their lives. The knights have adopted to being monks as best they can, but have not given up their vows of matrimony, assuming St. Cuthbert wished them to remain married. They are not stupid, however, and hide their wives and children when visitors stay.

The monks are not skilled craftsmen or farmers, so need to bargain for what they need. They often go to Gretna and Canonbie to trade.

The Abbott Cameron (Pious +3, Humble +1, Tolerant +3) is in charge here.

Adventure: Monastic Learning

The Abbott is anxious to learn how to read and write, to learn more prayers, to learn of the divine, and for his monks to learn also. He has a dilemma in that he can't easily ask other religious in case his story is reported to the Church. The Abbott fears that if the Church finds out his story, their Order will be expelled or even excommunicated for their heresy. If he can learn reading or writing from someone who can keep a secret, he would be indebted to them.

Adventure: This Apple Fell Far from the Tree

Callen (Ambitious +3, Angry +3), the first son of the Abbott, is now a young man. Callen did not understand the sudden change of lifestyle for his father and





believes he can use his skills to claim land and power for himself. The Abbott let the boy have his old weapons and armour and allowed to find his way, and Callen has not been seen since. A year later, a messenger came: Callen is now a hostage, and they are demanding three quarters of the herds to be delivered to them next summer; this is enough to impoverish the Monastery, perhaps causing the little children to perish.

Unknown to the Abbott, Callen has fallen into bad ways; he fell in with rogues and mercenaries, lost almost everything he owned, and is blackmailing his father to help pay off many debts. Callen and the bandits are in the Bandit Camp. Callen believes he should be the rightful lord of everything his father owns, and is infuriated that his father won't let him become Abbott unless Callen takes the cloth.

24.07 – Ravenburn

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Obvious

Ravenburn is a small hamlet of a dozen mud and thatch cottages, part of the Graeme clan. The villagers co-operate to farm oats and burn charcoal in the area. The headman of the village is Oanez (Genial +1, Even When He's Wrong He's Right +3), but his wife Rozenn is the real leader of the town. Rozenn is the head of the Witch coven in the local lands, and women travel from far around to speak with her, to gain her judgement, or ask for her to use her powers. Rozenn has a great knowledge of the local supernatural and political factions, and tends to use Items of Virtue and political savvy more than Folk Witch powers.

On a hill overlooking the village is a monolith known only as the Ravenburn stone. A megalith of many tons, it magically moves itself through the year to different hills nearby. The stone is a magic object and grants the Careful With (Ability) Virtue to those who venerate it correctly at certain times of year, which is a specifically worded request in Pictish. Rozenn has learned the prayer and uses it to grant blessings. The Ravenburn stone gathers a reddish moss which is Corpus vis and a Herb of Quality, and it is being harvested by the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte each Autumn.

Adventure: Kidnapped!

Rozenn is bitterly angry that the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte have claimed the local vis source of the Ravenburn stone. They come once a year in Autumn to claim the harvest, and Rozenn is powerless to stop them because one of the Sorcerers (Galan Erilich) has seduced her daughter, Yanna (Bored +2, OMG Boys!!?! +5), and gained an Arcane connection. Rozenn would

do anything to save her daughter. So far, the sorcerers have had the connection since the girl was 15, a summer ago. Rozenn refuses to speak against the sorcerers until her daughter is freed.

A large untapped seam of coal lies nearby. Due to eating from the Sacred Apple nearby, villagers from Ravenburn are often youthful looking, healthy, have many children and live long lives. Most villagers reach the age of 90 without complaint.

17.08 – Canonbie

Aura: Divine 2

Location: Obvious

Canonbie is a market town and the largest population centre in the Debatable Lands. When not a market day, it has a population of a few hundred people. On market days (Saturdays) it is the site of a major cattle and horse trading fair and is the biggest market in the Debateable Lands. All of the clans have a stake in Canonbie, but the Armstrongs have the largest population of locals here. Most of the huts and houses are made of wood and mud, but a few stone buildings also exist. On market days a Market Cross is erected, increasing the Divine aura to 3.

Every Saturday from late spring to early winter, the place fills with hundreds of merchants, tinkers, actors, musicians and farmers. The spring and summer markets are the largest, where up to a thousand people come to buy and sell horses and cattle, some travelling for days to get to Canonbie.

A new stone church is being built in Canonbie, but the process is slow because it is being built by the residents of the town in their free time. Investigating the church shows that much of the stones have been carried from Hadrian's Wall, but one of the low foundation stones is carved with images of bulls. Currently mass is held in the main open square in the town where people listen to the priests, but the noise of the cattle and horses tends to drown out the mass. Outside the town, an ancient Roman outpost is avoided by most of the local Clans, who believe it is protected by revenants.

The three clan leaders in the town are Bleiz Armstrong (Aggressive +2), Corwent Bell (Anxious +2) and Menguy Graham (Greedy +2). A small coven of witches also live here, loosely subservient to Rozenn in Ravenburn. The three witches attend to the town's magical needs, mainly to women and small children, but can be called upon for other services when necessary. The three witches are Aouregan Armstrong (Nosy +3), Briaca Bell (Shrewd +3) and Gael Graham (Patient +3).

The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte, most often Galan

Erilich, occasionally travel through Canonbie on business, but the witches do not approve of this and often speak ill of them to others. The witches remember old Mother Gera, a plain old woman who spoke out against the Sorcerers and mysteriously disappeared. While the witches have been told by Rozenn to leave the Sorcerers alone, they are still burning with resentment that they couldn't protect their own, and they want vengeance.

Canonbie is an excellent place for characters to meet people and share gossip, which could involve rumors of any of the adventures in the Debateable Lands. Meeting a friendly barkeep or family member who puts them up and feeds them for a while will go a long way to helping characters grow to like Canonbie.

Adventure: The Stone of Prosperity, Ffiniant Tarw

One of the Four Gateway Stones is located in Canonbie. The Stone of Ffiniant Tarw is being used as one of the foundation stones to build the new church. Taking the stone might annoy the local Christian population. (See Tir Beornthryth.)

Adventure: Remnants of the Mercurians

The old Roman camp (Magic Aura 3) that overlooks the valley retains some of the stone fortifications it once had, but most of the stones have been used for Canonbie. While the surface of the camp is empty, there is a loose stone bearing the image of Mercury that leads to a small underground temple. The temple is guarded by skeletons with animal heads in ancient and mouldering Roman armour who work together to drive off intruders, using their foul breath to inflict disease on any who come near. The guardians protect a vis source: an old statue of Hermes holding his staff low; during winter, the ice on the staff turns into 4 pawns of Vim vis. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte are interested in the site and have an agent in the town, Donnchadh (Greedy +3, Lazy +2), a fat blacksmith who is being paid an extra calf a year to keep an eye on things. He'll hear if the characters ask around about the ruins and pay an urchin to follow them.

Adventure: Witches, Witches

The three witches are at each other's throats; a complex web of attacks, thefts, and violence have severed any ties the witches once had. While all three admit Rozenn has the most power, they are all scheming to be top witch. Any of the three will admit to needing subtle aid to rub their rival's nose in their power. The only thing they agree on is that the Sorcerers are a threat to them all, but as the Sorcerers

are a rare sight the witches quickly fall back on old habits.

Adventure: The Tavern

Canonbie doesn't have too many inns, so most travellers camp in their tents near the town. One of the taverns has a huge amount of drink, so people are often kept awake by the revellers at the tavern. The innkeep, Harry, owns a keg once from Tir Beornthryth that produces unlimited quantities of ale. It's a regular question about where Harry gets his ale, as none of the local alewives sell anything near what he sells. The other tavern owners are willing to pay to find out what it is.

00.09 – The Sacred Rowan

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Subtle

The Sacred Rowan tree (Kind +3, Protective +5) is the largest rowan tree in the area and is covered in long healed cuts and carvings from the ancient druids. The tree spirit is dormant, but if awakened the spirit of the Rowan protects those who give it respect, and is kind and caring for those it comes across. It doesn't like to see people mistreat others, and always asks "Why are people so unkind?" It is both a vis source and a Tree of Virtue, and those skilful with natural magic can use parts of the tree for magical effects. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte know of this vis source.

01.09 – Ghillie Dhu

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

The Ghillie Dhu is a kind-hearted magic human, a dark-haired dwarf clad in leaves and moss. The Ghillie Dhu keeps to the woods if at all possible, travelling in secret or at night to maintain the various Sacred Trees. The Ghillie Dhu was born with the task of protecting the Sacred Rowan and has great knowledge of the magic properties of the natural world as well, but is terribly shy of adults. The Ghillie Dhu rarely leaves the wood, but can be encountered in any of the forested areas in the map.

Adventure: Protector of Children

The Ghillie Dhu is very protective of small creatures such as cubs and children. It saw several children kidnapped and taken into the town of Gretna, where they are currently working as slaves. The Ghillie Dhu can take them back to their parents.





Adventure: Awakening the Council of Trees

The Ghillie Dhu may tell the characters that once the Sacred Trees were active in the world and travelled about on their business, helpful as advisors to mankind and gifting their fallen branches and fruits to mankind. But the old gods decreed that trees were servants to man, and there was a great battle. The gods won and sent the ancient trees to sleep, unable to protect their domain against men. The Ghillie Dhu tries to ensure the trees are looked after until they wake. It may be possible to awaken the great trees again with magic, where they will find each other and have a treemoot and decide their course of action. The Ghillie Dhu believes the trees will again protect man from the horrors of the world. The Ghillie Dhu can't give away the tree locations, but encourages the characters to look.

11.09 – The Sacred Yew

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

The Sacred Yew is the most ancient of all the sacred trees and bears scars of ancient use by the druids, though this one also has a number of protective wards carved into the tree as well, preventing any from touching it. The Yew is one of the few who has not been touched in centuries and it sits forgotten by man, though it does not forget the men who attacked it and its brethren with bronze. The tree is both a Perdo vis source and a Tree of Quality, so its parts may be used by those who can use such magic.

If the dormant spirit of the Yew (Poisonous +3, Scheming +5) is awakened, it is not friendly to humans or humankind, who in its view destroyed an ancient and better world. The yew has many powers to do with necromancy, as it has roots both in the lands of the living and the lands of the dead. While cautious about acting too soon, it will eventually use its powers to raise the dead and force them to murder the living so that the land can again grow naturally without the influence of humans ruining nature. The sorcerers of Liddlemotte know of this vis source.

27.11 – Trolls

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Subtle

Deep in the moors, hidden in a low lying, muddy cave covered in shrubs, are several trolls. These hideous green creatures love nothing more than to eat humans, but have developed a dangerous relationship with the Witches of Canonbie. The Witches have convinced the Trolls to allow them freedom of movement over the moors and to eat any of Liddlemotte who venture into

the moors; in return, the Folk Witches bring stillborn babes to the Trolls to eat.

14.12 – Tir Beornthryth

See the Bastion of the North section.

27.13 – The Sacred Alder

The Sacred Alder is a Tree of Virtue and an Auram vis source. It bears the scars of many who have harvested its sap over the years, and the Witches regularly harvest its fallen branches and enrich them to use their magic powers. The Alder has many powers over wind and water, and its branches are useful to divining. If awakened, the Alder (Balanced +3, Calm +4) Is the most patient voice on the Council of trees and the mediator amongst them.

10.16 – Fairy Hill

Aura: Fairy 5

Location: Subtle

Lying against a small conical hill, only visible by the light of the moon, is a stone door covered in glowing runes. The fairies inside leave their hill regularly to collect the gifts left for them (bowls of milk, sacrifices to the good folk, and so on) which is the only food the fairies can eat. The fairies of this fairy hill are under an ancient geasa to only use things that humans throw away, so they cannot farm or create anything, nor can they directly steal, but they can for example take a hammer that was thrown in anger even if the hammer had since been retrieved by the human.

On certain holidays (Beltane, the Solstices) the fairies all gather together to travel the lands that once were theirs. The fairy hill has flowers of another colour that are an Imaginem vis source.

The fairies inside are a mixture of strange beasts. Malformed trolls, beautiful elf ladies, huge black dogs, two headed goats, men with animal heads, all are led by King Dalriada, a proud king standing eight feet high and clad in fine regalia with two massive rams horns coming from his brows. The fairies travel through the air upon moonbeams.

Any characters who are polite and respectful to the fairies can learn that on these special nights the fairies once again rule the lands as they did millennia ago before they were bound into the Otherworld beneath the earth. If the characters are formal and respectful, they may be taken for a ride around the countryside for the night.

If the characters are too friendly, the fairies will try to take the characters into the Falling Lands underneath the earth. As soon as the characters pass the open

door, they are taken under the earth and into the shadowy Fallen Lands (Fairy Aura 10). Even solitary fairies from the Fairy Hill may entice characters in, because each human that goes in allows a fairy to escape.

The Fallen Lands is a place of ash, rot, and regret. Nothing living or good lives there, and many things other than the Fairy Court hide in the shadows. When King Dalriada lives there, illusions cover the Fallen Land, making it a place of peaceful autumn breezes and falling leaves, of ancient castles filled with feasting and merriment; these are all just illusions and the fairies live in the illusions until they can get something better. The few scraps taken from mortal lands provide vastly more nourishment for the fairies than any illusory land, so fairies in the Fallen Lands will fight and scheme over cups of old milk and ripped dresses, though King Dalriada often covers the human things in illusions befitting their worth; a wooden cup of milk might seem to be a crystal glass of finest wine, an old and ragged dress appear to be shimmering silk.

Unfortunately, when Dalriada sleeps, the glamour fades and everything returns to ashes and shadow; this is not helped by the fact that Dalriada bores easily, waking only when it is time to journey around the living world or if a human is within the Fallen Lands. Humans are returned to their living world unharmed if they are polite and respectful, though many years pass.

If a human ever agrees to live in the Fallen Lands, it frees one of the fairies of Fairy Hill forever.

If they are openly disrespectful to the fairies, the fairies will kill and eat them, often torturing them ruthlessly first.

The fairy hill has a number of flowers growing on it that change colour as people blink; this is a fairy vis source. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte know of this vis source.

Adventure: Don't Feed the Fairies

King Dalriada, or one of his fairies, can let the characters know how difficult life is for the fairies underneath the hill. They used to have enough to eat from the town of Canonbie, but find it hard to enter the town now and must make do with the farmers on the moors. If they can somehow convince the people of Canonbie to leave gifts for the fair folk again, King Dalriada promises his aid and protection so long as Canonbie continues leaving gifts for the fairies.

14.17 – Kelpie

A hidden tunnel under the river leads to a cave where the Kelpie sleeps when it is not riding around the lands

drowning and murdering innocents. The Kelpie is very rarely in its lair; it only returns here to add to its festering bone pile, and it only sleeps after its eaten. Ancient and mouldering sets of clothes and bones lie here from the kelpie's hundreds of years of evil.

There is a vis source here, unclaimed; the kelpie's bone pile is a corpus vis source.

Adventure: Seeking Peace

The ghost of one of the victims of the kelpie may want burying. The ghost may guide the characters to the Kelpie's lair, where they have many skeletons to sort, and the skeletons form a vis source. If they do so, the newly buried ghost forms a Mentem vis source for the characters, but the Kelpie may still need dealing with.

20.17 – Bandit Camp

Aura: Infernal 2

Location: Subtle

Led by Donald the Unbreakable, this is a chaotic camp of thirty part-time bandits, mercenaries, runaway slaves, and criminals with nowhere else to go. These ruffians live on the edge of starvation, begging from local villagers who give them food to go away, but they are disliked and unwanted so any attempt at a better life quickly ends up with these men and women returning to the camp. They have seen the giants moving about, but the giants have avoided them so far.

A demon of disease called Purulax lives here, tormenting everyone it can.

Adventure: Breaking a Broken Curse

Donald, the drunk knight who could be said to lead the band, attempted to mug Galfrid the Summoner, one of the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte. Galfrid made them run in magically compelled fear and now Donald and his men refuse to leave the camp. Donald still thinks the magic is effective, and might drunkenly stir himself if he can have the curse broken.

The bandits quiver in fear at night when they sometimes hear the heavy thuds of giants moving around.

22.18 – Giants

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

A few giants live amongst the stones here, frightened of mankind. They are simple creatures who speak their own language and are dangerous when roused or cornered, but normally live by herding a few sheep and cattle without anyone the wiser. They hide by magically pulling the earth over them like a blanket, and bury their



animals with them; they return the following night.

The magical sheep provide animal vis when shorn. This vis source is unknown.



16. 19 – The Washer at the Ford

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Obvious



This is the favoured location of the Bean Nighe, a Magic Human in the shape of an old woman washing clothes where two rivers meet. The woman is dressed in green, has one nostril, one tooth, one eye, and one breast.



Those who can sneak up on her to suckle at her breast gain the Death Prophecy major virtue, but also gain the Low Self-Confidence flaw as they see their death.

Those who fail at sneaking are strangled by the old woman.



Those who approach without trying sneak discover the woman falls out of sight behind long grass or a hill and disappears.



26.19 – The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Obvious



Liddlemotte is an unusual site in the Debateable Lands; it is a large, squat tower as wide as a house, made with unmortared stone. The tower reaches an incredible height of six stories and is capped with a wooden roof.



Around Liddlemotte is a small collection of houses, smiths, farms, animals, and generally enough staff to serve a covenant of magi.



For that is what Liddlemotte is; a covenant of magi, though not Magi sworn to the Order of Hermes. The wizards of Liddlemotte are the descendants of Hermetic Magi after the Schism. To the current Sorcerers of Liddlemotte, the Order of Hermes is a dangerous threat from the south, the bogeyman that their masters frightened them with as apprentices.



The Sorcerers believe that the Code of Hermes has proven to not work and the Order is a failed institution, and attempting to resurrect it is as foolish as trying to bring back the Mercurians. They feel that magi should not swear a code or form houses, and any large organisation of Magi is doomed by the Gift.



Magically, the Sorcerers are Hermetic Magi. They study magic, harvest vis sources, dominate supernatural creatures, and intrigue with mundane affairs to their own advantage. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte are not particularly friendly to each other, but band together against outsiders and will gather their forces to attack if they feel threatened. Everyone in the area knows of the Sorcerers and will warn the characters to avoid their wrath.



There are four Sorcerers in the tower: Galfrid the Summoner, Felicia Half-Elven, Galan Erilich, and Meilyra the Burned. Each Sorcerer has a plan which may be foiled or even assisted by the characters, and are generally known to the other Sorcerers who may like or dislike the others plans.

Adventure: The Stone of Wisdom: Braden Feasa

The Stone of Wisdom lies within the Broch on the bottom floor. See the chapter on Tir Beornthryth, Bastion of the North.

17.21 – Longtown

Aura: Fairy 1

Location: Obvious

Longtown is a large sheep market with a history of visits from the fair folk. The Bell clan are dominant here and drive large herds up from the south to sell here at Longtown, before farmers take the sheep further into Scotland. The good folk often come out at night in Longtown to harass those who do not give them respect, and more than one traveller or local has gone into a merchant's tent and come out in an entirely different country.

Longtown pays a steep tax of animals to the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte for protection against supernatural forces after a fairy raid captured a handful of people. (This was actually a deliberate attempt to force Longtown's hand, made possible by Felicia's ability to negotiate with King Dalriada). The agreement includes service from the Sorcerers as neutral parties among the clans, so Galan Erilich or one of the other Sorcerers are occasionally in attendance to be arbiters and judges for those who wish to consult them. This has been in place for almost six years. The elderly residents remember when Meilyra the Burned set fire to Grandmother Weanna, the old Witch who helped the town back in those days and spoke out against the sorcerers when they demanded tribute. The only Witch who remains in Longtown is Miss Tamara, a Gentle Gifted girl who does her best to help those who need help, but as the daughter of a slave, the Witches of Canonbie are too high status to deal with her and Rozenn has her own issues.

Adventure: The Missing Redcap

Pico the Traveller, a Stonehenge redcap, travelled from the south to explore the Loch Legain Tribunal and find any Magi of Hermes who remain. Pico came across the Sorcerers and revealed himself, opening discussions with the Order of Hermes, but was murdered by Meilyra the Burned. As this was only a few years ago, villagers

often tell the (false) tale of how a finely dressed visitor with a wondrous red hat was burned by Meilyra after he insulted her burned visage. His goods and possessions – those that were not burned – were split amongst the town, including his fine red hat.

Adventure: Caterwaul

Tim Toldrum, King O’Cats (See 22.24) is having a terrible time with the fairies of Longtown. All of the locals leave bowls of milk and other appropriate tribute for him and his magical cat kind, but the fairies keep stealing it and bringing it back to their fairy hill. He is forced by ancient oath to start haunting graveyards and summoning the dead unless he is given appropriate tribute. Villagers in the town are less than impressed with Tim and his family’s night time singing, and even less impressed with the revenants who are walking through town stealing bowls of milk and ghosts giving nightmares about the fate of those who kick cats.

04.22 – The Great Goose of Gretna

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

This area is the favoured grounds of a giant, magical grey goose (Protective +5, Friendly +3) that forages around the nearby woods and all along the river Sark, though it is more often found closer to Gretna. Its head stretching taller than a man, this creature watches over the waterfowl in the area and ensures nature is in balance. If enraged, this giant goose is a horrifying opponent, able to break a man’s spine with a single peck.

The goose has a human friend in Gretna, whom it feels protective over, so is quite often in or around Gretna, where it uses its powers to assist humans it likes and bless weddings.

Adventure: Goosefat

A hunting party is in the woods hunting the great, magical goose both for the glory catching such a creature brings and (the real reason) the magical fat its body would contain. The fat is an aphrodisiac, and Lord Oyvin is cursed with impotency and desperate for a son.

22.24 – Cat Sith Lair

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

Tim Toldrum, King o’Cats, makes his lair within an ancient burial mound with a dozen other Cat Sith. These magical cats have many abilities and travel all over on their errands and have a high level of knowledge – if skewed by their perspective – of the area. The cats have the power to control the dead, but

only do so if they feel the humans have wronged them in some way.

The lair of the Cat Sith produces animal vis in the form of shed hair.

Adventure: Appropriate Respect

The Cu Sith have repeatedly been “insolent” and attempted to come near the Cat Sith several times recently (See 19.29, Cu Sith) forcing the Cat Sith to flee. Tim Toldrum wants respect from the foul creatures: they must maintain their distance and he wishes the infernal beasts to know their place; i.e. under him. If the characters can deal with this villainous menace, Tim Toldrum might be bothered to give them a reward.

01. 26 – Solway Boar

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

The Solway Boar is a huge (Size +3) example of its type, but as simple as its mundane brethren. The Boar looks after its forest with a single-minded dedication, and as such the forest is untouched by the locals, who fear the Boar’s wrath. Many boar live within this forest. Each year the Solway Boar must die on the last day of winter so that spring may come; at the same moment a sow gives birth to a new Solway Boar which grows to full size within a few days. Interrupting the killing prevents Spring from coming until the Boar dies. Most often, a hunter kills the boar, but the hunter is not important; sometimes the hunter dies in the process.

The blood of the killing, if mixed with the birth fluids of the sow, form a Rego and Creo vis source. The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte are aware of the vis, but do not interfere with the process after Galan Erlich lost a dozen fighting men to the boar some years ago.

03.26 – The Sacred Oak

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

The Sacred Oak (Determined +3, Proud +3) is a vis source and tree of virtue. Unlike the other trees, it is not dormant; it is intelligent and can communicate with those nearby. It refuses to move, as it believes it is the Head of the Council of Sacred Trees and they must come to it. Being a tree, it is very patient in its demeanour. From time to time, humans who discover it are granted its blessings if they serve it and treat it with appropriate respect. It will send the characters as its messengers to the other trees to ensure they come to the council for, patient as the Oak is, its been over a thousand years since the last council and the Oak is getting a little antsy.



15.27 – Boobrie

Aura: Fairy 2

Location: Obvious

The Water Bull, or Boobrie, transforms itself into a handsome, strapping man on the edge of the river. This Boobrie pretends to have a minor injury and ask for help from any young (or not so young...) women, whom it will do its best to seduce. If the Boobrie seduces the woman, the child will have the Fairy Blood virtue. The Boobrie isn't that bright, and can be convinced to work for future promises of marriage (or just sex) and isn't naturally a violent creature. If the woman is smart and keeps the Boobrie working for a year and a day despite many trials and tribulations, it will propose marriage. If she accepts on the condition he never returns to the river, he makes an incredibly strong and faithful husband.

The Boobrie knows where Tir Beornthryth is, as it was once the servant of Melisana ex Merinita, but it fled its cage when the covenant burned and it needs to be queried to give up this information. Even then, it wishes to get married to a good woman before it tells anything. The Boobrie has a chain which was once used to bind it in the Tower of Merenita.

04.29 – Gretna

Aura: Magic 1

Location: Obvious

A small village, Gretna is filled with happily married couples. There is no church in Gretna, and all of the marriages are "anvil" marriages, performed by the blacksmith with the bride and groom both touching the blacksmith's anvil. Gretna has a large population of Clan Graham. The majority of agriculture in Gretna is cultivating rye and oats rather than herding.

The Goose uses its powers to ensure marriages made in Gretna maintain their loyalty to each other for a year. Most don't realize what the Goose is doing, but when thoughts of infidelity strike, the Goose uses its blessing again to increase loyalty. As such, many of the older couples in Gretna have a warping score for having ongoing magic cast upon them, though the warping is relatively subtle, just making the people of Gretna look like each other.

An old woman here, Jessica Graham (Calm +2, Helpful +3) rescued the Goose of Gretna from a hunting snare when she was young. Ever since, the town has grown used to the Goose visiting. If Jessica is ever threatened when the Goose is nearby, the threateners will have a giant, angry, killer goose after them. The Goose has also adopted all of Jessica's family and from time to time takes the children on faraway adventures.

Adventures: Driving off the Old Ways

A wandering priest, Father Erland (Zealot +5, Angry +3) is furious at the village's refusal to use his services by having anvil weddings rather than proper Christian weddings, and also for their kneeling before the Goose when they should kneel before the cross. When the characters visit Gretna, he is fuming at a distance as a new couple is getting married, he recognizes the characters as outsiders, and begins to rant. If the characters assist him, they may gain an ally with ties to the church, but at the risk of annoying the town of Gretna.

19.29 – Cu Sith

Aura: Magic 2

Location: Subtle

Located in a simple cave deep in the woods, the huge magic dogs known as the Cu Sith wander the countryside hunting and watching for their ancient foes, the fairies. The Cu Sith live with an ancient Geasa to keep the fairies of the fairy hill from returning to the lands of the living. If the Cu Sith see the fairies they will attempt to drive them back into the hill. Unfortunately, the Cu Sith encountered Felicia Half-Elven, who gained arcane connections from their lair and has cast spell of silence on them, preventing them from barking and therefore blocking their ability to drive fairies back into the hill. The Cu Sith are wary of the Cat Sith, and tried to communicate the issue to Tim Toldrum, a great magician, but he and the cats all ran away.

Adventure: More Bite than Bark

While terrifying combatants, the Cu Sith are not able to deal with armies of fairies without their bark. The Cu Sith cannot speak due to being silenced, but are intelligent, so if they notice the characters having magical powers or interacting with fairies they may act, either to request aid from the characters or possibly to attempt to stop them.

02.30 – Lochmaben Stone

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Obvious

This megalith is the historic place for the northern peoples to gather before they made raids into the south for slaves, animals, and treasure. The Stone has its own spirit; if properly appeased, it grants speed to those on a raid, but it is currently dormant. Historically, Beornthryth had contacted the stone, but did not wish to add it to the Four Gateway Stones due to it being so violent.



25.30 – Duergar

Aura: Fairy 3

Location: Obvious/Subtle

A great conical hill has a concealed entrance into the underground. During the day, the Duergar inside sleep, but at night smoke is seen rising from underneath the

stones, and the Duergar open the great stone that serves to block the entrance. The Duergar are fairy smiths who make items of power for those who meet their bargains. Felicia Half-Elven is aware of the Duergar, but has yet to use their services.

Timeline

The following timeline is for events as they would happen if the characters do not get involved in any of the matters in the Debateable Lands. This is likely to change as the players act.

Year	
1065	Summer: Transported to Canonbie.
1066	<p>Spring: Galfrid the Summoner compels Bradan Feasa to reveal that there are three other stones, and together they have great power, but Bradan does not know where they are. Galfrid begins his search for the four stones by advertising for those who know the lands, as well as hiring mercenaries to investigate unusual sites. These mercenaries will investigate rumours of strange folk also investigating odd sites. There are three groups of mercenaries, all three led by minor hedge mages.</p> <p>Autumn: Battle of Hastings. Duke William is aided by a collection of Normandy and Provençal magi. King Harold dies with only hedge magi for protection.</p> <p>Winter: Duke William crowned King of England. Invading Normandy magi begin harrying and attacking Stonehenge magi without declarations of Wizards War. Stonehenge Tribunal has been Marched in the Normandy Tribunal meeting of 1058. Pacification of southern Stonehenge magi begins, who flee to north England.</p>
1067	<p>Summer: Gailan Erilich summons the heads of the local clans together to gather for a raid. The raid is successful, but Gailan Erilich encounters a hostile invading mage and is forced to flee; the invading mage is uninterested in the raiders. At a meeting to divide the raid, Gailan is humiliated by the Witches of Canonbie for his cowardice. Gailan takes a light wound from the witches when they beat him.</p> <p>Autumn: Gailan has the Witches of Canonbie stripped naked and whipped for their lies after their head witch captures them with a sleeping potion.</p> <p>Winter: Meilyra the Burned gets drunk in Longtown and boasts about how she is going to kill evil wizards who would enslave them all.</p>
1068	<p>Spring: Meilyra the Burned attacks the coastal covenant of Cuthbert's Blessing on Durham's coast, killing the two magi inside. The attacks are presumed to be from Normandy magi striking up the coast. Felicia Half-Elven joins in the raid and takes the covenant staff as slaves and gives them to King Dalriada, freeing twenty fairy warriors who guard Liddlemotte.</p> <p>Summer: Galrid finds rumours of the stone of Prosperity and claims it, bringing it to Liddlemotte.</p>
1069	<p>Winter: Harrying of the North. Duke William and his Order magi begin destroying English rebels and magi in northern England. Small bands of English forces raid the Debateable Lands.</p> <p>Meilyra disappears south to kill all magi she can.</p>





Year	
1070	Summer: An invasion of southern Cumbria by Malcolm III. A counter invasion back into Cumbria by Gospatrick, William's vassal, and his Order magi begins to burn the Debateable Lands, putting everyone to the sword or enslaving them. Gailan Erilich attempts to unite the Sorcerers and local clans against Gospatrick, but they are outnumbered; the Sorcerers agree to Felicia Half-Elven's plan to free King Dalriada to assist them against Gospatrick.
	Malcolm begins a raid on Northumbria, to Gospatrick's estates on the coast, drawing Gospatrick away.
	Galfrid finds rumours of the Stone of the Otherlands and claims it, but is horribly injured in the process. He is recovering until 1070 Spring.
	Winter: Harrying of the North finishes.
	Meilyra returns with riches and vis, but is injured until 1071 Spring.
1071	Summer: Galfrid finds the Stone of Vision and discovers Tir Beornthryth.
1072	Spring: Galfrid opens Tir Beornthryth.
	William marches north. Malcolm III swears fealty to William at Abernathy.
	Summer: Stonehenge Tribunal

Tir Beornthryth, The Bastion of the North

History of the Bastion

The Covenant known as the Bastion of the North was formed during the Viking Age just after Pralix' defeat of Damhan-Allaidh. Originally seen as an impenetrable stronghold from which the Order could launch raids against the Danish rune wizards, the changing political climate and the growing threat of the Schism meant Tir Beornthryth was never used for its intended mission. Instead it became the most southern covenant in the Loch Legean Tribunal and a powerful symbol of the unity of the Order after the events of the founding of Ex Miscellanea.

Beornthryth ex Miscellanea was the founder of the Bastion and gathered thirteen magi of differing houses to work together for a common purpose. For generations the Bastion built its power with a strong policy of internal co-operation and friendship, growing and thriving until it was the single largest covenant in Britain, with up to forty magi living there at any one time.

The Bastion had such relative isolation, strength, and numbers that few could challenge it. When the Diedne were finally cast from the Order, the Bastion decided that the Order had betrayed its principles and withdrew from the world, claiming they alone held the principles of cooperation the Founders had striven for.

Thinking themselves safe in their regio, the magi of the Bastion still needed to send out magi to collect supplies, gather vis, and witness the fate of the world. Unfortunately, one of these Bastion groups was caught when harvesting a vis source. Bastion's defences were compromised, as they knew the door would open again soon and the mechanism of how the Bastion's regio worked was revealed.

Hearing of the stockpile of magical power, the Order launched a surprise attack against the Bastion. While the Order was driven off, the Bastion had been gravely wounded; several master magi had been killed, and the Order had slipped in two magi under complex disguises who pretended to be grogs. Calls to re-enter the world to gain revenge were loud; the Bastion had power and numbers the outside world did not. An ill-advised raid by the Bastion's most gifted combatants left and never returned, slaughtered by a cunning Order war party. Fearing for their safety, the Diedne faction proposed an alternative solution; a great ritual so powerful that, once performed, it would allow the Bastion to be unchallenged; from their stronghold they could again unite the Order in peace.

Feeling themselves pressed for time, the Bastion magi worked as quickly as they could to bring the great ritual to fruition. The Order waited for their spies to act. Realising the extent and horror of the ritual,

one of the spies escaped from the Bastion and returned to the Order, telling of the coming Cataclysm. The Order attacked as quickly as it could, but many of its members were busy elsewhere. The second spy opened the Bastion's defences, allowing the attacking forces to enter Tir Beornthryth.

Just as the Bastion's defences were opened, the magi inside began their ritual. A magical battle began between the equally desperate two sides. Obedient to his master, a Diedne apprentice known as Arthbodu removed the Four Gateway Stones of the Bastion to the outside world so those inside would be trapped, unable to escape. If the stones were outside, the gateway could not open from the inside, but if the ritual went as anticipated, the Order mages would be dealt with and he could reopen the regio. So, as the battle raged, Arthbodu moved the stones and hid them around the Debateable Lands, nervous of Order forces outside the Bastion. He was returning for the last Gateway Stone when the ritual was completed and the Cataclysm ripped through the Tribunal.

The Cataclysm, as it was called, rewrote and undid much of the destruction the Schism had caused. All gauntleted magi were affected by the ritual and were twisted mentally and physically to represent what they had done, becoming monstrous, maddened creatures filled with paranoia, rage and guilt. Only the apprentices remained, and they had their memories of the time altered to make a new world not repeat the old.

Albertus the Scrivener was one of those apprentices. Like many, he awoke after the cataclysm as if it were a normal day, sought out his master and found the destruction that had been wrought instead. What Albertus did not know is that his memories were entirely false; his mind had been rewritten. Once Arthbodu of Diedne, he became Albertus of Bonisagus. Like all Diedne apprentices, he believed himself to be a part of another house and had no reason to doubt this until he stumbled on an old parchment, one that triggered an ancient memory.

The Four Gateway Stones and Beornthryth Ex Miscellanea

Millennia ago, ancient shamans summoned great spirits and tethered them to huge stones, carving the stones to better house the spirit. These stones are old and contain magic that the ancient people could imagine: vision, wealth, prosperity, and health. They placed these stones in magical places and sacrificed to the stones, and the spirits that were tethered to the stones were pleased and grew in power.

As the tribes were Christianised, the sacrifice and worship of the stones gradually stopped. People began to prefer the safety and security of the Divine to the sublime power of Magic, and while never fully abandoned, the stones were gradually left alone, pushed over, or even destroyed. The power of the spirits waned; with no sacrifices, their legendary powers were few.

Beornthryth the Shaman (Later Stone-Speaker and Ex Miscellanea) had always been curious about the ancient magics of the Stones. In Cumbria (Strathclyde in those times) Beornthryth discovered five of these carved stones. As time went by, she learned to speak with the spirits of the stones and learned of their powers.

Beornthryth was interrupted by a sudden call to war by Damhan-Allaidh, a powerful sorcerer. Wishing to be left alone, Beornthryth sent her apologies. Damhan-Allaidh responded by sending a giant to smash one of her stones, threatening that if she did not come she would be next. Beornthryth joined Damhan-Allaidh and used her spirits to spy on the few Order magi who came to England. Beornthryth had barely been at war a week when she was captured by a Flambeau mage, Talwyn the Blade ex Flambeau. He treated her kindly and without the disgust most magi had for each other. After several months the two married and Beornthryth began fighting alongside Pralix.

When Damhan-Allaidh was defeated, Beornthryth returned to her stones with Talwyn, and much of the the politics of House Ex Miscellanea passed them by. Walking through the wilds near Beornthryth's home, Talwyn and Beornthryth discovered a regio, but could find no way of opening it. Speaking with the great deer spirit, Korrigan Karv, she found that opening or closing such a thing was possible, but required great power. Bringing her four remaining stones, she placed them facing the hill, and together they opened the doorway to what would become Tir Beornthryth. Then a small clearing surrounded by woods, the regio grew as more people came to inhabit it and cleared the forest nearby.

The four stones have a special power that Beornthryth has invested in them; together, and only together, they can open or close the regio to Tir Beornthryth. Each of the stones is a link to the spirit, and possessing a stone gives a permanent arcane connection to the spirit. The spirits can manifest at any time they wish if they have the power to do so. None of the stones have any power remaining to manifest when the game begins, but they are detectable by magic. Albertus can investigate the stones with magic to find out how to sacrifice vis to them.





Finding Tir Beornthryth

There are a few ways to find Tir Beornthryth. Jinny Lantern, Tom Tildrum, the Boobrie, and the head Witch Rozenn know of Tir Beornthryth, but most have no particular interest in the site; Tom Tildrum gathers vis there. None of them reveal the information for free, and they will want the characters to do something for them. Asking around the towns won't net much success.

The Gateway to Tir Beornthryth

Aura: Magic 3

Location: Subtle

In the wooded hills near Canonbie lies a large hill that rises sharply from the lands around it. On the west facing side of the hill there is a stone outcropping carved with an image of thirteen towers linked together by bridges and the carved outline of a doorway. Nearby are the remnants of old buildings, long abandoned, and a large space just before the great stone outcropping with a single carved monument on a plinth, which is Calon Haderyn, the Stone of Vision. Three empty plinths lie here, covered in moss.

There is a Vim vis source here of the sparkling dew that falls near the stones, gathered in winter.

A bronze sickle has been driven into the outcropping. It is an Item of Quality, and is Arthbodu's herb collecting sickle. Albertus mentions how often he had to cut herbs when he was an apprentice, but is confused; the memory is incomplete. He would like the sickle and stares at it curiously for a long time.

Albertus, if led here, will set up a laboratory in one of the old buildings to study the stone.

The Four Gateway Stones

Each of the stones is an Arcane connection to a spirit. The spirits can speak to those who touch the stones, and can also grant powers and virtues to those who touch the stones, but only if they have the Might to do so; they can only gain Might through appropriate sacrifices of vis, goods, or animals. Each needs a sacrifice of vis and a pure white animal of their kind to be able to open the gateway, but they will need ongoing sacrifices to be able to use their powers or close the gateway again. Sacrificing to a stone involves venerating it and burning the chosen sacrifice; the items must genuinely be a sacrifice. Creating an animal with magic and sacrificing it does not please the stones.

Calon Haderach, the Hawk Stone, the Stone of Vision

Calon, the Hawk of Vision (Observant +5, Curious +5) is a spirit of observation and judgement. It watches the

world and all things within it. While distant, it is curious about the things it watches. It is happy to allow the characters entry to the regio so long as they don't attempt to control or manipulate Calon's ability to view things when and where it wants.

Among other things, Calon Haderach can inform characters about the movements of people around the Debateable Lands. It doesn't know where other stones are, as they are hidden, but can tell them a general history of Beornthryth and what happens if they find the stones. Sacrifices it enjoys are any creatures that see well, such as most birds and humans, as well as Intelligo vis.

Ffiniant Tarw, The Bull Stone, the Stone of Prosperity

Ffiniant Tarw, The Bull of Prosperity (Overly Self Confident +5, Awww yeah, we gonna make some sweet sweet love tonight +5), is the spirit of growing wealth. Ffiniant is indebted to the characters if they retrieve his stone from the foundation of the church.

Ffiniant Tarw grants his blessing to the characters and becomes a standard income source; lost animals find their way to Tir Beornthryth and form a substantial herd, though characters will need to find farmworkers unless they want to do the farming themselves.

Ffiniant Tarw likes sacrifices of agricultural animals or goods: animals with a single colour, pure wool, or items made from animals. He also likes Creo and Rego vis.

Bradán Feasa, The Salmon Stone, The Stone of Wisdom

Bradán Feasa, The Salmon of Wisdom (Enigmatic Riddler +5, Storyteller +5) is grateful if the characters can rescue his stone from the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte, and enjoys passing on stories to those who wish to listen. Bradán Feasa can pass on the Common Sense virtue to those he believes need it.

Bradán likes sacrifices of wise or thoughtful things, like owls, salmon, and humans. He likes Muto and Intellego vis.

Korrigan Karv, The Deer Stone, The Stone of Travel

Korrigan Karv, the Deer of the Otherworld (Skittish +5, Traveller +5) is a spirit of the passages between worlds. In the past, it led heroes on great journeys through the realms, but it has been stuck in a wyrm's lair for centuries without the power to move. It is grateful if the characters can free it from the Wyrm.

Korrigan Karv can open regiones for characters and take them to different worlds, though it won't do so unless the characters desire or need to go to them.

Korrigan can also retrieve them if they are lost.

Korrigan likes sacrifices of wild creatures and interesting found things. He enjoys Muto and Rego vis.

The Covenant of Tir Beornthryth

The Map

Tir Beornthryth is laid out as a hex map, as it is able to be explored. Each hex represents around 20 meters, so moving through a hex takes around a minute; walking from one edge of the map to the other takes around ten minutes of determined walking. The map in its entirety should be given to the players immediately, as Tir Beornthryth is visible from the gateway.

The Regio

Tir Beornthryth's regio is interesting in that it is round but can be stretched. If they walk past the edge of the map, the characters will find themselves on the other edge of the map. However, if the woods are cut down, the mountain mined, or the land is otherwise tamed, more of the same appears; the regio always provides more wilderness. Originally a tiny clearing surrounded by woods, the regio has been stretched significantly by previous generations building and clearing in the area.

Boons: Aura x2, Hidden Resources x3, Regio (Major), Monsters (Major), Buildings x2

Hooks: Contested Resource x 2 (Sorcerers of Liddlemotte, Witches), Monster (Major), Rival (Minor), Unknown (Major), Monster (Minor)

Read the following boxed text for the players:

You walk through the open gateway and into Tir Beornthryth. You are standing on a slight rise overlooking a green meadow dotted with woods. Behind you, to the west, is a great hill, the open gateway leading back to the normal world. There is a gentle mist over the meadow and here and there you see the glimmer of rainbows. Around you are the remnants of an old wall, now crumbled, and there are four plinths before you identical to the plinths in the real world behind you, but these ones are empty. To the east you see the rubble of an abandoned village, the eastern half looking burned and melted other than a large wooden hall, and to the south east you see the houses and cottages turn to farmlands and pens, smoldering smoke coming from some small, damp fires. To the south is a large hall, and to the north some distance away you make out what might be a disused mine with warehouses and sleeping quarters. Once upon a time this valley must have

hosted a hundred or more people, with many professions. In the middle of the valley is a long riverbed, now dry, with a circular stone column and its stairway to the banks rising many meters in the air not far east from the ruined village. Dominating the meadow are the towers: some fanciful, others ugly, some perfect, and others ruined. All the towers you can see are linked by majestic marble walkways that arc gracefully through the air to meet at a door high up on each of the towers. Not all of the walkways are intact; some are now rubble and others barely hang on with broken segments holding them together. You see some of the walkway network is accessible from where you stand from the stone column above the riverbed.

No humans live here; no smoke drifts through chimneys, nor is there sound of laughter or voices. The grasses are thick and weeds choke the old farms. But you are not alone. A reddish glow and hideous, gibbering shrieks echo from the stone podium. And even as you walk through, you notice a pack of shrivelled, humanoid creatures before you threatening murder and torture unless they get all the gold. They are covered in wounds and sores. Whatever Tir Beornthryth is, it isn't empty.

Powerful monsters inhabit Tir Beornthryth. The monsters are all that remain of the warped magi and grogs who attacked Tir Beornthryth. All will need to be dealt with for the characters to have full control of Tir Beornthryth.

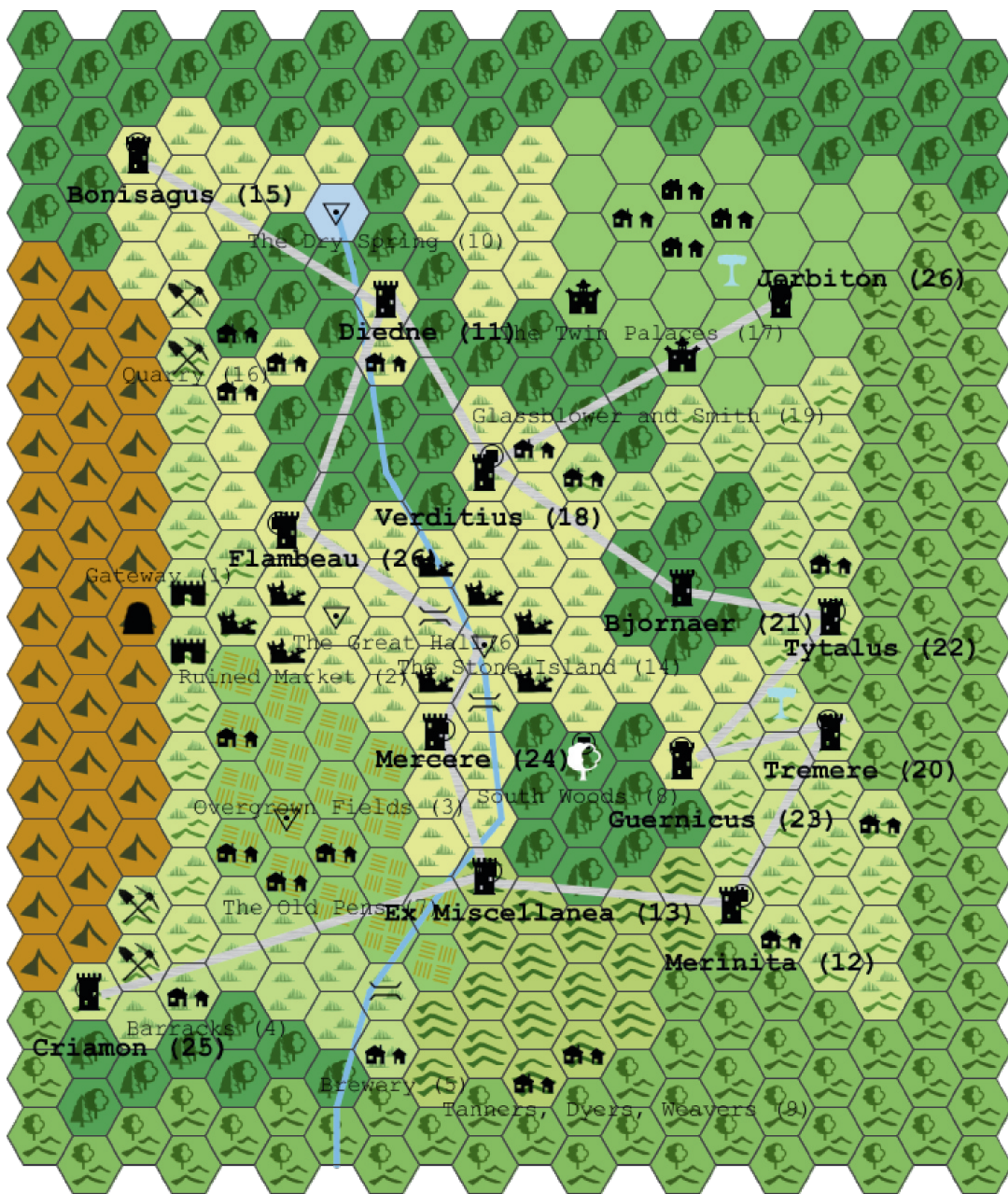
The buildings of the covenfolk and the farmworkers are made of stone quarried from the mountain and are solid, well-built residences in an older style. Until the characters clean any areas, there are skeletons here and there, but most have been taken to chew on by the monstrous creatures in the covenant.

It is important to note where all the monsters are, and how far they can see. Many of the creatures in Tir Beornthryth are intelligent but insane, so have no alliances with each other. While unlikely to work together, they can and will interact with the characters if they can see a reason to; they usually can.

Every creature in Tir Beornthryth except the characters is consumed with the ambition to rule it due to the effects of the Cataclysm.

Each of the areas should have a number of resources such as lab texts, tractates, vis, and magic items, but what they are needs to be created according to the requirements of the level of power of the campaign. Many of the items should be minor, such as





stoves that cook without fuel, magical lights, and so on: items that are useful to the covenfolk.

The walkways between the towers served more than one purpose. They allowed magi to travel and communicate quickly between one another's towers and the Stone Island, but also transferred water via the magic of the waterwheel on the stone pillar. If the

walkways are restored in their entirety (so the pool and the waterwheel are both fixed, as are the broken walkways) the towers linked to the walkway gain an aura of 6 from the mystical architecture, while the remainder of the meadow stays at 5. The entrance to each walkway has a stone tablet near the entrance with the symbols for each tower on it. When touched, a

ringing sound is heard in the tower so touched and the calling tower's symbol lights up. If the lit symbol is touched, the two towers can speak to each other as if standing next to each other, an illusion of the speaker's face appearing on the stone. The symbol for Tir Beornthryth can call all towers simultaneously, or call some towers and not others. The walkways are not inherently magical. Each of the walkways also has pipes for water to run between them, and a tap for hot and cold water.

Many of the areas of the map are not detailed. They are likely old cottages, originally built of wood, and are now in a state of disrepair. They may or may not have further encounters at the decision of the Storyguide. Once all of Tir Beornthryth is discovered, it will become apparent that Tir Beornthryth is a great covenant but it does lack an important resource: vis. Characters could lock themselves away in Tir Beornthryth and live happily but they will eventually run out of vis, forcing them back into the real world.

If Albertus is with the characters, he will only adventure in when the characters let him know it's safe; he's too old to be jumping around avoiding fireballs. Every location he reaches gives him a strong sense of nostalgia, and at the Storyguide's options he may have more memories. Once Tir Beornthryth is open, Albertus will reveal his full intentions to the PC's.

Locations in Tir Beornthryth

1. Gateway

The gateway into Tir Beornthryth opens into a courtyard surrounded by a crumbling wall. A large stone gatehouse lies in front of the gateway and two small towers once protected it, but the walls are in ruins and barely knee high. The remains of the towers block vision, and the old portcullis has been rent inward. Four great plinths lie in the courtyard, and the ruins of the walls contain elaborate carvings of the history of Tir Beornthryth – now lost.

Tir Beornthryth believed its control over the regio was enough to protect it, so the gateway and the towers were designed more to intimidate and inspire than to genuinely protect.

A number of shrivelled, wrinkled and grey creatures that were once human squabble over Roman denarii here. They are what remains of some of the camp followers who followed the Hermetic invaders into Tir Beornthryth, hoping to loot in the chaos. They are driven by greed and envy and will do anything to gather more wealth. They are surprised and shocked to see the gateway open and entirely unready to deal with any combat encounter. These creatures are weak and

pathetic to the point they are ignored by everything else in Tir Beornthryth. They speak in an ancient and debased Gaelic dialect.

2. Ruined Markets

This was once a paved, circular market dotted with buildings. Great pillars stand on the outside of a paved area that held a wooden roof. Inside the paved area are a number of stone buildings: the ones to the east horribly melted, others half-destroyed, all abandoned. Skeletons of the initial battle lie here and there. To the north of the market lies the broken stub of a circular tower, and through the open door fires can be seen still burning within.

Once, in peaceful times before the Schism, Tir Beornthryth existed as a Hermetic market and trade hub. People from all around would come to trade tomes and vis and make deals at the market of Tir Beornthryth, where anything could be procured for a price. The market fell into disuse during the Schism and was used as storage space instead.

Near the Burning Tower of Flambeau to the north are a few horribly warped dogs that sleep near the tower. They are skinny mongrels led by a vicious hound and are starving and opportunistic. They are all that remains of the mercenaries that survived the end of the Burning Tower. Due to their warping they should have some minor magical powers.

3. Overgrown Fields

These fields were once large enough to support large numbers of people, but are now choked with weeds and horribly overgrown. Some huts near the fields carry the remains of tools, and a large granary sits to the southwest of the fields. A dozen stone pens sit in the south, mostly untouched. The north eastern fields are blackened and charred.

Two skeletons sit near the open, charred area of the fields. One is covered through and through with vines; it is a magical creature, the remains of Meerwith, an apprentice of House Merinita who surrendered to the attackers and gave up the location of the ritual. Meerwith remained to watch the commotion and loot the ruins. After the ritual he was turned into a horrific vine creature, twisted with paranoia and delusions, before being attacked by David the Butcher. Meerwith killed David, but now waits in an eternity of panic, fearful of being discovered by magi of House Merinita.

David the Butcher held a cleaver; an Item of Quality made by a Tir Beornthryth Verditius mage in the past for a lifetime of service. It sits unrusting on the ground. The granary was a stone building with a thatched roof





which appears in perfect repair. Inside the granary are sacks of oats and a carved wooden talisman that protects the room from pests and decay.

The oats are unable to escape the granary in their sacks, but if opened they wish to go out and explore the world. They hate people and fear milk.



4. The Barracks

The site of an ill fated and horribly one-sided battle, the fighting men of Tir Beornthryth were trapped inside this building as it collapsed around them. Now only a broken ruin remains. If unburied, the barracks may contain any number of magical items that may have survived.

Shards of bone lie outside being repeatedly attacked by men armed in leather with maces and spears.

Half a dozen invading grogs were here making sure the Tir Beornthryth warriors were dealt with. Filled with loyalty and stalwart dedication to their cause, they have become bound revenants devoted to ensuring their task of ensuring the warriors of Tir Beornthryth are dead. Centuries ago they realised their magical compulsion, and now beg for death even as they attack any who they don't recognise.



5. The Brewery

A large brewery lies near the dry riverbed here. There is a huge double door on the side of the building, and nearby lies an abandoned wagon. Inside are huge copper cauldrons, now green with age, as well as kettles, wooden kegs, and the other implements of the brewer's trade. Most of the kegs are empty, the beer spoiled. On the side of each of the barrels is a similar mark: a B.

Near the brewery itself is a separate wooden barn for the cooper.

The brewery seems a large operation for just the covenant alone, and it is, as most ale sours within a few days. The ale brewed in this brewery often had unusual taste and was highly valued by those who visited the market.

Just outside the brewery are some ancient logs drawn up around a flat tree stump where the brewers would sit and do most of their business with the covenants. Several mugs and plates have been left here. One of the mugs is the Head Brewer's mug and is enchanted to remove the capacity for any liquid poured into it to inebriate the drinker. This is a tool for the head brewer to test the ale without getting horribly drunk.



6. The Great Hall

The tavern is a huge wooden hall build in the old Saxon style. On the outside it appears plain, though an ogre

guard with a massive axe sits outside. Inside, the hall was hung with banners, vivid tapestries, and shields bearing the symbols of the magi of Tir Beornthryth and images celebrating their lives. Each House had a section of the room devoted to it. Built at the time of the original founding of Tir Beornthryth, the tavern was once the main building of the first magi before they built their towers. The tavern has survived despite the burned man due to an ancient and forgotten magical item lying hidden behind a tapestry celebrating a Flambeau victory. Once a shield boss for Tolwyn the Blade, the first Flambeau mage and husband to Beornthryth ex Miscellanea, this shield was enchanted to protect the hall from fire after Tolwyn died of old age and then it was hung on the wall with great honour. It sat in pride of place until one of the later Flambeau magi covered it with a tapestry showing their many victories, where it lay forgotten for over a century.

Now the tavern is in disarray as ogres squat amongst what remains, a hideous hag screeching at them to attend to this or that.

What remains of one of the invading Hermetic magi lies here in the tavern. Known only as the Hag, she was a mercenary Tytalus maga with a cohort of ogre slaves. When the ritual was completed, she was turned from her beautiful former self into a monstrous hag, filled with a vicious hatred of everything still living within Tir Beornthryth. From here she plots to take over the remainder of Tir Beornthryth, as she believes the other creatures here are insane and need to be stopped. She trusts no one, but will give information about Tir Beornthryth as best as she can. She promises that if the other creatures can be dealt with, she will leave in peace. If presented with aggression, she will defend herself so that she can continue to deal with the remainder of the creatures in Tir Beornthryth.

7. The Old Pens

At the southernmost area of the farmed fields are pens for animals. Further south are the grassy fields for grazing the animals. There are no animals remaining; they have been eaten by the creatures in Tir Beornthryth.

In one of the small sheds near the pens lies a leather harness in good order. It has a minor magical effect on it to calm animals that are touched by the leather, allowing them to be easily hitched or used for labour.

8. South Woods

Once a forest used by the locals for mushrooms, berries, and coppicing, the woods to the south are now empty and overgrown. Here and there are the skeletons

of women and children, slaughtered by the invading soldiers as they tried to hide.

A blonde, magical cat, Canice, lives in the woods. Canice is the descendant of one of the familiars of the original magi. Canice is the rightful King of Cats by cat law, but as he has never left the regio he believes himself king of Tir Beornthryth.

9. Tanners, Dyers, Weavers

The tanners, dyers and weavers cottages have been re-inhabited by fairy escapees from the Tower of Merinita.

A fairy has inhabited each of the buildings. Each of the fairies are perfectionists and show the good and bad side of skills gone too far. The fairies were once used as slaves to create goods for the Tower of Merinita.

The Tanner is willing to go to any length for the purity of his product, and what he produces is incredible – though horrific.

The Dyer is the creature who taught the Redcaps how to stain their hats, and has other powers besides; she cares nothing for the results of her powers, only the satisfaction of the paying customer.

The Weaver is never satisfied with her craft, and is infuriated when anyone else even attempts to weave. She wishes to learn from, and then destroy, anyone with weaving skill.

10. The Dry Spring

A natural rise in a hill to the north creates a deep basin here, surrounded by rocks. While a dry pit now, it was once a magical spring where water would seep from rocks in the hill, causing water to pool in the basin before beginning to flow down the riverbed. There is Latin graffiti on the rocks near the pool where apprentices used simple magic to carve the rocks. Most of the graffiti is childish nonsense about love lives or insults poorly covered by other magic, though there are also pictures and poems. An old leather ball, stuffed with a mouldering sheepskin, lies near the pool. A few sets of the dried bones of children lie outside the spring.

An invading mage cast a spell to dry the spring, causing it to stop flowing in the hope of making passing the river an easier opportunity. A ritual to start the spring again would fill the pool and begin the steam flowing again. The water here (and throughout the spring) is pure with a refreshing mineral taste.

The Parched Woman lives here between the rocks. She is a skeleton with a wrapping of loose dried skin. Once a powerful Perdo mage, she was the one who dried the spring and slaughtered the apprentices who hid between the rocks. The Parched Woman is desperately thirsty and wishes to drink the liquid from

everything she can, including blood from the bodies of the characters.

If Albertus reads the graffiti, he notices one sentence in particular – ‘Arthbodu is going to marry Searcha!’ which triggers a memory of himself as a young apprentice swimming with a collection of other apprentices and a girl with green eyes who kissed him behind the boulder as the other apprentices giggled. He can’t help but cry, though he can’t understand why.

11. Diedne

The tower of Diedne is visible to any who view it from a distance as a circular tower with a conical top, surrounded by a low stone fence and a few ancient cottages within the fenced grounds. The walkways appear to lead to the tower.

Anyone getting nearer to the tower, or attempting to approach it on their way somewhere else, will take turns that seem to get them closer to the tower but deviate. They walk around the grounds of the tower, and will only notice it again when at a distance from the tower. The Tower of Diedne is protected by a Shrouded Glen effect which was created just before the invasion to slow down or stop invaders.

The stone cottages outside the towers are simple affairs where the magi and their apprentices lived. Inside the tower is a single lab where the Diedne would work together on their magic, Hermetic or esoteric. Outside is a stone circle where the Diedne practiced their ancient rituals.

The Tower of Diedne is only accessible after Albertus has gained all of his memories – these come from the Dry Spring, the Stone Island, the Tower Ex Miscellanea, the Tower of Jerbiton, and the Tower of Merinita. He then remembers the prayer to recite to enter the Tower of Diedne.

If Albertus enters the tower of Diedne he comes across the stone circle and remembers Arthbodu. He remembers his full memory, and why he – as First Apprentice – had the task of hiding Tir Beornthryth altogether from memory and never allowing anyone to come again.

Albertus remembers the following:

- Albertus is a member of House Diedne. He was once Arthbodu, First apprentice to the Master Seer of Diedne. He loved Searcha. He was married. They had children. His children were murdered by soldiers of the invading magi. Searcha lived, and is now the eldest maga in House Merinita, known as Lillian.
- The spirit that the Ritual was dealt with was a spirit of the land of Britain, and had power over its own mass





and the perception of time itself.

- The Master Bard of Diedne had been killed in the initial attack. The Ritual was one the Master Bard's apprentice, Searcha, had never been properly trained in. Searcha bargained with the spirit as best she could. She begged the spirit to 'Destroy everything now that has ever sworn the Oath of Hermes, and ensure their dreams and goals do not prosper when they are gone. But spare those with the Gift yet unsworn, so all the Houses may return, and that the Diedne may flourish again.'
- The Cataclysm was designed to save the Order of Hermes by leaving it in the hands of its apprentices. The spirit ensured both that the Order would survive and House Diedne would prosper by destroying and transforming every member of the Order of Hermes. To guarantee its oath, it changed the memories of those apprentices who were once Hermetic to recall only a history as a hedge mage. Finally, to ensure the flourishing of House Diedne the spirit rewrote the minds of the Diedne apprentices with memories of the apprentices of the Order of Hermes, whisked them away, and allowed them to believe themselves members of other houses.
- As the original members of the Order of Hermes in the Stonehenge tribunal were once Diedne apprentices, each of them has unwittingly trained their own apprentices in the techniques of House Diedne, not knowing those techniques to be Diedne Magic. Every Stonehenge magi has the Latent Magic (Diedne Magic) flaw, unlocked by a single season of teaching.

12. Merinita

The tower of Merinita appears to be a tiny, homely tower barely two stories tall. Before its door lies a fairy knight, charged with guarding the entrance against those without welcome. Inside are a dozen rooms, far larger than the tower could possibly encompass.

One of the rooms includes a series of iron chains where fairies were once bound to service, though most of the fairies have since left. All of the fairies in Tir Beornthryth are under compulsions from the chains in this room, which hold a piece of their essence; an old shield for the fairy knight, a jar of dye for the dyer, and so on.

Another room is the elements room where raw elements have been contained, allowing those who have access to the room to study the elements up to a score of 30; the room contains roiling volcanoes, churning surf booming against rocks, howling storms, and collections of minerals shifting and forming in earthquakes. A comfortable seat with a well-used pillow and a nearby

footstool and bookstand is in the middle, surrounded by piles of semi-valuable junk: urns, old weapons, scatterings of Roman coins, artwork, jewelled rings, and the like are all around, though getting past the elements to the safe zone is difficult.

Within the Tower of Merinita, usually within the great volcano, is the Dragon. The Dragon was once a Hermetic mage, and is now a monster driven by nothing more than greed. The Dragon regularly demands treasures from other creatures in Tir Beornthryth and collects them in its pile in the element room. It wants everything valuable to be piled up around it, and most of the valuable-looking goods in Tir Beornthryth are here.

If taken to the element room, Albertus recalls a memory of visiting with a much older man, and of playing with a tiny boy with pointed ears who made them both fly around the room. He remembers they "accidentally" found the room of chains, and he set the boy free – and he remembers the rage of the Merinita mage, and the great Certamen duel afterwards between the old Merinita sorcerer and his master, the Great Seer.

13. Ex Miscellanea

Once the tower of the most powerful house in Tir Beornthryth, there is nothing here remaining of the large square tower that was Beornthryth's home. Only a large boulder survives, the door-stone, bearing the images of the Hermetic symbols of magi past who trained and lived in the Tower. At the top is Beornthryth's own symbol.

14. The Stone Island

The Stone Island is an island standing around five meters up from the edge of the stream. Two sets of stairs curve up to it, one from each side of the river. From there the walkways begin. The Stone Island is heavily blackened and in places partially melted. It once held a great table and was the council's meeting place (when it was a nice day) but nothing remains on the top other than some half-destroyed guardrails to stop people falling in the river.

There was once a stairway leading down into the island, but it is now nothing but rubble. If cleared, the Stone Island contained the Library of Tir Beornthryth. There is a waterwheel that lies in the creek bed below. If it was attached to its point it would be able to scoop water into the channels in the Stone Island and up into the walkways. With no water and the waterwheel unattached, the channels on the island and in the walkways appear meaningless.

On the surface of the Stone Island is the Burning

Man, who seeks only to inflict his pain on others. Once the mage who destroyed the tower of Ex Miscellanea and Flambeau, this creature now does its best to immolate everything it can see. It is unreasoning and insane, though has moments of clarity.

Underneath the broken stairway are the undead looters, sent to steal as much of Tir Beornthryth's library as they can. They cannot leave, so engage themselves with endless games bargaining the library's goods between each other. If the exit is unsealed, they seek to leave Tir Beornthryth, fighting only if they must. The library has magical items keeping the room lit, the breeze fresh, and the rooms clean and dry. There is a second, smaller room where the council would meet if it was raining upstairs.

If Albertus is taken into the Library underneath, he remembers taking some children into the library and teaching them literacy. He also remembers overhearing a great argument from the council room.

15. Bonisagus

The Tower of Bonisagus is missing its second and third floors, though its first and fourth still exist. The first floor houses a fairy goblin known as Knockie, who does a bit of cleaning around the place; he has thrown a rope up to climb up to the fourth floor. The Fourth floor hangs in the air, apparently suspended by the walkway where it creaks alarmingly in the wind. The door from the walkway is locked, but underneath is open.

16. Quarry

This is a surprisingly large quarry with a large number of cottages and huts for the workers nearby. Two earth elementals (gnomes) have been slowly piling and shaping the stones into interesting artwork over the centuries and would prefer to be left alone, though they can be bargained with.

17. Twin Palaces

Two wooden halls sit here, choked with weeds and overgrown. If opened, the halls appear filled with people dressed in styles of centuries ago; they are friendly and discuss their travels. The things inside are all illusions created by the Illusionist to make him feel less lonely. The people inside all believe they defeated the magi at Tir Beornthryth and are having a great celebration. The original magi of the Burned Man, the Parched Woman, and the Dragon are here, and they all say good things about the original Illusionist. From time to time the illusions stagger between the halls to talk to each other.

18. Verditius

An octagonal tower sits here on four stubby legs. The doorway is open and a roaring flame belches out heat and smoke. Four stone men, twelve feet tall, stand by the door. At regular intervals, small automata leave to gather wood or create charcoal.

The tower is one room but with several gentries. A metallic, stubby, bearded dwarf clangs away with a hammer on anvil and pays little attention; he is the Full Metal Blacksmith, once a Verditius mage who separated his spirit from his body and sealed it within his remade body. The Full Metal Blacksmith has lost the Gift, but retains a great deal of magic and magic items from when he was alive. The Full Metal Blacksmith is currently creating a metal boat that can fly him past the lunar sphere where he hopes to explore the universe.

The blacksmith has forgotten almost everything, but may need strange and esoteric ingredients to complete his project. He can make items of power for the characters, but only ever makes them charged items.

19. Glassblower and Smith

The Glassblower and Smith are rogue automata with lives of their own created by the Full Metal Blacksmith centuries ago. They live in their cottages and work creating items of beauty, but ponder the meaning of life for themselves. They have no empathy for anything.

20. Tremere

This is not one but four towers linked by a wall. The north wall is broken down, but the others appear in good stead. This orderly arrangement of towers stands strong and proud, and many defence mechanisms stop intruders from trespassing. A high amount of resources lie here, and a number of the defences work but do nothing as they are designed to alert magi who would perform defensive actions rather than to waylay intruders. For Tremere magi these defences are standard, old hat defences used in the Sundering and not updated since those days.

21. Bjornaer

This rickety wooden fort is barely three stories high. The top floor is a roost, the bottom floor a comfortable den, and the middle floor devoted to three different labs. The building itself is dangerously in need of maintenance. A Bjornaer ancestor spirit — a hawk, or another animal that suits a Bjornaer player — lives in the roost upstairs.

If a Bjornaer mage attempts to speak with the ancestor spirit, it will try to impart knowledge of ancient, forgotten Bjornaer magic to the character — lore forgotten in the Schism. The ancestor spirit will have a



quest for the character to achieve the magic and it may require a significant sacrifice.

22. Tytalus

This tower is shaped oddly, with a large base but three separate tower parts rising from the base. The base is a common room for apprentices, kitchens, and other normal rooms while the three tower tops contain laboratories for different magi. The Tytali here were an argumentative sort who varied in their goals. One of the towers contained a Hermetic theurgist who attempted to contact daimons for power, another an adventurous Tytalus who was attempting to map the world, and a third was a kind and gentle soul who wandered seeking to help people.

One of the rooms contains objects with bound spirits, long dormant. Investigating this may lead characters to investigate Hermetic Theurgy. There was a large and thriving area for apprentices in the bottom half of the tower here, with a blackboard for class teaching and a system of rewards and minor punishments listed clearly. In the third laboratory there are a number of letters from Pralix to the resident of this tower, Geralt ex Tytalus, about the two of them writing the Book of Instruction as a prank to shake up the worshipful imitation to Tytalus that had begun after the Corruption. Geralt ex Tytalus is concerned that the Book of Instruction has been accepted hook, line, and sinker without argument, and he writes about the apprentices who now suffer for the ineptitude of their masters, urging Praxis to also write a letter confirming that they colluded in this. The returning letter is from Cad Gadu, informing Geralt that Pralix was found dead.

23. Guernicus

The Tower of Guernicus stands strong, a few images of crosses and saints carved into the outer walls. The door stands open, and a few broken skeletons lie inside the rubble in the tower. The tower is very well built and has two labs and extensive living quarters and its own library for legal matters. Outside, in a collapsed shelter for the outdoor toilet, is the skeleton of the head Guernicus mage who was caught unsuspecting by half a dozen murderous invaders while having a case of gastro-enteritis. A small shrine with a cross is just outside the tower, a few skeletons here blackened and charred.

The Guernicus mage's spirit is disturbed by his inglorious death. Once a powerful warrior and well respected for his foresight, his crippling internal agony didn't allow him to cast magic to save himself. He wishes to be buried in an appropriate cemetery with funeral rites.

24. Mercere

This is a three story stone house, images of the house of Mercere carved into the walls. The back end of this house is blackened with charcoal and melted from attacks by the Burning Man, causing that side of the house to crumble, but the entrance remains in good condition.

A dozen mercenaries have been turned into monstrous wolves who live out of the front of the Mercere house. They are ravenous and will attack suicidally. Their goods and equipment lie where they were taking shelter as the Cataclysm struck, inside the Mercere house.

Underneath the rubble is where the Mercere mage made her laboratory. A great archway lies covered with rubble, and if unsealed is a Mercere Portal to the ruined covenant of Cad Gadu. This portal was used by Loch Legean and nearby magi to travel quickly to Cad Gadu before the Loch Legean tribunal was officially formed and so was a part of Stonehenge.

25. Criamon

There is a walkway that leads to a tower that glows at night and is surrounded by darkness in the day. The Criamon mage who ran this tower perished in the initial attack, but was paranoid about his personal researches. Attempts to go to the single entranceway to the door are met with a magical puzzle appearing in light on the door, answerable only by an Enigmatic Wisdom roll. If failed, the tower casts a spell to remove any desire to interact with the tower in any way; the spell has Penetration +45.

26. Jerbiton

This tower is a small, mostly forgotten tower; the Jerbiton magi of Tir Beornthryth only used it for magical study and lived elsewhere. There are two labs and storage rooms of ancient equipment, all unused.

The Illusionist, a powerful magical human, lives here. He creates illusions to entertain himself but as he is mad believes illusions are real and reality an illusion. If the characters abide with the illusions, the Illusionist is happy enough, but if they keep insisting about real matters he grows dangerous.

Non Player Characters

NPC's do not have their character sheets or attributes shown, as the characters may need to be created in response to the play style of the characters. It should not be necessary to create all NPCs through the game, though it is advised to create the characters if they are direct, combative antagonists.



Albertus the Scrivener of Bonisagus

Personality Traits: (Adventurous +3, Curious +3)

Notes: Albertus is a wise old mentor for the player characters. Through the game Albertus will eventually join the characters in the Debateable Lands, but will not travel with them as he is aged; he will find a place to set up a laboratory to study the things the characters find instead. Albertus's memories gradually unlock as the stones are found, but will not completely unlock until he revisits the Tower of the Diedne in Tir Beornthryth itself.

It should not be necessary to make Albertus's abilities known to the players; he is an old wizard who can summon high totals in magic but is weakened due to old age.

The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte

The Sorcerers of Liddlemotte are designed to be a threat that cannot be easily faced when beginning the game. Each of them are older than the PC's and one Sorcerer should be a difficult battle for the group of Magi. Dealing with them should not be impossible, but should require some preparation. The Sorcerers are not immediately hostile either, but chance meetings and rumours should warn the PC's not to deal with the sorcerers lightly.

Galfrid the Summoner: Unlocking Tir Beornthryth

Galfrid the Summoner is a mage with an interest in spirits, and when he and his master found the Stone of Wisdom he was intrigued. When Galfrid first spoke with the stone he annoyed Bradan Feasa by attempting to control the Salmon of Wisdom, who gave him a piece of wisdom: that Galfrid should leave well enough alone. Infuriated by the Salmon, Galfrid has been redoubling his efforts to control Bradan over many years. So far he has not succeeded with magic, but he has discovered that Bradan is linked to four other stones, and he believes if the four stones are held at Liddlemotte the magic aura will increase.

Galfrid begins searching for other stones where he can, but as he is busy and doesn't believe time is critical he has sent out bands of mercenaries looking for the stones. The other Sorcerers believe Galfrid is wasting his time on ancient magic lost to time when he would be better suited to finding lost Hermetic magic.

Galfrid the Summoner should be created as a Tytalus mage.

Felicia Half Elven: Unchaining the King of the Fairies

Felicia Half Elven is the daughter of King Dalriada. She believes he bears no ill will towards humans and she

wishes to help him reclaim his kingdom; she has negotiated to assist him in that goal so long as the Sorcerers have a guaranteed place as his trusted advisors. One of Dalriada's most able servant fairies, Yellowan, is the main contact for the Sorcerers of Liddlemotte. Felicia Half-Elven has not told the Sorcerers anything of her plans, and they are growing suspicious enough to want her followed.

Felicia Half Elven should be created as a Merinita mage.

Galan Erilich: The True King of Scotland

Galan Erilich is the son of Mac Bethad, last king of Scotland (MacBeth) and he feels that Malcolm III is an English-loving pretender to Galan's rightful throne. Galan works to gather his forces; he is young, charismatic, and the local people trust and admire him. Galan is working on the local clans and trying to unite them into a fighting force with which he can fight off Malcolm III. Galan is in the process of uniting the local clans to start a raid together, the first of many ambitious plans.

The other Sorcerers are glad of Galan's influence on the local people but cautious of antagonising Malcolm III who has wizards of his own. Only the witches oppose Galan, who can't kill them outright without destroying his plans to unify the clans under his leadership.

Galan Erilich should be created as a Jerbiton mage.

Meilyra the Burned

Meilyra has a hatred for Hermetic Magi after an encounter with a Stonehenge Flambeau mage left her horribly disfigured. Meilyra wants nothing more than to eradicate the last of the Hermetic magi from the world, and tries to unify the sorcerers to travel south where she believes the last remnants of the Order lie. Meilyra is often south of Hadrian's Wall during spring or summer, searching for the Order; she has found several covenants but wishes to know the full scope of the Order before she begins to strike. She has kept her knowledge of the Order from the others as she fears they will capitulate to the Order.

Other than Meilyra, the Sorcerers have not seen a Hermetic Mage (other than a Redcap, who they killed) and so they are in support of Meilyra, but they are more interested in their own affairs than in any raid to the south, leaving their possessions vulnerable to the Witches.

When created, Meilyra should be created as a Flambeau mage.





Rozenn, the Witch of Ravenburn

Rozenn is not Gifted like Hermetic magi, but does have a great deal of knowledge about natural magics. If the Hedge Magic book or the Realms of Power: Magic book is not available, Rozenn is a witch because she understands natural environments. Rozenn can bring out the internal magic of vis rather than just use it to power magic. If Rozenn gains parts from magical things that are also vis, such as vis from a magical stone, the parts of magic animals, or magical herbs, she can turn them into potions, amulets, and charms that can give minor (or major) virtues for a year. It takes a season for Rozenn to turn vis into a virtue, and this virtue can be given to others in the form of giving them the potion, amulet, or charm. Rozenn has the Second Sight and Magic Sensitivity virtues.

Unfortunately the Parma Magica interferes with Rozenn's magic and she cannot use her powers to grant those with the Parma any virtues.

Tarass Wurm

The Tarass Wurm is designed to be a dangerous encounter, and should be created as such. If investigated, players can find out the stone it guards can be stolen, so the Tarass Wurm could be created as a threat that can kill the characters if faced immediately

and players should spend time preparing. When creating the Wurm, consider how the players will likely deal with the wurm, and if they want to face it directly. If the core book is available, Stellatis the Dragon is a potential foe, though it is suggested his Might and powers be downgraded somewhat.

The Sacred Trees

Each tree contains the aspect of a Daimon, or spirit of cosmic power. The spirits are linked to the tree, but killing the tree does not kill the spirit. They have different levels of Might; a suggested amount is 40.

Each tree has different powers, but when awakened they all have the power to cast Herbam spells up to their Might by spending Might Points equal to the magnitude of the effect. Each tree also has other abilities linked to them; a tree that gives off Aquam vis might also have water powers, as an example.

Each tree also has the ability to grant virtues, though doing so permanently lowers their Might and regaining that Might is a slow process for the trees, so they will only do so for those who truly impress them. Each can only grant a specific virtue. It is suggested the virtues granted are not Hermetic (other than possibly a Magical Focus in something Herbam related) and that the virtues granted are useful for the PC magi.

Mark Baker's 6th Edition

by Mark Baker

So, I've written a manuscript for 6th edition. It's written and it's been playtested by a small group. It's a piece of work that has taken long, long hours and quite a significant amount of dedication. I've sent the manuscript to Atlas Games and unfortunately they are not looking for RPG submissions at this time; they weren't able to read the manuscript due to legal reasons.

Why a new edition at all? 5th edition is amazing and I'll never need another Ars Magica!

5th edition is an amazing roleplaying game written by highly talented authors and game designers. It took many ideas from earlier editions and refined them into a successful game beloved by many, including me. It's certainly true that a 6th edition isn't necessary to play the game. The 5th edition rule system isn't 'broken'. It works... with some caveats. Ars Magica 5th edition was published over 15 years ago, and game design and gamers have moved on since then. What was new and exciting in Ars Magica isn't so new and exciting anymore; a 6th edition can revive interest – not in the current player base, but in those yet to come, and those who drifted away who might be brought back.

My 6th edition manuscript is not an updated Ars 5.5; it's a full edition change. Why? Because I love Ars Magica, and I'd love for it to thrive. Jason Tondro mentioned that Ars Magica is entering a period of Winter, and with Atlas holding off on producing (or considering, at least for the moment) new Ars books, or moving to spinoff systems, the future of Ars is in jeopardy. For Mythic Europe to survive, the community must not stagnate, must not be the same old grognards and forumgoers that it's always had. I believe a new 6th edition will keep Mythic Europe alive and bring an influx of players into the game just as 5th edition did. It's time for a new edition.

Ars 5th is a great system and better setting. But it isn't friendly to new players, either existing roleplayers or people entirely new to roleplaying. I bought the book and Lost Covenant of Calebais on a whim back when it was released here in Brisbane, Australia, due to its claim to be the best magic system ever. At that time, I was so confused by the system I couldn't understand how to play the game. Several in our group puzzled

over what we were supposed to do, and it wasn't until years later when a new player entered our group who had experience with Ars that we began to play. Ars Magica isn't easy to pick up. It's not always intuitive because it doesn't follow expected tropes – and that isn't a good thing.

In addition, some of the game design ideas of Ars Magica aren't quite as brilliant as they were 15 or 20 years ago. Once upon a time, Ars Magica practically introduced narrativist storytelling to RPGs. Virtues and flaws. Soap opera. Other games have taken story-based gaming and pushed it further or done it better. Still more games have worked on magical systems to rival (though, in my opinion, not beat) Ars Magica's core magic system. Roleplaying game design has moved on. The gamers who would have picked up Ars are moving toward other systems.

Ars Magica's basic game ideas are still good. The setting of Mythic Europe has nothing to compare with it. The current player base are eager, enthusiastic, and positive. The 5th edition authors are incredible.

So why move to a 6th edition? Because some parts of 5th edition aren't great. Because there's things that aren't wrong but they can be done better. Because possibly, a new edition might breathe even more life into something that's amazing already. Because not trying a new edition means that Mythic Europe will eventually stagnate.

Changes in a Nutshell

There are three main areas in 5th that I believe need consideration. All of the changes in my edition keep these in mind.

The d10 problem

In Ars 5th the main die used is a d10. 5th edition has situations where the modifiers to the die roll are greater than the range of possibilities of the die. This means that, barring very extreme circumstances, the roll of the die can be a formality; therefore, the risk and reward of rolling the die is taken from the game. The more that this situation is in play, the less interesting it is to play.

This is not a situation where a great deal of time or





optimization of characters is at fault; it's the nature of Ease Factors and a byproduct of a die with so few possibilities.



For example, a character with Puissant Stealth and Affinity with Stealth at age 25 could have put enough XP to have a rank of 6; this isn't stretching the system. Puissant makes that now a rank of 8. Let's say they have a Dex of +3 – good for a thief character. That's a +11 modifier to the Stealth roll. Effectively, a larger modifier than what a roll of the dice can compensate for.



This is one super ninja character. Sure, it's specialised, but it's not hyper-specialised with no other skills. It's just a pretty good character at what they do. Assuming our ninja is sneaking past a standard guard, he's invisible. A guard with Awareness 1 has equal chance of good or bad luck as the ninja. Barring only a very, very bad roll from the ninja, or an unlikely positive roll from the guard, the ninja remains unseen. Even a 0 on the die from the ninja is likely to succeed against the guard.



The main problem with the die roll is it's more of a formality; it doesn't narratively engage the players because the outcome is almost a foregone conclusion.



Any time the modifiers outstrip the range of the die roll, the tension of any situation is reduced. In the 6th ed manuscript I have a lot of changes to modifiers to increase tension.



Ease of Play for New Players

There isn't an easy entry for new players in 5th edition. The manual is difficult to read, there is no engaging fiction, examples of how to play are few and far between, the art is... not quality in comparison compared to similar RPG books of its time. There is a wonderful forum and helpful forumites... if you find them and are of the sort of person who posts on forums. There's a webpage with some ideas on it.



Ars 5th has no good method of engagement for new players because there isn't much to base characters on. While this is apparently due to the dislike of fluff fiction in RPG books by the player base at the time, I for one read the entire 5th edition book and had no idea how to play in the setting until I read parts of the 3rd and 4th edition books. After reading the 5th edition book, I assumed the game was all about doing wizardly lab work and all the story stuff at the start was sort of tacked on. (I was, of course, wrong).



With these ideas in mind, I always attempt to make things simple to understand and quick to play at the table. I reduce complexity wherever possible and speed play wherever possible.



A Game about Magic

While Ars has an amazing magic system, it does have some interesting eyebrow-raising moments. For one thing, some of the magic casting and item creation in Ars does not use recognizable magical tropes, or has some hoops to jump through mainly for the purpose of hoops.

Magic Resistance is a very important issue to address; MR unfortunately has some very unfortunate side effects within action scenarios where it is (more and more often) better to use anything other than magic just because magic is entirely ineffective. Or we get the situation where characters lowball spells because they're effective rather than use high powered spells. I've also made changes around avoiding and resisting magic, giving the targets of magic a small chance of avoiding magic – making magic less of a 'if it hits, it wins, but it doesn't hit when it's important' ability.

Character Creation

Character creation is difficult for new players in 5th edition mainly because there are so many options. Characteristics, skills, virtues, flaws, stories... all are a complicated and often unintuitive wall for new players. Trawling through lists of flaws and virtues to pick exactly what is needed can be an exhausting (and sometimes boring) experience for new players. As such, 6th simplifies this.

Firstly, there are two character types – major and minor. Major characters are heroic or magical in some way. Minor characters are extras – redshirts, grogs, and so on. Major characters have a number of differences from minor characters, and minor characters should be able to be created in around a minute if their statistics are important.

I have removed characteristics from the game; they are an unnecessary modifier to the dice and are now represented with the Benefits and Flaws system.

Benefits and Flaws have replaced Virtues and Flaws. The rename is just because "Virtues" is something of a misnomer (IMHO). I have reduced the number of Benefits significantly, and characters have a smaller number of Benefits but correspondingly they are more powerful.

Stories are no longer based within the Benefits and Flaws system. Each major character must pick a story.

Personality traits are now linked with the Confidence mechanic rather than independent of other mechanics.

There is a cap on skills related to the profession skill of the characters. This is to prevent characters boosting one skill up far over the others, meaning characters should have a number of skills that make sense for their characters.

Covenants and Libraries

5th edition had a problem of making covenants very paperwork heavy for the players while being hard for new players to create in their entirety. 6th edition covenants are the same in concept and are more of a guided creation process. A sample first covenant is given to assist new players.

Covenant creation should now be a faster process with very little paperwork. Libraries have been changed and no longer track individual books, so the covenant sheet in its entirety should be no more than one page.

Magic and Ritual

I have changed a great deal of small things in the magic section but the majority is the same; magi cast spells with Techniques and Forms and try to beat the spell level with their Arts. Some of the formulae have changed to make things easier for new players, but generally this is the same.

The changes to the magic system have been based around the idea of staying true to fantasy tropes. The idea that large rituals require casting as a group has been put into place, and there are some changes around ceremonial magic for both spontaneous and formulaic magic. There have been some changes to the base levels of effects, with some clarification around Muto and Rego effects and a reintroduction of a useful 4th edition duration, but generally things are the same.

The largest change is to Warping and the Parma Magica. Warping takes the place of Stamina, adding to all spellcasting rolls and representing the gradually increasing magical nature of wizards. The Parma is based off the mage's Warping score, removing the idea of studying magical resistance for its own sake – and the issue of having characters with incredibly high magic resistance being unable to be affected by magic. The Parma also adds a bonus to avoiding indirect magic, meaning that it is somewhat more broadly effective than in earlier editions.

Twilight has been changed to only be positive effects, and only granted at specific points in time.

Combat and Obstacles

I've changed combat from the ground up, but as every edition has done so I'm not in any way concerned about that. 5th edition combat was (deliberately) sparsely detailed in terms of what could or could not be accomplished, but perhaps could have benefited from more guidelines about how to use that narrative freedom. To add to that, some of the mechanics were not fun. Ars combat could be a complicated mass of modifiers which did not assist its goal of being a

narrative system. To add to this, most die modifiers being outside (or at the extreme edge of) the die roll meant that combat between equals could be a long, hard slog of many rounds, hoping for exceptional (or very poor) luck to finish a fight.

Many of the aspects of 5th edition combat, despite being worded in a narrative light, seem to function as simulationist play – especially around wounds and healing. Unfortunately for a simulation, it doesn't simulate things very realistically, leading to strange and unusual situations: a knight with three medium wounds (defined as, perhaps, two somewhat serious cuts and a set of broken ribs) could still fight on quite happily and exert each round. The tables of weapons was unbalanced, and the ability to abuse soak (with later sourcebooks especially) could make characters who were unstoppable in combat (a problem simply because that character would not be challenged by combat unless the combat was so incredible that the others in the group could be killed with a stray attack...). Group combat rules were not good for their multiplicative effects, though the idea behind them could work.

In 6th edition I take combat away from the semi-realistic model and allow a more heroic style. Major characters are wounded far less frequently but minor characters can still die quickly. Characters have to track their resources (such as fatigue, confidence, or minor wounds that heal quickly) and may have to retreat after losing such resources, but do not have to retire after taking a single bad wound. There is now more 'play' in the combat game of the system.

Healing is much faster. The penalty for being injured is lower, meaning characters can get back into the adventure (or lab) faster.

Laboratories and Long Term Events

Lab work is very similar; 5th edition players will be quite familiar with the laboratory rules, though there are some changes. Vis is now far superior to reading from libraries to represent the sacrifice studying from vis takes, and there is no longer any need for lab texts. Enchanted item creation is now less complicated overall and a few new things have been added.

Mythic Europe and Setting Date

Mythic Europe is one of Ars Magica's two really interesting parts – the other being the magic system. To differentiate 6th edition from other editions, I have set the official starting date at 1065 to explore a new time and place; this sets up interest for older players, opens space for authors, and is a recognizable date for most players to interest them in the setting. I've also opened





up the idea that Mythic Europe is more fantasy-historical than historical fantasy to allow those who prefer more fantasy to not be frightened away by the kings and dates and battles.



The most important change I've made to the setting is to include the Cataclysm, the event that ended the Schism; this is designed to litter Mythic Europe with ancient ruined magical places, monsters, and items so that new players can immediately sink their teeth into something familiar.



As for the houses, I've kept much of the houses as they have been written from 5th edition sources, but changed them enough to be something new. Each of the houses now has a few obvious roles they fulfill; again, this is for ease of new players entering the game. Some of the houses have had a major rewrite to give them a clearer role within the setting and amongst the other houses. As a side effect of the Benefit system, the Benefit granted by the houses is now much more important and powerful than what the houses did in 5th ed.



Things I Haven't Done, But Might...



Reducing or changing the houses is an idea I've had since I finished writing the current manuscript. In some ways, I feel the houses are now a part of Mythic Europe and shouldn't be removed, but in other ways the houses don't belong in the world they are set in. It's a matter of thinking and the future I suppose!



There's many more changes I haven't mentioned. But I hope the things I've mentioned have interested you to the point where a 6th edition might now be something you'll consider in the future.



Yours,
Mark Baker



Editor's Note: What follows is the first chapter of Mark's 6th Edition rewrite.



Chapter 1: Introductions

Salve, Sodales!

ARS MAGICA 6th Edition is a storytelling game where the players pretend to be the main characters in a fantasy story. In Ars Magica, the characters cast magic spells, battle monsters, interact with the medieval world and grow their powers over many seasons.

Each player creates a powerful wizard belonging to the Order of Hermes, the most magically powerful collection of magi in Western Europe. The players control the actions of these characters within the story as told by the Storyguide. While wizards, these characters are not all robe wearing scholars. Some may be proud of their pointy hat and ink stained fingers but others are warriors with sword and spell, sneaky thieves who manipulate illusion and darkness or devout priests who use their magic to aid the faithful. As well as casting combative spells and surviving dangerous encounters, Ars Magica allows magi to be skilled in other types of magic like healing, farming, scrying and enchanting or even tell stories around apprentices learning the ropes in a magical school. In Ars Magica, a mage who lives helping the common folk with weather magic and birthing animals can be just as important to the story as a caster of destructive spells in a trap filled dungeon.

Ars Magica is a game about magic. To that end it utilizes a system that allows and encourages players to explore interesting magical options. The magi in Ars Magica are not only combat wizards and adventurers. They are mages of great power with few limits on what they can do when they put their minds to it.

What is a Storytelling Game?

A storytelling game is one where one player (the Storyguide) creates stories for the other players. The other players control the main characters of the story whose skills and powers are written on a character sheet. These players control their characters by describing their actions in response to the Storyguide's prompts. The Storyguide also acts as the arbiter of the rules and has the final say over rules decisions when a story is in progress. The position of Storyguide may even rotate between players, allowing the players to both play in and tell the stories.

Ars Magica games involve between two to five players including the Storyguide. While there is no maximum limit of players, games can grow difficult to manage for the Storyguide with larger amounts of players.

Lauren is the Storyguide. She begins by describing the scene the other players are in. 'You are all crouched behind the ancient wall, waiting to see if the dragon will escape the cave. You see it! The black dragon comes slithering out of its cave, casting it' investigating the food you left for it.'

Nick, who plays the mighty warrior-mage Rurik, begins to speak. 'I leap over the wall, trying to get the dragon's attention!' Nick waves his arms, pretending to be Rurik.

Ruth, another player, joins in. 'I cast my spell of invisibility and start to sneak into its cave once the dragon is out of the way.' Ruth rolls the dice and grins as she sees the spell is successful. 'I made it!'

Lauren, now knowing the actions of the player characters describes the action. 'The dragon spots Rurik and lets out a hiss of amused satisfaction. It begins to follow you even as your friend sneaks in behind.'

'I run. I run really fast.' says Nick.

Why Play Ars Magica?

1. Narrative

Ars Magica is about stories; All the players create stories, not just the Storyguide, though the Storyguide gets to create stories for the rest of the group the other players may not expect. The players also choose a story for their own character to be involved with over the course of the saga and assist the other players to play through their own stories. Characters age and grow over campaigns which can sometimes last generations for the characters of the game.

2. Powerful Magic

While many fantasy games deal with magic, Ars Magica revolves around it. Hermetic magi are powerful and the game explores the options they have. Creating magical creatures, casting exploding fireballs, enchanting items, even creating flying castles are all possible for magi.

3. Diverse Cast

In Ars Magica each player may have more than one character. One or more characters controlled by a player is a major character with their own story, such as a magician with a mystical quest or a dashing rogue seeking to find her lost love, but players may have more characters they play regularly or occasionally. By allowing players to take on minor characters and antagonists from time to time it allows the major player

characters to pursue goals separately to one another while the players are always involved in the unfolding story. In many circumstances only one or two magi are along on an adventure with the rest of the players taking on the roles of companions, minor characters or the antagonists.

Die Rolls

The success or failure of character actions in difficult or stressful situations is determined by rolling a die. In Ars Magica this is a ten-sided die, also called a d10. These are available online or in hobby stores.

To determine whether a character is successful in attempting something in the game, the player controlling the character rolls a d10 and adds modifiers that represent the skills and powers of the character. If the die roll plus the modifiers equals or exceeds the Ease Factor (EF), which is a number set by the Storyguide, the action is a success. This is called an Action roll, but specific skills or powers may be called by the skill used, such as a Melee Combat roll or a Magic Theory roll.

Modifiers are derived from the level of skill or magical power a character has.

$$\text{Roll} = \text{Die Roll} + \text{Modifiers vs. EF (Ease Factor)}$$

When to Roll the Dice

Dice are rolled when the chance of failure is important to the game. If a situation is dangerous, stressful, or there is an important contest between two or more characters, roll the dice. Otherwise, do not roll.

Sir John is practicing weapons with his squire as he does every day. It is not important to the story to roll the die, so no die is rolled to determine the outcome of the mock battle. The player could describe that Sir John wins easily, or his squire gets a lucky blow to the surprise of all.

Later, Sir John and the squire are forced to do battle by a faerie queen. The outcome of the battle is now important to the story, so the battle is resolved using dice.

Extra Success

If a 10 is rolled on the d10, calculate the total as normal but create an additional beneficial situation. This may be applying weal or woe during the following turn, or may be a beneficial situation of another type entirely.

Hieronymus casts a spell to summon lightning at his foe. He rolls a 10! He calculates his spell casting and



his spell is successfully cast. The Storyguide mentions that Hieronymus is charged with mystical power; any spell he casts in the next round will be with weal!

Botch

If a 1 is rolled on the dice, calculate the total as normal but create an additional complication such as woe on rolls in the following turn, limited mobility, or some other problematical complication. Botches add drama and increased difficulty to a situation. They should not kill characters.

A 1 on a roll to do with botching a spell is a magical botch, with the magic causing the dramatic situation. (See Chapter 7, Magic for more examples).

Cielsovildis attempts to swim in a flooding river. To avoid drowning, she must make an Athletics roll with an Ease Factor of 6. Her Athletics is 5 and she rolls a 1 for a total of 6. She succeeds at the task of swimming, but the Storyguide determines the complication is that she is caught in a swift current and taken downriver away from her friends.

Margin

Some situations may use the difference between the successful roll and an Ease Factor to determine extra effects. This is known as the margin. When two characters strive against each other and the margin is important, the defending character's action roll sets the EF.

$$\text{Margin} = \text{Action Roll} + \text{Modifiers} - \text{EF}$$

Weal and Woe

Weal is a favourable situation that in some way aids the character. Mechanically, this is resolved by rolling two d10s and taking the highest roll. Woe is an unfavourable situation; roll two d10s and take the lower roll.

If there is a situation where both weal and woe are applied then all weal and woe are cancelled and the dice are rolled as normal regardless of the amount of weal or woe that could be applied.



Make Straight in the Desert

by Jim Seals

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

—Isaiah 40:3, KJV

AUTUMN 1219, NOW

Lost, Heron Moros gazed intently into heaven and saw no solace there. Following close in his *dominus*' wake, the good *tiro* had been marching south through the Ténéré Desert for close to six hours when his gait slowed to a meandering stop and he drank in the arid landscape around him.

It was midnight and the moon bled red. All around, the *Erg* of Bilma was awash in an ominous crimson hue. He was not the superstitious sort. His time as an apprentice of the Order of Hermes had taught him that, though wondrous to behold, the workings of Creation could be understood by man, given enough time and sound empirical reasoning. Yet, on this night, reasoning escaped him. Instead, the hunter's moon instilled in him an almost primal pause.

Far more disconcerting to Heron than the moon were the stars themselves.

Back home, he had come to know the stars as one might a dear friend, naming each and tracing out their well-worn constellations. Now, those erstwhile friends had become strangers to him. Here, most stars were unknown to him, complete with foreign names and indecipherable constellations. And what stars he did recognize were all wrong: such as *Stella Marris*, the star of the sea, and her placement. The same polar star that dominated the night skies of home was naught more than marginalia scrawled onto the peripheral of the world, peering over the northern horizon.

Then there were their movements.

In the east, behind the *Falaise* Kaouar, the stars breached the horizon, ascending straight into Heaven like a marlin escaping the ocean's depths. Achieving apotheosis overhead, the stars then began streaking earthward, vanishing behind the *Aïr* Massif in the west.

This clockwork procession lasted all night long and was a spectacle to behold, making Heron Moros all at once privileged and insignificant in equal measure.

Almost as if she were watching.

He was reminded of her... Of his Cansu and her cosmic gaze... of her love of dance and her weakness for Tuscan reds...

He laughed long and hard.

Then he began reminiscing and that laughter died down.

WINTER 1218, THEN

Cansu...

He saw her last on winter solstice.

It was noontide. The skies were clear and the sun was out, illuminating pristine wilderness. To the west, the mountains were mantled in last night's thundersnow storm; to the east, the sea churned, restless. The air was brisk, invigorating. In the distance, a gentle breeze whistled through the branches of evergreen pines and wintering beech alike, serenading him as he worked.

He was on the rocks and shoals, ankle-deep in the Adriatic, taking a dagger to his first love when she approached. Having loosened the moorings, he dragged *The Surly Mermaid* ashore, careening her until she was keeled over. Then he meticulously went about removing the accumulated barnacles one by one.

"You are upset." It was not a question.

He did not know which he disliked more: the barnacle colonies dragging down *Papà's* boat, or having unsolicited emotions ascribed to his person. "Am I so transparent?" he grunted, settling his attention on a rather tenacious arthropod.

"You are working on your boat," she answered smoothly. She came around the upturned *Mermaid* to stand near him as a breaker roared up. Without so much as a sidelong glance, she raised up her hand, prompting the wave to crash elsewhere. "You only work on your boat when you are upset."

Though he could hear the truth of her words, he did not listen, becoming all the more indignant.

"Word is you bested Boran last night," he began. He attacked the barnacle with the heel of his palm, heaving upward to create space enough to accommodate his dagger. "And at Creo Auram, no less," he continued, sliding the blade into place. "You're a maga now."

He heard a suction. Emboldened, he began wrenching the hilt, sawing at the barnacle's undercarriage with reckless abandon, until...



"Porca miseria!"

His dagger broke. All the while, the tenacious arthropod remained, mocking him.

With sardonic detachment, Heron's gaze lounged on his now bladeless hilt. Like *The Surly Mermaid*, the dagger had been *Papà's*; unlike *The Surly Mermaid*, *Papà* had given him the dagger *before* the sea swallowed him whole.

"You are bleeding," she said, drawing his attention to his opposite hand. There, blood pooled within his palm. She came to him, taking his injured hand into hers. Her hushed words bound the wound.

The two stood close, though neither dared a look. At long last, she said, "You were nowhere to be found, *aşkim*."

That brought him up short. His shoulders caved in on themselves, and he tossed the hilt aside. Through a clenched jaw, he let out a slow, laborious sigh. In that instant, all his airs evaporated and he knew his shame. He had broken his promise.

He cast her a tentative glance and was struck breathless.

She stood upon the shoals, imperious, her back to the roiling sea. Flanking her on either side, the breakers crashed upon the rocks, sending up a cooling sea spray to glisten across her warm olive complexion. The land breeze blew past and out to sea, playfully tousling sun kissed locks.

She wore the robes of her new station. The ornate robes were a deep-set, wine-dark color, trimmed with glittering silver, evocative of the Mediterranean at midnight. What's more, she wore them well. There was no mistaking the truth: she was indeed a maga of the Order.

All the while, she considered him with that obsidian gaze of hers that twinkled with the brilliant luminescence of shooting stars, a lasting Twilight Scar she earned in a Certamen duel. He had been her opponent then. As a senior apprentice, he had been tasked with overseeing her initial training lo those many moons ago.

In stark contrast, he was clad in simple browns-and-beiges afforded to all apprentices of Postestas; garments he should have outgrown. Resigned, he withdrew. "Cansu, I--"

She raised her hand, silencing him. When she corrected, him her voice was resolute, though not unkind.

"Meltem."

The Order recognized the power inherent in names as a Hermetic tenet. Once an apprentice succeeded their Gauntlet and swore the Oath, custom dictated the

taking of a new name of their own choosing as a symbol of rebirth.

He considered all this with a sadness that eluded understanding.

Aloud, he tried the name once, twice, then gave a low whistle. Sadly, the name did not come as naturally as Cansu had. "Won't lie: that'll take some getting used to."

"I leave for Hibernia within the hour," she intoned. From within bloodstained robes, she withdrew a parchment, complete with the broken wax crest of Coeris, Domus Magna of House Tremere. "Marching orders came this morning."

He watched as she stared at the Apennines. Hers was a pensive expression, leading him to suspect that she saw past the mountains to a distant isle in the North Seas. At last, she said, "Theirs is an unusual tribunal."

"To say the least," he agreed eagerly. Wanting nothing more in this world than to reach out and take her in his arms as if this moment were their last, he advanced a step, then another.

Unmoving, she looked at him, saw his closeness and shook her head.

Heron retreated. He knew she was right: after all, she was a maga now and he, a *discipulus*.

As he stepped back, she caught sight of the birchwood tree branch tucked into his rope belt and remarked, "You did not present him the challenge, I see." Her disappointment was evident.

As if struck, he took another step back. "No," he admitted in a rasp. "Not yet. With his health only now returning, he has been... somewhat preoccupied with matters of the Divine." Offhandedly, he added, "We're leaving for Africa tomorrow."

"Africa?"

He nodded, shutting down conversation with a noncommittal, "Long story," then sighing. "Perhaps, once we return... Who knows? By then, he might even stand a chance."

She was unamused. "You are well past age, Heron." "Don't you think I know that?" he exploded, raising his voice louder than he would have liked. She gave him that look and he took a moment to breath. Once he subsided, his voice was a plaintive whisper. "He needs me, Ca-- Meltem."

"And you need your Gauntlet." Hers was a doleful smile as she leaned in, leaving him a kiss on the cheek. "You always were a good *tiro*."

Walking passed, she ascended a coastal ridge, then turned back. She was now looking down at him. "Walk with God, Heron *discipulus* Ktistés."

Ill at ease, he nodded. "Same to you, Meltem *filia* Boran of House Tremere."



He watched her leave, vanishing within the tree line of coastal evergreens swathed in white as the breakers rolled back in, filling his boots with the Adriatic.

NOW

"You, too, like stars?"

Heron Moros returned to the present. During his reminiscing, he must have resumed his march south though he possessed no recollection of having done so. He reached down, readjusting his boots, taking stock that the irritant therein was not the Adriatic Sea, but the Ténéré Desert. Walking beside him was their ever-enthusiastic guide, In Ictu Oculi.

Oculi was a Monoculus, a race similar to the cyclopes of Greece, with a singular eye in the center of their cranium, though lacking their imposing stature. Formally a slave of the *Nasara al-Sahra*, Oculi was freed when the nomadic tribe of Christian brigands ran afoul of Ktistés. Since then, the Monoculus has sworn his services until "Oculi's shadow outraces Oculi" -- whatever the hell that means. As per his moniker, Ktistés found Oculi's name unpronounceable, thus he was rechristened him with the Latin phrase "in the blink of an eye." Mercifully, Oculi took to the nickname with aplomb.

"Oh yes," Heron answered, wincing a trite smile.

"Oculi likes stars!" Oculi was so delighted that he began dancing beneath that hunter's moon. Then, in mid-leap, a thought occurred to him and his joviality vanished. Leaning in close, he whispered, "At night, Oculi names them. Names them all their true name. Calms Oculi."

"You don't say," he said, humoring the Monoculus. Further south, his *dominus* was breasting a towering sand dune.

Oculi latched onto the apprentice's hand, halting Heron in sand-laden tracks. "Oculi says." The Monoculus raised Heron's hand and began tracing one of those unknown constellations in the south. "See, that there? Name's Monoceros!"

Displeased at the presumption, Heron sighed and concentrated. The constellation was naturally faint, made all the more so by the coming dawn. He counted eight, perhaps nine stars. As to who, or what a Monoceros was, Heron lacked the imagination.

Freeing his hand, Heron asked, "Monoceros?"

"Yes!" Oculi answered. "Yes, Monoceros is strong beast, quite territorial."

As Heron resumed walking he pondered this. The word held no meaning in Latin. Still, he seemed to recall reading a passage long ago in Postestas' Grand Archive.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "'Monoceros' is Greek for unicorn."

Without warning, Oculi slapped the apprentice upside the head. "No! Not unicorn. Not unicorn." Oculi never broke his stride as Heron slowed his, assessing the damage. The blow was more shocking than harmful. "Oculi knows unicorn; unicorns are delicate, weak. Monoceros is strong, stronger than all three of us as one! Back in Oculi's home said that Monoceros leaves the stars, roams Slavelands, frees slaves! Like Ktistés. Like Heron!"

"Uh-huh," Heron uttered, catching up with the guide. Together, the two began their ascent up the sand dune. Standing at the summit was his *dominus*, waiting for them. Heron's breath became labored as he steered clear the trail so as not to lose his own precarious footing.

"Is true!" Oculi said, showing no sign of strain. "You see. Know Monoceros by bird above, then quake of earth below. Trust Oculi. You see. Soon enough."

Heron had no time to mull over these words as he arrived at the summit. Peering over, he realized that his *dominus* was not waiting for them; he had been awestruck.

Traveling east to west, the windswept sand dunes of Ténéré came to a sudden end. As if God, Himself had taken a brand and scorched Creation's edge with a straight, unwavering line. Opposite that line was hardened salt pan, glittering white with a luminescence all its own.

Uncertain, the apprentice turned to his *dominus* and the *dominus* smiled.

"Boy," Ktistés proclaimed with a gesture that tried (and failed) to encompass the spectacle before them, "the Torrid Zone!"

THEN

"Begging pardon, *dominus*. I must've misheard you. You want to go where now?" Heron Moros asked, stooping low on his haunches inside his *dominus*' sanctum.

A descendant of the Duende, a goblin-like race of faeries native to Iberia, Ktistés was a dwarf. As a consequence, neither his sanctum nor his laboratory -- both constructed within the heart of the *Gran Sasso d'Italia*, Great Rock of Italy -- purported to standard size restrictions, much to Heron's chagrin. Unlike his faerie relations, Ktistés was a pious Christian; at best, he found his strong faerie blood to be distasteful, a stain upon his immortal soul. Still, the magus could not deny that his stain had some advantages, not least of all in helping him become the greatest Terram expert in the





Roman Tribunal, if not the entire Order. He possessed an understanding of stone that eluded most.

Ktistés was also ancient, even by Hermetic standards. Though curious, Heron never dared asked the exact number. All he knew was that he was the last in a long line of *discipuli* dating back two centuries. A line that -- if Ktistés was so inclined -- could have seen him singlehandedly elevated to primus of House Tremere decades ago. A line that was soon ending. For even venerable Ktistés was mortal.

"No, son," the magus smiled good-naturedly. He was grooming his calcified beard with a hammer and chisel, reaping his own personal vis source, a recent Twilight scar. "You heard me true: I want to go to the Torrid Zone."

Though speculation abounded, no one quite knew what the Torrid Zone actually was. The Church's general consensus on the matter was that the zone was an inhospitable land, demarcating the end of Creation, a place where the sun resided, setting off a veritable "ring of fire." Whether Heron accepted this, he did not know. All he knew was that this proposed sojourn would undoubtedly delay his Gauntlet a second time.

Steeling himself, his hand unwittingly rested upon the tree branch tucked into his rope belt as if it were the hilt of a sword. "*Dominus*, with all due respect--"

"How is it that we always feel the need to preface saying something disrespectful with those words? 'With all due respect' -- bah! As if the former somehow excuses the latter." Setting aside his tools, the magus cackled at his own joke.

Barely restrained anger seized Heron's visage.

Last winter, Ktistés made an error while casting his Longevity Ritual, an error that almost proved fatal. Mercifully, his stay in Wizards' Twilight was nigh instantaneous; he was there one moment, gone the next and back again. However, bereft of his ritual, he soon thereafter succumbed to his advanced age. Since then the good *tiro* suspended his apprenticeship to tend to his bedridden *dominus* instead. With Ktistés hale once more, Heron had embarked on a season-long adventure to procure a birchwood tree branch from the *Ultima Foresta di Fata d'Italia*, the Last Fairy Forest of Italy. His sole intention in coming here was to present his dominus with the branch in the time-honored tradition of their house, thus issuing his challenge to Gauntlet.

Heron inhaled deep, attempting to wrangle his anger. Perhaps *he was not deaf to reason*, he thought. "But the Torrid Zone can't be reached," he began, the words coming out in a rush. "No magus has reached the zone. No Hermetic expedition has ever returned."

Ktistés placed a reassuring hand on Heron's shoulder. "Not yet, no," he corrected cheerily enough. "While you were off on sabbatical, I have been hard at work here, corresponding with our recently retired primus, Umno of the Burning Acorn Vexillation. He has committed considerable resources to this undertaking. Resources that await us at Tripoli."

Then Ktistés spoke the words that signaled Heron's defeat even before the war had begun, "Son, I need my good *tiro*."

"*Accidenti...*"

Heron acquiesced.

Though he heard not another word, hours passed in conversation. His dominus spoke of scripture and Twilight with equal vigor. When he was too exhausted, he dismissed his discipulus. Heron emerged from the sanctum scathed. The resolve he had come here with was no more than bitter ashes upon his tongue.

In that time, night had come and thunder roared, stealing his attention.

From outside the sanctum, the discipulus took in the grandeur of Postestas. The covenant was a vast stronghold perched along the Gran Sasso's easternmost mountainside, overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Overhead, thunderstorm clouds were amassing, converging from all points of the compass to shadow the covenant's distant courtyard.

He knew that Cansu's Gauntlet had begun. Tradition dictated that apprentices of House Tremere meet their *dominus* in Certamen, a magical duel, in order to pass their Gauntlets. Apparently, Cansu dared her *dominus* on his terms: Creo Auram.

When Heron last saw her in the guardhouse he had made a promise, a promise he could no longer keep. Instead, he proceeded eastward, towards the sea, tucking the branch into his rope belt beside *Papà's* dagger.

NOW

Apropos of nothing, Ktistés turned on Heron: "You thought me a fool." There was a pregnant pause as Heron considered his words with great care.

Since leaving Postestas, theirs had been a sojourn of accumulating losses, beginning with their Black Cloak, Tarquinius. He fell victim of a mermaid's charms and drowned whilst en route to Tripoli. Their next loss came in the resources promised. At Tripoli, Ktistés expected a caravan of experienced men and supplies. Instead, said caravan consisted of naught more than a child translator, a half dozen men-at-arms, and a collection of camels that became belligerent whenever in his or his *discipulus*' presence. Wearisome, Ktistés ordered the

camels slaughtered and their meat dried for sustenance.

Cynically, Heron suspected Umno of subterfuge, an effort to remove his *dominus* from the playing field of Hermetic politics. Once Ktistés died or entered Final Twilight, then all the voting sigils he held would be inherited by his eldest living apprentice, a maga in the Levant far more sympathetic to Prima Poena's anti-Islamic position in the region. In private, he had voiced such concerns and was soundly rebuked for his efforts. Prior to Twilight, Heron had known Ktistés to be a man open to entertaining opposing viewpoints. Now, as death loomed closer, he seemed to possess precious little patience for dissent.

Then the child, Kahina, died. Like Ktistés, Kahina had some faerie blood to her and was blessed with the Gift of Tongues. She succumbed to heat exhaustion while on the Garamantian Road. Tragically, the expedition was a day's travel outside of the last oasis, Ghat. Ktistés had not taken this loss well.

Izem the Hunter also died. Izem, the most experienced man in the caravan, had appointed himself sergeant of the grogs in Tripoli. Since then he ruled with an iron fist and was little loved by his men. No tears were shed when his own namesake, a lion, mauled him in a drunken hunt. Without Izem to keep the men in line, the rest abandoned the expedition somewhere near Bilma. Soon thereafter Ktistés and Heron became the "honored guests" of the *Nasara al-Sahra* and taken to Fachi. There remained little question in Heron's mind that the grogs had sold them out, though he dared not broach the subject with his *dominus*.

Since their last tête-à-tête in Tripoli, Heron had kept his distance as best he could, for his *dominus* appeared to be inexorably losing his mind, prone to having entire conversations with himself. When questioned, he would insist he was communing with the Divine. What's more, his moods were mercurial in nature. His anger roiled like the tides, leaving Heron alone to mourn the slow erosion of a once great man.

Ktistés' laughter came in a bark; it was no longer a pleasant sound. "Well? You were clearly man enough to broach the subject once before, be man enough to speak up now. You are just like all the rest!"

Heron bristled at the implication. With clenched knuckles, he managed, "Sir, no, sir."

"No?"

"I'm still here, and I'd never--"

"Oh no! You would never say such thoughts aloud -- even when given permission to speak freely. You are too well-trained for that. By the way, you are welcome, you ungrateful whoreson. My vision told me that by the

end you would prove to be my Judas."

Heron had had enough.

He had loved this man with all his heart... This man who taught him the meaning of service and honor... This man who had been there the night *Papà* died, who had saved him from the sea... He had sworn to serve at this man's side, to take a sword if need be... He had done all that was asked, and so much more... And he had postponed pursuing his own dreams to ensure that this man, this contemptible, stunted man would not wallow in his own soiling...

And this man would dare question his loyalty?

The *discipulus* struck his *dominus*, hard.

Taken unawares, Ktistés went down, harder.

"Believing that the Divine spoke to you does not make you a fool, 'sir', it makes you mistaken. You were in Twilight, disoriented, lost. You happened upon an offhanded passage of scripture then and latched on, like a child grasping at his mother's teat!"

From the ground, Ktistés spat green on Heron. "Ah! There it is: Twilight!" With Oculi's help, he stood. "Have you not once stopped to consider that God might have used Twilight to remind me of His word, hm? That by making straight in the desert, as we have, we are preparing His way?"

"Honestly?"

The magus laughed again. "Please! Entertain me, boy. I would love, love to hear this."

Heron stood on uncertain ground. The magus could strike him dead for delivering such an insult to his person. Yet Heron ceased caring. When he spoke, his voice was low, measured.

"You're an old man," he began. "You went through an ordeal, a terrible ordeal, and you're all the lesser for it. Now, faced with your own mortality, you've come to the sad realization that your legacy isn't good enough, that you're somehow lacking. So, like the same incognizant faeries that 'stain' that blood of yours, you've dreamt up this bedtime story for yourself, about how you're actually on some divinely inspired quest from goddamn Jehovah, Himself. And here we are, on the edge of the world, dying by the footfall with no promise of intervention, Divine or otherwise."

The magus stared at him long and hard. "You could have left with the others."

"No, sir," Heron said, giving a slow, shake of his head. "You are my *dominus*, and I am a good *tiro*, a good soldier."

There was a pause then. Ktistés stared out into the Torrid Zone. All around them the night lost its opaqueness as the sun began to rise, announcing that their excursion was at an end.



"Make yourself useful and fetch me some water, *boy*," he said at last.

Dismissed, Heron turned on one heel and marched down the sand dune. From his belt, he removed the birchwood tree branch and began dowsing for water.

THEN

With a tentative step through a Mercere's Portal, Heron Moros watched in amazement as the unceasing commotion of Harco vanished into the glacial stillness of *Corno Grande* and shivered. At 3,000 meters, *Gran Sasso d'Italia's* "Big Horn" was the highest peak of the Italian Peninsula. In addition, the portal was located amid the Calderone Glacier to deter "uninvited guests" -- namely, invaders and vis-collectors alike. Here the air was thin and warmth, nonexistent.

"Welcome home, *tiro*," a voice greeted him.

It was Tarquinius, standing watch. As a Black Cloak, Tarquinius was clad in a manner evocative of Spartan, complete with spear and short sword. How he did not succumb to the elements was a minor mystery to Heron.

"It's good to be home!" he smiled, hiding his disappointment that none, save the assigned guard, were there to greet him.

The smile was not returned. Tarquinius said nothing. Compared to his compeers, he was said to be rather loquacious. However, as the silence drew ever onward, Heron began suspecting this reputation was in jest.

Beneath ice laden breath, the *tiro* muttered, "Good talk," as he proceeded past the Black Cloak and began down the mountainside stone path toward the Covenant of Postestas.

Heron started to leave earshot when the Black Cloak spoke again.

"*Tiro*," Tarquinius boomed, "she waits in the guardhouse."

At hearing this most welcomed news, Heron let out a hoot then made haste to the guardhouse, all the while unaware of the slight smile tugging at the Black Cloak's stern visage.

Up an embankment, Heron made his approach. The guardhouse was less a house and more a lean-to. Outside a pair of banners were posted like listless sentries. One belonged to Postestas and came complete with a white fist clenched over a wave on a field of blue, whilst the other was unimaginatively monochromatic and belonged to the Black Cloaks.

Pushing through the doors, Heron took stock of the contents therein. Inside, there stood an emptied cot, a smoldering hearth and, mounted on one wall, an enchanted warhorn used last during the Schism War.

True to Tarquinius' word, Cansu was there, alone and quite naked.

Heron stammered.

With intent, she approached, pressing her hand against his quivering lips, silencing him. She smiled, mischievous stars alighting her gaze. He inhaled, breathing deep the scent of Tuscany on a warm summer's day.

"No more talking, *aşkı*m, just dancing," she whispered.

An hour later, the dancing was done and all the red was gone. She stood up. He was much slower to lean over the cot, attempting to catch his breath as she began to dress.

"Cansu, I--" he managed.

Over her shoulder, she winked, "I know, *aşkı*m," then slid on her trousers. "Alas! I have no time. Gauntlet begins at dusk and I still have to report for last inspection. I--" She was rummaging through their discarded clothing when she came across his prize.

"You have your tree branch!"

"Only cost me a tussle with a werewolf, too." He mustered a modest smile.

She laughed. "You joke."

"Wish I were." From the cot, he reached toward her, silently asking for the branch's return.

She considered him as she handed the branch over. Then she remembered she was still bootless and continued in earnest. "You will tell me all about it later?" she asked, pulling on a boot.

"You'll be the first."

"Good," she said, pulling on its mate. "When will you present it?"

"Soon as I leave here, I imagine." He laid back down on the cot, arms crossed behind his head, reassured. "Once the branch is his, he has no grounds not to accept the challenge, and I'll have my Gauntlet at long last."

That brought her up short.

A shadow of concern crossed her countenance as she pulled down her tunic. In that instant, her moxie vanished. "You will be at my Gauntlet tonight, right?"

From the cot, he arose and came over to her as naked as she now felt. He cradled her visage, and promised, "I'll be there. Find me."

Her smile blossomed. "I will."

With that the lovers shared a parting kiss then she was gone and he was once more alone.

NOW

The sun had not yet risen above the surrounding sand dunes and Heron Moros longed to be alone once more.



At his heels was Oculi.

Amiable... tiresome... Oculi...

Though good-natured, the Monoculus would not cease his incessant prattlings. Compounding matters, he seemed incapable of saying anything remotely useful. One moment he educated Heron on the dietary restrictions of some local river deity, the many-tusked *Hipuh Potuhmuhs*, the next he explicated Heron on the semantical distinctions between the terms "elder" and "older" -- along with the myriad social implications inherent thereof -- in Monoculi society, and the next he would extol Heron on his favorite color (sunrise orange) -- all seemingly in the same breath, bereft of any transitions whatsoever. As if the topics were somehow intrinsically linked to one another. Still, the Monoculus had his uses as pack-mule as he carried the shovels needed for excavation.

As per Heron, he ceased paying attention somewhere around the mating tendencies of a large, flightless bird known as the *Struthio* (apparently, back home, Oculi bred these beasts to serve as mounts). Instead, he waited until Oculi took a breath, gave some noncommittal response, and continued concentrating on the task before him with branch in hand.

Heron had chosen to go westward seeking water. He measured his stride into long, awkward steps in order to clear as much distance as he could. In between each step, he paused, concentrating upon his makeshift dowsing rod. Looking back, Heron estimated he had a quarter-hour before the sun crested over the nearest sand dune.

He kept to the *ergs* of Ténéré, cautious as not to venture too close to the Torrid Zone. If the zone was composed entirely of salt, then he doubted there would much drinkable water there.

Not that you're having much luck here, mind you, he thought ruefully.

With each step, the sun rose higher still -- as did the temperature. Their reserves were nonexistent now. His waterskin was as parched as he was. He supposed his *dominus* could create water for them, using a low-level *Creo Aquam* spell. But water created using magic would prove hollow, a short-term balm masking compounding thirst.

Heat addled, Heron persevered, aware that theirs was an untenable situation: there simply was no water this close to the sun.

Meanwhile, Oculi continued prattling on, blithely unaware of how dire their straits actually were. The Monoculus began expounding upon the eccentricities of various desert beetles, and their respective nutritious value, when Heron had had enough.

With a searing rage that he did not even know existed until coming to the desert, he let out a primal scream, whirling around and striking Oculi with the dowsing rod repeatedly, all the while shouting, "Would you please shut the hell up?!", at the top of his lungs.

His senses returned to him when he heard the snap. It took three strikes to break the branch.

Bewildered, he stood there, panting, desperate to draw in air that would not come. Staring down at the broken branch he could not quite comprehend what this meant. All he knew was that something much deeper had been inexplicably lost, but what he could not rightly say.

From the broken branch, he looked up. In his tantrum, Heron failed to notice that their time roaming the desert together was up: the sun had risen high over the sand dunes.

For his part, In Ictu Oculi stood there on dueling sandbanks, staring at the ground ahead. Behind him was the sun. The Monoculus was sad, almost heartsick, a man who has somewhere else to be and does not want go.

Heron looked down, seeing Oculi's shadow stretch far ahead of him across the desert sands -- outracing him.

"Oculi die now," Oculi said.

A second later the screaming began as the dueling sandbanks exploded outward, consuming amiable Monoculus. Heron could do nothing save watch in horror as the earth after-birthed a pair of canine-sized scorpions for the sole purpose of tearing Oculi asunder with their pincers.

Though he had never seen the beasts before, Heron knew these creatures. Despite his shortcomings, Izem the Hunter had taught him well: *Deathstalker Scorpions*. Said to be highly venomous, these creatures lie in wait just beneath the sand, soaking in the desert's warmth before pouncing upon their prey when least expected. Incredulously Heron mused, Izem failed to mention that they were pack hunters, just as he heard the sand move behind him on either side. There were, at least, two more here, perhaps more.

Enraged, the *discipulus* sought to defend himself through force of arms. Reaching backward to where his weapon of choice, a trident, should be, Heron made the unfortunate discovery that he had left it behind with Ktistés so as not to overburden him on his return trek.

The sand began undulating around him, surrounding him.

He inhaled a deep breath and concentrated, drawing time to a perceived stand still.

In his mind's eye, he went to the candlelight, opening





his book of Learned Spells, perusing the pages for an applicable spell given his present predicament. He had been trained as a *Parma Hermeticus*, a league of Hermetic guards. All his spells were designed to either thwart mundane combatants, such as *Repel the Wooden Shaft* or *Rusted Decay of Ten-Score Years*, or to strengthen his own person to endure punishment, as was the case with *Doublet of Impenetrable Silk* or *Gift of the Bear's Fortitude*.

Admittedly, of the two categories, the latter would have been useful had he had the foresight to cast them ahead of time. Sadly for him, the Deathstalker Scorpions had not obliged to inform him of their intentions.

These were beasts, he reminded himself; beasts require Animal. He turned over his spell book and went to that section. There were precious few spells there.

He could cast *Circle of Beast Warding*.

The drawback to that spell was that it required a circle to cast. While he imagined the desert sand would prove accommodating in this, he could not guarantee the wind would. One strong gust would break the circle, dispelling the ward and leaving him exposed. Best case scenario: He would have magical protection and could wait the beasts out. Worst case scenario: There was no waiting the beasts out and he would be torn to shreds when the ward gave out at sunset.

No, he needed something more proactive. He needed—

Blunt the Viper's Fangs.

Granted, the *Perdo Animal* spell was not the ideal spell of choice. (In an ideal world that would be *Cripple the Howling Wolf*, but that was beyond his capabilities at present and he was loathed to cast any spontaneous spell this deep in a hostile land.) But it might be enough to make them think twice.

With his answer, he exhaled that same breath, and returned to the present.

One of the pair that had torn apart Oculi moments earlier lost interest in his still-writhing carcass and was approaching. The scorpion's movements were skittish, almost cautious. It appeared to Heron that the beast, now exposed, was sizing him up.

All the better, he thought, making his stand in the sand.

With a loud voice and exaggerated gestures, he cast his spell, his last.

As he worked his magics, channeling the base, elemental forces of the universe to purport to his will, he knew something had gone horribly wrong.

Back in his mind's eye, he saw the candle brighten, then all at once extinguish. In the distance, he heard

someone screaming in pain. It took a long moment to realize that someone was him.

Beside him, an undulation exploded, spewing sand, as another Deathstalker Scorpion entered the fray. Before the sand could subside, Heron was on the move. He ran.

He ran eastward, and he ran hard, lest he meet a fate similar to poor Oculi's.

He ran towards assured safety, towards Ktistés, towards his *dominus*.

Surely, his *dominus* had erected the sheltered needed to wait out the day by now.

Surely, his *dominus* would know how to handle these beasts.

With the last of his confidence spent, he cleared the distance, running up the last sand dune and reaching the summit in record time. Thereupon he collapsed, crestfallen.

For there was no shelter to be had, and no *dominus* either. In their place stood a lonesome pillar of salt cast in his *dominus'* likeness.

Final Twilight had come for Ktistés of House Tremere.

Fatigued, Heron crawled on hands and knees toward the pillar. He wanted to examine him one last time. The saline simulacrum wore an expression akin to utter and profound contentment. Whatever happened here in their absence had pleased Ktistés to the welcomed end.

With wavering hand, the *discipulus* reached out for his *dominus* one last time. As he drew closer, an arid zephyr came, whisking the countless granules of salt to the wind.

Heron's throat constricted, though he had no time to process what had happened. All he knew was that he was still in danger. He could hear the sand moving, could see the undulations closing in.

With no more choices availed to him, Heron former *discipulus* of the late Ktistés of House Tremere made straight for the Torrid Zone.

NOW & THEN

Heron Moros was broken.

He had no Gift, and no *dominus* to guide him through that monotonous desolation where time held no meaning.

Somewhere in that vast nothingness a door opened as Heron staggered through.

Once he cleared the threshold, he realized that the door somehow led to the War Room, the council chambers of Postestas. Inside were his *dominus*, Ktistés, and Cansu's, Boran, engaged in a heated discussion with one another, mediating as best he could

was the covenant's princeps, Garvil. All were younger men.

Once the discussion reached an impasse, with the former hurling accusations of recklessness toward the latter, Garvil raised his hand, silencing the room. "It is agreed then: Ktistés, as you won the duel in question, you also won first rights of *dominus* where the child is concerned," he said. "Should you choose otherwise, those rights revert to Boran here."

He waited to hear opposition on this matter. When none was forthcoming, he concluded, "Very well. I will expect that you both are less... contentious with Certamen in the future. Is that understood?"

Of the War Room, Heron Moros asked, "Is this death?"

"Heron Moros is dead," Meltem of House Tremere answered though he knew she was not addressing him.

To one side, he saw her standing within a cave that should not be there. The sight was enough to stop him dead in his tracks. Behind her was a child, standing at attention. A *tiro*, she was no more than eleven, Heron estimated. She served Meltem as torchbearer, illuminating the darkness with a simple *Palm of Flame* cantation.

In truth, he paid the child little and less heed as his attention was squarely upon her, Meltem. For all intents and purposes, she was in her autumn, her hair touched with silver throughout. In spite of this, she was no less captivating to him than she had been on the shoals of the Adriatic Sea. Surrounding her was a modest procession of a dozen or so, mourners all. Each waited on her next words with bated breath, and she did not disappoint. "Heron died as he lived," Meltem continued, her assured voice extending past the cave and into the Torrid Zone, "protecting all of us, those few he deemed most precious to him in his world."

She must be a princeps now, Heron reasoned. Even as the thought occurred to him he somehow knew his reasoning had been in error. He took a step closer and began examining her surroundings with greater care. That is when he noticed the Gate of Eurydice. This was no commonplace cave; this was the Altar of the Standards. The Altar was buried deep beneath Coeris, where Tremere gather to commemorate their honored dead. *She's no princeps; she's prima*.

As if to confirm his realization, she held out a sigil—a sigil that Heron had never seen before and all at once knew to be his own—then placed the sigil within a recess, along all the rest.

"He was the best of us, and he will be m, missed."

From the Torrid Zone, Heron staggered toward her. He wanted to soothe her, to reassure her that he was

still alive, that—

"You should have killed him."

Heron turned. He now stood outside the Half-Glade of the *Ultima Foresta di Fata*. Beside him was Silva Ambages of House Merinita. Together, the outsiders watched as a pack of werewolves ceremoniously turned their backs on one of their own. Their ensuing howlings were melancholic, haunting.

"Their values are not ours," she narrated, voice laden with sorrow. "Your 'mercy' has condemned him to a life bereft of meaning." Across the pasture, the noble beast made no protest. He simply stole into the woods, an outcast. "For a pack animal with no pack has no place in these woods."

Once he was gone, the pack departed and silence reigned.

"Here," she said, handing over his prize: a single birchwood tree branch. Heron accepted, taking hold. As the pair held onto opposite ends, she leaned in, adding, "Know that this will bring you no happiness, *tiro*."

"Wait," Heron begged. His voice was raw with thirst. "I, I—"

Standing in the Torrid Zone, at the crossroads in-between the War Room, the Altar of the Standards and the Half-Glade, Heron had not expected to have a wave of water come crashing down into his open maw, drowning out his words, and washing away the scenery.

Taken aback, he inhaled, sputtering. Acting on instinct, he hurled himself to one side. Clinging onto the splintering railing, he began coughing up as much salt water as he could, ensuring his intake was minimal. It was here that he made several maddening discoveries in rapid succession. First, the Torrid Zone was gone and both the glade and the altar were nowhere to be seen; second, he was now somehow no older than the torchbearer had been, and lastly, he heard *Papà* singing.

Of all these discoveries, the last one gave him the most pause. *Papà* always sang whenever the seas became too rough. He did so to calm Heron, to reassure him that it would be all right.

Easing back into the boat, he could not help staring, agog, at *Papà*. There he sat, larger than life itself, oars in hand, rowing against the growing tempest, singing with all his might. He winked as he started in on the chorus again. Behind him, Heron watched in slow dawning dread as a thundersnow storm began in earnest, enveloping *The Surly Mermaid*.

It would not be long now, he thought. Soon the sea would swallow *Papà*, orphaning him all over again. Ktistés would come, and his apprenticeship would begin. He tried to choke down the sobs, to no avail.





Heron wept.

Tears ran earthward, escaping the sweat-stained gravel of his stubble to splash upon the smooth cobblestones outside his childhood home. Once again he became spectator, more specter than man. He watched as a woman he has no recollection of fled into Burano's predawn sea smoke. She too wept, her tears pooling with his as she ran right through him, oblivious to his ethereal presence. In her wake, abandoned on some stranger's stoop, was a swaddled bundle. Angrily Heron shouted after her, "*Why is this happening to me?!*"

In answer, a hand took his. However, this was not Papà's hand. This was a child's hand.

Bewildered, Heron looked around, regaining his bearings once more.

Now, he was no longer a child at sea or a specter outside a house that was no longer his home; now, he was an old man at war. Dressed as he was in enchanted armor, he was an imposing sight to behold, even at his advanced age. He stood on a parapet overlooking the battlefield. Behind him, he could hear the trumpets sound as his men assumed their positions. He had trained them well, and took pride in this.

Soon the Battle for Coeris would begin.

Standing at his side, holding his hand, was the same *tiro* Heron had seen earlier, the torchbearer. He was reminded then how much she looked like Cansu had at her age. When the *tiro* spoke she did so with a wisdom

that belied her age: "Faith does not require understanding, *Papà*, only gratitude and acceptance."

That is when the siege engines struck and all hell broke loose.

Dying of thirst, his wanderings had ended.

He collapsed into a heap on that hard panned earth. There he laid; labored breaths inhaling and exhaling salt, swelling his leathery tongue. Viscous spittle clung to his sun scarred countenance. With what strength remained, he rolled onto his back, allowing him to bask in the sun's unwavering mercilessness. His breathing slowed as his vision clouded over.

Gratitude? he thought. *Sard that.*

Acceptance, however, was another matter. For he accepted that he had gone mad somewhere during his lonesome wanderings; he accepted that his experiences were naught more than his own depraved hallucinations, attempting in vain to derive meaning where none exist; he accepted he would die now without ever seeing her again.

It was as he accepted this last "truth" that he heard a singular voice whisper to him in the distance.

Her voice...

"I found you, aşkim."

Then came the caws as the earth began to quake beneath the unceasing tread of a gigantic beast charging toward him. Heartbroken, Heron Moros gazed intently into heaven and saw his solace: a lone bird circling overhead.



Heron Moros discipulus Ktistés of Tremere

By Jim Seals

Concept: Trained as a Parma Hermeticus, Heron instead becomes a failed apprentice when a magical botch suppresses his Gift.

Characteristics: Intelligence +2, Perception -2, Presence 0, Communication +1, Strength +2, Stamina +2, Dexterity 0, Quickness 0

Size: 0

Age: 27 (27); Born: Autumn 1192

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Virtues & Flaws: The Gift; Failed Apprentice; Affinity with Single Weapon, Skilled Parens, Tough, True Love: Cansu, Warrior, Well-Traveled; Minor Magical Focus: Certamen*; Suppressed Gift; Dutybound: Good Tiro, Embittered: Ktistés**, Infamous, Uncertain Faith

*Free House Virtue

Personality Traits: Good Tiro +5, True Love +3, Embittered toward Ktistés +2, Uncertain Faith +2, Servile +1

Reputations: "Good Tiro" -4 (House Tremere)

Combat:

Trident: Init +3, Attack +9, Defense +9, Damage +7

Kick: Init -1, Attack +4, Defense +3, Damage +5

Soak: +5 (+11 *Doublet of Impenetrable Silk* & Gift of the Bear's Fortitude)

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

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

Abilities: Arabic 3 (Securing Passage), Area Lore: Apennine 1 (Covenant of Postestas), Area Lore: The Great Desert 1 (Ténéré Desert), Area Lore: The Tell 2 (Tripoli), Area Lore: Venice 1 (Venetian Lagoon), Artes Liberalis 1 (Astronomy), Awareness 1 (Keeping Watch), Athletics 2 (Long Distance Walking), Brawl 3 (Below the Belt), Carouse 1 (Games of Chance), Code of Hermes 1 (Certamen Law), Concentration 1 (Casting Spells), Dowsing 3 (Drinking Water), Etiquette 2 (Superiors), Faerie Lore 1 (The Last Italian Faerie Forest), Folk Ken 2 (Fishermen), Guile 1 (Port Authorities), Latin 4 (Hermetic Terminology), Magic Theory 3 (Learning Spells), Organization Lore: House Tremere 2 (Covenant of Postestas), Organization Lore: Order of Hermes 1 (Roman Tribunal), Profession: Caretaker 2 (Ktistés),

Profession: Fisherman 1 (Casting Fishing Net), Single Weapon 5 (Trident), Survival 1 (7) (Adriatic Sea), Swim 2 (Adriatic Sea), Veneto 5 (Fishermen)

Arts: Creo 7, Intellego 0, Muto 8, Perdo 4, Rego 4, Animal 4, Aquam 0, Auram 0, Corpus 8, Herbam 4, Ignem 0, Imaginum 0, Mentem 0, Terram 4, Vim 0

Twilight Scars: None

Equipment: Loose desert hiking clothing, trident
Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Known Spells:

- *Doublet of Impenetrable Silk* (MuAn 15) +14
- *Blunt the Viper's Fangs* (PeAn 15) +10
- *Circle of Beast Warding* (ReAn 5) +10
- *Bind Wound* (CrCo 10) +17
- *Purification of the Festering Wounds* (CrCo 20) +17
- *Gift of the Bear's Fortitude* (MuCo 25) +18
- *Endurance of the Berserkers* (ReCo 15) +14
- *Curse of Rotting Wood* (PeHe 5) +10
- *Repel the Wooden Shaft* (ReHe 10) +10
- *Palm of Flame* (Crlg 5) +9
- *Edge of the Razor* (MuTe 20) +14
- *Rusted Decay of Ten-Score Years* (PeTe 10) +10

Appearance: Handsome, Heron Moros is a muscular, dark-hued man of indeterminate origin. His is a broad, luminous smile. His palms are calloused over in crisscrossing scar tissue, a souvenir of a childhood spent working the nets.

Customization Notes

Leading into "Make Straight in the Desert," Heron Moros was created as a 27 year-old Hermetic apprentice. As is standard, he began his apprenticeship when he was 10 and was scheduled to complete his Gauntlet at 25. However, his dominus' episode of Twilight and subsequent aging crisis waylaid this ambition, costing him two years of stunted development as caretaker and then wayward wanderer. Following the narrative, Heron was awarded 5 Experience Points from adventuring in Survival for autumn 1219, and 2 additional points from exposure that winter as he recuperated.

Although suppressed, Heron remains Gifted. If, through the course of play, Heron manages to unlock his Gift somehow he will need to rebalance his flaws.



Should he be sworn into the Parma Hermeticus League after all then his True Love: Cansu virtue would be replaced by Parma Hermeticus: Meltem.

New Flaw: Embittered

Personality, Major or Minor

Whether justified or not, you resent someone (or some group) for past wrongs. Yet, for reasons you may not understand, you cannot bring yourself to outright hate the offending party. You automatically take the Personality Flaw Embittered +4 (Major) or +2 (Minor) at character creation. All rolls involving said party suffer the corresponding penalty. Confidence to overcome this penalty must be spent in advance of the roll.

Background

Born in 1192, Heron Moros was abandoned as a small child on the docks of Venice. There he was taken in by a kindly fisherman, Massimo. A lonesome man with no surviving relations, Massimo chose to raise the child as his own, never once volunteering the truth of Heron's parentage. While under his care, Massimo taught his newfound figlio how to fish. Of his childhood, Heron fondly remembers the hours spent with his papà onboard The Surly Mermaid on the Adriatic Sea.

During the last such excursion, the pair were besieged by a thundersnow storm. The storm claimed Massimo's life and would have claimed Heron's own had it not been for the timely intervention of one Ktistés of nearby Postestas. As per his role, Ktistés was dueling in Certamen with an opposing sodales when their magics ran wild, creating the aforementioned thundersnow storm. Guilt-ridden, the aging Tremere chose to raise the child as an apprentice when it was soon thereafter discovered that Heron was Gifted. Heron was ten years old.

Eager to prove his worth, Heron's apprenticeship at Postestas was exemplary. He quickly earned the reputation of "good tiro" throughout the covenant for his willingness to serve. Recognizing this trait, Ktistés steered Heron's training toward the Parma Hermeticus, a league of Hermetic wizards dedicated guarding their fellow sodali. Around this same time, Heron was also awarded the privilege of mentoring the newer recruits in the basics of Certamen, engaging in introductory bouts. One such bout with Cansu discipula Boran left the new recruit Twilight scarred. As Cansu recovered, the two began a passionate liaison that continued until the end of her apprenticeship.

It was as Heron's apprenticeship was drawing to a close that his dominus endured a brief episode of Twilight while renewing his longevity ritual. With no ritual

Parma Hermeticus

Fashioning themselves after the Praetorian Guards of Ancient Rome, this league seeks to subvert their own ambitions in service of another magus, mainly as a shield grog.

Founded in 1017, the Parma Hermeticus began when the First Prefect, Clotilde of House Jerbiton, lost her inamorata during the dying days of the Schism War. Bereaved, she abandoned her art and rededicated her magics to the defense of another. In time, Clotilde sought like-minded survivors of the war and created an all-inclusive league that knew no singular house.

Steeped in tradition, a Parma Hermeticus must swear their service to a particular magus. For players seeking to join the league's ranks, a magus must be named, either at character creation or as a result of play prior to admittance. Those discipuli trained within the league, the naming of a particular magus is a matter of some ceremony, occurring soon after the Oath of Hermes is sworn.

Should the named magus die during play it is not unheard of for a Parma Hermeticus to commit ritualistic suicide, thus invoking the final fate of the Profane Prefect.

Mechanically speaking, the Parma Hermeticus Minor Hermetic Virtue (PC) or Major Story Flaw (NPC) works in much the same way as True Love does (see: ArM5 pg. 50 & 59 respectively). Players seeking to create a Parma Hermeticus should refrain from taking Proud as a Major Personality Flaw.

to protect him, Ktistés suffered a severe aging crisis that winter. He was now bedridden with none to take care of him. None that is save Heron.

Heron set aside his studies -- even deferring Princeps Garvil's offer to complete Heron's Gauntlet in Ktistés' stead -- to serve as his dominus' caretaker. It was during this time that the same "good tiro" reputation turned sour. What once was a badge of respect was now one of thinly veiled contempt. Close to a year would pass before Ktistés' would regain his strength. Once he had, Heron embarked to the Ultima Foresta di Fata, the Last Fairy Forest of Italy, to acquire his birchwood tree branch and issue the challenge. Upon his return, Heron discovered that he would accompany his dominus to Mythic Africa on a spiritual quest. A quest that ends in the Torrid Zone.

Having been given an Arcane Connection by a maga from Hibernia, Onesimus [a]of House Bjornaer saved Heron Moros from the zone. The former slave turned Christian abolitionist has the heartbeast of a



monoceros, allowing him to endure the zone's harsh conditions. By spring 1220, Heron Moros has recovered to discover he is a man at a crossroads. Indebted to Onesimus, he enlists in the Bjornaer's personal crusade to break the chattel slave trade, all the while secretly attempting to free his own Gift and return to the woman he loves.





Join The Team

Submission Guidelines



Peripheral Code cannot survive without your help. In particular, we seek submissions which go beyond the canonical *Ars Magica* setting, game rules, or traditional storylines, but manuscripts on any topic of interest to *Ars Magica* fans are welcome, both feature articles and submissions to our regular columns.



Feature Articles

Feature articles are 2,000-5,000 words.



- **Adventures:** While every covenant is different and stories will usually be custom-written, there is a long history of adventures written for *Ars Magica*. *Thrice-Told Tales*, *Tales of Mythic Europe*, *Tales of Power*, *Hooks*, and *Mythic Locations* are all good resources. In particular, the distinct single-session episodes of *Thrice-Told Tales* make excellent models for writers.



Adventures win the gold medal of submissions; there is no single category more needed, and no category so seldom filled.



- **Alternate Settings:** We eagerly look for articles on alternate historical periods, wholly original worlds, or even *Ars Magica* set in recognized settings from films, fiction, and other games. This includes new Houses and alternate takes on the Founders, an always-popular topic for conversation amongst *Ars* fans.



- **Alternate Systems:** We would like to see articles adapting *Mythic Europe* and/or *Hermetic* magic to other game systems.



- **Margins of the Order:** With the official *Ars Magica* 5th Edition line having come to a close, everything those books have not covered is now fair game for us. All those blank spaces are now the margins, and we would like you to help us write in them. Example manuscripts include a rival covenant, a potential covenant site, a mythic location, new *Hermetic* Societies, *Verditius* confraternities, *Bjornaer* septs, mystery cults, lineages, hedge magic traditions, and so on.



- **Fiction:** *Ars Magica* fiction for *Peripheral Code* should be stand-alone short stories. Alternate settings and historical periods are welcome. This is an excellent place to test out ideas, characters, and settings which you might develop further once they prove successful in *Peripheral Code*. Many established authors use anthologies and magazines to draft stories they later develop into novels. Let us do that for you.



Columns

Regular columns are a good choice for authors submitting for the first time or who do not have the time to write long feature articles. Some columns are designed to help GMs with the work of game preparation, while others are of more general interest to all *Ars Magica* players. A full column might be 1,000-2,000 words, but for columns made up of small elements (*Illuminations*, *Goblin Market*, *Reviews*, *House Rules*) an individual book, spell, or review might be as few as 250 words.

- **Magi of the Order:** This regular column presents a single *Hermetic* magus at a single point in his life with full game stats and spell list, talisman and familiar if appropriate, and any original spells and enchanted items. The character needs to have *Story Seeds* that make him useful to the GM; traditionally he either has something the players need, needs something the players have, or has goals which will conflict with the players. We discourage you from submitting your own PC; your character is never as interesting to everyone else as they are to you.

- **Goblin Market:** This column spotlights enchanted items and *Magical Things*. Avoid items which simply duplicate spells which are already in the game. Submissions should include complete game statistics for the item, using the format found in other *Ars Magica* books. Give the item a history and suggest how it might create or be used in stories.

- **Illuminations:** Our library column details books and spells for a covenant library. While the book needs game mechanics, it is also important that the book be interesting. Its author, history, physical details, current location, and game mechanics can all contribute. Design notes are useful when introducing new spells; explain how the spell conforms to guidelines, and address any game balance concerns. Give the spell some context: who invented it, how is it used, and how can a PC get ahold of it.

- **House Rules:** *Ars Magica* is often house ruled, and if you have some of those rules which have worked especially well for you and your table, tell us about them. House rules should be tested before you send them to us, and you must include examples in your submission illustrating how the rule works. Remember that readers will probably not be able to ask you

questions later. You might include discussion about why and how you developed this house rule, and how it changed through play test. Short submissions (less than 1,000 words) are fine, but we will keep them until we can gather them together into a single column of at least 1,000 words. Larger submissions can be published alone.

- **Reviews:** *Peripheral Code* seeks a regular reviewer who would contribute a column of reviews every issue. See this issue's editorial for details. More generally, we are looking for book, film, game, and other product reviews which would be of interest to Ars fans. With few official Ars products on the horizon, this is a time for players of the game to look elsewhere for game aids and inspiration. Perhaps you have already reviewed a fantasy RPG, novel, or film on Amazon or your blog. We'd like to consider it for publication in *Peripheral Code*.

- **NPCs:** Not all NPCs need character sheets, but the ones that do are covenfolk, grogs, or other characters with whom the PCs interact regularly. Strong NPC submissions include story seeds, roleplaying advice, complete game stats, and a complete background for the character.

- **Antagonists:** Ars Magica has a uniquely labor-intensive process of NPC and monster creation. Authors who do this work for Storyguides around the world win the silver medal for submissions. Stat blocks and spell lists for allies (who the SG can improvise) and PCs (which players prefer to make for themselves) are less useful, but every Storyguide needs antagonists, preferably with story seeds and clear goals in opposition to the players.

- **Other Columns** (for example, on the Realms of the Divine, Infernal, and Faerie) are possible, if we receive regular submissions which merit their creation.

Format: Manuscripts should be Word documents. Do not format your manuscript with bold, italics, bullet points, or other formatting; if you are sending a document you have already formatted, remove all formatting before you submit it! Send manuscripts to jason.tondro@gmail.com

Art Submissions

Peripheral Code believes artists should be paid what the artist believes the work is worth. Peripheral Code also has no significant art budget. But we are especially interested in two things:

- **Cover Art:** Cover art needs to be magical in theme, but is not otherwise bound by the Ars Magica canon or setting. This is a particularly good place for us to feature art you have already created, and which you might sell in other form (as, for example, prints). If we can work with you on something like this, please reach out to us with samples of your work and your financial requirements.

- **Interior Artists:** Art for columns and feature articles should be created specific to each article. Artists working in this capacity need to be fast and modestly priced. If you are interested in contributing to Peripheral Code in this capacity, reach out to us with samples of your work and your financial requirements.

Rewards: Writers who contribute to Peripheral Code receive an electronic copy of the issue in which their work appears and 4 XP in Craft: Writing.

More seriously, writing for Ars Magica has been described as more of a meta-game than a business proposition. Authors in Peripheral Code participate in the game of making the game, and they play this game for fun. If writing for Peripheral Code is not fun, we certainly understand your desire to take your writing time elsewhere. The magazine does not make a profit; income from issue sales incompletely defers the cost of cover and interior art. Costs in excess of sales are bourn by the editor.

Send us your work. We want to read it..





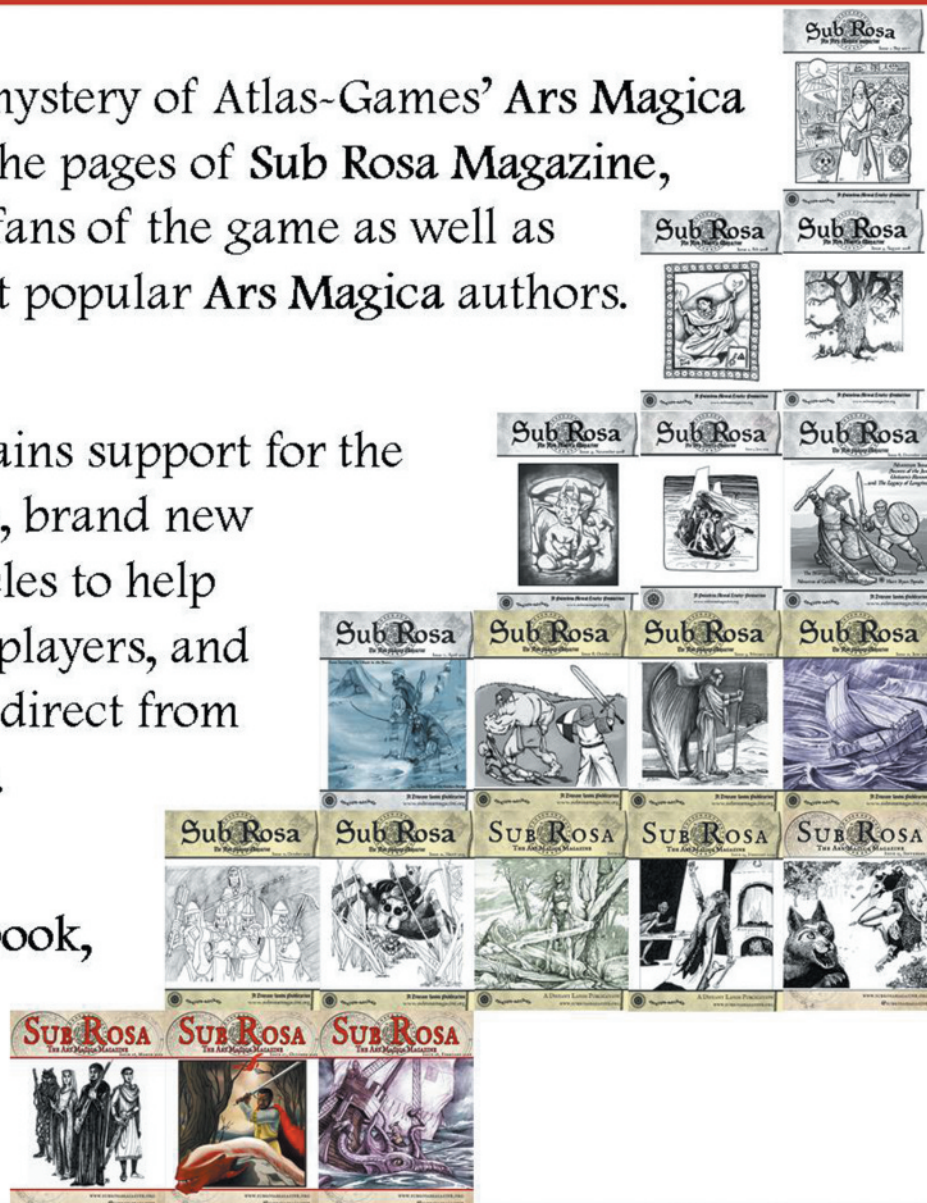
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THE ARS MAGICA MAGAZINE

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