

Sub Rosa

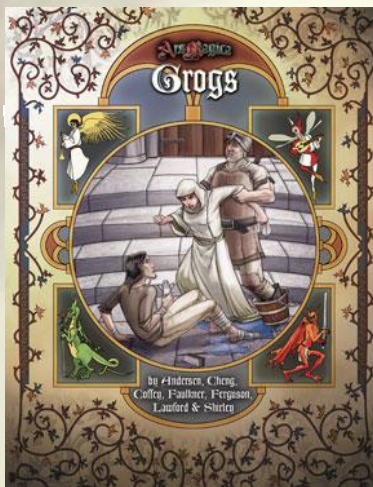
The Ars Magica Magazine

Issue 10, June 2012



A Distant lands Publication
www.subrosamagazine.org

Out Now and Coming Soon



Groggs

Authors: Mark Shirley, Christian Rosenkjaer Andersen, Evangeline Cheng, Camo Coffey, Mark Faulkner, Timothy Ferguson, Mark Lawford
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry
Stock Number: AG0301 | ISBN: 1-58978-129-5 | MSRP: \$29.95 US
Format: 144 pages, hardcover
Release Date: July 2012

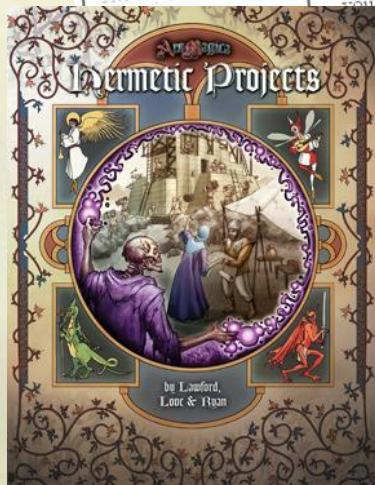
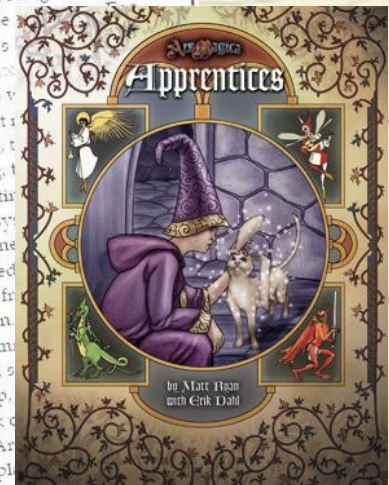


ARS MAGICA 5TH EDITION

The Roleplaying Game of Myth and Magic

Apprentices

Authors: Matt Ryan with Erik Dahl
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry
Stock Number: AG0300 | ISBN: 1-58978-128-7 | MSRP: \$19.95
Format: 80 pages, softcover
Release Date: Available Now

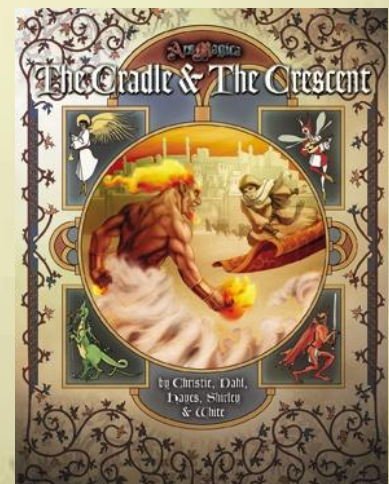


Hermetic Projects

Authors: Mark Lawford (Great Tower, Hermetic Shipyard), Richard Love (Burning City, Intangible Assassin), Matt Ryan (Living Corpse, Menagerie)
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry
Stock Number: AG0299 | ISBN: 1-58978-126-0 | MSRP: \$29.95 US
Format: 144 pages, hardcover
Release Date: Available Now

The Cradle & The Crescent

Authors: Niall Christie, Erik Dahl, Lachie Hayes, Mark Shirley, Alex White
Cover Artist: Grey Thornberry
Stock Number: AG0298 | ISBN: 1-58978-123-6 | MSRP: 32.95
Format: 192 pages, hardcover
Release Date: Available Now



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June 2012

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This issue was laid out using MS Publisher 2010 and makes use of the MagicMedieval and GoodCityModern Plain fonts.

Tweets from the foundation of the Order:

maestrojerbiton: @notcriamon Dude! That is some serious ink!
notcriamon: @maestrojerbiton One word, seven letters, when the hollow quill breaks, it is without substance.

maestrojerbiton: @notcriamon Oh man, that is deep! Do another one!

notcriamon: @maestrojerbiton These three letters mark you as the reflection of a wise man, the sturdy horse who hears from afar.

Contribute to Sub Rosa

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

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

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Individual Single Issue: US\$4.50

Individual Subscription – 4 issues: US\$16

Troupe Single Issue: US\$13

Troupe Subscription – 4 issues: US\$35

Under the Rose

Double-figures. Just a one and a zero next to each other. It shouldn't mean any more than the numbers either side of it, but somehow it does. This is, in case you're still in any doubt, issue 10 of **Sub Rosa**. That's a nice little milestone to celebrate. And what better way to do that than by introducing a new contributor?

If you look over the list of playtesters in the front of each new book, you'll more than likely see David Staveley mentioned a few times, but this is his **Ars Magica** writing debut, having written the very nice little Mystery Cult of Silvanus for us. But he's actually more influential to this issue than just one article as he's also the player behind the often-manipulated, sometime put-upon, and known-to-occasionally-rage-quit Benedic of Ex Miscellanea as depicted each issue in the Journal of Vulcanis Argens. Of course, Argens' view is entirely skewed and I still hope one day to see Benedic's Journal to discover his unique take on those shared events and to find out just what he was up to while the other magi played at politics. I'm sure it was nefarious.

If that's not enough, he also played a part when I was working through ideas on the Hermetic Shipwright, those same ideas that you'll find in this issue in a fully developed strategy for building out your own Hermetic Shipwright player character.

And lastly, in one of those rare instances of very apt timing, Gerald Wylie's Storyguide's Handbook this issue strikes a personal chord. Until the end of last year, Dave and I had spent and enjoyed nine years across a

couple of **Ars Magica** sagas. But now the old group has wound down and we're currently without a saga. It's a weird feeling, and I wish I'd read Gerald's article this time last year as he looks at what troupes can do to make sure that they get the most out of their sagas and how to plan for that eventual and inevitable end.

Okay, that's enough about Dave. Forget Dave. Done? Good. We've got more in this issue.

Stormbreaker is a scenario that literally drops an enchanted ship into your saga. Of course, you get nothing for nothing and just what does a covenant do with someone else's enchanted ship? If they claim it are they responsible for repairing the damage it caused? But dare they seek its creator? Of course, the recently-released *Hermetic Projects* provides useful material for investigating and bringing an enchanted ship into your covenant, but the scenario can be played without it.

Those of you who follow us on Twitter (@subrosamagazine) may have seen a series of Twilight Scars being posted. This issue presents an article full of them. Often overlooked,

they provide the perfect way to chart your magus' changing relationship with magic. They also make for useful and descriptive hooks for NPC magi, especially the old and warped.

Before I forget, the Grand Tribunal 2012 season will soon be upon us again. This year, the GT:UK returns to its familiar roots in Cheltenham and the GT:US returns the Lake Tahoe. **Sub Rosa** will be there! Of course, which "there" is still being worked out, but we'll certainly try to do something.

You can find more details on both of these events in this issue. If you haven't been to a Grand Tribunal yet, do consider it.

Before we go, and I probably say this every issue, but please do take a moment to appreciate the artists that have worked so hard for us *yet again* this issue. Jeff, Alexandra, Angela, Barrie, Jason, and Vincent have all been generous to a fault and its their work that really does help lift what we do here.

Mark Lawford

The Perfect Turb

The long-awaited *Grogs* supplement will be hitting the shelves before the next issue of Sub Rosa so as our thoughts lean towards these doughty supporting characters, we want to hear about your turb.

Send in a snapshot of your turb. Who is their captain? What skills do they have? How do they work together? Do the magi have their favorites? What sets them apart?

Do you think you've hit upon the perfect

combination of grogs, a combination that provides military muscle as well as brains and stealth?

Or can you add to the roster of grogs fallen in the service of their magi? Tell us who they were and how they fell.

We'll be celebrating the humble grog in issue 11 and we hope yours will be among their number.

From the Line Editor

The next book for **Ars Magica** will be **Grogs**. This is an important book for the line precisely because it is about the bit players.

Troupe-style play is one of the features that has made **Ars Magica** unusual from the beginning. The idea that players have more than one character, that not every character will be played every session, and that some of the characters will be shared between the players, was quite new when **Ars Magica** came out, and is unusual for a roleplaying game even now. It does, however, have a number of advantages: it makes it fairly easy for an **Ars Magica** saga to cope with a player who can't attend every session, for example. The claim in the main rule book that it could also cope with a player going abroad for a year didn't get tested as early as I hoped, because I never went back.

More importantly, it allows troupes to tell different kinds of stories at the same point of a saga. It is, for example, extremely hard to tell horror stories with magi, because there is, by design, very little that magi cannot stand up to. On the other hand, you can tell horror stories with grogs very easily. Not only that, but the goal of the grog adventure can be getting a message to the magi to come and help, so that the players' other characters resolve the problem. Slapstick comedy and farce tend to work better with grogs, although some magi are also masters of the genre.

Nevertheless, it is very easy to overlook the grogs. Indeed, one could say that the lateness of this book in the line is testimony to that. Part of the point of

grogs is that they don't rely on complicated mechanics, or deeply complex ties to the background of Mythic Europe, so it is a little hard to see what would go in a book about them. Rather than new mechanics or deep background, the book contains a lot of information to make it easier to use grogs in your saga.

There is one important mechanical addition in this book: lots of new Minor General Flaws. Most people want two for every grog, to go with the Personality Flaw and pay for three Minor Virtues, but the main **ArM5** rules do not contain that many. Grogs has a lot more, drawn from the Open Call.

Readers may remember the Open Call, which asked for grog concepts. Those are also a major part of the book; a wide range of backgrounds for grogs, with some ready-to-use sets of Abilities, to make creating distinctive grogs for your saga a bit easier. These are not fully created characters, but should allow anyone to create a grog extremely quickly.

That is also part of the focus of another chapter, which provides mechanical tools, such as training packages, designed to make it easier to advance dozens of grogs over the course of years. The rest of the book is concerned with how to incorporate grogs into your stories, whether by themselves or when they are accompanying magi. We hope that the book will help you to make grogs an important, even though not central, part of your saga.

The other important aspect of this book is that part of it was an Open Call.

By David Chart

Open Calls are, with **Sub Rosa**, absolutely essential to the continued health of **Ars Magica**. Authors run out of enthusiasm for the game and either want to take a break, or to retire completely. Without a continuous supply of new authors to take their places, the game would soon break down.

Open Calls are a good way to recruit new authors because a potential author does not need to have any existing connection to Atlas to participate. Nor is previous writing experience of any kind necessary; because new authors submit completed drafts, I don't have to predict how good the finished product will be. New authors don't even need to be native speakers of English, although they do have to be good.

Almost all of the people currently writing for **Ars Magica** were recruited through Open Calls at some point, and one of the authors recruited through Grogs has already written quite a lot more for the line. I have no doubt that he is eagerly anticipating the book's release, partly because he has said as much on the Atlas forums on several occasions.

I probably won't run another Open Call for a while (the call for Hooks was quite recent), but if you are interested in writing for **Ars Magica**, do submit something to **Sub Rosa**. I read it, and I have recruited authors from **Sub Rosa** in the past.

The Storyguide's Handbook: The Dramatic Journey

What Do we Mean by Story?

By Gerald Wylie

To all things come an end. It is a sad but true fact that the vast majority of **Ars Magica** sagas, just as with any other RPG campaign, end before their time. As a result, stories remain untold, goals remain unfulfilled, and mysteries remain unresolved. So how do we get the best out of the game while it's running?

While previous articles in this series have looked at specific rules or game concepts, this article steps outside the game a little to discuss what you can do to ensure that your saga is as rewarding as possible while you're playing and has a satisfying end when that time comes.

The word "story" has some broad meanings. In **Ars Magica** there is the story of the covenant and the story of an individual magus. Each gaming session can tell a different story to the last and the story of a Tribunal's fall to corruption plays out over many real-world months or even years.

This article is more concerned with those larger scale stories, those beats that chart the course of a saga. If a saga does draw to an early close, it is these larger stories that are more likely to suffer and remain unresolved.

So the story we are interested in is a chain of events, narrated by the troupe, that takes their

characters from one dramatic place to another. These individual "events" can themselves be stories, or chains of smaller events. This "chain of events" metaphor is useful as the aim is to keep each chain to a manageable length and to avoid tangling multiple chains into a confusing knot.

Keep Things Simple

As we'll see, there are a lot of stories to keep straight even before you begin adding in sweeping saga plots. Each magus and companion has their own goals and journeys to undertake and the covenant grows or declines over the course of the saga.

Dealing with Outside Distractions

There are plenty of distractions outside of the game that often make regularly returning to that world difficult. Work, college, relationships, family commitments, other hobbies, other gaming groups - there's only so much time to go around. So the key is to be accommodating. Nobody wants the game to feel like a chore or an obligation too far. If people are time-constrained, here are a few things that can be done to keep the game ticking over until people can come back to the table.

Keep the stories short: Keep individual stories to a session or two at most. You may have a longer story in mind, but find ways to break it up into smaller, easier to handle episodes. Your players won't feel the pressure of the longer story bearing down on them and they'll be more inclined

to commit to the next story if they know they're not on the hook for the next four weeks.

Vary the stories: **Ars Magica** has four supernatural realms, thirteen Tribunals, twelve Houses, countless hedge traditions, and an endless range of magical beasts and faeries. There are plenty of stories to be told so keep it fresh to make every story worth turning up for.

Don't expect everyone every time: Very rarely does the absence of a given player make a session unplayable. There are always alternatives. Frankly, even if a specific character is "needed", the storyguide always has the option of playing them as an NPC.

Play by other means: If you can't get together face-to-face, there are ways to get some time in. Google Hangouts (other online conferencing systems are available), play-by-post, or plain old email could work for you.

One-on-one: Take the opportunity to progress individual stories. Most characters have their own stories that don't warrant covenant involvement, so you could progress those in times where the group just can't get together.

Maintain the narrative: You might not be playing, but the game world still goes on. If you're feeling creative, write the occasional "off-camera" piece - a small vignette describing events in the world elsewhere. This keeps the interest ticking along and gives the storyguide chance to present new information. Similarly, you could always write letters to the characters. Most sagas tend to include stories that impact or involve more than just the player covenant, so letters from other magi (bishops/nobles/etc.) help flesh out the world you're creating and keep players engaged with the saga during the quiet times.

One thing you can do is to draw out a simple grid with characters and stories down the side and time across the top. For those things you know and can control, such as when a particular earthquake is going to happen or when your Diedne story is going to start, mark it on the grid.

The aim is to avoid stories overlapping too much. I would even go so far as to say avoid them overlapping at all if possible, with perhaps the exception of adding in a few hints here and there on the build up to a new story. For instance, if you want to play through the expansion of the Church farming estates into the woodlands, try not to overlap that with the failing of the covenant's magic aura unless the two are connected. Each of those is story enough and you would do well to avoid the confusion.

Player characters run across the grid of course, and as the player and storyguide develop their story you can project it onto the grid, planning how you're going to support that player's goals. Even here though, as we will see below, you should break the line into discrete plots so that you can control their progress.

This grid then gives a visual reference for where stories are and what needs to happen to wrap them up. It shows whether you're juggling too much at any one time and it helps to ensure that each session can contribute to the story currently being told. This is a useful tool for other reasons, that we'll come to as we go.

TV and Comic Books

TV series and comic books face the same issues of pacing that an **Ars Magica** saga does; provide engaging stories issue/

episode after issue/episode while moving things forward for the characters and the audience.

Seasonal Arcs

Before we get into this bit, a quick word on seasons. It is a term widely used in **Ars Magica**. Covenants have their seasons, magi measure their work in seasons, and the age or power of Magical creatures is described as their season. We are not going to introduce another in-game use for that word, but rather point to what TV and comic books do with it.

A TV season is often 13 or around 22 episodes long and each episode is usually a discrete story in itself, with elements of that season's arc layered into the

You might already have a plan but most stories can be reworked to some degree to make them work better for the troupe.

story. Each episode offers something distinct from the previous and the next episodes, but the arc is also usually serviced as a "B-story". Most TV shows these days develop a strong story arc across each season, with the season finale either wrapping up a given thread of events or setting up a situation to be resolved or continued at the start of the next season.

TV seasons are a function of TV production, i.e. the series is shown, then breaks, and then comes back for a new season the following year. In some markets, seasons often have a break mid-way through but the principle is the same. The same thinking can be applied to RPGs and **Ars Magica** in particular.

Applying this to your Saga

As storyguide, you can give yourself a (broadly) set number of stories per "season", each of which progresses your arc in some way. You can use these episodes to explore different aspects of the wider story. For instance, if your season arc is the recession of Faerie from the Tribunal, you can explore what that does to each of the Realms - does magic also suffer or does the Infernal step into the niche that the Fae are leaving behind; You can look at what the implications are for characters known to the covenant and you can have the make-or-break season finale. And of course, what you take away in one season, you can have many stories in another season giving it back.

Doing this helps to make your saga pretty efficient. By that I mean that your stories remain focused, while also ensuring that your characters each get to progress their own character arcs.

This model can be really useful to troupes that don't want to be too reliant on a single game but who would rather mix things up. Just as we might turn from one TV series to another, troupes can enjoy a season of **Ars Magica** in rotation and then pick up another game at the conclusion of each season.

The Big Events

Certainly, the major players in the comic-book world, Marvel and DC, use "events" to boost interest and sales. These events usually draw individual books and

characters into a much larger story with the intention of changing the fictional world temporarily or permanently (though in comic books, nothing lasts forever). Good examples of this might be the Civil War storyline from Marvel, in which the publisher's principle characters took opposing sides on a moral issue, resulting in open conflict; the Blackest Night storyline from DC, in which dead heroes and villains were returned to unlife. While these storylines dominated their respective companies at the time, once they were over, life returned to what passes for normal in comic books.

So, unlike TV seasons, comic book events usually dominate one or more titles for a period of months before being resolved and returning the associated books to their own individual stories. There is inspiration for us here too.

Applying this to your Saga

Ars Magica emphasizes Story Flaws, Flaw taken by individual characters that draw them into their own personal stories. Progressing these can be seen like those issues of a comic book that do not deal directly with one of the big events. Building to, and running, larger events that draw in player and non-player characters, provides periodic focal points to a saga. Your players should be anticipating the next big event, perhaps looking for clues or hints as to what it is. They should be able to throw themselves into the event, with each gaming session and/or story dedicated to progressing that event. Once the event is over and the focus returns to normal, the players and their characters get to consider the consequences.

If you are part of a troupe that

Mysteries and Clues

If you're going to build on a mystery, don't assume that your players will be able to understand the clues to the same degree that you do. It's very easy to be cryptic. Very easy. But it's harder to be both cryptic and constructive at the same time. A player faced with a too-cryptic riddle or too-obscure a clue is eventually going to give up. One way to avoid this is to provide your

cryptic clue or riddle or mystery and then add in a further clue that approaches the same result from a different angle.

For instance, if the character finds something unusual hidden in the binding of an old book, he may not have any other information to go on. But if you include a reference to the bookbinder then an avenue of investigation opens up. This allows you to guide the players and present natural investigation paths.

plays **Ars Magica** almost exclusively, then this model has a lot to offer. It promotes a good mix of ephemeral stories, memorable yet throw-away encounters, and then the larger and more far-reaching stories that help punctuate your saga.

The Payoff

Unless you have a known conclusion already planned for the saga, don't start stories that you can't close. Open-ended stories tend to drift. You might like the recurring theme or villain, and there's nothing necessarily wrong with using them repeatedly but you need to ensure that the payoff is within reach. The season or event models discussed above can help with this.

When you start a story, have an end-point in mind. Run the sessions you need in order to get to that end point. Be strict. Lead the players a little if you have to. It may not be their fault if, after all your planning and plotting they fail to grasp the final clue or take the last piece of bait. Help them get to where they need to be so that they can enjoy the end of that story. Don't be tempted to insert filler material until the penny drops as it always gets less likely to drop with time.

Rewards

Of course, rewards are an important part of the payoff; what does the covenant get out of

the last year of struggle? Don't treat the story/season/event finale as just another session with its 5-10XP and a handful of vis. You've spent time building to this point so use it to advance the covenant and/or the characters in some way.

An example; if the players have managed to negotiate a cessation of hostilities between the Order and the Church, then have them recognized. Give the covenant a good reputation. Have one of the magi made an envoy to the Church if that advances his or her aims. Or even bring a cleric into the covenant as part of the Church learning more about those it was so antagonistic towards. Do something positive that helps move things on.

Vis is always welcome, as are books, devices, and the like. But the bigger payoff comes from the characters growing in stature somehow so try to build rewards that do just that into the payoff.

Something for Everyone

Arguably, **Ars Magica Fifth Edition** has so many options available to even the core Hermetic magi characters, that no two players in a troupe are likely to have the same individual goals. That's before companions and mythic companions are factored in. In order to make sure that nobody is short-changed however, all of these personal

goals need to be enabled and progressed.

The Needs of the Players

Players themselves need to feel that they both bring something to the table and that they get to take something away. For most, this means ensuring that their magus character gets to a) do cool stuff, and b) gets the payoff for doing that cool stuff.

Character Focus

Ars Magica is highly character-centric. Other games and genres go quests and journeys very well, but **Ars Magica** allows a real investment in character-building so try to relate the stories to the character themselves. It might sound obvious and it can sometimes be a trite device to have an antagonist related to one or more protagonists, but you need to build an emotional connection between characters and the stories.

For instance, if you need an arbitrary magus to arrive at the covenant, why not make it one that knew the parens of one of the current generation of magi at that covenant? If the wife of nearby knight runs off with a faerie prince, why not make her the former lover to one of the companions? Build those links and create the emotional connections that help to develop the characters. And speaking of developing the characters...

single story, so determine what kinds of challenges must be overcome on the way to achieving that goal. It should be possible to break this down further into a number of story arcs. The Verditius who wants to win the House competition and gain the universal acclaim from his brother magi needs to develop his power and prowess, determine the device he needs, fall at the first hurdle, gain support from others, initiate the skills he needs,

and then... We'll see.

Taking the first item, the need to develop his prowess, we can turn that into an arc all its own. For instance, does he need training to improve his craft skills? Does he have a Flaw that limits him? Does he need resources to build out his laboratory and specialize it towards his craft? There are stories there to be told just for that initial stage so try to provide advancement along that line



Character Arcs

As a troupe, or just between Storyguide and player if need be, determine what the ultimate character goal is for each magus and companion character and start to break that down into arcs. It is unlikely that a large goal can be achieved in the space of a

where you can.

So how do these things come in without every story having to progress that character's story? Often through just a few tweaks here and there. Does the Verditius have a Forge Companion yet? Then in the next village the characters visit the blacksmith (or carpenter, or seamstress, or whatever) is in need of moving on, has few ties to keep him there, and wouldn't say no to a position in a covenant. A touch like that is probably incidental to the story being told, but it helps to progress one of the characters' own story arcs.

Story Flaws

The aim of Story Flaws is well-understood and most troupes already work them into their saga. But Story flaws don't just need to drive or incept stories. They can be used as elements within a wider story, again to provide flavor and to make the story more personal to the magi and/or their companions.

For instance, in a story concerning a magus gone missing from his covenant, you might want to use a character's Story Flaws to lead them to a clue. Does a player character have a canary Magical Animal Companion? Well, what if the magus the player characters are looking for had a hawk familiar? When the canary disappears does the search for it lead to discovering the lost magus' secret? Does a character have a Tormenting Master? Then have him notice a book written by his master in the covenant's library while searching for clues.

The story at hand doesn't concern those Flaws directly, it certainly doesn't rely on them or close them off in any way (depending on what really did

happen to that canary), but it makes things more personal and hopefully more memorable too.

Everyone's a Storyguide

One of the great things about **Ars Magica** is that everyone gets to be the storyguide if they want to be. In terms of keeping things focused, that's not always helpful. Sometimes it needs the alpha-storyguide to take a guiding hand to the saga while leaving certain locations, themes, or characters

Determine what the ultimate character goal is for each magus and companion character and start to break that down into arcs

to the beta-storyguides.

The Role of the Alpha Storyguide

This isn't meant to lay out everything that a storyguide should do. If you're reading this then you likely have a pretty good grasp on that already. This is rather a set things that the alpha storyguide can do to help others in the troupe tell the stories they want to tell.

The alpha storyguide should have a vision for the beginning, middle, and end of the saga. They should have a plan for the principle story arcs that describe those phases. And they should agree with the troupe the broad areas that those stories are likely to cover. At this stage, this should be the minimum needed to describe the saga.

This leaves gaps for the beta storyguides to play in. If the role of the Church is not important to the wider saga, then leave this fertile ground to another storyguide. The same with House

Diedne, the Magic Realm, the crusades, or any number of other areas.

It is important to let the beta storyguides have their day. Most troupes are already pretty collaborative but it never hurts to check on who wants to run what and when. Even if it's within a story cycle, there's always room to cede the floor to someone else.

Listen to what the troupe wants to see in their stories. You might already have a plan but most stories can be reworked to some degree to make them work

better for the troupe. For instance, if you have a story about investigating the disappearance of a magus, and you know that the troupe are looking forward to some more Faerie stories, add some of those elements in there (was he Merinita, with a faerie familiar? Or can you change the only witness from a fleeing librarian to a taunting sprite?)

Have some standby material. Every now and then, the alpha storyguide needs to pull something together at short notice.

Recurring Characters

There's always room for crossover but it makes a lot of sense to keep certain characters to certain story arcs. An example; it can be jarring to have the Bonisagus patron of the covenant's own Bonisagus gain House renown to also figure in stories of faerie kings and princes unless they are designed to help the young Bonisagus advance. Keep things simple and don't try

to mix stories and themes too freely. Unless handled with care, that kind of cross-over can become messy and confusing as players look for unintended meanings and spend more time trying to figure out non-existing relationships than they do on the main stories.

Finishing with Characters

There's nothing says "I'm not sure how to end this" than an immortal NPC. Don't be afraid to lose NPC characters. It can be really useful just to get rid of them somehow. You get to close off stories that have run their courses, simplify your cast list at the end of a run of stories, and add some emotional punch to the saga. But they don't simply have to die to exit the saga. There are other ways.

Retirement: It was very common for the wealthy, both male and female, to retire to religious houses in old age. For a donation or grant to land and fortune, they would find peace, contemplation, and care in their last years. For a twist on this, consider another dastardly fate such as Divine leprosy, that forces the character into isolation away from the covenant.

Distant lands: Characters not entirely in command of their own destinies may be ordered abroad by those they answer to. This may be to take charge of a failing monastery or to build a mercantile foothold in the Holy Land.

The undiscovered country: No, not death this time. Adventurous characters who have run their course might make one final leap into the lands of Faerie or Magic, or go in search of lands south of the sun or far to the west. This puts them out of play, but with the possibility of a return that brings a whole new

set of story possibilities. In effect, if they do come back they are very different characters.

Areas of Interest

The alpha-storyguide should be mindful not to play with every toy in the box if he can help it. Beta-storyguides should do the same of course, but it is likely to be easier for them as they are not carrying the main saga elements.

Covenant as Character

Most would argue that the most important character in any saga is the covenant. We can already chart its rise to power and subsequent decline through its seasons. Spring covenants are young, probably in need of help from others. Summer covenants are secure in themselves but still growing. Mature autumn covenants have power to share with others and they gain influence in return. Winter covenants are in decline.

These changes can be a little abstract so it is useful to have events take place in the covenant that mark the passing of time. These events can be very important to the player characters and no less so to the players themselves.

Physical Changes

Covenants should evolve physically over time. Consider a young spring covenant founded around a casting of Conjuring the Mystic Tower. It may be enough for the young founders, but as they age and need more space for their laboratories and growing library that small tower is not going to be enough? So make an event of these things.

During one story arc there may be a theme of there being

too little space. And during the next there may be perpetual building work going on in the background of each story, or the search for vis to enable the conjuration of new towers may drive events.

Buildings may also be repurposed from their original use. For instance, the old stable block might be converted to a forge for the new blacksmith, or a magus may insist that the old barracks is just the right shape and alignment for his laboratory. A sealed laboratory may even need to be unsealed in order to accommodate a new member of the covenant.

In extreme cases, the covenant may want or need to move site, whether permanently or temporarily. Don't be afraid to do something extreme like that. Just as TV shows and comic books might redesign key elements to keep things visually fresh (just look at the excitement that usually accompanies each newly-redesigned Tardis console room in Doctor Who), we can do the same in our **Ars Magica** sagas - the trick is to hand-wave some of the cost and impact away so that the outward trappings are new and fresh but without penalizing the players.

Political Changes

Covenants are political institutions and as such they can go through a range of changes in relationship to other covenants and magi. For instance, does your spring covenant start as a chapter house to another larger covenant? How does it gain independence as it approaches summer?

Or if the covenant has been founded as a single-house covenant, how does the relationship with that House change when an outsider is allowed entry? And what if your

covenant seeks support from the Tribunal towards some common good and becomes a covenant dedicated to a single aim?

Importantly, all these changes should be driven by the players and their characters. Place challenges in their way and threaten their status quo but enable the outcome that they want.

Character Changes

For a spring covenant, just starting out, the first marriage between covenfolk is an important event, as is the first child born at the covenant. There are all kinds of firsts that are significant; the first familiar bound there, the first talisman created there, and the first apprentice brought there. These things will happen in your saga, but don't let them pass without mention. These things should be significant and important for the magi and the covenfolk so make mention of them. Give the covenant a feast. Have the covenant's chronicler make record of it. Your players will appreciate it as they realize that they are writing the covenant's history.

Of course, those are happy events. There are others that can be used to punctuate more thoughtful times. The first grog to die in service. The first to die in old age. The first apprentice gauntleted and gone, and ultimately, perhaps, the first magus to die. Having to deal with these events is a part of growing up and a covenant is no different. So mark those too.

Winter covenants face a different sort of event; the last of a kind. When does a winter covenant finally fall? When the last magus enters final twilight? When the last of the grogs dies? When the few remaining servants

finally flee the warping of the aura? These acts are herald the coming of the end, which is what we'll look at next.

Saga Longevity

Like any RPG, players can often invest heavily in their characters. Unlike other RPGs, there are no levels or thresholds that naturally limit character progression; it is possible to play a character until extreme old age or twilight finally claim them. Given that, what can you do to ensure that you get the most from the game?

Saga Pace

It is important to ensure that the saga moves forward briskly enough that your players don't feel trapped. You don't need seasons to go by between sessions, but if you've run three straight stories without the magi materially improving then your players may start to feel a little frustrated. As good as the stories might be, the aim of a magus character is to improve in their Arts, to learn new spells, to advance within their cult or mysteries, and if that isn't happening then things can get a little stilted.

At a higher level, the same can be said for the covenant as a whole. Founding a spring covenant and nurturing it through to summer and beyond is a rewarding gaming experience, but progress needs to be made. A saga cannot stay at spring forever, so work out what kind of attributes you see each covenant season having and work towards them within your saga. If you see a summer covenant as being secure in its vis sources, without the need to search for new sources, then stop telling stories concerning new resources and

give the covenant what it needs to be summer. Develop the covenant such that you move it through its seasons too.

Each troupe needs to define its own pace but just remember to move things forward and use the state of the magi's study and the covenant's season as yardsticks against which to measure progress.

Starting a new Saga

There is a danger of equating a saga to the lifetime of your gaming group. However, these things are not intrinsically linked. They may be, for many troupes, but it would be a mistake to think that you need to keep a saga running when all it really needs is to be closed off to make way for something new.

There are a number of reasons why you might want to take this bold move. Perhaps the setting is no longer as engaging as you thought it might be; perhaps the characters aren't as enjoyable as when you started; perhaps you've read the latest Tribunal book and actually like the sound of playing there. Whatever the reason, it is far better to go with your instinct than to stick it out in a saga that you are not really enjoying.

The Foretold Ending

It sounds somewhat defeatist to think about the end of a saga before it's even begun, but it is worth thinking about how you're going to play with a view to possible endings. You want the end of your saga to be something you control rather than something that either slowly drags the game down or cuts it dead in mid-flow.

We have already looked at ways to build natural end points into your saga; points at which you can finish up, resolving as

many story threads as possible, and leaving players with a sense of satisfaction. But there are a few other things that you, as a troupe, can do when you feel the end closing in and you want to wrap things up.

Agree to an End

As a saga, you should agree an end-game. This doesn't mean you should determine the end of the saga ahead of time, but you could come up with some options ahead of time. For instance, is your covenant located near the site of a real-world natural disaster, a sunken or lost village or city? What, in your saga, might have caused it? Is it a big enough event to bring your saga to a close? An alternative to this might be inferred from the regular journal extracts found in recent issues of *Sub Rosa*; just what is the Vernal Inquisition mentioned ahead of each set of Argens's scribblings? Placed in the context of a saga, it is unimportant what the Vernal Inquisition is, who leads it, why it is under way, and what happened to the magi of Donum Chanuti; it's all a mysterious framing mechanism. But, once the group

decides to end the saga, there's immediately something to work towards.

The Final Stories

Who runs the final stories is down to your troupe, but consider giving every storyguide their own final bow. You've all brought different things to the saga so it's worth celebrating that, even as the saga winds down. The one thing you should aim to do, should time permit, is to wrap up the outstanding threads.

Make sure that magi get what they've been working towards - has your saga's Bonisagus been angling to lead the Colentes Arcanorum? Make sure it happens. Has the nearby abbot been an enemy for years? Then tell the story of his fall, or of his reconciliation with the magi. There are always stories that need a satisfying ending.

The End

For whatever reason you decide to bring a saga to its end, whether it is to allow your gaming

group to do something else, the loss of that gaming group, or just because you want to start a new **Ars Magica** saga, there are things you can do to make the game as rewarding as possible while that saga is running.

If the ideas presented above can help do that then so much the better and good luck to you. Always remember the key rule however, if you're not enjoying a particular saga then there's no harm at all in starting again. The setting is now so expansive and rich, with so many different options for character types, play styles, and locations to visit, that a single saga can never do them all justice. But by breaking things down, by pacing your sagas, and by looking forward to the end rather than shying away from it, your troupe will have many more opportunities to explore everything that **Ars Magica** has to offer. And that has to be a good thing.



Designing the Hermetic Shipwright

The *Hermetic Projects* book was conceived and designed to offer ideas and examples for players and storyguides alike. The intention of that book is to provide inspiration and example so that similar projects can be attempted or indeed any of those six projects brought to fruition.

The projects are presented such that any magus with an interest in such things could reasonably study towards their goal. It is likely that an established character could seek help from others in their covenants, from specialists, or even practitioners from other magical traditions.

This article attempts to fill an intentional gap in the published book. It presents a starting magus template; a magus, fresh from apprenticeship and designed with the aim of becoming an Hermetic Shipwright. Players looking to introduce a new magus Hermetic shipwright character can take this fully-developed template and simply apply their own finishing touches.

Hopefully, the choices made in designing this budding shipwright will

also serve as examples for specialists for the other projects in the book, in particular the Hermetic Duelist and the Living Corpse. It should also give food for thought with other characters too, and while other games

By Mark Lawford

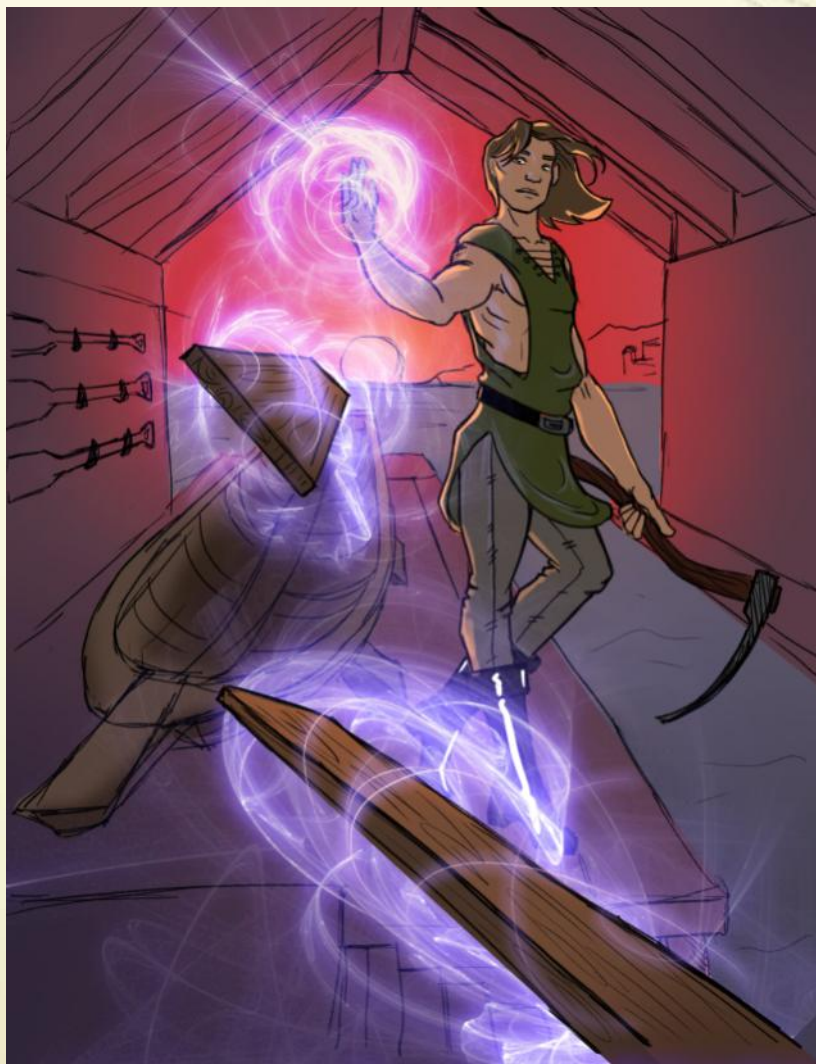
Identifying the End Goal

The end goal is a magus able to enchant some very large objects, in this case specifically ships. There are two aspects to this. The first is having a laboratory large enough to contain a ship. That is dealt with extensively in *Hermetic Projects*. The second is finding a strategy to cope with the demands of opening a large device for enchantment.

A ship, like most other devices, is composed of specific identifiable parts. In the case of a ship as presented in *Hermetic Projects*, this is the hull, the mast, steering oar or rudder, and castles fore and aft. In the largest ship, this comes to a total of 50 pawns of vis needed to open the entire compound vessel. To put that in perspective, those 50

have their *min-maxing*, we like to think of this more as *specializing*; selecting those Virtues and Abilities that help take the character towards the player's goals. So what are those goals..?

pawns means that the ship can support up to 500 levels of enchantments. That's an impressive ship whichever way you cut it. And that's without adding rigging into the equation (that would add a further 10). This is actually more achievable



Sub Rosa

than it sounds, as we'll see.

So the end goal, for this article at least, is to create a character with a clear path through to opening a huge ship, including its mast, rudder, and two castles, for enchantment.

One last but important point on this. The magus' Magic Theory score represents the upper limit of the number of components that can be considered part of the ship. This means that the magus could potentially embed other objects within the ship to further increase its capacity for enchantment and to allow for additional Shape and Material bonuses.

Build out the Magus

We'll assume an age of 25, so that's ten years from before apprenticeship and he's just taken and passed his gauntlet. This gives 480 experience points to spend, half of which should be on Abilities, and the other half split equally between Arts and Spells.

House

Okay, let's be clear. While a member of any House can realise their dreams of building their own enchanted ship, there's obviously one House that this is aimed at. Without apology, this is House Verditius. The benefits are there to be seen. If you want a character capable of enchanting a ship able to carry 500-plus levels of enchantments, then you need to be looking at House Verditius.

Their Outer Mystery, Verditius Magic, is reason enough. It allows them to add their Craft Ability score into the laboratory totals and it reduces the number of pawns needed to open a device for enchantment by that same score.

Characteristics

Intelligence and Dexterity are really what you need to make the

most of your other gifts, given that Intelligence adds to Laboratory Totals and Dexterity is closely associated with Craft. Perception is useful as it is used in Rego Craft Magic (as per *Covenants*, page 49).

Recommended Characteristics

Intelligence:	+3
Perception:	+1
Presence:	-1
Communication:	0
Strength:	-1
Stamina:	0
Dexterity:	+2
Quickness:	-1

You probably don't want a low Communication as this may impact working with assistants further down the line.

Virtues

With the exception of the free Verditius Magic Virtue, a magus can have no more than five Minor Virtues, so if we want to use our full allocation of Virtue slots we would need to take two Major Virtues and four Minor Virtues. However, looking through the core rulebook, there is really only one Major Virtue we want to take and there are five very useful Minor Virtues. So in this case, we're going to stop at spending eight points.

Free

Verditius Magic: It goes without saying. This is free to members of House Verditius.

Major

Major Magical Focus (Ships): One argument says that every magus character should have a Focus.

Minor

Adept Laboratory Student: Provides a +6 bonus when using a Laboratory Text. While this perhaps doesn't help with the initial invention of a device or effect, it certainly helps with repeating the feat.

Affinity with (Carpenter): The more quickly the Craft Ability increases, the more the Verditius Magic Virtue comes into its own. Not only does the value of the craft Ability add to Laboratory Totals, but it also reduces the number of pawns of vis an item takes to open for enchantment. This is crucial in later years when the magus looks to enchant ships.

Affinity with (Magic Theory): While Craft, in the hands of a Verditius, reduces the pawns of vis it takes to open a device for enchantment, Magic Theory (x2) provides the upper limit for the number of pawns that the magus may use in a season.

Puissant Magic Theory: That's +2 right out of the bag for all totals involving Magic Theory. And as it modifies the score itself, that includes the number of pawns of vis that may be used in a single season.

Inventive Genius: Provides +3 to creating new spells, enchanted devices, potions, etc. By implication, this also includes when working from Laboratory Texts, which stacks nicely with the Adept Laboratory Student Virtue above. If the magus experiments, the bonus rises to +6.

As an alternative to *Puissant Magic Theory*, you could instead go for *Faerie Blood (Dwarf)*, which provides a +1 bonus to any total that includes a Craft Ability. In the case of a Verditius, this total includes all Laboratory Totals where an appropriate Craft is being called upon. This is useful where you decide to take more than one Craft Ability and intend to use those Abilities in line with the additional rules presented in *City & Guild*. As it is, for a more focused shipwright, you can't beat *Puissant Magic Theory*.

Flaws

We need eight points of Flaws to balance the Virtues we selected above.

Major

Deficient Technique (Perdo): This is

unashamedly a sink. It's a Major Flaw and if we simply accept that we're not going to be doing a lot of work with Perdo then it shouldn't get in our way.

Tormenting Master: Every magus needs a story flaw and for House Verditius this fits the bill nicely. A master, jealous at the apprentice's ambition and ability? With potential to turn into a real vendetta? What's not to like?

Minor

Difficult Spontaneous Magic: Casting magic in the field is not where this magus excels; that's for another member of the troupe. We're going to try to cover some of this with some

utility spells but in fairness we would expect a magus of House Verditius to craft his way around certain situations and prepare in advance.

Driven (win the Verditius Competition with one of his Ships): If you have to have an aim, something about your personality that drives you on and explains why you're so single-minded, then this is it.

Abilities

We are going to keep this character nicely focused on his magical aims, so a lot of the nice-to-have Area Lore, and even Realm Lore Abilities have been pushed to one side; the character can always learn

them later if needed.

The usual rules apply though, so 45 experience points need to be spent on childhood abilities. Beyond that, we can make our own choices.

Awareness, Brawl, and Charm: Set these to level 2 and that's the 45 childhood experience taken care of. Brawl in particular we don't object to having as it does at least add something to Dodge.

Artes Liberales (ritual magic): You'll need points in this and it is worth taking the ritual magic specialty as you may want to invent and use Ritual spells later on to either conjure complete objects or to repair damaged ships.

The Hermetic Shipwright

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

Size: 0

Age: 25 (25)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: The Gift; Hermetic Magus; Major Magical Focus (Ships); Adept Laboratory Student, Affinity with Carpentry, Affinity with Magic Theory, Inventive Genius, Puissant Magic Theory, Verditius Magic*; Deficient Technique (Perdo), Tormenting Master; Difficult Spontaneous Magic, Driven (Win the Verditius Competition)

Combat:

Dodge: Init -1, Attack N/A, Defense +2, Damage N/A

Fist: Init -1, Attack +4, Defense +1, Damage -1

Kick: Init -2, Attack +4, Defense +0, Damage +2

Knife: Init -1, Attack +5, Defense +1, Damage +1

Bludgeon: Init -2, Attack +6, Defense +1, Damage +1

Soak: 0

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: Artes Liberales 2 (ritual magic), Awareness 2 (determining effect), Bargain 1 (hard sell), Brawl 2 (dodge), Carpentry 3 (ships), Charm 2 (first impressions), English 5

(storytelling), Finesse 1 (precision), Latin 4 (Hermetic usage), Leadership 2 (assistants), Magic Theory 5+2** (enchancing items), Parma Magica 1 (Ignem), Philosophiae 3 (Verditius Runes)

Arts: Cr 5, In 5, Mu 5, Pe 0, Re 5, An 0, Aq 5, Au 5, Co 0, He 5, Ig 0, Im 0, Me 0, Te 0, Vi 5

Equipment: Casting Tools (carpentry tools such as chisels, hammers, nails, etc.); Wizardly Robes; Workman's Clothes

Encumbrance: 1 (1)

Spells Known:

Air's Ghostly Form (CrAu 5) +10

Broom of the Winds (CrAu 15) +10

Charge of the Angry Winds (CrAu 15) +10

Wind at the Back (ReAu 5) +10

Break the Oncoming Wave (ReAq 10) +10

Dagger of Ice (Cr(Re)Aq 10) +10

Pass the Unyielding Portal (MuHe 5) +10

Repel the Wooden Shafts (ReHe 10) +10

Gather the Essence of the Beast (ReVi 15) +10

Scales of the Magical Weight (InVi 5) +10

Sense the Nature of Vis (InVi 5) +10

Bind Wound (CrCo 10) +5

The Unseen Porter (ReTe 10) +5

* Free House Virtue

** The +2 is the bonus granted by the Puissant Magic Theory Virtue

Bargain (hard sell): Take a nominal level in this as it gives you a chance at least to press for a bargain.

Craft: Carpentry (ships): Alongside Magic Theory, this is the main Ability that you'll be adding in to Laboratory Totals. It also reduces the cost of opening devices for enchantment, so it is worth taking this as high as possible from the outset.

Finesse (precision): Spells that create things from nothing rely on an Intelligence + Finesse roll for their quality. Rego Craft Magic, as presented in *Covenants*, uses a Perception + Finesse roll to determine the quality of items created that way. The **ArM5** book was obviously written ahead of *City & Guild*, which introduced a very good system of defining an object's inherent quality, so you'll find an

insert nearby with some useful new guidelines on the quality of conjured objects.

Latin (Hermetic usage): Obviously.

Leadership (assistants): If you can, you'll want to pick up a Forge Companion (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 113) or two as these would each provide a bonus to the Laboratory Total. The higher the Leadership, the more Forge Companions the magus can have.

Living Language: This is free.

Magic Theory (enchanting items): It's critical to be putting points into this and to take the enchanting items specialty. You're going to benefit from the affinity and you have a +2 from Puissant Magic Theory, but don't rest on that. Take it as high as you can.

Parma Magica (Rego): You need something to protect you, but you're not principally a field-magus. It is recommended that magi just out of apprenticeship should have a score of one. Anything more is indulgent at this stage.

Philosophiae (enchantment): The value of this ability is added the Verditius' Laboratory Total in the same way as Shape and Materiel bonuses (and is similarly capped by Magic Theory). In later years, when the Verditius initiates Verditius Elder Runes, this Ability score replaces the default x2 Magic Theory multiplier when working out the maximum number of pawns of vis a magus can use in the laboratory in a single season.

So what's missing? Well, although we're building a Hermetic shipwright, the *Profession: Shipwright* Ability can be

Determining The Quality of Conjured Objects

The *City & Guild* supplement provides a small table on page 67 that lists the Craft Levels required for different quality of goods. These range from Shoddy, through Standard, Superior, and up to Excellent. The rules for Rego Craft Magic in *Covenants* have already established that creating goods through magic is harder than through mundane effort so we'll apply the same thinking to conjuring items.

Intelligence + Finesse Stress Die

Result Quality

Botch The item is not of the intended type at all.

0-5 The item is of the intended type but is visibly Shoddy in the extreme. It has one Damage Level and has a penalty of 5 applied to any Stress Checks made against the device.

6 The item is of the intended type but is of Shoddy quality.

9 The item is of the intended type and is of Standard quality.

18 The item is of the intended type and is of Superior quality. This includes the +1 bonus as per *City & Guild* and described below.

21+ The item is of the intended type and is of Superior quality. This includes the variable bonus as per *City & Guild* and described below.

Superior and Excellent items each provide bonuses towards some aspect of the device's usage. In the case of Superior items this is a flat +1 towards a single aspect of its usage, such as a sword that is easier to swing (+1 to attack) or sharper than normal (+1 to damage). Excellent items have this +1 bonus but also add +1 for each 3 points by which the roll exceeded the target Ease Factor (21 in this case).

Base Laboratory Total

Given the Abilities and Virtues selected at character creation, the shipwright detailed in the nearby statistics block already has a reasonable base Laboratory Total before things like aura, Arts, or even assistants are added in.

Intelligence	+3
Magic Theory (enchanting items)	+6
Craft: Carpentry (ships)	+4
Philosophiae (Verditius Runes)	+4
Inventive Genius	+3
Puissant Magic Theory	+2
Total Before Arts and aura	22

Another factor is the upper limit on the number of pawns that can be used in a season to open a device for enchantment. At an effective score of +8 (based on including the specialty and the bonus from Puissant), this would normally be a maximum of 16 pawns. Going back to *Hermetic Projects*, we can see that this is already a very large-sized hull. If we take into account that the Carpentry score is deducted from the number of pawns needed for a given device, we can actually open a huge hull for enchantment for 14 pawns where it would normally take 18. Already, the larger ships are in reach of this magus just starting out.

left out. It doesn't contribute to any laboratory totals (and believe me, that discussion has been had) so it doesn't help to enchant ships. For all the administrative side of the business, employ a manager or, better yet, a venditor who can act as your middle-man and sell your enchanted ships to the highest bidders.

Arts

Arts are not as important to the shipwright as they might be to a magus relying more on magic outside the laboratory. Raise the Techniques, excluding Perdo, to level 5. That takes care of 60 out of 120 available points, so spend the remaining by raising Aquam, Auram, Herbam, and Vim to 5 each. These are going to be the most important forms for ocean-going ships.

Spells

Spells are also not going to figure highly, certainly at this stage. As a result, the shipwright has learned a number of low-level utility spells. They should mean that the character has options in most scenarios; there is a combat-based spell, something for defense, and something to enable him to move objects around remotely, etc. It's important to have these as you shouldn't be tempted later on to acquire spells; spending seasons you need elsewhere that don't advance your designs as a shipwright.

You can see one recommended spell list in the nearby character statistics box, but really this is down to individual choice. Just take a series of utility spells that give you something active to do in the field.

Personality Traits, Sigil, etc.

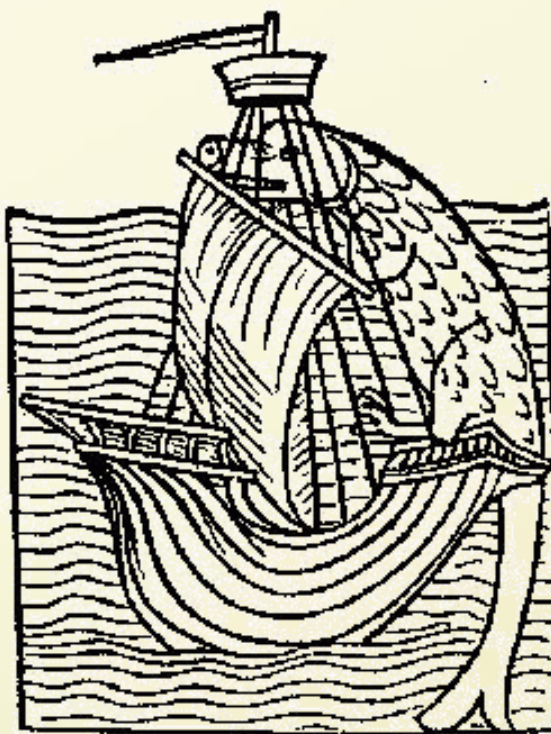
These are all yours. Does he want

to be the leader of the covenant, or is he a follower? Is he upbeat or cynical? Is he protective of his work or does he actively seek help and sponsorship?

The framework we've put together in this article talks about capability and not personality. How you want to approach the character is up to you, and that's what makes the character yours.

Progression

So far, we've built a starting magus, but they don't stay that way for long. This section looks at where your precious seasons are best spent.



The Arts

Ignore the Hermetic Arts. That's right. Until you really need them, ignore them. They make up a decent part of your Laboratory Total, but given Intelligence, Magic Theory (enchanting items), Inventive Genius, Craft: Carpentry, a bonus from Puissant Magic Theory, the aura, etc.

you already have a pretty decent base to work from. If you're working on ships, your Major Magical Focus doubles your lowest Art anyway, which even at low levels is a welcome bonus.

There are some scenarios where improving your arts does make sense.

If you decide that you'll get some useful assistance from an apprentice or even a familiar then you need to ensure that your Arts are at an appropriate level. It's possible that this may actually be a false economy, however. In the case of an apprentice, it will likely take up to a couple of years to get all the Arts to the right level and then you're committed to providing training each year. It may be more beneficial and less work to find a Forge Companion.

If you work out that you'll be wasting fruitless seasons inventing something given a too-low Laboratory Total then you should pick up the books and learn more about the Arts up front before you start. This may be quite likely when you look to build out your laboratory and need to invent new devices to provide the bonuses presented in *Hermetic Projects*.

And of course, when you hit the ability to open that full 50-pawn vessel for enchantment, you've probably done all you need to with your Magic Theory and other Abilities and you can at last learn more about Forms and Techniques.

Abilities

There are three main Abilities that you need to invest in and one supplementary Ability.

Magic Theory, Craft: Carpentry, and Philosophiae are the main Abilities that are going to serve you best. They all add to the Laboratory Total for a Verditius magus so long as you are actually crafting the device

you're enchanting. Once you know the Verditius Elder Runes (see below) then Philosophiae really helps put those larger devices within reach.

Fortunately, in our build, Magic Theory and Craft: Carpentry have affinities associated with them so they should increase at a reasonable pace. Just make sure that whenever you gain any exposure XP in the laboratory you invest them in one of these two Abilities. With the help of the affinities these should keep ticking upwards.

If you do have input into the covenant's library at creation, do make sure that there are plenty of tractatus on Magic Theory and Philosophiae and if you can manage it make sure you have a master carpenter too - very good for training.

The supplementary Ability is Leadership. At some point, you'll want to gain an apprentice and/or make use of a Forge Companion (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 113), or even involve other magi in your work. For that to be most effective, you need to improve your Leadership so you can gain the benefit from as many assistants as possible.

Laboratory

The laboratory is important the Hermetic shipwright and he needs to move out of the cellar and into a dedicated facility as soon as possible. Much of that is going to be driven through gameplay and is out of scope for this article, but we have other things to cover.

Enhancements

Hermetic Projects provides (I hope) a pretty good set of suggestions on building a laboratory that fully supports enchanted ship-building. It is important to get the Focus and Features that really bring the additional bonuses to the ship-building laboratory totals. Again, some of these can be gained through

gameplay and investing seasons of time. Others may require the magus to invent new devices. If that's the case, remember to make the laboratory texts available to others for loan or sale.

Assistants

Seek out a Forge Companion as soon as possible. If you are starting your covenant from scratch, your troupe may be happy to let you buy a suitable Forge Companion (or plural) as a Specialist from the covenant's Build Points (see the *Storyguide's Handbook* in **Sub Rosa** issue 9).

If you want a character capable of enchanting a ship able to carry 500-plus levels of enchantments, then you need to be looking at House Verditius.

While an average-build Forge Companion will only add +1 to a Laboratory Total, this is better than nothing. And if you choose to increase your Leadership Ability, relatively easy to do at low levels, then you can be looking at a +3 or +4 before you know it.

Apprentices take up a lot of time, but the investment could pay off (personally, I'd wait). It's the same with familiars. They take a fair bit of time and effort without immediate payoff.

Spells

Look to the *Hermetic Projects* book for inspiration here, but you may want ritual spells to create components or repair damage. Other spells, like those to be used outside of a laboratory, are largely the domain of other magus archetypes. That said, if you do want to acquire other spells, don't waste time inventing them from scratch. Instead, ensure that you get laboratory texts for them and learn them quickly.

Initiations

Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults presents some interesting and useful new Mystery Virtues for House Verditius. They all have their uses and we'll discuss the most useful of them below. Before that, two honourable mentions. Items of Quality (page 124) allows the Verditius to bestow items with bonuses to their usage drawn from their shape or material. There aren't many useful examples that would apply to ships in the core **ArM5** book, but Oak and a Ship's Sail give a maximum of +7 to protection from storms and sailing respectively. Arguments could be made that these

could be expressed in giving the captain or pilot a bonus in certain situations. Reforging Enchanted Items is another useful Virtue. A shipwright not only builds ships but also repairs them. While the rules for damaged goods in *City & Guild* make it clear that a device is not truly broken until all its Damage Levels have gone, a ship on a long journey may be at risk. If the shipwright can offer repair services too, then he is more likely to gain custom for his work.

Verditius Elder Runes (*Houses of Hermes: Mystery Cults*, page 127): This is critical to attaining the higher numbers needed to enchant the largest ships. Beyond the direct benefits to enchantments (doubling the Art associated with the rune inscribed on the target device), the last line of the description says, "...the limit to the amount of vis he may use in a single season becomes his Magic Theory score *times his Philosophiae score*". With the Magic Theory score expected to accelerate

thanks to the Affinity, increasing the multiplier has a dramatic effect.

Initiating this Virtue is not that hard; it is just a Minor Virtue and consists essentially of spending time on the initiation and sacrificing a greater enchanted item. And that's it.

This Virtue is really important. With the aid of a decent tutor and/or access to books on Philosophiae, a score of five is easily achievable, so try to initiate this House Mystery early on.

Of course, a grounding in Verditius Cult Lore is vital as without it the magus will not be initiated into the inner mysteries. So ensure that you maintain friendly relations with your fellow Verditius magi. At least until the hubris sets in, of course.

Enchantment Strategies

There are other options beyond enchanting an entire ship right from apprenticeship and the sections below explore some of these.

Start Small

It is unlikely that your storyguide is just going to give you your shipyard from the outset, so you're going to need to start smaller. As a carpenter, your magus should be able to use Craft: Carpentry in enchanting just about anything made of wood. So do so, and don't be shy about the Laboratory Texts. You need things to trade and at low level the things you'll be making aren't going to change the world. So, invent small, cheap, but useful devices and then translate the Laboratory Text for others to use. They'll have a choice between borrowing the text, paying for a copy to be made, or paying you to make the device. Whichever way, you still

gain.

Enchant Just Parts of the Ship

Once the magus has a laboratory large enough, he can move on to enchanting a sailing vessel.

The end goal must surely be to enchant a large ship consisting of hull, mast, and castles bow and stern. To do this requires a very high Magic Theory, which may take some time to build up. As **ArM5** page 97 explains, a compound device can be opened for enchantment either for the sum of all its parts or only the highest cost item. In the case of a ship, the highest cost item is the hull, the smallest of which takes just 10 pawns of vis to open for enchantment (reduced, of course, by the score in the magus' Craft Ability).

While reaching the high Magic



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Useful Devices and Effects

The following effects may be suitable for use as lesser enchantments or as greater enchantments that can be instilled in any vessel. The “Sight of...” effects need not be enchanted into a ship at all and may be invested into a free-standing or portable device.

The Invulnerable Hull

ReTe 39

Pen +0, Constant Effect

Range: Personal, Duration: Sun, Target: Structure

This effect wards a ship from submerged rocks, as are common in coastal waters. The ship may run aground, but the hull takes no damage from the experience as the hull itself never comes into harmful contact with the surface. And where the ship would strike a rock below the waterline, the ship is instead buffeted away, again with no Stress Check required.

(Base 5, +2 Sun, +3 Structure, +1 stone; +1 for two uses per day, +3 triggered at sunrise/set)

Sight of the Ocean Currents

InAq 15

Pen +0, 24 uses/day

Range: Touch, Duration: Concentration, Target: Part

A crewman standing at the bow of a ship enchanted with this effect can see the ocean currents as they swirl and flow ahead of the vessel. This additional insight provides a +1 bonus to Sailing rolls when employed.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +1 Concentration, +1 Part; +5 for 24 uses per day)

Sight of the Following Winds

InAu 20

Pen +0, 24 uses/day

Range: Touch, Duration: Concentration, Target: Group

A crewman standing at the stern of a ship enchanted with this effect can see the winds as they billow and build behind the vessel. This additional insight provides a +1 bonus to Sailing rolls when employed.

(Base 4, +1 Touch, +1 Concentration, +2 Group; +5 for 24 uses per day)

Theory scores required for the truly magnificent ships may be difficult, as compound devices the magus has the option to open just parts of the ship. This reduces the magical capacity of the enchanted ship, but does allow the Hermetic shipwright to start plying his trade.

But by embedding other items into the ship, such as an emerald or ruby, the magus can slowly increase the capacity of the enchanted ships he is able to open.

Lesser Enchanted Items

While the Hermetic shipwright is ultimately concerned with vessels carrying multiple effects, there is always the option to enchant vessels carrying just a single effect. This doesn't require opening the device for enchantment but does restrict the effect to a single season's worth of effort.

This also offers a new opportunity. Ships can be brought to the shipwright for a “refit”, in which a beneficial magical effect can be instilled in the pre-existing vessel. In this respect, the Hermetic shipyard is the key asset.

Enchant Items that Affect the Ship

Greater enchanted devices that affect a ship at Touch range are certainly possible and, given that they can be created in a standard laboratory and then installed in a ship at leisure they may even be preferable to enchanting the entire ship. I would rather say that they are actually complementary for a number of reasons:

- Enchanted ships, by the rules in *City & Guild*, page 77, gain a bonus to their Stress Checks to resist damage equal to the magnitude of the total of instilled spell effects. That soon adds up and makes effects to protect the ship from damage largely redundant.
- A given invested effect is destroyed only when the device itself is totally destroyed. Given that a ship has more Damage Levels than a smaller portable device, this gives the advantage to the ship.
- The Laboratory Total for an invested effect gains a bonus for

each prior effect that shares a Technique and/or Form. When enchanting a ship, the bonuses a likely to grow quite quickly.

- Devices that operate at Touch range may be stolen or otherwise removed from the target ship, thereby ending their useful effect and potentially granting it to someone else.

But these separate devices can be used tactically. A covenant may want to procure items to ensure the safety of their companions when they need to travel. Independent devices to ensure calm waters, storm-free skies, or a constant wind in the sails all have their place and can be used to supplement the powers of earlier less capacious enchanted ships.

Conclusion

I hope that the material in this article complements the work already done in *Hermetic Projects* and helps you to build out a magus capable of enchanting the greatest ships Mythic Europe has ever seen.

From the Journal of Vulcanis Argens

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

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

Bellatorius and Valeria returned from Canterbury this morning. I understand the Quaesitor seeks to bring charges against Petalichus of Verditius.

It seems that my understanding was correct and Valeria had been sent to investigate a conflict between two magi, over some ancient philosophical text desired by both, one being Petalichus. By the time they had arrived the conflict was done and Petalichus the apparent victor. Bellatorius has been heard expressing his grudging respect for the manner of the victory; not the sentiment of course, but the simplicity in the magic involved. Petalichus, as I told them before they left for Canterbury, is a weaver and worker of more lowly crafts, the kind that we cannot live without but barely notice their practicing. Petalichus was somehow able to induce his enemy to sleep beneath a sheet or blanket or some such that he had enchanted with a powerful Ignem effect.

The solution is so simple I can almost see his laboratory notes before me. If one creates an item lasting but a brief span of years then more power can be instilled within it in a much quicker time. It makes impressive feats possible. Enchant the item such

that it is triggered by the action of someone sleeping beneath it and, well, I am glad I have no need to engage in Vendetta with Petalichus.

Bellatorius has also expressed surprise at a weaver having such strong knowledge of Ignem as to be able to achieve such a device. When I next see him I intend to set him straight on that for our crafts are only the means by which we enchant, they do not always define our interests. I confess, my own magical leanings are more to the metallic than to other forms though I put that down to the influence of my master.

I do not know who now has the contentious book that apparently caused so much upset but if it does indeed contain knowledge of ancient devices as Bellatorius suggested I would pay a large sum of silver to own it.

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

I wrote today to Junius of Semitae. I have been practicing the lower rituals of my House and I have recited the chants a hundred times and I have drawn the symbols and their contra-tines until I can draw no more. I am ready, I think, to learn more of the secret Verditius ways. If he could but send me a tractatus on our shared ways then I am sure I will soon be ready to learn the secret magics we keep safe from the Order.

I must soon present my initial thoughts on a device to protect the written records of our Vis sources. I have given it much thought and I am beginning to see some limitations in Bonisagus' theory. If I could but bend the laws a little, reach beyond the

magic known to the Order... But still, I think I have a design.

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

My design for the parchment store was accepted with little persuasion. There were some questions around the security of the device of course but I have offered the Quaesitor the chance to design such effects as would improve her confidence in the device.

I made an initial estimate of fifteen pawns of Vis to design and build the device. The council agreed that this was an initial estimate. In fact, the council agreed so readily to fifteen pawns that I may see fit to increase the final cost when I next report on progress.

Extract from the journal of Vulcanis Argens:

Misconceptions and mysteries, the words roll so easily that they become intertwined. What is a mystery without misconceptions? An unanswered question and merely that? It is the assumption and the quickly made decision that fuels a mystery and we have seen many of those recently.

To the story then. The last few days have been most interesting and only now do I find time to address them in my journal. Events started when Halbert returned to my forge bearing a book. He claimed to have found it outside my door and I had no reason to doubt him. It appeared to be written and annotated by my Parens, Aurifex. To have one of his books at all is a gift, but to receive it

so strangely implies some message, and where a message is freely given then I must expect a cost to follow hard upon.

I set about to read through the volume and soon realised that amid the annotations that he had made to his own works, Aurifex had inserted personal notes some seeming to relate to intrigue and covenant machinations, which I shall transcribe here.

"I returned to the heart of the island. My suspicions were correct. It is seeking a way. I do not trust the others. It falls to me."

"I have felt the beast in the place I collect. What could it want with my Herbam?"

I did not know at the time but while I was reading, Valeria was investigating some damage that had been done to Legalitus' sanctum. We later found out the cause of course but at the time Legalitus contended (and probably still harbours suspicions) that Charonicus had possessed the maid in some fashion and coerced her to ransack his laboratory.

As Benedic was finding out, the offence was not restricted to Legalitus but also included Charonicus whose maid had suffered the same indignation.

Later that day, I heard about and intervened in the case of a guard (I forget his name to my shame) who acted entirely out of character and attacked another with his spear.

Clearly these three events were related and Benedic's other news coming so hard upon seemed also to

be connected. He had communed with the forest and found it to be wounded in some way and he believed that wounding to originate from beyond the forest in the direction of the marsh.

We knew of course that Charonicus had collected Infernal Vis from the marsh and Benedic could be forgiven for his concern. We persuaded Charonicus to grant us a guide to take us to the site so we could investigate. It was an outstanding obligation from the last council meeting so what better chance?

I shall not record details of the journey through the marsh as the location of the site is stored in My Other Volume but I will record that the way is beset by smugglers and lay brothers. The smugglers are apparently in the employ of the covenant but the monks are not. They



are reclaiming land from the marsh however and so when Conrad does reappear I intend to send him to them. Perhaps they might find use for certain tools that would make they task easier.

The site itself is a nasty place with an Infernal aura and I felt uncomfortable using magic there for fear of doing just what Benedic then did. He attempted some spell, to move one of the corpses we found at the bottom of the pool I think, and promptly succumbed to Twilight.

It is an interesting and worrying sight, to see a fellow magus trapped and in pain between this world and the next. I should perhaps have shown more concern, but I took my lead from the Valeria and she herself opted for calm detachment. In any case, he soon recovered and apart from professing feelings of nausea

Benedic seemed untroubled by the event.

The Quaesitor and I agreed that we would recommend no further Vis to be harvested from this place. I leave to her the details of its securing...

After the marsh, I returned to the book and discovered the discoloured page. It was only by holding a candle behind it that the message became clear:

"I have created a device which may stop the menace once and for all. He suspects that I move against his master. I must act soon."

And here we touch on mystery again. I could make a number of

guesses as to who is being referred to but that could lead to all manner of misconceptions.

The simple questions are:

What device and what menace?

Who suspects?

Who is his master?

Did Aurifex act or not?

What action did he take?

Is the matter of the message dealt with?

So who is the master the passage refers to and who suspects? I wish my knowledge of the magi hereabouts was better. Did my master have a prior apprentice? Did either of the other magi have any apprentices, successful or otherwise? What other magi lived at the Covenant? Who are we replacing? Somewhere in there lies



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the answer.

To find that answer, the questions must be addressed rationally and calmly and preferably by someone other than myself.

The next morning we met up again with Benedic who seemed by now to be much recovered from his Twilight. We trekked, as arranged, back into the woods wherein we met the spirit on the forest that Benedic spends so much time with. And I now fully understand why.

The power of this being was palpable despite its obvious wounding. For my part, I agreed to remove the blight that afflicted her and resolved to find whatever it was on the island that caused her so much pain. With the three magi and our grogs working together, following what cryptic directions the spirit was able to give us we estimated the probably point of the wound.

My suspicions may have been borne out. The Covenant is the heart of the woods. It seemed that the wound was centred on the tower.

Valeria visited upon Legalitus and I think Benedic returned to Charonicus and I employed magical means to find the Infernal Vis. I cast a spell on myself meaning I could hear the scream of Infernal Vis when I came near to it. I enhanced it by a magnitude or two in order to amplify the noise. I tracked it through the tower and found the sound loudest outside Legalitus' door.

I informed Valeria as she left at which she promptly returned to his chamber to confront him. According to her later account, Legalitus did not deny it and claimed the vis to be simply a trophy related to some adventure or other from his youth. Wisely, she considered that she was in no position to formally accuse him of anything and so she had no choice but to leave without seeing this trophy, despite her prior demands.

We set out again into the woods, trying to track further traces of the

Vis. That is when a dreadful thought struck me. I raced back to my forge and inspected the book further. I discovered a mechanism within the iron binding of the book and, upon tripping it, twenty black grains dropped from its spine. Infernal Vis. This then was another question. Why would Aurifex hide such vile stuff within a book?

I gave these grains, what amounted to twenty pawns of Vis, to Benedic, for I wanted rid of it, and suggested he take it to show Charonicus. I instructed him to ensure its destruction and also gave him the report I had worded on our trouble in the marsh. The report was damning concerning the pool and the Vis and made it very clear that we should not be harvesting Vis from that site unless and until we could reclaim it from the Infernal. I stopped short of drawing parallels with the reclamation work the monks busy themselves with as I thought this might ill-dispose Charonicus to Benedic too much. Of course, I prepared another copy which I will present before council at our next session. That will give Charonicus enough time to either abide by its findings or show himself to be in reckless breach of them.

While Benedic was away with Charonicus, the Quaesitor wanted to use one of her casting tablets using the book as arcane connection. I refused on the very clearly stated basis that she would learn something about me and very probably about my Parens. I offered instead to cast the spell from her tablet. She considered my proposal for a moment and then declined on the basis that she had a duty to protect the secrets of her House. So, she does understand... We left the matter and she has not asked again.

When Benedic returned, without the Vis, it was clear that his opinion of Charonicus had fallen and he freely admitted so. I took some satisfaction in the result.

As we were about to return to the woods we chanced upon the carpenter who had been collecting wood from the forest. He was returning with his donkey laden with freshly cut wood. I had by this time grown weary of the occasional screech from any nearby Infernal Vis and had passed the spell to Benedic. He responded strongly to the carpenter's load. He took us back to where he cut the wood and revealed that he had collected several loads previously and had already made brooms and spears from the straighter pieces.

I raced back to the covenant and ordered the housekeeper to break and burn all new brooms. I then went to find the guards. Bernard, loyal to the last, accepted me at my word and we set out to find the spears. We came upon two guards. One followed the order to drop his weapons but the other was overcome by a somewhat familiar golden glow. His aspect became threatening and I was forced to use magic to loosen his grip on the spear. I gave Bernard the chance to bring him down for I did not want to spear the unfortunate soul through with Terram unless I needed to.

The conflict was resolved and the weapon broken and burned.

It seems that where Aurifex had not been visiting the site, for I assume this to be his site, he was unable to keep the Infernal contamination at bay. I hope that by getting Benedic to raze that small dell the forest will see fit to replenish it and perhaps I can start collecting pure Herbam Vis from there.

But the questions still remain, by what spirit was the book conveyed to me and where had the book been kept all this time? And more worryingly, what is the significance of my Parens' sigil manifesting during the possession?

The Cult of Silvanus

Being a Record and Discourse on the Nature of the Cult of Silvanus within this Tribunal:

"It is a rare thing in these modern times to find what appears to be a direct survival of a beathen cult on these islands, much less one from the days of the Empire. Nevertheless, my investigations do suggest that such a group exists, hiding themselves in plain sight. How the Good Lord permits such to continue, I am fain to admit ignorance. Thus I commit to page all that I know, so it may instruct my sodales, and commit this knowledge to record. Those familiar with the writings of Augustine, Virgil or Ovid may recall a minor godling by the name of Silvanus, who haunts woodlands and the pastoral hinterland, causing mischief amongst the people therein. I have seen an altar to this Silvanus with my own eyes. Rudely carved, with a man next a tree, with some metal tool in hand, accompanied by a dog, and inscribed simply DEO SILVANO SANCTUS. My parma was assailed by some ward as I entered the grove, thus I did not tarry long to investigate further..."

Lumen ex Jerbiton ex Schola
Pythagoranis

The God Silvanus

Silvanus has several key attributes. Principally, he is a god of the woods (hence Silva, the Latin for woodland), and is related to the Silvanae, a form of nymph common to such places. His bond with nature extends from the woodlands to the fields and other cultivated places. In this regard, he is less concerned with the fecundity of

the fields, which is the domain of Ceres, and more with their protection from the wild forces beyond their boundaries. In turn, this protective aspect also applies to the home. Finally, this protection from the wild extends to the hunting of the wild animals he gives protection from, treading into Diana's domain.

Silvanus is depicted as an old man. He is usually accompanied by a dog, representing a connection to his hunting aspect. He is commonly shown holding a falx, a small gardening sickle, to represent his agricultural connection, and a pine branch, for his woodland connection. He may occasionally be shown holding a bow if his representation is more strongly linked to the hunt. His shrines are mostly found on the farming estates near the wild places, which he protects, rather than towns and cities.

Places favoured by Silvanus often attract the attention of the Silvanae. These wood nymphs are the attendants of Silvanus and live in the trees. They are playful in character, but can become angry if the forest is threatened.

History of the Cult in the Stonehenge Tribunal

During the Roman occupation of Britannia, the soldiers brought with them the worship of many new gods. Silvanus was particularly popular along Hadrian's Wall, where the protection he gave against the wild lands further to the north were very much appreciated by the legions.

It is a common misconception

by David Staveley

that when Rome abandoned Britannia, writing that they should "Look after their own defences", that the legions left. Actually, the Legions of Britannia were revolting, again, and the empire did not have the manpower to deal with them, so it simply washed its hands of the province.

It was a lawless time after that, with the once unified province dividing again along old tribal lines. Protection was a very valuable commodity, and the mercenary groups formed from the remnants of the old legions were happy to oblige. Abandoning their old posts on the wall and settling where they could, the memories of the old Empire quickly started to fade, as the population rejected the old order that had kept them yoked for so long. Nevertheless, there was one man who did keep one aspect of the empire alive. His name was Sabinius, once a centurion, and an initiate of the cult of Silvanus. He founded the Collegium dei Silvani with a few like-minded colleagues who still remembered the old ways. New sacred groves (luci) were established, and many new initiates were brought into the cult. By the time of his death, the cult had built a substantial following in the local farming communities.

These farms flourished with the cult's assistance, but with the inevitable coming of Christianity, the cult began to suffer. As it slowly lost patronage from the newly-converted population, the cult clung to tenuous survival. It helped that their adherents were spread throughout the countryside, rather than in the centres

of population as the countryside was slower to change than the towns, and with the time given them, a decision was made within the Collegium to enforce secrecy upon those who remained. Those landowners who still wanted the protection that Silvanus could bring to their lands had to undergo a rite that would bring ruin upon them if they revealed names, locations or details of their rites to the uninitiated. Thus the Collegium dei Silvani became a mystery cult, and continued on as a shadow of its former self, in practice if not in power; its priorities now included self preservation.

With the coming of the Order of Hermes, a new opportunity arose to establish the cult on a firmer footing. The Collegium, though it knew of the Gift and understood its power, lacked Gifted priests at the time and its capability was waning as a result. In a

risky attempt to survive, a magus was initiated. This magus, known within the cult as Quercus after initiation, was young and naive and, given the promise of power, found himself committed before he had a full understanding of the cult's aims. Fortunately for the cult, the relationship proved fruitful, and a line of gifted priests continues to this day. Quercus integrated some of the Collegium's knowledge into Bonisagus' Magic Theory, leaving this knowledge to those who can trace their lineage to one of his apprentices.

The Collegium Today

The Collegium is a mixture of Gifted magi, hedge wizards and lay initiates. There are three levels of initiation, with the lowest (Domesticus) consisting mainly of the patrons of the cult. The priests

Story Seed: A Troubling Account

When searching a library for some book or other, some pages from a journal come to light. The journal is written in code, much like a magus might use for his laboratory work, but upon translating the text clear references to the Cult of Silvanus are revealed.

The journal talks of a magus called "Quercus" who invented a new Hermetic Target, integrated from knowledge held by the cult and now taught to those magi who attain the rank of Agrestis.

The Barrier target itself may be a useful addition to Hermetic Theory, but perhaps more useful would be the knowledge that those magi who employ this Target are likely connected with this secret Mystery Cult.

(Agrestis) make up the second level, each with a lucus (sacred grove) as their domain. There are roughly half a dozen Agresti currently. A single high



Initiation Script: Domesticus

Ease Factor: 15

Script Bonus: +9

Script Details: The initiate must spend two seasons performing good works for the cult (+2), during which time his character must be judged fit to proceed. During the third season, the initiate must travel to the sacred grove, arriving at an auspicious time (+3). When the initiate arrives in the grove, the other initiates stand with their backs to him as he sacrifices material wealth (+1), giving funds to the cult. Standing in the centre of the grove, a pine branch in one

hand, a falx in the other, a wreath of pine twigs around his head, he then recites the hymn to Silvanus. On the ground, he is instructed that he will find an acorn, a gift from Silvanus himself. He must swallow the acorn whole. If his intentions towards the collegium are not just, he will immediately turn into a sapling, and is promptly cut down with his own falx. As a result, the initiate suffers an ordeal, gaining the Minor Flaw Silence of Silvanus (+3). At the conclusion of the initiation, the initiate gains the new Virtue Silvanus Domesticus.

priest (Orientalis) controls the Collegium as a whole. Initiates are given a new name by the cult, usually woodland related, for use only by cult members, along with a title denoting their rank. Hunting is encouraged amongst members, and hunts involving several initiates are not uncommon. Membership is traditionally for men only, and there has been no exceptions to this yet. Hedge magicians tend to be from the Folk Magic tradition, and the Silence of Silvanus keeps the peace between them and the members of the order, enabling the two groups to work together. The collegium is not well known in the Order of Hermes, for fear that some magi may take exception to the pagan nature of the cult.

The history of the Collegium runs deep through its attitudes, and its primary motivation seems to be survival, which is accomplished with the protection of rich and powerful landowners. Some of what goes on could be considered interfering with mundanes should it come to light. Beyond that, the priests attempt to instil in their Domestici an urge to preserve the natural places, to protect them so that the lands rules by men do not spill into them. The relationship between the Domestici and their priest is a symbiotic one, as the landowners benefit greatly from the rites performed on their lands.

Gaining Membership

It is expected that an Agrestis will train an apprentice to eventually take over their Lucus. If, for some reason, this does not happen, they may look outside of the cult for a suitable candidate. Other suitable Gifted individuals who either discover the cult or are themselves discovered by the cult are expected to form a new Lucus once they reach the level of Agrestis.

Worship

Sacrifices to Silvanus, which usually accompany the various rites, include grain, fruit, wine, milk and meat of domestic animals, though

generally not live sacrifices. What is given is generally what the land produces, in thanks for the protection given by Silvanus. Worship of Silvanus is given in Latin, and there is an annual feast, sponsored by the Domestici. The feast, which falls on the day of the Autumn equinox, is followed by a week of rites on the lands of the Domestici, which protects the lands until next years feast. These rites are often clandestine, held at night to avoid prying eyes, but it is common for parish priests to be given a generous stipend to look the other way and ignore the strange local customs that come and go once a year.

Ranks

Each rank within the Collegium must be initiated as even those who maintain a separate life outside of the Silvanus faith are sworn to secrecy.

The First Rank: Domesticus

The Domestici are usually wealthy landowners who benefit from what the cult can do for them, and help fund and protect the cult in the mundane realm. The lay members are initiated into the first rank of the Collegium, and are given the title

Initiation Script: Agrestis

Ease Factor: 21 (reduced to 18 as the prior initiation involved a Minor Ordeal)

Script Bonus: +12

Script Details: Those wishing to attain the second rank must undertake a quest (+3) expected to last no less than a season in duration. If they are inheriting a lucus, this will be a task set by the current Domestici who serve that lucus. If the initiate wishes to start a new lucus however, the quest is to search for one of the original altars of Silvanus, wherever they may be buried.

If you cannot protect yourself, you cannot protect others. The initiate spends 14 days in the depths of the wood containing (or which will contain) his lucus. He will eat and drink only what the woodland gives him, and must sacrifice half of what he finds. He must sleep on the bare earth. On the night of the 15th day, after making five

deprivation checks (as per **ArM5**, page 180), the Silvanae send the wild animals of the wood to attack him. With his feet kept firmly on the ground, he must protect himself without harming the animals. Finally, a wolf warped by magic will appear, which the initiate must slay, the body of the wolf is buried at the site of the lucus. The skull is stripped and used as a cup for a brew which includes pine needles, henbane and fly agaric. The ordeal over, the initiate gains the Given to Silvanus Major Flaw (+9).

As the sun rises and the visions of the realm of Silvanus fade, the initiate awakens with a new sense of belonging in the world and the initiate becomes attuned to the nature of Silvanus, enabling the power of the god to act through him, represented by the Major Virtue Silvanus Agrestis.

Domesticus. Most do not progress further than this. They are taught the cult lore only to level 2; enough that they can usefully participate in any rites when required, which they are obliged to do when asked. The teaching of the lore is started and the virtue *Silvanus Domesticus* is initiated at the first level of initiation (see the nearby initiation script). The collegium also expects a monetary payment to join. In return, the collegium will help protect the lands of the initiate. A number of the first rank are under the protection of a single priest. Whilst they are aware that luci other than the one to which they belong exist, they remain unaware of the details, for their own protection, and for the protection of the other luci. Non-gifted members at this level typically still attend church. Some to keep up appearances, but most because while they support the cult, it has not replaced their faith in God.

The Second Rank: Agrestis

Those who are Gifted, whether Hedge Wizard or member of the Order, are allowed to attain the second rank and become a priest of *Silvanus*, gaining the title of *Agrestis*. There is no limit to the cult lore that they can learn at this rank. Each priest inherits or creates a *lucus*, but is not necessarily restricted to just one. The priests know of all the luci, but do not share this information with the *Domestici* under his control. He is responsible for protecting the lands

Further Research

One element of the old magic lost to the modern Cult is the ability of their Barrier magic to differentiate between targets crossing the Barrier. As a Minor Breakthrough (*Houses of Hermes: True Lineages*, page 26), effects cast as Barriers could have additional trigger conditions placed upon them, perhaps implemented as a further Intellego spell.

This starts to stray into Watching Ward territory, but without the costs associated with ritual magic.

of his *Domestici* by performing yearly rites as described below. Only Pagan characters may advance to this rank. Those who have come to the cult with their faith in God intact must first throw it off, taking one of either the Pagan or Dark Secret Flaws.

The Third Rank: Orientalis

There is a single person at this rank within the Collegium, who is the high priest and personification of *Silvanus* on earth. The *Domestici* are not allowed to meet him, and little is known about his role. What is known is that when the previous *Orientalis* dies, the *Agrestis* meet at the *Lucus*



Story Seed: A New Lucus

Setting up a new *lucus* can be a troubling task. The prospective *Agrestis*, after questioning an ancient spirit, finds the location of an old temple site near the old wall, where hopes to find an altar. The place is not dead however, and as the initiate digs, he triggers a protective trap, sending him plummeting into a regio from which he must escape. Can he hide from the bands of woad-covered spirits that stalk the vestigial battleground, or must he fight them?

Primus, a well hidden place deep within a regio, and by some means, a new *Orientalis* is chosen and initiated directly by *Silvanus* himself.

New Abilities, Virtues, and Flaws

New Ability: Collegium Dei Silvani Lore

This is the cult lore, which is used in many of the non-Hermetic rites performed by the collegium, as well as for further initiation into the cult. Tuition in this knowledge is restricted by rank and members are never taught more than they need to know by their superiors.

New Minor Virtue: Silvanus Domesticus

The initiate is now favoured of *Silvanus*, and can benefit from the *Domesticus* ritual if used on their estates. This also grants immunity to the effects of that ritual. *Silvanus* will help those favoured whilst they are in his domain, so this virtue also grants an implicit score in Forest Lore of 3 (see *Guardians of the Forests*, page 37), with the forest containing the *Lucus* of the initiate being considered the Home Forest. If the initiate already has a score in Forest Lore, or trains it by some other means at a later date, this virtue will add 1 to the score if the original score is 3 or greater.

New Major Virtue: Silvanus Agrestis

With the knowledge that the

Silvanus priests once employed protecting Hadrian's wall from the bloodthirsty hordes to the north, they gained a particular expertise with linear boundaries. This virtue grants a new target: Barrier, which is equivalent in difficulty to structure, and has a maximum length of 1000 paces, or one Roman mile (the distance between mile castles on the wall, the word mile comes from the latin mille, which means thousand). Anyone crossing the barrier will be subject to the effect. The length of the barrier must be walked when casting the spell.

In addition to this, the Lucus of the Agrestis will give him certain powers over his domain. After constructing his Lucus at the heart of

a forest, he can mark an area by means of ritual extending at most to the edge of the forest, or 1000 paces (whichever is shorter) that will be his domain. Being magically attuned to it, his domain is now considered a structure rather than a boundary for the purposes of spellcasting, and by concentrating, he can become aware of all that goes on within the forest.

New Minor Flaw: Silence of Silvanus

A dire fate may yet await an initiate to Silvanus if he acts against the Collegium. This flaw is the equivalent of a Vow, but with nastier consequences should that vow be broken. Those who break this vow turn into trees. For some the

experience is explosive and sudden, while for others the transformation can take weeks or months. The initiate continues this transformation until reparation can be made. The change affects the initiate's essential nature and is not prevented by Magic Resistance. Those of the cult can always recognize one of their own transformed into a tree and they may choose to strike the tree down or leave it as an example to others.

New Major Flaw: Given to Silvanus

This flaw is equivalent to the hermetic flaw, Restriction. The flaw binds the soul of the initiate to Silvanus, and his magic will not work



unless he possesses a piece of wood from a pine tree. This applies to any form of magic that emanates from the Gift so it can affect Hedge Wizards equally.

New Target: Barrier

A Barrier is a line between two or more points. The line can be straight or curved, but it has a maximum length of 1000 paces, or one Roman mile (being the distance between mile castles on Hadrian's Wall - the word mile comes from the Latin mille, which means thousand). Anyone crossing the barrier is subject to the spell's effect. As with Ring and Circle effects, the magus must mark out the Barrier during casting. Unlike Ring or Circle, simply walking the length of the Barrier is sufficient. Similarly, the Barrier must be indicated by clear markers, such as the space between two door posts, a set of stones dropped along a longer path, or a series of trees lining a road or track. The length of the barrier must be walked when casting the spell.

Barrier is equivalent in difficulty to Structure.

Non-hermetic Rituals

There are certain rituals performed by the Collegium which pre-date the Order of Hermes. Whilst they must be led by a Gifted priest, usually of the rank Agrestis, the power of the ritual is increased by the involvement of unGifted Domestici. Ritual Points are calculated by adding together the Collegium Dei Silvani Lore of all the participants, including the leading Agrestis, and dividing by two, rounded down.

Domestici are required to attend rituals when requested.

The Domesticus Ritual

The Domesticus ritual is the most commonly used, and is used to protect a farm estate and increase the

bounty from crops or animals within. Any animals entering the estate to feed on crops or animals, or any human intending to steal must make a brave roll against the number of ritual points or flee. Participants in the ritual, or those animals and people within the estate at the time of casting, are unaffected. This, accompanied by the gain in bounty in any crops or animals will result in a percentage gain in yield from the estate equal to the ritual points. This ritual is always performed during the week after the autumn equinox, which limits the number of estates that a particular Lucus can cover, thus limiting the number of members and geographical reach. The ritual is performed by precessing around the boundary of the estate, making sacrifices at the start and end and reciting prayers to Silvanus along the way.

This ritual has no Penetration, so those protected by Parma Magica, a Might Score, or resistance from any other source are not affected.

Silvanus Blessing Upon The Lucus

This ritual is performed within the Lucus on the Autumn Equinox in association with the feast that happens on this day. The Silvanae attend, at least on the periphery, and the Domestici try to outdo each other with the offerings they bring for sacrifice. The ritual creates, or maintains, a preternatural tether (see *Realms of Power: Magic*, page 10), focused on the altar and with a maximum score equal to the ritual points divided by 5, rounded down. If the ritual is not performed, or the score is lower than before, the tether score will decrease by 1. A higher score for the year will result in an increase in the tether score by 1, to the maximum. For a "full" lucus, the tether score will not generally go higher than 3. Any vis that results from an aura developed around such a tether manifests in the fruits of the

trees.

New hermetic Spells Unique to The Collegium

The following spells are commonly learned by members of the Collegium and both Laboratory Texts and Casting Tablets are known to exist.

The Shrouded Lucus

ReMe 30

R:Touch D:Moon T:Structure, mystery

This modified version of The Shrouded Glen (**ArM5**, page 152) ensures that initiates, whether Gifted or not, protected by Magic Resistance or not, are immune to its effects.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +3 Moon, +3 Structure)

Baleful hordes Retreat

ReMe 35

R:Touch D:Sun T:Barrier, mystery

Anyone crossing the Barrier must make a brave roll of 12+ or flee in fear. Any victims must be at least slightly fearful or apprehensive in the first place, for example, approaching a giant guarded Roman wall, or a dark forest, or an opponent.

(Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +3 Barrier)

Further Reading

Peter F. Dorsey, *The Cult of Silvanus: A Study in Roman Folk Religion*, Brill 1992

Grand Tribunal America

The 5th annual Grand Tribunal of the Americas will be held August 3 through August 5, Anno Domini Nostri Jesu Christi 2012.

The gathering will take place amidst the Northern California Sierra Nevada mountains, in the uniquely beautiful Lake Tahoe Basin at "The Village at Squaw Valley", in Squaw Valley, CA.

This is a family friendly event.

For the first time we are offering a Companion/Apprentice program with separate activities for the young, new or non-gaming attendees. Experienced, CPR Certified care will be available for youngsters while parents game.

Please see our website for registration, hotel and other information

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Registration Rate through 7/10/2012.

To contact this year's Grand Tribunal America organizers, you may contact Dawn Hansen and Laura Saunders at PracoGTA@yahoo.com.



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Grand Tribunal: UK

This is the sixth UK Grand Tribunal, following Cheltenham (2007), Cheltenham (2008) and Cambridge (2009), Cheltenham (2010) and last year in Cambridge again. This year it occurs two weeks after the American Grand Tribunal at Lake Tahoe .

A small friendly RPG event, we pride ourselves

in providing a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for fellow gamers, whatever their level of knowledge of **Ars Magica** and RPGs generally. If you enjoy games, even if you have never played or even heard of **Ars Magica** before, you will find a fun friendly weekend with lots of enthusiastic gamers!

To contact this year's Grand Tribunal organizers, see the website and/or the mailing list as per the details below.



Cheltenham

August 17 to August 19, 2012

Visit our Web page at:

<http://gt12.ekkaia.org/>

Or join the mailing list at:

grandtrib@yahoogroups.com

Stormbreaker

When a ship bursts out of the sky in the middle of an immense thunder storm, the covenant is faced with the ultimate symbol of Hermetic hubris; a ship designed to sail through the realm of magic itself.

By way of introducing the Hermetic Shipyard project, as featured in the *Hermetic Projects* supplement, this story presents your covenant with an enchanted ship. Its daring enchantments and the audacity of its creator may have been lost to the Order for many years, but the ship could now lead the covenant back to a wealth of Hermetic knowledge. And if not, the covenant has possession of a very valuable device, one that could bring them great wealth and renown.

Precis

At the height of a magical storm, as the magi contend with lightening and hurricane winds, a ship bursts out of a cloud above the covenant and plunges to the ground a mile away.

Tearing into the nearby hamlet, the crewless ship plows into the fields, attracting local interest from the Church and the local landowner. The magi must secure the ship so that they can discover where it came from, who sent it, and what it portends.

With the ship in their possession, they have the opportunity to investigate its enchantments, to learn what great magics it has been invested with and how to operate them. Discovering that the ship is able to sail through the Magic Realm, the magi may follow the trail left behind it into the Magic Realm and there find its stranded creator. They may track the ship back to where it was built

intent on finding the lost laboratory texts that will allow a fleet of similar ships to be built. Or they may use it themselves to explore further than their means and location would normally allow.

Will the magi find the shipwright and bring him back to the Order, or will they use his greatest achievement for the betterment of their own covenant?

By Guy Leopold

Background

The magus Gioachino Masi lived and worked over a century ago in Venice. A member of House Verditius, he trained as a carpenter and shipwright and he used his arts to secure a prosperous living providing



Sub Rosa

magical services to the city's fleet. As with most members of his House, hubris soon overtook him and he began work on something magnificent. Using insights into the Magic Realm that he had gained in trade with a magus of Syria, he started construction of a ship that could breach the barrier between the mortal world and the Magic Realm.

Persuading Seif al-Rajih to join him, Masi launched the ship, now named Tempesta, into a storm, which the magi had imprisoned within its timbers. Further voyages ensued, each testing the Tempesta's new powers, until the storm was finally unleashed and the Tempesta pulled into Magic Realm.

As far as the Roman Tribunal is concerned, Masi and al-Rajih simply vanished. With Tribunal politics as they were at the time, few queried their disappearance from the Roman stage and within a generation they were nothing but a memory.

Masi's shipyard was ultimately sold as the covenant companions aged and all hope of their Hermetic friends returning faded. The valuable laboratory texts were either sold through House Mercere or, in the case of those for the Tempesta, were taken by the most loyal companions to be held until their masters returned.

Preparing the Story

All you really need is a covenant with a magical aura. It doesn't matter whether your covenant is rural or urban, in woodland or the desert. The enchanted ship is the hook into the story and it makes its explosive entrance early on.

The Tempesta is an enchanted device, not just a ship that has devices acting upon it. As such, any magus who wants to investigate its enchantments needs access to, or the means to build, a laboratory large enough to contain a ship. This isn't

easy, but a covenant working together to investigate the vessel should be able to manage.

Dramatis Personae

Many of the mundanes listed below can be swapped out for characters already in play in your saga where appropriate. If you'd rather not have an enchanted ship barrel into your nearby friendly village, then pick another and use these new characters.

The Village

We assume that the ship tumbles into a village, churning up farmland, etc. But it may be more dramatic to have the ship crash into a town. The level of destruction is likely to be higher and the effects both more keenly felt and long-lasting. It also shifts the tone, given the additional risk to human life and limb. However, the default is for a village setting, so

Gottolinus, the Infernalist

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

Size: 0

Age: 37 (37)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Diabolist; Merchant; Incantation, Consumption, Malediction; Infernal Blessing* (manifesting as Puissant Guile, Puissant Merchant, and Puissant Bargain); Aptitude for Selling Short Measures*, Cautious with Bargain, Educated; Avaricious, Dark Secret: Inherited his fortune through murder, Infamous

Personality Traits: Avaricious +3, Gregarious +2, Honest -2

Reputations: A Thief and a Swindler (Venetian docks) 4

Combat:

Dodge: Init +0, Attack N/A, Defense +2, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +0, Attack +4, Defense +2, Damage -2

Dagger: Init +0, Attack +7, Defense +3, Damage -1

Soak: -1

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Venice 3 (personalities), Bargain 5+2 (hard sell), Brawl 2 (Dagger), Carouse 4 (games of chance), Civil and Canon Law 4 (Venetian trade laws), Folk Ken 2 (townsfolk), Guile 3+2 (lying to authority), Infernal Lore 3 (curses), Italian 5 (Venetian), Latin 4 (academic usage), Merchant 5+2 (wine), Order of Hermes Lore 2 (personalities), Swim 1 (the lagoon)

Infernal Methods and Powers: Incantation 4, Consumption 4, Malediction 4

Equipment: Expensive merchant's clothing, a sharp knife, and two bodyguards

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Handsome with thick dark hair, a calm soothing voice, and well-groomed mustaches. Gottolinus is dressed clothes made from the most expensive imported fabrics and is liberally adorned with touches of gold and silver. He is a man who could want for nothing.

Gottolinus' Infernal blessings are in the form of the Puissant Guile, Puissant Merchant, and Puissant Bargain Virtues, which have been applied above.

the characters below should suffice.

One thing to note is that all social interaction rolls within the village at this time are determined by Stress Die and there is a base two botch die associated with them, which may be modified as described below.

Father Renaud, The Priest

Renaud is a spindly and austere man of nearly fifty. He lives in the small cottage next to the church, which is now overshadowed by a steaming great ship arrived from the sky. Throughout his introduction at the crash site he is clothed in a short grubby nightgown from his bare, bowed, and skinny legs protrude.

Renaud is concerned with the devilry that has just dropped a ship onto his parish and he angrily blames the magi when they arrive, accusing them of most heinous witchcraft. He promises torments both worldly and beyond for the harm they have done to his community and for the affront and damage to his church.

Setting his church right, however temporarily, shows enough contrition for him to calm down and focus on the rest of the village. If they fail to deal with him properly, then one extra botch die is imposed on any social interaction rolls within the village.

Botches around Renaud ultimately result in the magi gaining a reputation for witchcraft as the priest spreads

word of their misdeeds.

Mathieu, The Steward

Mathieu is more concerned with his villagers than the ship and he is busy trying to organize the men to find the injured in their damaged homes.

He can be brought on-side by assisting without hesitation, showing concern, and by healing the injured, which provides a +3 social interaction bonus for the duration. Failure to do these things, however, sets him immediately against the magi, even moreso than the Gift usually does and imposes a -3 penalty and one extra botch die is imposed on any social interaction rolls within the

Maelstrom

Magic Might: 50 (Aquam)

Characteristics: Int 0, Per 0, Pre +3, Com +1, Str +10, Sta +1, Dex -1, Qik -5

Size: +5

Season: Summer

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Spirit; Berserk; Magical Monster; Magical Air; Compulsion (Consuming ships and sailors)

Qualities and Inferiorities: Greater Power × 2, Improved Abilities × 1, Focus Power × 4, Temporary Might, Improved Attack × 4

Personality Traits: Acquisitive +3, Angry +2, Hostile +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init -5, Attack N/A, Defense +1, Damage N/A

Grappling: Init -5, Attack +14, Defense +2, Damage +10

Soak: +1

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-10), -3 (11-20), -5 (21-30), Incapacitated (31-40), Dead (41+)

Abilities: Area Lore: the oceans 5 (geography), Awareness 4 (searching), Bargain 3 (with those who summon her), Brawl 6 (Grappling), Charm 1 (first impressions), Folk Ken 1 (magi), Latin 4 (hermetic usage), Magic Lore 5 (creatures), Norse 5 (storytelling), Penetration 2 (Aquam)

Equipment: None

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: When using her Eidolon power, Maelstrom manifests as a woman composed of seawater. Flecks of foam play over her skin in waves and her hair sways like waves breaking on the shore. Where she rises out of the water, her legs and feet spiral down, joining with the water's surface. Otherwise, her physical form is a great swirling of water. When she comes to the surface the swirling grows in power and threatens to draw sailors and ships in. The bodies of former victims can sometimes be seen, tumbling and churning within her swirling belly.

Powers:

Eidolon, Points: 2, Initiative: Qik-1, Form: Imaginem, Range: Touch, Duration: Conc, Target: Ind

Pull of the Watery Grave, Points: 4, Initiative: Qik+0, Form: Aquam, Range: Touch, Duration: Conc, Target: Group

Crafter of Aquam, Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Aquam, Range: Per, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Master of Aquam, Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Aquam, Range: Per, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Crafter of Auram, Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Auram, Range: Per, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Master of Auram, Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Auram, Range: Per, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Sailors that fall into the Maelstrom must engage in a grappling combat with her as per the rules in **ArM5**, page 174. If Maelstrom is successful then the victim must make drowning deprivation rolls, as per **ArM5**, page 180.

village.

Botches around Mathieu ultimately result in the covenant's supplies becoming patchy; Mathieu is a respected and influential man and the traders side with him against the covenant.

Foucaud, The Angry Farmer

Old and beligerent, Foucaud, does a good line in pitchfork waving. His concern is for his crops and the damage to the land. He has a point. He's old and even he realizes that for all his bluster he might not last a harsh and hungry winter.

So he is the rabble-rouser and discussions with him always come back to the state of his land. It's not just the cost of the crops, but the effort it will take over the harvest and

winter seasons to get the land back to what it was.

If they fail to deal with him properly, then one extra botch die is imposed on any social interaction rolls within the village. Botches around Foucaud result in the magi and their men being run from the town at the ends of pitchforks and illuminated only by burning torches.

Seigneur Valentin

Seigneur Valentin is the feudal landowner and whether he is introduced at the time and place of the crash or only later, he wants answers. Used to getting what he wants, he wants compensation from the magi for damage to the village, or the return of the ship that the heavens obviously saw fit to grant

him.

If you need numbers, he'll start higher but hold out for forty pounds of silver. If the magi refuse at this level he'll happily raise the matter with the most senior noble that the covenant knows in order to exert political leverage over them.

Venice

Any trip to Venice is going to be filled with guides, interpreters, masters of lodgings, thieves, etc. That's more than can probably be accommodated here. But there are two characters who are important to the story:

Gottolínus, the Infermalist

Gottolínus is a diabolist. He has given his soul over to the devil in

Naham

Magic Might: 15 (Aquam)

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

Size: 0

Season: Autumn

Age: N/A (75)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Human; Good Teacher, Puissant Shipbuilding, Tough, Long-Winded; Driven (Build his Ship); Poor Hearing

Qualities and Inferiorities: Gentle Air, Natural Appearance, Ritual Power × 2; Improved Abilities

Personality Traits: Helpful +3, Reclusive +2, Friendly +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack N/A, Defense +4, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +1, Attack +6, Defense +4, Damage -1

Bludgeon: Init +0, Attack +9, Defense +5, Damage +1

Soak: +2

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Aramaic 3 (slang), Area Lore: Naham's Island 5,

Awareness 2 (searching), Bargain 3 (information), Brawl 3 (Bludgeon), Carpentry 6 (ships), Climb 4 (timbers and rigging), Folk Ken 3 (language barriers), Greek 3 (slang), Hebrew 5 (slang), Magic Lore 4 (the Magic Realm), Order of Hermes Lore 1 (personalities), Shipbuilding 8+2 (vessels of unnatural size), Survival 5 (isolated desert islands), Swim 2 (shallow seas), Tinker 4 (mending tools)

Equipment: Filthy loincloth, hammers, nails, saws, and other assorted carpentry tools

Encumbrance: 1 (1)

Appearance: Rather small and wiry, Naham is all bulbous wrinkled joints and knotted muscles under sun-bleached skin. His hair is long, grey, and matted, which at least matches his beard.

Powers:

Seal the Wounded Vessel (Ritual Power), Points: 3, Initiative: Qik-11, Form: Herbam, Range: Touch, Duration: Mom, Target: Str. This power magically and permanently restores a single Damage Level lost by a ship. Use of the power costs 3 points off Naham's Might Score, which return at the rate of one for each season spent wholly within the Magic Realm.

Naham knows Aramaic, Hebrew, and some Greek. If characters are not able to communicate in those languages, you can resort to pictures drawn in the sand, sounds, and gestures, and use the parties' respective Folk Lore scores in place of languages.

exchange for profit and a life of comfort and privilege. He is a notable figure around Venice and his knowledge of its people, affairs, and history even includes the activities of the Order of Hermes within Venice.

Gottolinus himself approaches the magi, having been alerted to their presence in the city by his infernal patrons. As far as he is concerned, these newcomer magi present an opportunity to make a little more money - after all, why come to Venice if you're not looking for something, and if you're looking for something then you're probably willing to pay for it.

It's important to note that Gottolinus' infernalism is not

something upon which he dwells. It has always been a means to an end; just as one merchant may lie, or another short-measure, so Gottolinus consorts with devils. He recognizes that his soul is imperiled, but he believes he can avoid punishment a while longer yet.

For their part, his demonic patrons are currently maneuvering him into encounters with people who just might have the means to detect his infernal corruption and bring his soul to them through sudden and decisive actions.

Use the standard Tough Guy statistics from **ArM5**, page 22 for his bodyguards.

Abbess Benedicta

Benedicta is the abbess of a small but comfortable nunnery, supported by the generosity of the Venetian elite. Aside from the good works her sisters do for the city and the tuition they provide for the daughters of the wealthy, Benedicta holds a set of old books in sacred trust, handed down through several generations of nuns. She is aware that these are magical in nature but trusts that they have nothing to do with the infernal. She is correct, and these are Gioachino Masi's Laboratory Texts.

She would be reticent to let them go as they are, for her, part of the convent.

Mandrenke

Magic Might: 50 (Auram)

Season: Autumn

Characteristics: Int +2, Per 0, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +13, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik -5

Size: +6

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Confidence: 1 (3)

Virtues and Flaws: Magic Animal; Clear Thinker, Improved Characteristics, Lightning Reflexes; Magical Monster; Cruel (Major)

Qualities and Inferiorities: Focus Power × 2, Gigantic, Greater Power × 2; Extra Natural Weapons (Large Claws), Gift of Speech, Imposing Appearance, Improved Abilities × 10, Improved Attack (Large Teeth), Improved Damage (Large Teeth), Improved Soak × 3, Improved Strength, Large Claws, Large Teeth, Thick Scales; Acclimation Prone

Personality Traits: Cruel +3, Boastful +2, Violent +1

Combat:

Dodge: Init -5, Attack N/A, Defense +2, Damage N/A

Lashing Tail: Init -5, Attack +7, Defense +2, Damage +13

Large Claws: Init -5, Attack +12, Defense +5, Damage +17

Large Teeth: Init -5, Attack +14, Defense +4, Damage +19

Soak: +9

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-11), -3 (12-22), -5 (23-33), Incapacitated (34-44), Dead (45+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Magic Realm 5 (boundaries), Area Lore: Mythic Europe 5 (seasonal storms), Awareness 4 (alertness), Brawl 7 (Large Teeth), Faerie Lore 4 (faeries of the storm), Folk Ken 4 (magi), Guile 4 (reneging on bargains), Hunt 4 (faeries), Latin 4 (classical usage), Leadership 5 (intimidation), Magic Lore 8 (creatures), Old Norse 5 (poetry), Order of Hermes Lore 5 (history), Penetration 5 (Auram), Stealth 4 (flying), Survival 4 (Magic Realm), Swim 5 (stormy seas), Teaching 4 (Magic Lore)

Equipment: Thick Scales

Encumbrance: 0 (0)

Appearance: Mandrenke is a long-bodied wyrm-like white dragon. Her forelimbs are great wings that blacken the sky when she beats them. Her long jaws, spiked with jagged and broken teeth, crackle with lightening and her eyes shine brilliant white. She can writhe and coil her body to bring her bite, tail, and the claws on her wings to bear on opponents.

Powers:

Incantation of Lightning (Greater Power), Points: 1, Initiative: Qik-3, Form: Auram, Range: Voice, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Gathering of the Stormy Might (Greater Power), Points: 2, Initiative: Qik-4, Form: Auram, Range: Voice, Duration: Conc, Target: Group

Master of Fierce Rains (Focus Power), Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Aquam, Range: Voice, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

Master of Fierce Winds (Focus Power), Points: 5, Initiative: Qik-5, Form: Auram, Range: Voice, Duration: Mom, Target: Ind

If needed, use the statistics for Abbess Prudencia from *Legends of Hermes*, page 29.

Novice Gabriella

Gabriella is easily led and has had her head turned by Gottolinus more than once. Young and already bored with the religious life she can be corrupted into stealing at least some of the books.

If needed, use the statistics for the anchoress in *The Church*, page 83.

The Magic Realm

The time spent in the Magic Realm looking for Masi is an opportunity to insert your own stories and introduce your own characters and opponents. However, the

following relate directly to the search.

Maelstrom

Maelstrom knows that Masi sought out Naham the shipbuilder, but she does not willingly part with this information. On sensing the Tempesta's arrival, Maelstrom heads towards it

Naham

Naham is a carpenter and shipwright, a magical reflection of the Divine Noah, and he exists in the Magic Realm where he perpetually builds a great ship capable of saving every living creature from the coming flood.

He encountered the Tempesta and its crew during its initial voyage

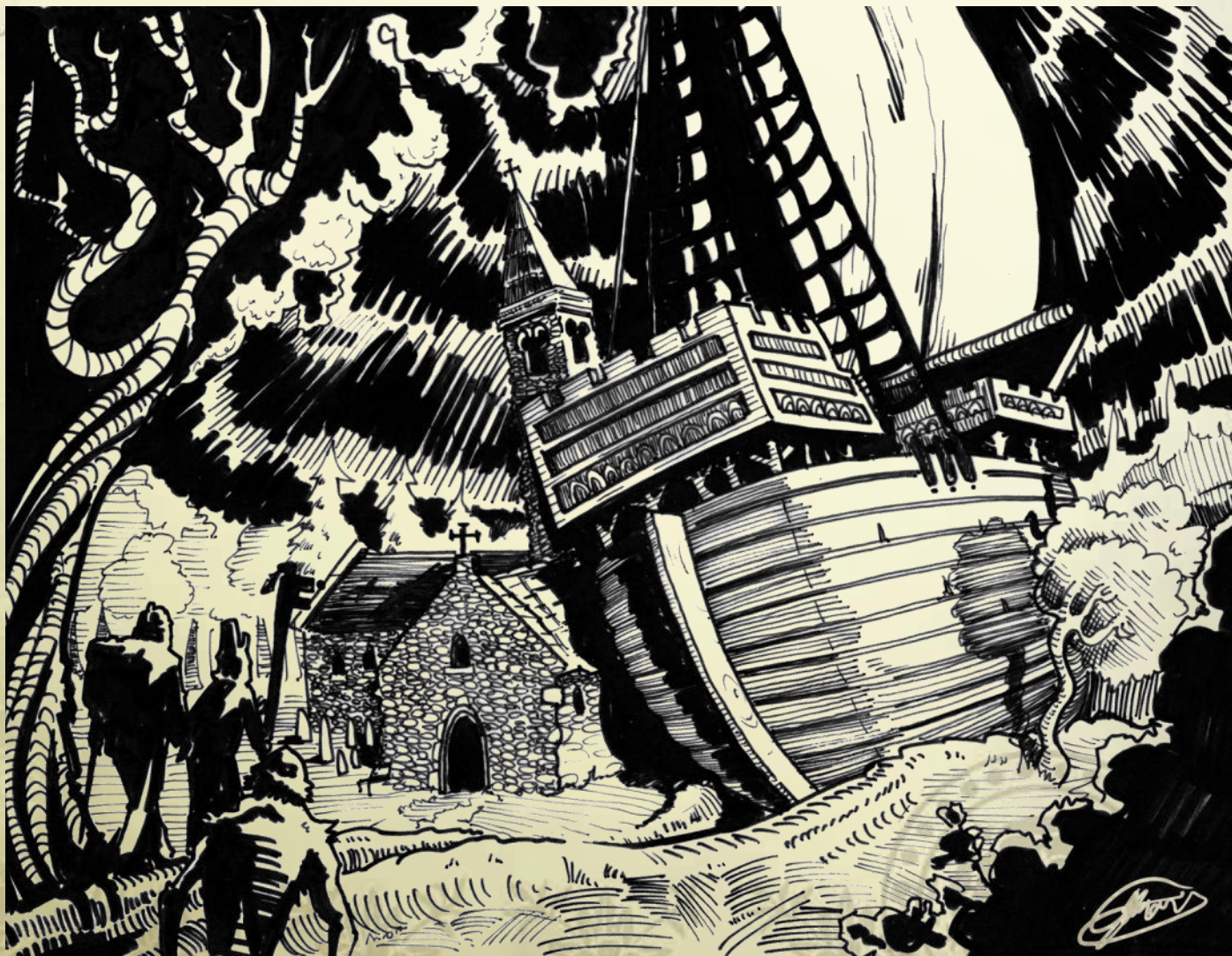
through the Magic Realm. Despite his warnings, he believes Masi and his colleague went in search of Mandrenke, looking for a way back to the mortal world.

Mandrenke

Mandrenke is a vast dragon who claims fatherhood over all storms. A single beat of his wings raises a hurricane, a stamp of his claw calls the thunder, when saliva drips from his spiked jaws the skies fill with rain, and his tongue is pure blinding lightning.

He captured Masi and al-Rajih, killing the Syrian but keeping Masi alive in order to have him live in defeat and torment for daring to bind a storm into his petty vessel. And it

(Continued on page 41)



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(Continued from page 39)

was the Mandrenke that cast the Tempesta out of the Magic Realm, frustrated at being unable to release the storm bound within its timbers.

The Tempesta

The central character of this story is the ship itself; the Tempesta. The work of Gioachino Masi, a remarkable Verditius craftsman and visionary, the ship is now without its master. Like its captain, her crew are long gone and with them so goes the secret of her operation.

Expected Sequence of Play

The magi first encounter the Tempesta in the middle of protecting their covenant against a magical storm. Having wrested control of the grounded vessel from the mundane authorities, the magi have the chance to investigate its magic and its origin.

The Thunder Storm

Weather-sensitive characters within the covenant feel a storm coming for a few days before it actually arrives. Spells such as Sailors Foretaste of The Morrow confirm that something big and violent is coming.

The Raising of the Storm

The winds pick up through the day of the storm and the clouds darken overhead. By the time the evening starts to draw in, the skies are dark, the rain is cold and stinging, and the winds are hard to resist. And then the thunder and lightening start.

The storm itself is destructive enough, even before the Tempesta arrives. Unless the magi have already warded the covenant against storms, up to three discrete storm events affect the covenant:

The Winds: Have a character make a Strength + Athletics Stress

Roll against 12. If they fail, they are swept off their feet by the winds and must make a Soak Roll against the amount they missed the Ease Factor by (plus the standard non-combat die roll). On a botch, add three to this.

The Roof: The winds start to lift the roof off one of the covenant buildings. It threatens to lift entirely unless a magus is able to control it through magic. A ReHe spell with a Group Target and a Base Level of 3 is enough to control it.

Lightening: Lightening might strike anyone or anything within the covenant as you see fit. It may be a magus, a familiar, one of the covenant, their livestock, a building, or a laboratory. If it strikes anything living, you can treat it like a naturally-occurring *Incantation of Lightening* (ArM5, page 126), which does +30 damage and forces those nearby to make a Size stress roll against 6+ or be blown away from the strike. Inanimate objects make a Damage Check, as per *City & Guild*, against an Ease Factor of 15. The roll has a penalty of -3 due to severe weather. On a failure, the item loses a Damage Level and is probably set on fire, which forces a further Damage Check every second round until the fire is extinguished.

The Arrival of the Ship

The ship speeds out of the storm with an almighty crash of thunder and flash of lightening. It is low enough that it smashes part of the covenant's tallest building, doing cosmetic damage and sending a shower of debris to the ground. As an added moment of peril, you can have the debris fall towards one or more of the covenant, requiring a dodge or fast-cast magic to avoid injury.

Debris Initiative Total: +1

Debris Attack Score: +5

Debris Damage Score: +15

With the ship listing to one side, it flies over the covenant and, descending all the time, heads

towards a nearby village where it ultimately crashes into the earth, plowing up fields as it goes.

The observant among the magi and their companions should see a trail on the ground that follows the path the ship took in the air. This trail takes the form of bright green grass or flowers bloomed out of season, or a pond made clean and clear. This is the result of the Magic Realm leaking through in the ship's wake and where it touched the mundane world it has invested the earth with vis. Enterprising covenant folk may collect these small pieces for a total of between five and ten pawns of vis depending on how rich your saga usually is. Alternatively, you might rule that these cannot be collected now, but that they might spawn Items of Virtue or Extraordinary Vis (*Realms of Power: Magic*, chapter eight) in the coming seasons. Regardless, here and there, the bright colors left behind in the wake glitter like fire in the darkness.

The Impact Site

It is easy to see the trail left by the ship as it ran aground. The earth is churned up and then forms a deep ditch where first the keel and then the hull impacted and ripped up the ground.

The ship has come to rest in the village and it has done a lot of damage on its way through.

Fields: The ship has literally plowed through the fields, turning over earth and uprooting and ruining crops. Should the magi want to make this good, they can use Group-Target, Base 3, ReTe effect to draw the earth back where it should be, but they may need to go to ritual magic and/or Rego Craft Magic in order to do something with the crops.

Homes: As ship made its way into the village, it has torn through a few houses, crushing their timbers and collapsing their roofs. You can decide how many homes have been

affected. Clearly, if you stage this event in an urban environment then this becomes the main focus. The villagers are trying to dig through to

shops surround the markets, church spires reach from every parish; the population density makes the uncontrolled ship a far greater danger.

magic, followed by looking for clues on board the ship, before finally trying to discover the invested effects through laboratory work.

It looks like some great animal has bitten into the hull. Here and there are broken planks that appear to have been bitten through or twisted and wrenched off.

get to those trapped within. Magi can help with some simple Group-Target, Base 3, ReHe spells, either subtly to support beams while others work, or with a great visual effect.

Church: The village's stone church has also been struck, and it is this sturdy structure that arrested the ship's progress. However, the ship has damaged the churchyard, complete with its graves, and the impact with the church has broken the small bell tower that now sits at a precarious angle and looks likely to drop onto the ship's deck at any minute. Dust and chunks of mortar tumble down regularly, and the danger keeps the ship free from investigators until the bell tower can be secured. A Group-Target, Base 2 (+1 for stone), ReTe effect is enough to keep the tower from collapsing.

Livestock: Pigs, cattle, ducks, and chickens have scattered themselves across the village and beyond, though the chickens, being less cognizant of any specific dangers have wandered back. Some of the village youngsters have been sent to fetch the animals back.

The ship itself is steaming, throwing off a mist in all directions, and is laying in the deep trench that it gouged out of the ground. It lists to one side and is butted up against the church.

NOTE: The damage is likely to be far more significant and far more dangerous in an urban environment. Tenement buildings line the streets,

Retrieving the Ship

How far away from the covenant the Tempesta came back to Earth is for you to decide, but getting it back to the covenant is going to be a feat regardless.

The vessel can be Targeted as a Structure with +1 magnitude for size with the following effect:

ReHe 30

Range: Touch, Duration: Sun, Target Structure

Moves the target ship completely under the control of the casting magus.

(Base 3, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +3 Structure, +1 size)

Unless a magus happens to have just such a utility spell available, then Ceremonial Spontaneous Magic is likely to be the order of the day, spiced with liberal vis use. If you are using *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, you might want to look up the use of props in page 58 in case any of your player magi already use them.

Alternatively, a more mundane operation can be carried out, but this is going to take some time to organize and a huge allocation of man-power.

Investigations

Where did the ship come from? How did it get here? Is it enchanted? Whose ship is it? These are some of the questions that are likely to be asked. Probably the first avenue that the players will explore is Intellego

Intellego Magic: While these spells can't tell what effects have been invested, Intellego is still useful. Intellego Vim can determine (base 1) that the ship is enchanted, and (base 1) that there is a Magic Aura currently sitting over the village (this is a remnant of the Magic Realm's incursion. When the same spell is attempted at a later time, the expected Dominion has reasserted itself).

Intellego Herbam (base 3) can be used to determine what the ship is made from (cypress wood) and where it originated (south of the Dolomites).

The Hull: Once the dirt from the village is cleared away, ominous tooth-marks can be made out. It looks like some great animal has bitten into and scraped away at the hull. Here and there are broken planks that appear to have been bitten through or twisted and wrenched off. This is the damage wrought by the dragon Mandrenke. Estimation, using Intelligence + any applicable Lore against Ease Factor 9, shows the creature's size to be +6 (give them a bonus for using something flavorful like a bestiary - if they think of it they might be able to create a sort of image of what the full jaws look like using magic). You should vary this information based on how far out the character is from that Ease Factor. Any Arcane Connection to the beast has long-since expired, but it should give the magi a clue as to the kind of adversary they may face.

Looking for Clues on Board: The ship itself is carvel-built, i.e. the hull is formed from timbers that abut one other rather than overlap. This is a key marker for southern or Mediterranean ships. An appropriate Area Lore or Craft/Profession Simple Roll of 9 or more is enough to confirm this.

A circle, complete with Hermetic inscriptions, can be found on the rear

castle. This raised platform appears to have been turned into a casting space and the markings on the deck act as a prop giving a +5 bonus to Ceremonial Casting and the prepared nature of the circle reduces the casting time to twelve minutes per magnitude (see *Houses of Hermes: Societates*, pages 58 and 59). An Order of Hermes Lore Simple Roll against an Ease Factor of 9 reveals the manner and design of the circle to be something more common in the southern Tribunals.

Below deck, there is a burnt out room at the bow, a cramped sleeping area with torn hammocks hanging from the beams, and a makeshift laboratory at the stern.

The burnt-out room is dark with charred wood and contains the remains of two beds, one either side of the chamber. The remains of a tapestry, again burnt and impossible to make out any design, hangs from the hull. However, *Tales from the Ashes* can be used to see the tapestry in its original glory. Any magus doing so sees a fine tapestry of a ship with two sails within a circle of red against a field of blue. Astrological and Hermetic symbols add decoration outside the circle.

Everything in the chamber has been tossed about, and an upturned chest can be found beneath one of the beds. The inside of the chest appears largely untouched by fire, but there is no sign of any contents it might once have held. There are some designs within the chest and those familiar with Verditius magic will likely recognize them as the runes used to bind their magic to devices.

Laboratory: The rear of the ship below decks has been turned into a laboratory. It is clear however that this was an improvised affair as the equipment (now broken and strewn throughout the deck) appears to have been made from other ship's equipment - poor-quality glass from a lamp has been reshaped into a simple alembic, tin cups have been turned

into bowls and small cauldrons, and all manner of stands have been made from scraps of wood. The remnants of a journal can be found, but most of the pages seem to be missing (see the nearby insert for key information from the Journal).

Examining the Ship in a Laboratory

It is hard to fit a very large Nef into a standard laboratory, so if the magi want to investigate the magic used within the ship they will need to build a dedicated laboratory around her.

Laboratory work must be undertaken in a laboratory, even if that laboratory is actually open to the elements, and the *Covenants* supplement provides excellent information on designing a laboratory from scratch. Otherwise, a magus can create a simple laboratory with a season's dedicated effort. This results in a -3 penalty, which a second season of effort eliminates.

Once the Tempesta is enclosed in a laboratory of some kind, the magus can investigate the ship's enchantments, which are done in the following order:

Effect	Level
Chart Passage Through the Storm	25
The Sky is My Ocean	39
A Thing of Magical Air / A Thing of Magical Waters	40
Open the Mystic Sails	54
The Enslaved Storm	61

The most dangerous effect is well within the capabilities of even an inexperienced magus to discover; the ability to take the ship into the Magic Realm. While the Tempesta is designed to fly through the storm it carries within itself, any Auram phenomenon that has a link to the Magic Realm can be sailed through, whether that is produced by the ship

or not.

All Roads Lead to... Venice

So what specific clues lead to Venice? The construction of the ship is one clue. While its time in the Magic Realm has degraded all arcane connections, magic can still determine properties of things, which is why the magi can learn that the ship is made from wood harvested south of the dolomites, just to the north of Venice. The style and construction of the ship is also Mediterranean, which would not be unusual for a Venetian shipbuilder.

The symbol on the burned tapestry is that of an old and long-since lost covenant and the details can be gained from Harco, either approached directly or through a Redcap. This places the symbol as belonging to Gioachino Masi, an independent magus in the Roman Tribunal.

Venice

The magi may decide to look further into the ship's origin, for if there is a ship enchanted through Hermetic means then there may still be Laboratory Texts from which new ships could be enchanted. This trail leads to Venice.

Venice is an independent republic built upon a series of lagoon islands in the north-east of the Roman Tribunal, just south of the Dolomite mountain range. It is a considerable naval power in the Mediterranean region and it frequently leverages its wealth and military might in the pursuit of more profit.

We'll leave the arrival in Venice to you so that you can both put your own spin on the city and control the pace of this part of the story. The two key events though are the encounter with Gottolinus, and the discovery of the laboratory texts.

A Knowledgeable Fellow

Gottolinus views Venice with both pride and a proprietorial air, so when his demonic patrons inform him of recently-arrived Hermetic magi he seeks them out.

The magi encounter Gottolinus through one of his bodyguards, who delivers a note from him inviting the magi to a private room in a lodging house not far away. The note explains that he knows much of the magical goings-on in Venice and would like to put himself at their disposal. If subsequently asked how he knew of their arrival he lies and says that he has people all over the city who report back to him.

For the interested, the note was handwritten by Gottolinus and acts as an Arcane Connection (Weeks). He has no reason to suspect ill of the magi so has not taken precautions against them.

If the characters meet Gottolinus he is attended by two burley armored bodyguards who dwarf their employer. Characters with Sense Holiness and Unholiness are able to sense the taint on Gottolinus on Ease Factor 15. He meets the magi in an upstairs room in a drinking house. He awaits their arrival and clearly uses this room as his office on a frequent basis. Importantly, should the magi ever wish to find him, it won't be long before he returns here.

For a price (ten pounds of silver), he can take the magi to the site where

their ship was built.

The Old Shipyard

Gottolinus can use his demonic patrons to learn what he needs, telling the magi that he will use his contacts in the city, and is then able to take the

happens to magical sites if they are abandoned and forgotten.

Gottolinus however knows where some of the texts were taken. For a price (ten pounds of silver), he can take the magi there.

A Long-held Trust

After a journey along the canals and away from the shipyards, Gottolinus takes the characters to a tall four-story townhouse that edges directly onto the canal. It is whitewashed and looks to be in good order. This is the convent of Corpus Domini (Level 5 Dominion). Gottolinus advises the characters to ask for the Abbess Benedicta. He does not accompany them.

Benedicta is willing to see visitors but is surprised to hear that they know of the books and asks, quite strongly, who told them of their existence and what they want with them. If the magi tip

their hand too early and say they want to take them then Benedicta brings the meeting to a close. If they profess interest, she can be persuaded (a donation helps) to provide a viewing.

When she does so, she explains that some of the books were lost in a fire about fifty years ago, but these were saved. The books themselves are old and damaged but the text is legible. They are untranslated laboratory texts. Your troupe may decide which specific effects these



magi to the site of the old Hermetic shipyard. It is still in use but the magical aura is no longer strong enough to overcome the Dominion.

The owner and shipwright (a robust, bearded man called Frugoni) knows nothing of any magic and claims that the shipyard was passed to him by his father and by his father before him, which is true. There is nothing left here of use to the magi except perhaps a vision of what

cover, from either the Tempesta or Masi's earlier work on enchanted ships.

Benedicta makes it clear that these books are not for sale, but while she will not suggest it, she is open to the suggestion of someone copying the text. This relies on a cordial and unthreatening relationship having been struck up.

Theft

There is another way to obtain the books. For a price (ten pounds of silver), Gottolinus is able to get one of the novices to smuggle one or more books out of the convent. This involves clear betrayal by one of the novices and theft. Sins and crimes both. If the magi go along with it, they are party to these sins.

Once the fee is paid, Gottolinus introduces Novice Gabriella. She is clearly not cut out for a life in the nunnery and, going by how her eyes take in each male character, should fortune play roughly with her she is likely to end up with a career on the docks.

She knows where the books are and can safely retrieve one. If the magi get greedy (another sin) she will reluctantly agree to taking more. However, if she agrees to three or more, she gets caught and descriptions of the magi are circulated as having been involved in the attempted theft. If they have seen the books, the magi may describe which books she should take. If not, ask the players what four or five effects they might like and pick randomly from those.

Importantly, if the theft fails, Gottolinus reports back to the magi, which should make them suspicious as he's already had the money up front. What they do with him after that is in their hands.

Into the Magic Realm

Regardless of whether the magi go to Venice, Masi is in the Magic Realm

and the only way to get him back, and potentially his knowledge with him, is to find and rescue him. There are two

ship once before. Of course, she doesn't care that the crew is different, she barely notices that, but she wants

If the magi have already constructed a laboratory large enough to investigate the Tempesta then they have the means to enchant another ship, perhaps one of their own design

ways to do this. Firstly, if the magi have investigated the enchantments in the ship then they should be able to trigger the effects and take themselves into the Magic Realm. If they haven't done that, then they need to find a gateway that will take them there.

That second option is beyond the scope of this story but a few ideas might be:

- Seek out a powerful magic aura and set of regiones
- Search for a magical creature able to lead the ship into the Magic Realm
- Find a magus or exotic wizard with the power to move between realms

Whichever option they choose, they ultimately end up in the Magic Realm searching for Masi and al-Rajih.

Rescue

Once the characters have made it to the Magic Realm, looking for and rescuing Masi and al-Rajih is perhaps itself a source of stories in the longer term as the magi find new clues as to where they went and even whether they are still alive. The three encounters detailed below however, provide enough of a path to lead the characters to their goal.

Into the Maelstrom

The spirit Maelstrom recognize the Tempesta and sees her chance for revenge, having been bested by the

the ship.

Maelstrom first manifests as a gently swirly swell on the clam waters stretching out in all directions. If the Tempesta is flying overhead, then Maelstrom is happy to help the magi if they would bring their ship to the water's surface. When they do however, she uses her power to create a great undercurrent that drags the ship in towards the increasingly swift center of the whirlpool.

Each round the ship is gripped by the power, the captain must make a Presence + Leadership Stress Roll against Ease Factor 9 to keep his crew holding fast. A failure sees one of the crew pitched overboard into the maelstrom, which gives Maelstrom the chance to grapple another target. Targets grappled by Maelstrom must make drowning deprivation rolls as per **ArM5**, page 180.

But she is easily beaten. If magi target her Might Score, she releases all targets after taking just 10 points of Might damage. At this point she becomes resentful, but compliant and can tell the magi that the last time she tangled with Tempesta the crew took the vessel to Naham, the shipbuilder.

Unless you are adding your own stories between events, Maelstrom points the Tempesta in the direction of a boundary that leads to Naham.

Naham, The Shipbuilder

This encounter starts with a mountainous island on the otherwise-empty horizon, but this is no island.

As the Tempesta draws closer, the island is clearly a massive unfinished ship. What at first appeared to be a high cliff is actually the ship's incomplete jutting bow. The keel rests on a small sandy island, large enough for a few trees, a freshwater pool, and a few birds, lizards, insects, and other small animals.

The ship is 300 feet tall from the bottom of the keel to the top of the stem and five times that in length. The upper decks are unfinished and appear little more than skeletons made of timber. The same is true of the rear of the vessel that disappears back into the island.

The island seems idyllic, peaceful, and deserted but there is a small campsite just outside the treeline. A shelter of wooden stakes and fresh tree branches protects some simple bedding and the fire pit shows signs of recent cooking. There are carpentry tools nearby and a simple grindstone for maintaining them.

There is a large hole in the side of the hull, apparently left to allow access. There are ladders galore inside that lead to seemingly scores of decks. Calling out brings no response, but as the characters explore the ship, they start to hear hammering. Homing in these sounds, in amongst the lacework of beams and planks, the shipwright Naham can be found.

He is small and thin with long matted and bedraggled hair and beard. He is wearing little more than a loincloth and the remains of a short tunic, more rips and tears than tunic now. He sits and hammers, oblivious to visitors until they raise their voices. Centuries of hammering has taken its toll on his hearing and the characters will need to speak up.

He is a nervous man who, if asked how and why he is building the ship, will put a finger to his bearded lips and shush at the question, before pointing skyward with a gap-toothed grin and an knowing nod.

If asked about the Tempesta, he

If You're Feeling Creative

If you're feeling creative, you might want to insert an encounter with the beast the players have just described to Naham. You could even use Naham to help the players describe the potential encounter if he asks them pertinent questions about the beast, such as where it might be found, whether it is dangerous, what it eats, how it might

be reasoned with or subdued, etc. If the players describe something hugely challenging, then they're making a rod for their own back of course, but turning their own imaginations against them is an interesting trick to play.

recognizes the vessel and speaks about its captain, a lost and desolate scholar. He knows where the Tempesta went to, but he will not tell these newcomers anything until they have paid his price. His island is running short of timber, so he needs new wood. Similarly, he needs iron for the ship's nails. Lastly, he desires knowledge of a strange beast the like of which he has never heard before. He does not explain why he wants to hear of the beast and instead just points skyward again. Those who make the leap of associating the name Naham with Noah might have an inkling.

The Tempesta can supply both wood and iron at the cost of one Damage-Level to the ship. The beast tales, told over a simple supper of fish, gives the players a chance to tell their own story of a unique and unusual animal. Naham has heard every tale of every natural and mythical beast, from the smallest ant to the greatest dragon and everything in between. Naham wants to hear something new, so the players can be as creative as they like and make up something new, odd, spooky, or outright strange. If a player describes something that the troupe has heard of, then Naham himself has heard of it and asks for a truly unique creature.

Once all three tasks have been completed, Naham explains that the magus-captain sailed to find a great dragon, a lord of the storm; Mandrenke. He can point the way, but warns that Mandrenke is a fearsome foe, uncontrollable, and deadly. Before they go, however, he is able to return their kindness in providing him with raw materials by

magically repairing the Damage Level sustained by the Tempesta.

Confronting the Dragon

When you're ready for the confrontation with Mandrenke, the Tempesta's crew spot a storm brewing on the horizon. In heading towards it they encounter fish and other creatures of the sea all fleeing the storm front. Some of these can speak, so they can warn the sailors to turn sail and leave. They even utter the dread name of Mandrenke! In truth, these creatures are perpetually fleeing as the storm never really moves from its spot, but that's neither here nor there.

The storm has an eye of calm at its center, but to get there requires three increasingly difficult Leadership or Sailing rolls against 9, 12, and 15 respectively. Failure at any doesn't hold the ship up, but the ship loses one crewman overboard for each point by which the roll fails. A botch sees the Tempesta swamped with water (or buffeted by such winds that she topples from the sky if she is in flight) such that the magi need to save their crew and right the ship.

Use of magic alerts the dragon and a peel of thunder accompanies his roar. With each spell, the roar sounds closer.

Once the eye is reached, the party has three rounds in which to act, minus any rounds in which they used magic to sail through the storm. This means that Mandrenke may potentially arrive at the same time as the Tempesta. Mandrenke does not hold back, attacking the weakest-looking or most exposed targets first.

The idea here is to pick off the little characters where possible. Make targets of the nameless sailors first, then any characters specific to this story, then the grogs, companions, and then finally the magi themselves.

At any point, if the magi decide to flee to live and fight another day, allow them to do so. This should be a dangerous encounter, so the magi may want to retreat. Have Mandrenke follow them with bluster, but let them go. They can always prepare and come back again.

Rescuing Masi

The magi do not need to defeat Mandrenke. They just need to hold the dragon off while they reach and rescue the fallen Verditius. He is chained to a rock that rises out of the sea. He is naked from the waist up and there are signs of repeated wounding and healing across his body.

The chains are welded shut

through Mandrenke's lightening breath so they need to be shattered, either through magic or by destroying a their single Damage Level. Do this by making an Attack Roll with a suitable weapon against Defense 6. Add the remainder to the standard Damage. If the Damage is 15 or higher, then the chains break and Masi can be taken from the rock.

Mandrenke tries to prevent all this, but remember that characters can be defended against attack. If an equal or greater number of characters declare themselves as defending the rescue party, Mandrenke can only attack them, not the rescue party. Of course, once the dragon has torn through the defenders then he's free to do as he wants.

Getting to the rock should be the work of at least two rounds, as should getting back to the Tempesta.

Leaving the Magic Realm

When the ship is ready to leave,

Masi can direct her into the storm whipped up by Mandrenke. The dragon follows all the way, flying above, behind, and around the ship and picking off targets with his lightening strike.

The Tempesta flies through the storm, out of the Magic Realm and through the Twilight Void, and back into a storm in the Mortal World. As luck would have it, they are not too far from their covenant and Mandrenke remains in the Magic Realm.

Masi is incredibly old by this point. When rescued from the rock he appears to have retained his relative youth, despite his wounds, but his age soon comes upon him. He has but a season to live and he is grateful to have that final season without torment and distress. He sets about writing letters to his House and discovering what happened to those friends and colleagues he left behind.



Rewards and Consequences

This is an unusual story in that the characters may choose to refuse the gauntlet instead of following Masi into the Magic Realm. In that case, the magi have an enchanted ship. Whether they go to the Magic Realm or not, such a thing is going to attract attention.

The principle reward is the ship itself. If the magi have followed the trail to Venice then they should also have at least some of the laboratory texts used to enchant the Tempesta. And if they have already constructed a laboratory large enough to investigate the Tempesta at the beginning of the story then they likely have the means to enchant another ship, perhaps one of their own design.

If the magi rescue Masi from the Magic Realm and return his ship to

him then they earn the Famous Virtue with a range at least across their Tribunal and House Verditius, if not the Order. Masi himself dies after a season back in the mortal world, but he can use that final season as a teacher should the troupe wish it.

Continuing the Story

Seif al-Rajih's research into the Magic Realm that enabled the enchantment of the Tempesta may still exist, perhaps laying forgotten in some distant library somewhere in Syria or perhaps in Venice. If the magi wish to recreate this magic, giving themselves access to more powers than those invested in the Tempesta, they may be able to track down those original laboratory texts and make their own breakthrough that much easier.

Other magi, potentially hearing of the ship and/or their exploits in the Magic Realm may come to them

seeking insights for their own researches, believing them to have knowledge that could be useful. And each magus that comes brings their own stories with them.

Possession of the ship likely brings fame and infamy in equal measure, no more so than if an Hermetic descendent of Gioachino Masi demands her inheritance from the covenant. Can the covenant legally refuse her claim? And if they do, how do their fare against an ambitious young Spring Covenant with little to lose?

Finally, Mandrenke may not forgive or forget the insult done by these magi and may gather and raise a great storm and a flood that sweeps across their lands. How the magi deal with this becomes important and it could result in a new voyage to the Magic Realm to hunt the great white dragon.

Sailor

The following statistics should serve for any mundane crewmembers employed to sail the Tempesta. Note, they begin without any knowledge of the supernatural world so taking them directly into the Magic Realm may test their loyalty to their captain.

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

Age: 25 (25)

Decrepitude: 0

Warping Score: 0 (0)

Virtues and Flaws: Covenfolk; Tough; Compulsion (Dockside Vices)

Personality Traits: Brave +1, Loyal to their Captain +1, Satisfied with their lot -1

Combat:

Dodge: Init +1, Attack N/A, Defense +5, Damage N/A

Fist: Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +6, Damage +1

Bludgeon: Init +0, Attack +8, Defense +5, Damage +3

Knife: Init +1, Attack +7, Defense +5, Damage +3

Soak: +5

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

Wound Penalties: -1 (1-5), -3 (6-10), -5 (11-15), Incapacitated (16-20), Dead (21+)

Abilities: Area Lore: Coast 3 (harbors), Athletics 2 (aboard ship), Awareness 3 (at sea), Brawl 4 (Knife), Carouse 3 (getting drunk), Folk Ken 2 (prostitutes), Guile 2 (shifting blame), Principle Living Language 5 (songs), Second Living Language 4 (tavern talk), Third Living Language 3 (tavern talk), Profession: Sailor 4 (rough weather), Swim 3 (ocean waters)

Equipment: Quilted or leather armor, knife

Encumbrance: 1 (2)

Appearance: Often bearded, usually dressed in ragged or worn clothes, often with a quilted or leather jerkin, sunburned arms and faces, and work-calloused hands.

The sailors are perennially unsatisfied with their lot, seeing themselves hard put-upon and hard done by. This is balanced by an inclination towards loyalty to their captain, but that balance is sometimes tenuous.

The Tempesta

Tempesta is a Very Large Nef of Excellent construction (on the quality scale provided in *City & Guild*). It has a castle at the rear of the vessel and a sturdy iron-bound mast. The whole ship has been opened for enchantment as a compound device adding together the vis capacity of these three elements for a total capacity of 32 pawns (16 for the hull, 8 for the castle, and 8 for the mast).

Enchantments

The Sky is My Ocean

ReHe 39

Pen +0, Constant Effect

R: Personal, D: Sun, T: Structure

As a constant effect, the ship is lifted into the air, allowing it to catch the winds and sail through the air as easily as it would upon the sea.

The effect cannot be suspended, but the altitude can be controlled such that the ship rests upon the surface of the sea or run aground.

(base 10, +2 Sun, +3 Structure; +1 for 2/day, +3 triggered at sunrise/set)

A Thing of Magical Air

MuAu 40

Pen +0, 24/day

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Structure

This effect associates the vessel with the form of Auram as if it had a Might Score associated with that form. While the vessel does not actually gain a Might Score, so has no Magic Resistance or a Might Pool, this does allow it to enter the Magic Realm through an Auram Vestige or Boundary manifest in the mundane world.

The effect is temporary, though is maintained by the ship itself, as the Magic Realm is made up of many different form-related realms and travel between them is made easier when the ships is associated with the appropriate form. For this reason, the Tempesta is enchanted with a similar effect that aligns it to the form of Aquam.

(Base 10, +1 Concentration, +3 Structure; +5 device maintains concentration, +5 24 uses per day)

A Thing of Magical Waters

MuAu 40

Pen +0, 24/day

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Structure

As A Thing of Magical Air, except the ship becomes aligned with the form of Aquam.

(Base 10, +1 Concentration, +3 Structure; +5 device maintains concentration, +5 24 uses per day)

The Enslaved Storm

ReAu 61

Pen +0, Constant Effect

R: Touch, D: Sun, T: Group

Tempesta has a storm imprisoned within it. The storm is an immense thing of frightening winds, raging thunder, and vicious lightening that each strain against their imprisonment. Those touching the ship's hull can feel the storm chained and bound within the ship's timbers.

The same magic that binds the storm also allows the storm to be temporarily released; never unleashed but allowed a moment of freedom. When this happens, the great storm is thrown forward of the vessel and the ship then sails after it and into it.

The storm itself is just the earthly manifestation. It is the storm's vestige in the Magic Realm that the ship uses and the released storm provides the arcane connection necessary for the ship's pilot to steer a course from the mortal world into the Magic Realm.

As the Tempesta passes into the Magic Realm, it recalls the storm into itself, clearing the skies behind it.

There is just one problem. When the ship travels through the Twilight Void, the Sun duration immediately expires and the storm would be at risk of being fully released. This is the reason for the strange design - it needs not only to trigger with sunrise and sunset but also these travel events to ensure that the storm is kept contained.

(Base 5, +1 Touch, +2 Sun, +2 Group, +1 complexity, +2 size; +10 for unlimited use, +3 triggered at sunrise and sunset, +3 triggered on entering or leaving the Twilight Void)

Chart Passage Through the Storm

InAu 25

Pen +0, 1/day

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Vision

The vessel allows the pilot to see through a Auram phenomenon and steer the ship through into the microcosm of that phenomenon in the Magic Realm. This is closely associated with The Enslaved Storm and is activated by the ship's pilot as the storm is unleashed.

As the ship re-enters the storm the pilot makes a Magical Travel roll (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 23) as though he had an arcane connection to the destination.

(Base 3, +1 Concentration, +4 Vision; +5 device maintains concentration)

(Continued on page 50)

(Continued from page 49)

Open the Mystic Sails

ReVi 54

Pen +0, 3/day

R: Personal, D: Concentration, T: Structure

This effect, activated when the Tempesta is navigated through the Twilight Void, reduces the speed it takes for the vessel to navigate the void. The length of the journey through the void is reduced by three steps from its initial Speed Level as determined by the table on Realms of Power: Magic, page 23.

(Base 20, +1 Concentration, +3 Structure; +6 for 50 uses/day, +3 triggered on entering the Twilight Void, +5 device maintains concentration)

The above effects fill 270 of a maximum 320 slots, leaving 5 pawns worth of enchantment space for a maximum of another 50 levels that could be enchanted into the Tempesta.

Sailing the Tempesta

As a ship of Excellent construction, the Tempesta provides a bonus of +1 to all Sailing-based rolls, including those taken on sea, in the air, or sailing through the Magic Realm.

Sailing the Tempesta in unusual environments however takes some practice. During the first season with the Tempesta in which it sails the sky or the Magic Realm, the crew suffer a -3 penalty to any Sailing-based rolls due to their inexperience and they do not count as “trained to use item” for the purposes of Stress Check, as per *City & Guild*, page 77.

Damage

The Tempesta’s construction is Excellent, providing four base Damage Levels, and as a Very Large nef it has a Damage Level modifier of three, based upon its size. These two numbers are multiplied providing a total of 12 Damage Levels. Due to the rigors of its time in the Magic Realm and its crash back to Earth, it is in a damaged state and has just three Damage Levels remaining. However, the ship can be repaired and such a venture may be the impetus behind building a new Hermetic shipyard.

Stressful events, such as breaching the Magic Realm, collision with similarly-sized or larger objects, crossing through boundaries or vestiges, or falling to Earth, force a Stress Check, as per *City & Guild*, page 77. Due to the enchantments invested into the ship, it gains a bonus of 51 (based on the magnitude of all invested effects) to such checks, making the vessel near-invulnerable to all but the heaviest trauma.

Falling to earth, however, is very dangerous and the ship receives a penalty to the Stress Check of 1 for every foot fallen up to a maximum of 50 feet. A separate Stress Check is made for every 50 feet or part thereof that the vessel falls.

All Hermetic enchanted devices remain functional until they lose their last Damage Level.

Travel to the Magic Realm

Realms of Power: Magic, chapter three provides all the rules you need for magical travel to and through the Magic Realm. There isn’t space here to condense or reproduce that content so you’ll need either to refer to that book or take things on trust. The description of what’s going on and the effects listed nearby should be enough to go on.

Things with Magic Might automatically gain the ability to enter the Magic Realm through those points where the Magic Realm and the mortal world touch. This is the key enchantment invested into the Tempesta. While it has an effect that allows it to sail the skies as well as the seas, the true power lies with the power to magically change itself, as if it had a Might Score associated with the Auram form.

It also has a storm held in check within its timbers and it is able to use this as an arcane connection to a place within the Magic Realm. By temporarily releasing the storm, it is

able to sail through the storm from one world to the other.

Once in the Magic Realm, another enchantment is used to shorten the duration of journeys between places, ensuring that the ship rarely is rarely left becalmed in the Twilight Void.

While the Tempesta carries with it the means to enter the Magic Realm, to return to the mortal world the crew must find a vestige connected to a phenomenon already manifest in the mortal world.

The Tempesta is enchanted with effects sufficient to provide the right conditions and capability, allowing it to be piloted into and navigated through the Magic Realm. These are detailed in the boxes nearby.

Twilight Scars

By Ben McFarland

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”

Khalil Gibran

The core **ArM5** rules state that Twilight Scars result from failed Twilight comprehension, usually brought about by a magical botch gone horribly wrong, where the magus stumbled with magicks beyond his control and is left forever changed by the experience. Little direction aids the Storyguide regarding the scope of a Twilight Scar, how prevalent or active a Scar should be, if the magic used influences the effect, or the local aura colors the nature of the Scar.

Without much definition, this leaves the creation of a Twilight Scar to the Storyguide, who might improvise an effect or postpone assigning one until he’s had a chance to think about the event. In order to speed the process, here are some guidelines to consider.

Twilight Scars are Benign, Malign, or Quirky. They are always annoying and reflect the magic which created them, but a Benign scar is easier to conceal, while a Malign one draws attention to the magus. Quirky scars are simply that—odd and unusual, and may or may not draw attention or be easily concealed.

Determining Twilight Scars

To determine what type of scar is acquired, consider these conditions in order. If more than one condition is met, then the type of scar with the most conditions met manifests:

- If the magus casts in a Divine aura, has mastered the spell, has the Guardian Angel, Sense Holiness/Unholiness or True Faith virtues, or the Clumsy Magic or Pious Flaws, then Twilight Scars manifest as Benign.
- If the magus casts in anger, combat, or an Infernal aura, has the Cthonic Magic virtue, or the Diabolic Past or Tainted by Evil flaws, then Twilight Scars manifest as Malign.
- If the magus casts in a Faerie or Magic aura, has the Mythic or Strong Faerie Blood virtues, or the Chaotic Magic, Plagued by Supernatural Entity, Twilight Prone, or Faerie Friend Flaws, then Twilight Scars manifest as Quirky.

Condition	Benign	Malign	Quirky
Divine Aura	X		
Faerie Aura			X
Infernal Aura		X	
Magic Aura			X
Mastered Spell	X		
Faerie Friend			X
Cthonic Magic		X	
Guardian Angel	X		
Plagued by Supernatural Entity			X
Diabolic Past		X	
Mythic or Strong Faerie Blood			X
True Faith	X		
Cast in Combat		X	
Chaotic Magic			X
Pious	X		
Tainted by Evil		X	
Sense Holiness/Unholiness	X		
Twilight Prone			X
Cast in Anger		X	
Clumsy Magic	X		

For instance, if a magus with Sense Holiness/Unholiness botches and fails to comprehend Twilight after casting in anger while battling a creature in a Faerie aura, then the resulting Twilight Scar would be Malign.

In cases where none of the conditions are met, the default is a quirky Twilight Scar.

Example Twilight Scars are given below, organised by Form, Technique, and then type of scar for each Form and Technique combination. An example spell is provided with each Form and Technique.

Animal

Creo Animal

Example Spell: *Soothe the Pains of the Beast*

Benign: The magus' hands grow feathers or fur.

Malign: The maga's touch causes immediate unnatural animal shedding, eventually leaving the animal bare.

Quirky: The magus sheds small feathers or animal fur when upset, sitting, or resting.

Intellego Animal

Example Spell: *Image of the Beast*

Benign: Concentrating, the maga senses of the number of animals in a structure with her. The animals begin to cry out in fear and pain for diameter.

Malign: Animals easily track the magus and attack him first in combat.

Quirky: Animals of the same type as the target all look the same to the magus.

Muto Animal

Example Spell: *Beast of*

Outlandish Size

Benign: Animal grows slightly larger when touched and remains enlarged for diameter. It dislikes all individuals during this time.

Malign: Animals in room become evil-looking for diameter and hate the magus, trying to attack him unless restrained.

Quirky: Animal grows barely, but noticeably, larger while the maga touches it.

Perdo Animal

Example Spell: *Decay of Fur and Hide*

Benign: Leather and woolen items worn by the magus always feel soft, supple and somewhat greasy.

Malign: Parchment touched by the maga falls apart if held for diameter or more.

Quirky: The magus' clothes are always unraveling or losing the stitching. Shoes fall apart quickly.

Rego Animal

Example Spell: *Viper's Gaze*

Benign: One type of animal holds rigid for diameter when the maga first looks at it. The animal refuses to remain in the maga's presence afterwards.

Malign: Mounts and draft animals balk, dogs and cats actively scramble to avoid the magus' touch.

Quirky: All animals in a structure visibly freeze for three breaths when the magus first enters the room.

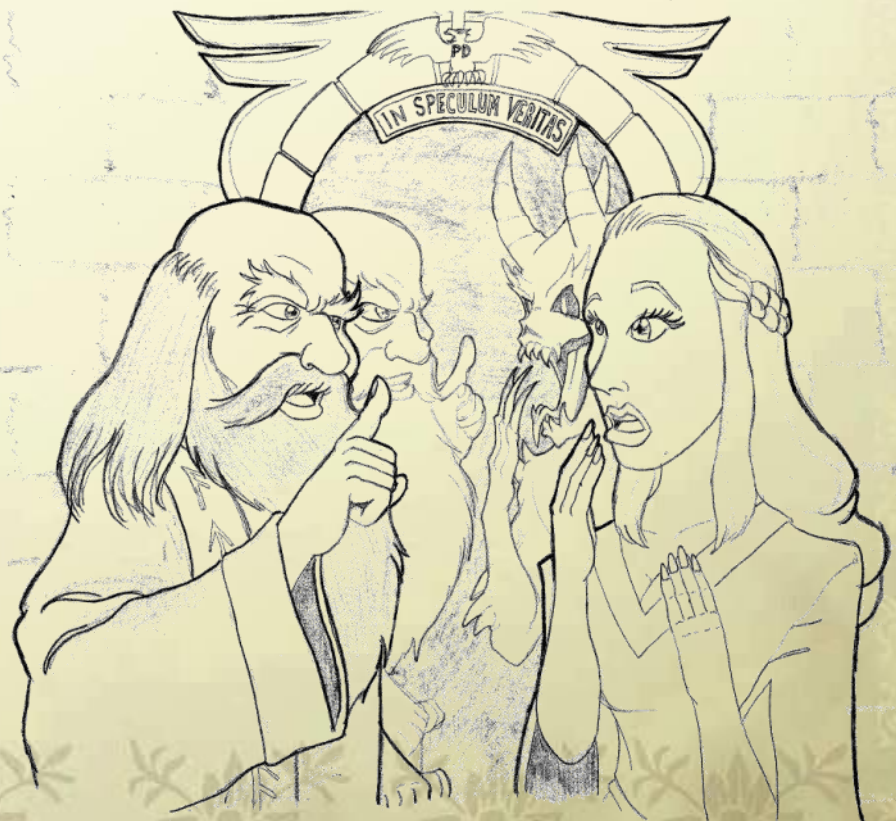
Aquam

Creo Aquam

Example Spell: *Mighty Torrent of Water*

Benign: The magus and his clothes are always damp, as if just washed.

Malign: The magus leaves wet footprints in his wake, no matter



Sub Rosa

where he is.

Quirky: When injured, the maga bleeds in tiny, arcing spouts of water and blood.

Intellego Aquam

Example Spell: *Voice of the Lake*

Benign: At first touch, bodies of water tell the magus about anything which as died in the water or while touching the water, starting with the most gruesome.

Malign: Every source of liquid the maga touches tells her it is poisoned.

Quirky: When injured or drinking, the magus hears random whispers from nearby bodies of water.

Muto Aquam

Example Spell: *Lungs of the Fish*

Benign: When the maga holds her breath, she can do so for a little longer, but her skin looks scaly and fish-like when she does so and for a diameter afterwards.

Malign: When sleeping, the magus must rest with a mouth full of water to breathe.

Quirky: When upset, the magus steams slightly, small tendrils curling up off the skin

Perdo Aquam

Example Spell: *Parching Wind*

Benign: Magus is always bone dry with flaky, uncomfortable and cracking skin. If soaked, his clothing dries in a diameter.

Malign: Magus is always thirsty and must drink twice as much per day or gain Thirsty trait.

Quirky: The maga is always thirsty and, once a day for a diameter, randomly shares her

thirst with another person with a touch. The effect's source is recognized by the recipient.

Rego Aquam

Example Spell: *Breath of Winter*

Benign: Any liquid the magus touches becomes cool and ice-clogged for a diameter.

Malign: Any non-boiling liquid the maga tries to drink freezes solid for diameter.

Quirky: The magus leaves frosty outlines anytime he remains still for a diameter.

Aurum

Creo Aurum

Example Spell: *Stench of Twenty Corpses*

Benign: The magus smells like a corpse from either sun rise to sunset or the reverse.

Malign: The maga's breath and aroma stink like a bloated corpse. She cannot smell the scent.

Quirky: When the magus becomes excited, aroused, afraid, or otherwise emotional, he smells like a rotting corpse.

Intellego Aurum

Example Spell: *True Sight of the Air*

Benign: Smoke and clouds near the maga manifest detailed shapes and figures.

Malign: The magus makes the air hum faintly in any room or within 30 paces.

Quirky: Any passage of the magus through a mist, smoke, or fog holds its shape for diameter.

Muto Aurum

Example Spell: *Rain of Stones*

Benign: Any time the magus yawns, coughs, or laughs, he has a mouthful of small pebbles or dirt.

Malign: The magus' breath exhales small clouds of dust, which dissipates within a diameter.

Quirky: The maga sneezes small pebbles and stones.

Perdo Aurum

Example Spell: *Room of Stale Air*

Benign: The magus always smells musty, stale, and otherwise unpleasant.

Malign: The air in the room occupied by the magus begins to stale and foul after a diameter. This goes away when the magus leaves.

Quirky: The maga is unruffled by breezes and gusts, leaving her clothing unaltered by the wind, no matter how hard it blows.

Rego Aurum

Example Spell: *Ward Against Rain*

Benign: Rain bounces off of the maga like hailstones when it hits her. She gets a little wet.

Malign: Rain seems to fall specifically on the magus, drenching him worse when in a storm.

Quirky: Rain makes the magus wet in strange patterns and designs, rather than uniformly wet. This pattern is different every time.

Corpus

Creo Corpus

Example Spell: *Purification of the Festering Wounds*

Benign: Scars of old wounds

on the magus look gangrenous and pus-colored.

Malign: The maga's wounds heal with deep, obvious scars which pucker and twist.

Quirky: Any physical scars that the magus has shift over his body when he sleeps, never appearing where they did the day before.

Intellego Corpus

Example Spell: *Whispers Through the Black Gate*

Benign: Corpses mutter and sigh in voices only the maga hears when she is within the room. The bodies still move.

Malign: Corpses mutter and sigh in voices audible to any within 5 paces of the magus.

Quirky: Corpses say inappropriate things in voices which are randomly and inopportunistically audible to any within 5 paces of the magus.

Muto Corpus

Example Spell: *Arm of the Infant*

Benign: The magus' fingers, toes, ears, and nose are noticeably small and pudgy, but otherwise functional.

Malign: One of the magus' arms and legs is noticeably shorter than the other.

Quirky: The maga's appearance becomes slightly asymmetrical, but changes with each full moon. One eye or ear may be higher or larger than the other, fingers may be different lengths, and so forth.

Perdo Corpus

Example Spell: *Curse of Leprous Flesh*

Benign: The magus takes on the dull grey pallor of a

corpse.

Malign: The maga is forever shedding clumps of hair, small pieces of skin, or even her earlobes or small fingers and toes when angry or upset. These lost bits grow back over a moon.

Quirky: The magus gains the strange lesions of leprosy, but affected areas fade and shift with each season.

Rego Corpus

Example Spell: *Awaken the Slumbering Corpse*

Benign: Corpses roll over, either on to their backs or stomachs, when the maga walks into the room.

Malign: Skulls and corpses chatter and silently laugh when the magus enters the room or if he touches them.

Quirky: The faces of any corpse within 30 paces contort into mocking and inappropriate expression while the magus is nearby.

herbam

Creo herbam

Example Spell: *Wall of Thorns*

Benign: Any wooden seat used by the magus becomes bumpy and uncomfortable after a diameter.

Malign: Wooden objects used by the maga sprout small thorns while she uses them, making them painful to hold for extended periods.

Quirky: Any wooden object used by the magus sprouts thorns when it is set down, causing it to stick to whatever surface it was left.

Intellego herbam

Example Spell: *Shriek of the*

Impending Shafts

Benign: The maga is quietly told "I thirst for your blood" by any arrow or wooden weapon which comes within 5 paces of her.

Malign: Trees and plants softly whisper as the magus passes, calling him a "murderer and killer". They ask what he plans to destroy next, but never answer. Answering them quiets the plants until the next sunrise or sunset.

Quirky: The nearby plants mock the magus' dress, smell, choice of path or grooming habits whenever he sits still for more than a diameter. Answering them quiets the plants until the next sunrise or sunset.

Muto herbam

Example Spell: *Stir the Slumbering Tree*

Benign: Trees and shrubs randomly share their worries and ailments with the magus, fearing pests, woodcutters, drought and animals, directing the character away from these things.

Malign: When traveling through flora, any plant which could strike the magus, such as drop a pine cone, swat with a turned branch, exude a root to stumble over, does so.

Quirky: Foliage changes color when the maga touches or rests near a plant for more than a diameter. Leaves turn colors, pine needles become orange, flowers blossom and wilt, grass turns yellow. The effect fades when the maga departs.

Perdo herbam

Example Spell: *Wizard's Autumn*

Benign: Trees and greenery become dry and dormant when the magus stays within a pace for

more than a diameter.

Malign: Any plant handled by the maga for diameter or more dies and wilts. Larger pieces crumble into dry rot the longer they are held.

Quirky: Plant products age faster when used by the magus, and the magus leaves yellowed footsteps when walking in greenery like grass, moss, or even tree branches.

Rego herbam

Example Spell: *Repel the Wooden Shafts*

Benign: Plant products randomly leap away from the magus at inopportune moments. If movement is restricted, the object tears or breaks.

Malign: Plant products visibly evade the maga's grasp, skittering away when the maga first attempts to use them.

Quirky: The magus has difficulty setting plant products down; objects randomly stick to the magus for at least a diameter. This effect becomes more pronounced as the magus becomes more excited.

Ignem

Creo Ignem

Example Spell: *Heat of the Searing Forge*

Benign: Objects held by the magus for more than diameter grow warm to the touch. Objects held for more than ten minutes become uncomfortable to hold, and those held for ten diameters become painfully warm.

Malign: The maga is always very warm, exuding steam on cold mornings, surprising people if touched, and quickly melting snow or ice if handled.

Quirky: Liquids, such as tea, soup, water, wine, held or handled by the magus for longer than diameter begin to boil or steam. Food eaten by the magus continues to cook, as he eats it, quickly becoming overdone or burnt.

Intellego Ignem

Example Spell: *Vision of Heat's Light*

Benign: The maga sees primarily in *Heat's Light* and must concentrate hard to see in normal vision, which often results in headaches. This makes reading difficult.

Malign: The magus has a small nimbus of light which reflects his mood or temperature. It scales across the spectrum, from red to green to violet, as the magus becomes angry, happy, or sad. His personality traits determine the usual color. It is



easily visible in a dark room or at night without bright light.

Quirky: The magus sees everything as a combination of regular vision and *Heat's Light*, and loses their regular vision if the air is very cold, like a snowstorm.

Muto Ignem

Example Spell: *Hornet Fire*

Benign: Fires within a pace of the magus throw sparks and cinders until the magus moves away. These are not directed at anyone in particular.

Malign: Fires within a pace of the magus turn bluish-green and throw smouldering cinders while the magus is nearby.

Quirky: Flames within a pace of the maga harden into a crystalline form of an insect while she is nearby. The fires still produce heat and light as appropriate and consume their fuel. They fall into a pile of shards which dissipate if the fire is extinguished.

Perdo Ignem

Example Spell: *Conjuration of the Indubitable Cold*

Benign: The magus is cold to the touch, like a corpse. He grows colder the more excited he becomes.

Malign: Liquids touched by the maga form a thin film of ice. Those handled for longer than diameter freeze solid. Bathing with more than a sponge leaves the maga encrusted with frost and chunks of ice.

Quirky: The magus' clothes are always encrusted with frost and rime, especially near the collar or the cuffs. His backpack, belt, or boots often freeze, becoming difficult to open or remove.

Rego Ignem

Example Spell: *Leap of the Fire*

Benign: Torches, lanterns, and candles refuse to remain lit within a pace of the magus, leaping from their fuel and extinguishing themselves.

Malign: Random flames within a pace of the wizard leap from their fuel and attempt to follow the magus like a vaguely puppy-shaped flame, possibly consuming anything flammable it touches and definitely leaving scorch marks.

Quirky: Fires within 5 paces of the maga arc and stretch, like a swimmer testing the water. If the maga remains within one pace of a fire for diameter, it plunges from its fuel and extinguishes.

Imaginem

Creo Imaginem

Example Spell: *Phantasmal Animal*

Benign: A phantom animal often perches on the magus' shoulder, just out of his sight. It disappears if anyone tries to touch it.

Malign: A vicious and dangerous illusory animal seems to be draped on the maga, such as a viper looped around her neck, scorpions on her hands or shoulders, or enormous spiders crawling across her back. They disappear with a half-hearted bite if touched. The maga may or may not notice them.

Quirky: The magus' visage seems overlaid with a ghostly image of the particular animal. The image fades if pulled back like a hood, but reappears if the magus becomes excited, upset, or aroused.

Intellego Imaginem

Example Spell: *Summoning the Distant Image*

Benign: Anytime the maga performs a mundane action, opening a door, picking up a spoon, she sees flickers of some place within 30 paces. Faces are blurred and voices are muffled.

Malign: When ever the magus becomes angry, excited or sad, the image of the magus appears somewhere within 30 paces and mirrors his current actions.

Quirky: The magus sees flashes of an object's creator or last owner when picking up an item for the first time.

Muto Imaginem

Example Spell: *Disguise of the Transformed Image*

Benign: The maga's eye color changes with each blink.

Malign: The magus' reflection changes to something evil-looking and sinister.

Quirky: The magus appears differently to each person in the room. Reflections show the same person.

Perdo Imaginem

Example Spell: *Invisibility of the Standing Wizard*

Benign: Items worn by the magus all begin to fade to a dull, charcoal grey.

Malign: The last item held or used by the magus remains invisible to him until someone else picks it up and uses it or until he picks up and uses a similar item.

Quirky: Parts of the magus become invisible when sleeping, eating, angry, or bathing. The portions become visible when the magus stops the activity.

Rego Imaginem

Example Spell: *Wizard's Sidestep*

Benign: The maga's image wavers or shifts anytime she violently moves, sneezes, coughs, or laughs.

Malign: If the magus is bumped, struck, or jostled, his image shifts like a stone dropping into water.

Quirky: The magus always passes through doors twice. Either ahead of himself or after he's already entered the room.

Mentem

Creo Mentem

Example Spell: *Weight of a Thousand Hells*

Benign: Whenever the magus is alone in a room, he appears surrounded by ghostly figures only he and those with Second Sight can see. The figures plead for the magus to apologize and remain until he does so.

Malign: The maga sees eyes watching her from every shadow, weighing her actions and considering her moral character. Those with the Guardian Angel, Ghostly Warder, Premonitions, Second Sight, Sense Holiness and Unholiness, Visions, Tainted by Evil and True Faith virtues and flaws can also see the eyes.

Quirky: Any time the magus contemplates something—a decision, an action, a fork in the road, a chorus of ghostly voices holds a whispered debate, asking if he'll do the right thing or sin against God.

Intellego Mentem

Example Spell: *Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie*

Benign: The maga exhales

smoke when angry, mist when excited, and steam when laughing.

Malign: Any time the magus speaks, he exhales a misty cloud.

Quirky: The magus exhales a misty cloud anytime he is not speaking.

Muto Mentem

Example Spell: *Mind of the Beast*

Benign: The maga incorporates sounds made by the animal into her regular speech. If a bird was selected, she may chirrup or whistle when she speaks.

Malign: The magus regularly expresses the most inappropriate habits of the animal suggested. For instance, if a hound was selected, he might mark posts and doorways.

Quirky: The magus takes on a small combination of the animal's habits and expressed sounds. Selecting a squirrel might meant the magus chitters while wiggling his nose.

Perdo Mentem

Example Spell: *Calm the Motion of the Heart*

Benign: The magus is always monotone and unemotional sounding, even when very excited or upset.

Malign: The maga loses the ability to express a particular emotion and instead expresses an inappropriate emotion, laughing instead of crying, shouting instead laughing, etc.

Quirky: The magus cannot express the last expressed emotion again until at least three different emotions have been expressed. Until then, the magus expresses an inappropriate emotion.

Rego Mentem

Example Spell: *Confusion of the Numbd Will*

Benign: The maga must perform a random selection event twice with each decision, such as rolling a die or flipping a coin. If prevented, she does nothing for diameter and then acts normally.

Malign: Hearing a simple phrase causes the magus to babble incoherently while speaking for diameter.

Quirky: The magus cannot perform a particular action, such as going up the stairs, sitting down, picking up a dropped object until a trigger statement or event occurs, like bell chiming or someone snaps their fingers. If prevented, he does nothing for diameter and then acts normally.

Terram

Creo Terram

Example Spell: *Touch of Midas*

Benign: The magus' fingernails grow as lead.

Malign: The maga's touch leaves a light coating of lead on any metal object handled or carried for more than a diameter.

Quirky: The magus sheds tiny flakes of lead, brass, or tin when upset, sitting, or resting.

Intellego Terram

Example Spell: *Tracks of the Faerie Glow*

Benign: When walking on dirt or stone, the maga leaves footprints which glow until she stops walking for diameter.

Malign: The magus leaves glowing footprints which fade after a few minutes when walking. If running, the footprints remain for an hour.

Quirky: Anyone within five

paces of the magus leaves glowing footprints until they move away from the magus.

Muto Terram

Example Spell: *Edge of the Razor*

Benign: Metal objects become dull and tarnished when held by the magus for over a diameter. An edged item seems worn, but sharpens easily.

Malign: Bladed weapons or tools pit and rust easily when within 5 paces of the magus. Metal items used by the magus break easier.

Quirky: The magus' touch leaves tarnish or rust stains on anything handled for more than a diameter, requiring cleaning or polishing to remove the discoloration. Any worn metal leaves obvious stains on the magus, even if it wouldn't normally, such as gold.

Perdo Terram

Example Spell: *Pit of Gaping Earth*

Benign: The maga's footsteps or touch leave deeper impressions than normal and are not easily removed.

Malign: The magus leaves a heavy divot in the earth if he falls down, and running marks the ground as if a horse was galloping across soft turf.

Quirky: Walking on stones leaves a trail of dirt-filled footprints, and walking on dirt, the magus leaves dust-filled footprints. Walking through dust, his footprints remain dust-free until sunset or sunrise.

Rego Terram

Example Spell: *Unseen Porter*

Benign: When no one is looking, objects randomly move a

pace when the magus puts them down.

Malign: Objects actively hide themselves up to two paces away after a magus handles them.

Quirky: Objects handled by the maga change orientation after she uses them, sometimes reverting to a previous state if no other movement is possible, such as a door or window opening, a clasp unlocking, or a bar lifting.

Vim

Creo Vim

Example Spell: *The Phantom Gift*

Benign: Animals and people who interact with the magus seem to have the Gift for diameter after being within a pace of the magus.

Malign: The maga's touch causes people to treat her as if she has the Blatant Gift.

Quirky: When the magus is emotional, those within a pace seem to have the Gift.

Intellego Vim

Example Spell: *Scales of Magical Weight*

Benign: The maga always senses slightly less vis than she actually finds.

Malign: When sensing vis, the magus can never accurately tell if vis is Magic, Faerie, Divine or Infernal. It senses differently every time.

Quirky: The magus always knows exactly how much vis is present but believes all of it is of the type detected when the botch occurred.

Muto Vim

Example Spell: *Sbrond Magic*

Benign: The maga's sigil cannot be altered from her spells.

Malign: The magus' sigil becomes more pronounced and apparent and cannot be removed.

Quirky: The sigil of the magus randomly fluctuates in a cyclical manner, becoming strong and indelible then fading before returning.

Perdo Vim

Example Spell: *Demon's Eternal Oblivion*

Benign: The magus smells faintly of brimstone and sulfur and cannot mask the scent.

Malign: Destroying demons leaves marks like a Criamon's stigmata on the magus which only the magus, those with Second Sight or True Faith, and demons can see.

Quirky: The magus feels his skin crawl if touching a demon or someone with the Tainted with Evil flaw. His palms smoke slightly when in an Infernal aura.

Rego Vim

Example Spell: *Gather the Essence of the Beast*

Benign: Any time the magus attempts to gather the sort of vis involved in the botch, he glows until sunrise or sunset.

Malign: If the magus uses magic to collect vis, the vis glows brightly, regardless of the container.

Quirky: When casting, the maga's hands drip a glowing liquid the color corresponding to the arts being used. This liquid smokes until the spell expires or a diameter, whichever is longer.

Mappa Mundi

Everywhere you look online you're bound to find something of interest that can be used or adapted to support your **Ars Magica** saga:

First, here's an example of a saga taking advantage of Google+ pages: plus.google.com/u/0/116087125128393136482 The Midnight Saga is set in Stonehenge, and presents itself as "a saga of dark horror." Take a look and check out another method for sharing your game with the world.

Are you looking for Divine magical items which are historical, but not relics of saints? Consider cursing stones- here's a recent discovery on the Isle of Canna in the north of Scotland, a bullaun "cursing stone." www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-18130259 And it is decidedly human-remains-free.

Sure, you can use the chart in *City & Guild*, and calculate how long it takes your characters to travel from Paris to Venice. Or, you can check out this great Roman travel calculator from Stanford and revel in the cool. orbis.stanford.edu/



Not only does it show the old Roman routes, but it calculates the cost of travel on those routes. Leaving aside the cool factor, this is a serious piece of academic research.

Even so, now you'll always know when the redcaps were on time and when they spent too much time in Provence!

Want something a little more ancient and mystical? Check out the additional meanings within the Eye of Ra- perhaps a different sort of arcane connection lost in Antiquity? io9.com/5907604/this-well-known-egyptian-symbol-is-actually-an-early-math-problem It's history you can take to the laboratory and research.



Sure, you could listen to the reasoning behind this article www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/04/120430164357.htm and think simply the motion of the ocean waves put those enormous boulders on a shelf on the Aran Islands- and not magical sea titans. Certainly not magical sea titans living off the coast of Eire, no no, that would be just awesome.

So one of your magi has gone and put points into Infernal Lore. Sure, he's popular at Tytalus

gatherings, but what does he know? Well, start with this handy table of symbols representing a wide variety of demons, of course!

yourmomfanclub.tumblr.com/post/20482173945 Give all those Guernicus a knowing wink when they tell you "I'm just learning about the enemy."



How do you get those Covenant hooks worked into play? Easy. Lost Roman hoards do it every time. www.archaeologydaily.com/news/201203288093/Hoard-of-30000-silver-Roman-coins-discovered-in-Bath.html In case you were wondering, why yes, we did keep ridiculous sums of money in the Bath.

Finally, you know how you get respect? 11C Vikings will tell you, stacking severed heads is a sure route to polite conversation. www.archaeologydaily.com/news/201201277886/Viking-mass-grave-linked-to-elite-killers-of-the-medieval-world.html It makes a bit more of a mess than Certamen, but you have fewer repeat offenders.



In the Next Issue

The Storyguide's handbook: Outlawry

A look at the social, legal, and moral implications of living outside the law

Welcome to the Turb

A celebration of the humble, brave, cowardly, heroic, and decidedly dead grog.

The Body by the Shore

Lies never stay drowned.

The Vitruvian Magus

Building the Ideal Hermetic Architect

Mythic Cyprus

Contested Jewel of the Mediterranean

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