

VICTORIANA

# THE CONCERT IN FLAMES

ADVENTURES IN VICTORIANA EUROPE



by Chad Bowser, Walt Ciechanowski, Lynne Hardy,  
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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>				
Using this Book	5				
<b>The Encyclopaedia Victoriana</b>	<b>8</b>				
The True Dark Age	8				
The Hope of Rome	9				
Entropic Scientist: Leonardo da Vinci	10				
Aluminat Triumphant: The Final Defeat of					
Chernobog	11				
The Chains of Order	12				
The Blue Fever	13				
On Reconsideration of Eldren and					
Similar Subspecies	13				
The Saint and the Tsarina	14				
The Failed Spring and the New Hope	15				
The Elephant in the City	16				
The Failure of the Concert	16				
A Napoleonic Hope?	17				
Nations at a Glance	20				
The Austrian Empire	22				
Vienna	26				
Milan	28				
Pest and Buda	28				
Prague	29				
Venice	31				
The Danubian Principalities	32				
Bucharest	36				
Serbia	36				
The French Republic	36				
Paris	39				
Bordeaux	41				
Calais	41				
Lyon	41				
Toulouse	42				
The German Confederation	43				
Berlin	47				
Frankfurt am Main	48				
Hamburg	48				
Munich	49				
The Kingdom of Greece	49				
Athens	51				
Delphi	52				
Mount Olympus	52				
		The Italian States	52	Scene 5 – Paris Legwork	106
		Bologna	55	Scene 6 – A Concerned Niece	108
		Florence	55	Scene 7 – The Chorus of Flame	109
		Naples	56	Intermission	113
		Padua	57	Chapter II: Viennese Cadenza	116
		Pisa	57	Scene 1 – The Russian Gambit	117
		Rome	58	Scene 2 – Viennese Legwork	119
		Turin	59	Scene 3 – The Hahn Residence	120
		The Low Countries	60	Scene 4 – The University	121
		The Hague	62	Scene 5 – The House of Citizen Liberty	123
		Amsterdam	62	Intermission	124
		Brussels	63	Chapter III: Pestian Crescendo	125
		The Ottoman Empire	63	Scene 1 – A Threat Removed?	126
		Constantinople	66	Scene 2 – A Celebratory Dinner	127
		Crete	66	Scene 3 – Pestian Legwork	129
		The Kingdom of Portugal	67	Scene 4 – A Distracting Opera	130
		Lisbon	69	Scene 5 – Waylaid!	131
		The Russian Empire	70	Scene 6 – The Spark of Revolution!	132
		Saint Petersburg	73	Intermission	135
		Moscow	73	Chapter IV: Prager Bridge	135
		The Scandinavian Confederation	74	Scene 1 – A Sorcerer’s Return?	135
		Copenhagen	77	Scene 2 – Ambush!	136
		Muspelheim	77	Scene 3 – Prague Legwork	138
		The Kingdom of Spain	79	Scene 4 – Yehudi Assistance	138
		Madrid	82	Scene 5 – The March of the Automata	140
		Barcelona	82	Intermission	142
		Basque Country	82	Chapter V: Genevan Finale	143
		The Swiss Confederation	83	Scene 1 – From Russia with Concern	144
		Bern	86	Scene 2 – Storming the Palace	146
		Geneva	86	Scene 3 – The Wrath of Chernobog	148
				Scene 4 – The Final Confrontation	150
				Conclusions	151
		<b>The Concert in Flames</b>	<b>90</b>		
		Background: The Legacy of the		<b>Appendix: New Sapients</b>	<b>152</b>
		Thirty Years’ War	91	Giant	152
		The Thulian Plan	92	Harpy	152
		Getting the Adventurers Involved	95	Karakon	153
		A Note on Language	95	Merfolk	154
		When Adventurers Go Astray	95		
		Chapter I: Parisian Overture	97		
		Scene 1 – The Last Republican Ball	99		
		Scene 2 – Murder Most Foul!	103	<b>Index</b>	<b>156</b>
		Scene 3 – The Cathedral	104		
		Scene 4 – Montesquieu’s Residence	105		

# Europe

200 km

Kingdom  
of Denmark

United Kingdom  
of Great Britain  
and Ireland

Kingdom of Norway  
Kingdom of Sweden

The Austrian Empire

The Russian Empire

Kvenland

Grandduchy  
of Finland

French  
Republic

Kingdom of Prussia

The Ottoman Empire

Kingdom of Spain

Kingdom of the Netherlands

Persia  
Kazakh  
Khanate

Atlantic Ocean



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Continent!

You have in your hands *Victoriana's* official guide to Europe. This supplement is the result of work over two editions and has greatly evolved over time. What started as a shilling shocker spread through a few European cities has become a full-blown Continental gazetteer with an epic penny dreadful that could reshape the map of Europe.

From the Rock of Gibraltar to the steppes of Russia, from a Kingdom of Giants to the Boot of Italy, this book is packed with information about the nooks and crannies of a fantastic Victorian Europe. We've tried to make each region come alive to enable Gamesmasters to set entire shilling shockers in a given region (I have a soft spot for the Danubian Principalities might) without tossing in a whole host of new rules. That said we do offer a smattering of new sapients in the Appendix, ready to be used as adventurers or supporting characters.

*The Concert in Flames* is a penny dreadful that is a bit of a departure from our previous adventures. While some investigation is involved, this penny dreadful is plotted as an action-adventure with a race against time. The adventurers follow clues and thwart a Continental conspiracy in the streets of Paris, Vienna, Pestbuda, Prague, and finally Geneva, where an ancient horror threatens to burn Europe. Throughout all of this the adventurers get to attend the re-coronation of Napoleon, rub elbows with

Emperor Franz Karl, join forces with the Tsarina, and possibly end the Crimean War. It's an adventure they soon won't forget!

Before diving into this book I'd like to thank all of my co-authors. This was a challenging project to pull together with multiple authors and they had only the vaguest of outlines to work with. In spite of that they did an admirable job in helping Europe come alive for *Victoriana*. Their hard work is most appreciated!

## Using this Book

*The Concert in Flames* is divided into two parts. The first is a gazetteer of Europe, beginning with more articles from Countess Lyonesse's scrapbook and concluding with entries on each of the major regions of Europe. Adventurers that hail from these regions should use the appropriate social class table when determining their breeding.

With the incidental exception of Paris' Département aéthérique, there are no new associations offered, as there is really no need. Each association given in the *Victoriana Core Rulebook* has its equivalent in any of the regions; a simple name-change is all that is necessary. One point that any European adventurer will want to pay attention to is languages; adventurers that hop around the Continent can quickly find themselves in cities where communication is difficult.

## A Different Europe, but Much the Same

While *The Concert in Flames* is a supplement on Continental Europe, we aren't providing canned histories of the continent and its various countries. The reason for this is simple: it isn't necessary. In broad strokes, the history of *Victoriana's* Europe is the same as our own. The Roman Empire, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars all took place essentially as they did in the real world. It only takes a few minutes with a good search engine to find more detailed information on a particular historical event than we could possibly provide here.

Where *Victoriana* differs from our world is in some of the details. Obviously a world of Dwarfs, Orcs and magic is going to have differences to our own, although we've taken the conceit that these differences tend to resolve themselves over time. For this supplement we've chosen to focus on the things that are noticeably different in order to illustrate how a Gamesmaster can 'tweak' other parts of history to give them a *Victoriana* spin. In short, recorded history is a source to plunder for adventures, not a straitjacket to prevent them!



We have peppered the gazetteer with interesting new equipment and other items of value and there are a few new spells here and there (some of which are reprinted from the *Liber Magica*). Of particular interest are the new firearms of the German Confederation, the blue diamonds of Greece and the crystal blades of Andorra.

After the gazetteer is a penny dreadful that takes the adventurers from Paris to Geneva by way of Austria. More than just an exciting city-hopping adventure, it is an opportunity for Gamesmasters to shake things up and, perhaps, bring some wayward elements of *Victoriana* back into line with our own history or, alternatively,

spinning things off into even more far-flung directions. The adventurers should feel like their action, or inaction, can change the world – and they won't be wrong.

One word of caution: we've tried to make each city come alive with its own character. It would be a crime if Paris or Prague felt just like London. When your adventurers are hopping across the Continent they should feel like they are immersed in different cultures.

A little research can go a long way when an adventurer orders breakfast or thinks that her fluency in German is going to be enough when trotting around the Austrian Empire.

### Using the Second Edition

The Victorian world of 1867 in *Victoriana*'s earlier editions isn't so much a set historical period as it is an amalgamation of the 'best bits' of the Victorian era, and much of it is based more on the 1850s than the 1860s. Thus, most of the information given in the gazetteer can be used whole cloth, with the Gamesmaster easily smoothing over the occasional inconsistency.

The penny dreadful provides a bit more of a challenge, as Napoleon Bonaparte is presumed dead (as he was in our world by 1867 – or 1856 for that matter) and Louis Napoleon is now in charge of France. As France is still 'the French Republic' in the core rulebook then it's a simple matter to make the coronation about Louis Napoleon's ascension to emperor as Napoleon III; it just happened a few years later than in our world.

Similarly, the Austrian Empire became the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in May of 1867. By massaging the date, a Gamesmaster can comfortably make the Unity Concert a symbol of this compromise and allow events to play out as they are written.



# CHAPTER I

## THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA VICTORIANA





# THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA VICTORIANA

## COUNTESS LYONESSE'S DIARY

- 1 January 1856 -

*It is a rare occasion indeed when I feel compelled to write more than one entry in a single day, but I must confess I felt the memories flooding back as I organised my travels for my memoirs. Thus I feel I should put a few thoughts to paper while they are fresh in my mind!*

*Colette Grißom, bless her soul, once asked me about how European society differed from America's. I chuckled at that - as if the entirety of the Continent could ever be summed up in a single statement! It is as difficult, I suppose, for me to think of a continent-sized nation as a single culture as much as it is for an American to think of state-sized nations having different languages, societies and cultures. In both cases we emphasise and de-emphasise similarities and differences amongst various states (no Virginian, for example, would ever consider herself the same as a Bostonian, and a British aristocrat would be much more comfortable in Hanover than Paris).*

*Still, flipping through these articles and diary entries has brought back many good memories; that magical night in Venice when Charlie and I dined on sepe de nero before taking a sandolo to the theatre, watching a herd of unicorns in the Black Forest, sailing through the Pillars of Hercules, dining with the Tsarina in Saint Petersburg! Such wonderful times they were!*

*And yet, how times have changed! The French Empire that marched across a continent is now a faded republic, the Holy Roman Empire broken into a loose confederation of German states, the Ottomans retreating from Europe, a wave of revolutions that reshaped governments for good and ill. And now, the Crimean War threatens the balance of power that has been in place for almost half a century. I find myself constantly revising my notes as the Continent as-is is not the Continent that was. I have no doubt that the Europe of 1857 will look little like the Europe of 1856. Whether that is a good thing is for history to decide.*

## The True Dark Age

By Zechariah Roth - *Journal of the British Archaeological Association Vol. 11, 1855*

In spite of more enlightened scholarship regarding the state of the Continent after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, there is still a tendency amongst some of my esteemed colleagues to refer to the era between the Age of Rome and the Renaissance as 'the Dark Ages,' a time when much of our learning was lost while our ancestors simply struggled to survive against barbarians and each other.

Such a notion is ludicrous and terribly regional. The Eastern Roman Empire ('Byzantine' is anachronistic) and the Nithami states not only preserved the knowledge

of the ancients but improved upon it, to say nothing of the cultures of the Orient. Indeed, it's worth noting that gunpowder, that technological innovation that challenged the hermeticist for supremacy on the battlefield and changed the face of war forever, was discovered during this period. When taken as a whole, there never truly was a 'Dark Age' in Europe.

Unless, that is, we go further back. Before the Roman Empire, before the Greek Empire, and even before the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Empires, there was an age where much knowledge was truly and universally lost, so much so that we can't even piece together the world as it was before. We call this age the Great Cataclysm or Great Flood, when the antediluvian world was wiped away forever.



And how truly was it wiped away! Antiquarians have found curiosities and relics that posit the antediluvian world as one in reverse, when continents were oceans and oceans were continents. The Guild refers to this world as the Golden Age or High Age of Magic, when vast empires were ruled by sorcerer-kings and everyone was connected to the aether. If such notions have the scent of myth about them then they should, as most of our collective knowledge about the world before was preserved only as mythology in various Paynim cultures.

What was the world truly like before the Great Cataclysm? Mythology and scant records hint at a few names. Chief amongst them is Atlantis and Antilla in the Atlantic Ocean and Thulia in the North Sea. Other such lands include Lemuria and Kumarinadu in the Indian Ocean and Fusang and Mu in the Pacific. A few antiquarians even assert that desolate Antarctica once held a thriving civilisation and similar claims have been made about the Arctic.

I do believe, and there is considerable, if circumstantial, evidence to support, that the Antediluvian Age was one of great magic, when the Celestial Engine was set a cog or two towards Entropy. By even fragmentary accounts it was an age when the aether flowed through the skies like air, with cities of towering spires and majestic flying ships, quite unlike our crude aerostats, that carried hundreds of people across continents. Chirurgeons could cure diseases and regrow lost limbs and sorcerers could achieve true immortality as archons. It was indeed a glorious age to be alive!

And then, seemingly overnight, it all came to an end. We aren't sure what happened but again we can point to legend and mythology, this time preserved in the texts of the Levantine religions. The Aluminat Codex casts the Golden Age as diabolical, with Devils ruling the world as princes until the Celestial Army of Order cast them out. Some say that it was the Great Archon Nergal who commanded that army. Others believe that Nergal and his followers, the Nergaleen, sought to destroy the world and remake it in their own image, necessitating the Army of Order to deal with him as well.

Whatever the truth, the world was dealt a devastating blow from which it never truly recovered. As Sir Arthur Dee has so eloquently put it on several occasions, we live in the 'dying embers' of the magical age; hermeticists grasp at the scraps that remain after most of the magic was somehow ripped away from the planet. In that sense, the Dark Age is not a moment in time; instead we continue to wallow in it.

*The more I research the antediluvian age the more I keep coming across references to the Nergaleen. What they are exactly remains a mystery - the Church alternately praises and condemns the archon Nergal depending on the source, and he is certainly considered an Archon of the Dale in contemporary sources. This means that the Nergaleen could either be an army of holy warriors pledged to the Heavenly Host or they may be a demonic army. At least one account claims that they are confined to a distant place, but not in the Dale. If this is true, I fear the day someone inadvertently stumbles upon them!*

## The Hope of Rome

By Placido Puccinelli - Lecture at the Università degli Studi di Torino, 3 September 1855

Almost two millennia ago the Roman Empire was marching around the Mediterranean and through Europe, bringing order to the lands through the strength of its legions. It blended nations, cultures and even religions together in a homogenous whole. For a long time, Rome seemed invincible and, after it fell, the dream of a strong Roman empire never really died. The Greeks carried the torch through the Byzantine Empire for a millennium more, and Holy Roman Emperors have carried the torch up through the turn of this century.

Why has the dream of Rome endured? We need only look to the Aluminat for the answer.

The Heavenly Host inspired the Eight Voices to give its message to the world, that we can be happy in this world and secure our place in the next by accepting Order into our lives. The Pale Riders of the Aluminat succeeded in purging Maleficium from Rome and establishing itself as the official religion of the Empire after three centuries of persecution and resistance. Laws were rewritten to conform to the Commandments and the Imperatives. The Paradise of Perfect Order seemed at hand. And then it fell apart.

It is perhaps too easy to blame the Paynimry and the Maleficium for the Fall of Rome, but the truth is Rome's core was rotten. In particular, many Romans paid lip service to the Twelve Commandments and all but abandoned the Six Imperatives. By rejecting the Imperatives, Roman leaders and citizens invited Entropy to guide them. Thus the dream of one unified world order collapsed just when the Heavenly Host's victory seemed imminent.

Since then, of course, we've seen the folly of our ancestor's ways. Factional interests have kept the Continent in an almost perpetual state of war, and even when there is no war we remain divided. Even the Conclave acknowledges the seemingly permanent divisions by supporting the various sects of the Aluminat with no concrete plan for reuniting them. The Concert of Europe simply maintains the fractured status quo with the promise of stamping out disruptions to it. Rather than settle our differences we look for new enemies to fight together so that we can ignore those differences. The forces of Entropy laugh as we do so.

Can there ever be a new Roman Empire? That is the hope of the Book of Perfection, the ultimate book of the Aluminat Codex. Like a machine, it only works when all of the parts work together. We were tested once and found lacking, thus the Great Flood purged the most entropic elements. The Book of Perfection warns us that we shall once again be tested, this time by fire, and only through unity can we hope to succeed.

## The Book of Justas

### CHAPTER 5: THE SIX IMPERATIVES

Blessed are those who submit to Order, their place in Heaven is prepared.

Blessed are those who repent, they have time to right themselves.

Blessed are the righteous, they will be victorious.

Blessed are the just, they shall be justly judged.

Blessed are those who accept their condition, they are martyrs for Order.

Blessed are those who battle Entropy, they shall be exalted.

## Entropic Scientist: Leonardo da Vinci

By Lord Blackthorne – *London Guild Quarterly*, Summer 1855

What does it mean to be a Liberator of Entropy or a Templar of Order? Can one simply substitute 'magic' for 'entropy' and 'science' for 'order'? Is it possible for a hermeticist to be truly devoted to the Heavenly Host if she continues her magical studies? If so, then why Maleficium?

I confess it pains me when I overhear snippets of conversations amongst my colleagues in Guild parlours oversimplifying the Celestial Engine as if it were two teams

on the field. The simple fact is that it is a war of philosophy made manifest, and anyone can support either side no matter what tools they use.

One need only look at the pathetic state of our own thaumaturgy to see the philosophy of Order in action. Creativity and spontaneity, once the hallmarks of a truly great magician, have been replaced with rote memorisation and recital of a few common spells handed down from instructor to student. Where are the innovators? Entropy isn't the willing of aetheric force through one's fingers; it is the ability to create new effects on a whim!

No, I've long argued that the true Templars of Order are not the engineers and scientists, whose sparks of entropic creativity develop new technologies, but instead the staid academics who are content with learning and teaching that which is already known. There are far too many hermeticists comfortable with that description.

As for an unorthodox Liberator of Entropy, I offer the great Leonardo da Vinci. Considered amongst the greatest artists in history and perhaps the greatest of the Renaissance polymaths, da Vinci no doubt vexes many an Eldren who felt he should belong to their noble subspecies rather than be a common Huldu. Still, da Vinci's talents weren't restricted to the arts; he was a great inventor as well!

How he could have reshaped the world with his creative inventions had sorcerers not been so quick to categorise him as an overzealous artificer and deem his inventions for the most part impractical.

Even in the 15th century, when it was painfully obvious that magic no longer held the potency it once had, the hubris of the sorcerers of the time refused to see the potential of technology. Instead, they saw only the gunpowder of the battlefields destroying the world they knew and believed da Vinci's inventions would only hasten that destruction. Towards that end the great magicians of the time were true Templars of Order, stifling the new to preserve the old.

As the example of Leonardo da Vinci shows, magic and technology belong to neither entropy nor order; they are simply the tools most commonly deployed by those professing such philosophies. I yearn for the day when the Consortium can reshape the world once more, rather than simply try its best to preserve the water in a leaking cup!



## Aluminat Triumphant: The Final Defeat of Chernobog

By Cardinal Jules Mazarin - *Personal Reflections on the Thirty Years' War, 1649*

It is perhaps ironic that I am writing these reflections in exile, as the grand success of the Thirty Years' War has hardened the peasants into demanding reforms. Putting aside my personal inconveniences for the moment, however, I should like to reflect on the underlying cause of the war that has consumed our people and our coffers for far too long.

Ever since the Eight Voices carried the message of the Heavenly Host to Rome, the Aluminat has been spreading the Perfection of Order throughout Europe. The Paynim sorcerers and witches, as expected, did not take this kindly, and thus a war for men's souls has been raging across the continent ever since.

Over time, the Templars of Order, best embodied in the Order of the Knights Palatine, have succeeded at every turn, even as the forces of Entropy chipped away at our resolve and our institutions, splitting the Aluminat into various sects and setting one Aluminat nation against another.

Still, as the great Saint Augustine once noted, the archons have a propensity to reflect the needs and desires of the faithful on Earth. As the various Paynim archons were diminished, their followers banded together, blending the various dogmas of the Old Faiths. Over time, distinct archons, such as Artemis, Morrigan, Thor and Zorya, to

name a handful, coalesced into new archons. By the time of the Thirty Years' War, only a single 'super-archon' remained. His name was Chernobog.

The Pale Knights believe that Chernobog had actually resisted for centuries and was responsible for the slowing of conversions in Eastern Europe. This dark archon realised that it could not achieve victory by force of arms; the Aluminat had simply grown too powerful. Instead, it worked within the Aluminat, poisoning the minds of the weak and setting us against ourselves. The leaders of the various sects blamed the others for being swayed by Maleficium and the Thirty Years' War erupted, tearing the Holy Roman Empire apart.

Fortunately, the Pale Knights weren't deterred from their mission. Extraordinary knights such as Dame Justina of Bialystok, Sir Spiridon of Constantinople, Don Enrique Castellanos, Sir Obediah Spinoza, Elek Szabo, and, of course, our own Isaac de Porthau are but a few examples and testaments to their tenacity. They nipped and baited the terrible Chernobog until they finally defeated him on the shores of Lake Geneva, ending his scourge forever.

The net result was the end of the terrible war that ravaged the heart of Europe. The Geneva Council established an understanding amongst the Aluminat sects and created the Consortium of Hermetic Guilds which now polices the use of magic. While I am not so naïve as to think we've struck the Paynimry a mortal blow, we have at least created institutions that should prevent the forces of Entropy from instigating such a horrible continental war in the future.

*With due respect to the Cardinal, he appears to be mistaken on two points. The first is obvious; we've seen just in this century that continental conflicts have not been eliminated and we can only pray that the current conflict in the Crimea doesn't, as it appears to threaten, draw in the rest of Europe.*

*Secondly, it seems rather convenient to distil the Aluminat's enemies into a convenient bogeyman in the form of the 'Dark One,' or Chernobog. Theologist friends of mine are always quick to point out which Daynim archons 'evolved' into the Heavenly Host and vice versa. While I am quite certain that some of the more militant Daynim supporters sparked the creation of a great warrior archon, it would seem to me that there was something more going on during the Thirty Years' War. Mr Bradlaugh certainly has some strong opinions on the matter, but unfortunately his crusade against the orthodoxy will ensure that he is never taken seriously by the Aluminat-dominated academia.*

## The Chains of Order

By Charles Bradlaugh - *The Fallacy of Dogma, 1854*

It is often stated, at least in private, that Aluminat priests and scholars no longer encourage debate and discussion over the words of the Codex or the examples of the Voices and the prophets before them. Instead, the Aluminat only preaches Dogma, or the one true way to interpret the words of the Codex. There is no longer room for debate, as, in their own words, that would invite Entropy. Why should this be?

If one should read the Yehudi Books of Order in their original language, one might notice that certain parts of them differ from the Aluminat Codex even where they should be, translation conventions aside, identical. Specifically, one would notice that the Yehudi have only Eleven Commandments and the Eleventh differs substantially from the Aluminat Codex. Specifically, the Eleventh Commandment forbids only Maleficium, rather than all magic as taught from Aluminat pulpits today.

So why the difference? The answer lies in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, when the Council of Geneva brought the various Aluminat sects together to 'agree' on a single translation. The official text that resulted, the Unified Aluminat Codex, eliminated the differences that crept into various editions being used by different sects

over the centuries. Old Codices were collected and, to the best of anyone's knowledge, destroyed, to be replaced with the Unified version. Of course, not all copies were destroyed; several were preserved. Some languished in the private libraries of nobles, others buried in the catacombs of churches and still more as spoils captured by heathens. I've had the privilege of reading through these and have come to an astonishing conclusion: all previous Codices substantially agree with the Yehudi version of the Eleven Commandments! Not a single one outlaws magic as a whole, nor includes a Twelfth Commandment. The question that arises is what made the Geneva Council revise and add to the Commandments if no sect had already done so? The answer, obviously, must be found in the Thirty Years' War. While there seems to be some mystery as to the extent of Maleficium influence, particularly spurred on by the Slavic archon Chernobog, something frightened the Aluminat to the extent that it completely reshaped its policy.

To wit, the Aluminat completely washed its hands of magical oversight, ending the Inquisition and enabling a secular Consortium of Hermetic Guilds to take its place. In addition, the adoption of the Unified Aluminat Codex has perpetuated the idea that there is now a single, definitive interpretation on all matters spiritual. In plain language, Dogma has replaced reflection and debate. In addition, the new Twelfth Commandment makes it clear that archons are not to interfere with mortals nor are mortals to aspire to be archons. This could also be read as enforcing Dogma, as many aspects of current religions and, indeed, some of the texts themselves, were imparted by archons. No archon should interfere with Dogma, nor should any sapient, acting in an archon's stead, reinterpret the Unified Aluminat Codex.

Dogma is the tool of the Ophanim. In the past, theologians often considered these orthodox archons to be righteous but ultimately flawed, as Ophanim spoke as one - each archon within the Heavenly Host was expected to bring her own perspective on mortal matters - the very idea of a monolithic, unwavering Godhead is anathema to the Levantine faiths! With the adoption of the Unified Aluminat Codex, however, it seems that the Ophanim faction has scored a major victory. There is no more room for perspective. If this truly is the case, then I fear for the health of our society. Without the freedom to question and only one path deemed righteous, our society is doomed to wither away in stagnation, fearing and dismissing every new idea. It is a terrifyingly bleak prospect, no matter how Aluminat priests couch it. One must wonder what happened during the Thirty Years' War that made the Aluminat, and perhaps even the Heavenly Host, so frightened that it was willing to rewrite its own philosophy. Fortunately, the industrial revolution has

proven that Aluminat chains have yet to fully bind us all and perhaps we as a free-thinking people will wake up and change before it is too late.

## The Blue Fever

By Ignaz Semmelweis – *Österreichischen Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 12 June 1853

While it is my firm belief, and thus far the theory holds, that cleanliness, especially amongst medical practitioners, can drastically reduce infection and disease, there is one disease in which cleanliness has no bearing; I speak, of course, of the dreaded Blue Fever.



While diseases as a whole have proven stubbornly resistant to magical forms of healing, Blue Fever actively attacks those with magical abilities. As a result, it is often known as the 'Eldren Disease' or 'Heavenly Retribution', as it disproportionately affects Eldren and magicians. It is most definitely contagious, but only towards those with a strong connection to the aether or frequent association with it through the performance of magic. In every case it has either been proven that the victim was covertly a magician or suspected of being one (although, admittedly 'suspected' is a rather low standard).

The Blue Fever gets its name from the aetheric glow that manifests in a victim's arteries and veins. It is at least as deadly as consumption and there is no known cure, although patients that manage to recover from the disease seem to be immune; there is no documentation indicating that a patient suffered through Blue Fever twice. What is perhaps most interesting about the is that the Blue Fever seems to strike whenever major plagues do. The 6th century Plague of Justinian, the 14th century Black Death, and the 17th century Italian Plague all had severe outbreaks of Blue Fever in addition to their main epidemics. Interestingly, no correlation beyond the timing has ever been made by a surgeon. By example, Bene David communities were largely spared the Black Death due to their food taboos, but they still had a number of incidents of Blue Fever in proportion with their neighbours.

One empirical result of these Blue Fever outbreaks has kept the Eldren population, in spite of their longer lifespans, from outpacing the other subspecies, while magicians are lucky to replenish their numbers rather than outpace scientists and engineers. Several theologians have noted this correlation and consider the Blue Fever a sort of 'Order correction,' although this is obviously unfair to the victims that were simply born magnetists. There are even a few who posit that the Blue Fever is the remnant of a great weapon used during the War in Heaven that sparked the Great Flood! Whatever the Blue Fever's origin, the only true 'cure' thus far is to not get Blue Fever in the first place by refraining from the practice of magic. While this would no doubt please the Aluminat, it still doesn't resolve the issue of magnetism.

### Blue Fever

INFECTIVITY: 1 (8 for those with magical abilities or sensitivities; Eldren without planar empathy are included)  
 VECTOR: Magical Contact  
 SPEED & LIFESPAN: Daily (30)  
 EFFECTS: delirium, fever (30), headaches,  
 -2 Dexterity, -2 Fortitude, -2 Resolve  
 POTENCY: 4

## On Reconsideration of Eldren and Similar Subspecies

By Alfred Russel Wallace – *Letter to Natural Science Weekly*, 11 February 1855

I have read Mr Darwin's article 'On the Origin of Sapiency' in the 13th August issue with great interest and I find myself

agreeing with most of his points; there is, however, one point upon which I must disagree, and that is Mr Darwin's classification of the Steppegoblin as a distinct subspecies.

Mr Darwin accurately notes that there can be significant variations within a single subspecies; he offers as an example the Proteons (I abhor the derogatory classification of 'Beastfolk'), who have many easily distinctive variations within their subspecies but are nonetheless lumped together within a single classification. This is in contrast to Dwarfs, Gnomes and Huldufolk, all of whom are short in stature but nevertheless deemed distinct enough to warrant classification as separate subspecies.

Mr Darwin further notes that the Eldren seem to have evolved from two separate subspecies that intermingled over time and are no longer distinct. I agree with the notion that there are two varieties of Eldren, distinct in the way they connect with the aether. Where I disagree is in the notion that these two varieties were ever separate subspecies. Instead, I propose that they have always been a single subspecies that is divided into clairvoyant and spiritualist varieties. In this manner the Eldren is no different than the Proteon except that the difference in variety is aetheric rather than physical. In both cases the initial varieties were regional (Proteons tend to emulate the animals of their native regions), but regional intermingling does not create new subspecies.

I would propose that what we commonly designate as Eldren be further subdivided into the varieties of 'Elf' and 'Moroi.' The former was originally from Western and Northern Europe and has an affinity for clairvoyance, while the latter was originally from Southern and Eastern Europe and has an affinity for spiritualism.

Based on this new classification I would further assert that Mr Darwin erred on considering the Steppegoblin to be a subspecies distinct from Eldren. No doubt this is due to the prejudice of seeing the peoples of Russia and Central Asia as 'different' than their European counterparts, especially where the aristocracy is concerned, but as we don't hesitate to include Dwarfs, Ogres, Orcs, et al of Slavic origin with their Western cousins I see no reason to make such a distinction for Steppegoblins. A Steppegoblin is merely an Eldren with an affinity for mysticism.

My studies here in Singapore and Malaysia in general have strengthened this theory by my discovery of another variety of Eldren that seems to originate from this corner of the world. The Bunians, as they are locally called, perfectly resemble other Eldren except for their particular

connection to oneiromancy. As with Steppegoblins, when Bunians intermingle with Eldren the children may manifest either of the parents' aetheric connection (or none at all). In sum, I propose that Steppegoblins are Eldren and should be classified as such. Without making arbitrary distinctions we can better understand the subspecies as a whole and perhaps challenge the growing consensus that the Eldren subspecies is imminently in danger of becoming extinct.

## The Saint and the Tsarina

By Nikolay Karamzin – excerpt from *The New Russia*, 1820

During the Thirty Years' War there was an archon pulling strings behind the scenes. His name was Chernobog and by all accounts he was one of the strongest of the Old Gods. This should come as no surprise to the Russian reader; Chernobog is a Slavic archon and Slavs do not bend easily. Such was his power that he had shaken the Aluminat to its very core, splintering it and threatening to burn the entirety of the continent along with it.

Enter the Order of the Knights Palatine. These holy warriors, originally drawn from the Roman Aluminat but eventually knighting members of other sects as well, fought the forces of Chernobog while the nations of Europe waged war against each other. One of the Pale Knights, Dame Justina of Bialystok, came up with a plan to end Chernobog's influence in the world forever. No one knows the details of that plan, but it is known that a trap was laid for Chernobog within Switzerland and, with the sacrifice of many Knights, the Dark One was destroyed. Dame Justina was victorious.

Little wonder then, that our Tsarina Ekaterina has enshrined the Polish knight as one of the greatest saints in the Russian Aluminat and dedicated a new church in Saint Petersburg to her. By all accounts Dame Justina led a virtuous life and disappeared after fulfilling the role the Heavenly Host in their collective wisdom gave her to play. There are some that believe Dame Justina gave her life to stop Chernobog, but I like to believe that she simply went home, rewarded for her victory with a pleasant but uneventful life.

I bring up Saint Justina because this century has given us a parallel. In the early 17th century Chernobog marched through Europe and put it to the torch. This history has its own Chernobog in the form of Napoleon I, a power-mad dictator who turned a republic into an empire. He then marched his way across the continent, bringing every nation to heel. That is, until he stepped into Russia.

While the winter was brutal and the snow pummelled the French forces make no mistake, Bonaparte still seemed as invincible here as he was throughout the rest of Europe. While both sides inflicted many casualties the French Emperor was still able to take Moscow with the remnants of his 'Grand Army.' They found a city abandoned; it had been evacuated. That is when the Tsarina sprang her trap.

Aetheric explosions decimated the French forces as the Russian army, disguised by invisibility spells, rushed into the burning city and engaged the French forces as wyvern riders, cloaked by the falling snow, swooped down and shredded the marvels that Bonaparte had brought with him. The Tsarina herself rode one of the wyverns, intending to pluck Napoleon from within his army and ending the war once and for all. Only a stray cannonball, which ripped through her wyvern's wing and took her hand with it prevented that from happening. Still, seriously wounded, the Tsarina picked herself up, bound her stump, and continued to command her army until she had driven the French out of Russia.

It was this occasion that not only granted her the sobriquet of 'the Steel Tsarina' (doubly so considering that the Guild gifted her with a platinum replacement), but also cemented her role as the Matriarch of the Russian Aluminat Church. While the Tsarina had previously ruled by right of marriage, her actions during the Napoleonic Wars have already made her a saint as well.

## The Failed Spring and the New Hope

By Maxim Bolshev - *Reynold's Weekly Newspaper*,  
19 March 1854

The Springtime of the Peoples could have been the most glorious and democratic era in our history, as the peoples of many European nations - Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sicily, and others - rose up and demanded more representative governments. The reactionary response was predictable, as the Continental monarchs ruthlessly crushed all opposition. Only in France did the revolution take hold and even then the new republican government is quickly retreating from its principles to the point where the average citizen sees little difference between king and parliament.

Why weren't the revolutions more successful? Is it that the monarchies are too strong, their armies too powerful? Is it that the revolutionary message is weak and failing to inspire more people to revolt? I propose that it is merely a lack of organisation, a lack of common purpose, which has resulted in the continued submission of the peoples. As isolated groups we can agitate and influence, but ultimately we lack

the power to succeed. Unity amongst the proletariat is what we need if we are ever to overthrow the corrupt aristocracy and reform the bourgeoisie to give the proletariat back what is rightfully theirs, the fruit of their labours.

So is our cause lost? Is the quiet half-decade since the Year of Revolution a sign that the proletariat has given up, that the workers' movement is finished? Nonsense! Recently I have seen two hopeful signs that support for our glorious cause is swelling once more.

The first is Citizen Liberty, who was present during the Springtime of the Peoples but who has only grown in popularity among the proletariat since. Clad in black robes, Citizen Liberty is doing for the Continent what Tommy Atkins is doing for the British proletariat - providing a common symbol for the workers to rally behind. Citizen Liberty resembles a Roman goddess, reminding us of the loftiness of our cause, and she carries a hammer and sword. The hammer reminds us of who we are, the builders of civilisation, while the sword reminds us that liberty is only acquired through strength. She is also Eldren, reminding us that there are aristocrats committed to our cause and that we should judge no one based on their breeding. Citizen Liberty is a perfect representative and symbol of our movement.

The second is *Regina*, a revolutionary opera written by noted Viennese composer Oskar Hahn. Initially suppressed in the German-speaking nations, *Regina* found its audience in France and, eventually, Austria followed suit. Presumably the play pokes fun at Prussia, but I believe there is a more universal message embedded within it. In any case the play is proving popular amongst all classes and sheds light on the plight of the proletariat living under the whims of the aristocracy.

Together, these two elements can help forge a true international movement to end Europe's arbitrary divisions based on the agreements of kings and foster a true revolution, one in which we are all equal partners and represented by a truly democratic Congress of Europe. When that happens, it shall truly be a glorious moment for our beloved Continent.

*I've seen Regina and I must confess that I agree with Mr Bolshev's assertion. It certainly seems a pro-revolutionary production, although admittedly I saw it in Paris and such inferences could very well be the result of the director's flourishes over the script.*

## The Elephant in the City

By Alexis de Tocqueville – *Le National*, 31 December 1855

An elephant now stands where the Bastille once stood; a symbol of absolute monarchy replaced by a symbol of absolute monarchy. That said the elephant survived the end of the empire it symbolised; it stoically stood throughout the new kingdom and its overthrow. It currently glistens with a thin coat of rare Parisian snow casting its shadow over the new republic.

I have watched Parisians pass the elephant by with reverent awe and for that I cannot blame them. It is a magnificent sculpture, massive and powerful, shaped to Napoleon's specifications with bronze taken from captured cannons. It is also a clockwork masterpiece, raising its trunk to blow every hour from sunrise to sunset. Visitors delight in ascending the stairs into the howdah from which they can look over the rooftops of the city, partaking in a view normally reserved for the tallest buildings or aerostats.

And yet, in its continued glory, the elephant reminds us of better times. More forthrightly, it symbolises how far we have fallen since we returned the republic to the people. Liberty has exacted its price and many lament that the best of France sailed to Quebec with its last king.

For from the howdah one can see the great buildings of Paris teetering on ruin, the congestion that chokes the streets and the Seine, the masses of jobless and homeless people huddled beneath awnings and in alleys, begging for the bourgeoisie, now the new elite, to spare a few centimes. The bourgeoisie ignore them as they pass by, not because their hearts are hardened but rather because they have little to spare. When one is wearing rags it is sometimes difficult to notice that another's coat is threadbare. Thus the two remaining classes in Paris fight with each other like scrawny dogs for scraps.

"It wasn't supposed to be this way" is a common refrain, uttered by the disillusioned republicans. The government has locked out its radicals, opting to muddle forward with whatever consensus they can wring from Parliament, while the monarchists and even Bonapartists smile in smug, but no less hungry, fashion. Is it any wonder, though, with the glittering New France across the sea reminding the Old France of what she lost?

Even the elephant is not immune. Its paint is chipped and faded, some of its decoration pried free. It is a haunting reminder that comfort and security may sometimes seem more desirable than liberty and more than a few shivering,

hungry Parisians wonder whether it's time for Napoleon to be returned home? For its part the elephant quietly waits and will just as assuredly trumpet the fall of democracy as efficiently as it trumpeted our second chance at it.

## The Failure of the Concert

By Guildmaster Joseph Fouché, 1st Duc d'Otrante – *Wiener Gilde Quartals*, Winter, 1856

As war continues in the Crimea there can be little doubt that the so-called 'Concert of Europe' is in tatters. Created amongst the Great Powers of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia in 1815 and amended to include France in 1822, the Concert of Europe was supposed to maintain the status quo after the Napoleonic Wars. A Great Power would only act in affairs outside its territory if agreeable to the other Great Powers.

It was a lofty goal and one certainly worth pursuing. As a grand hermeticist I certainly foresee a time when all of us Europeans shall need to stand together in an apocalyptic moment and the Concert offered a way for us to see ourselves as a united continent rather than a collection of squabbling nation-states. I applaud Chancellor Metternich's efforts in this regard.

Unfortunately, the Concert seemed doomed almost from the start. It didn't take long for Great Britain to retreat across the Channel, although it continued to ensure its economic interests through Gibraltar and Egypt, leaving France to anchor the Concert in Western Europe. Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, France, also refused a Russian proposal to intervene in the case of revolutionary movements. Undeterred, Russia only formed stronger ties with Austria and Prussia in what's been dubbed a 'Holy Alliance.' What it really did is draw a line between the absolutist and constitutional monarchies in Europe and, when the French king was forced to abdicate in 1848, there was no army to restore him. Doubtless Britain would have suffered the same fate had revolution broken out in London.

That said Russia's recent land grab in the Balkans has cooled Austria towards it even as the move achieves the shared goal of diminishing the Ottoman presence there. Austria and Prussia have been playing chess with the German states for decades now and Prussia seems on the verge of winning; Austria cannot afford to become embroiled in a regional war without the solid backing of Britain and France. Unfortunately, their poor performance in the Crimea is likely to withhold their participation in any German civil war and Prussia knows it.



So now, when we are likely to need it most, there is no unity in Europe. The Tsarina has the upper hand and has made it publicly known that she doesn't appreciate Austria's recalcitrance. Unless something unexpected happens, Russia is likely to build on its gains by joining Prussia in a war against Austria. And, like Russia in the Crimea, Austria is likely to face his enemies alone.

Still, the conclusion is not foregone. Should the Great Powers come back to the table and resolve the Crimean War together, there is still time to build a stronger, truer Concert in Europe. I pray the monarchs and their ambassadors take advantage of this fleeting opportunity before it is too late.

## A Napoleonic Hope?

By Jonathan Sheffield - *Daily Chronicle*, 31 December 1855

With the ever-increasing pessimism over the war in the Crimea, several MPs have been overheard both within Parliament and in the gentlemen's clubs and public houses throughout the city pitching the idea of restoring Napoleon Bonaparte to his throne, or at least allowing him to play the role of Field Marshal once more. It is an intriguing prospect, but one that warrants questioning how we got to a place where we are promoting the same 'Despoiler of Europe' that we'd imprisoned for the last four decades?

One needs only reference the headlines of this newspaper over the last two years to answer the question. Both France and Great Britain eagerly joined the Ottomans in war against Russia in March 1854, expecting to quickly turn back Russia's

gains and force it to sue for peace. Austria's reluctance to side with Russia was also viewed as a hopeful sign that the war would end quickly with a win for the Allies.

While Russia held the Danubian Principalities against the Ottoman Army, British and French forces landed in the Crimea in September 1854. They had initial success, laying Siege to Sevastopol and blockading Russia's Black Fleet. Unfortunately, despite heavy bombardment, the Allies were unable to take the city before winter set in. They were forced to dig in and wait. Unfortunately, the Tsarina didn't.

In what is now called the January Rout, Russian forces, many of whom had somehow arrived in the dead of a brutal winter storm, attacked the Allies and pushed them back from Sevastopol. It was only through the quick thinking of field officers that the fleeing Allied forces were able to regroup and dig in as naval support blasted away at the advancing Russian lines. Their discipline at holding 'the Thin Red Line' finally halted the Russian advance.

Now at a stalemate, things looked up as Austria finally got involved, at least after a fashion. Prince Ferdinand Maximilian accepted Princess Nadja's hand in marriage. As Austria did not declare war, this was seen as a hopeful sign that Austria might pressure Russia to end the war. Unfortunately any possibility was soon dashed by an assassin's bomb that killed the Prince on his wedding night on 5th May 1855. Angered, Princess Nadja personally entered the war soon thereafter as Allied reinforcements enabled the Siege of Sevastopol to begin anew. Once again, Russian sorcery, combined with the might of Russian





wyvern cavalry and Giant squadrons, hammered the Allies in the autumn. Only battered remnants remain, hopeful for yet another infusion of fresh reinforcements after the winter.

Unfortunately, armed forces enrolment is down; there is little appetite for joining the military when one knows he will be shipped to a lost cause. Enrolment is so bad in Britain that I've heard rumours that Parliament may be considering conscription when they reconvene after the holidays. In France it is even worse. Their coffers are empty and the struggling republican government had hoped that this war would legitimise its rule. Instead, unemployment is high and many Frenchmen are either

pinning for the return of King Louis or looking to throw yet another revolution.

Toward that end the whispers have started regarding Bonaparte. It has been noted that the greatest military mind in the world is wasting away on Saint Helena and his return could bring hope to the Allies. On the other hand, it has also been noted that Bonaparte's last foray into Russia was rather less than successful. In either case, at least for now, it is a hypothetical question; no one is seriously considering lifting his sentence. Still, it is an intriguing scenario to imagine where the Tsarina and the Emperor of France meet once again. I rather think Bonaparte would be better equipped this time; will it be enough?

## *BULLFINCH'S CELESTIALOLOGY, OR CLASSIFICATIONS OF ARCHONS*

### THE NORDIC PANTHEON

#### BALDER

Archon of beauty and youth. He is believed to have been killed during the Great Cataclysm and currently resides with Hel. Balder is generally depicted as an Eldren.

#### FREY

Archon of fertility, sunlight, and peace. He is married to a Giant. Frey is generally depicted as an Eldren.

#### FREYA

Archon of love and sister of Frey. Freya is generally depicted as an Eldren.

#### FRIGG

Odin's wife, patron of married women. Frigg is generally depicted as a Dwarf.

#### HEIMDALL

Sentinel of the gateways between Asgard and other realms, including Earth. He is usually depicted as a Human.

#### HEL

Mistress of the underworld. She rules over the murderers, adulterers and criminals who live in her realm, whom she plots to lead in a final War against the Heavenly Host. She is sometimes equated with the Devil Balberith. Hel is generally depicted as an Eldren.

#### LOKI

Archon of deception and trickery. He is generally depicted as a Huldu.

#### THE NORNS

Not gods, but three hags who represent the past, present and future.

#### ODIN

The All-father, the archon of wisdom and the leader of the Norse (also known as Wotan in the German states). His symbol is the spear Gungnir, he rides an eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, and has two ravens, Hugin and Munin, who tell him all that happens in the world. Odin is generally depicted as a one-eyed Dwarf (curiously, earlier depictions of Odin resemble a Cyclops, perhaps indicating that Cyclopes used to reside in Northern Europe).

#### SURTR

Archon of the sun and fire. Surtr is often considered an enemy of the Norse archons. Generally depicted as a Giant with a flaming sword, Surtr is often regarded by Giants as a patron fighting for equal rights between Giants and other subspecies.

#### THOR

Archon of thunder and patron of the peasants (known as Donar in the German states). He carries the mighty hammer Mjolnir which only he can lift; as such the hammer symbol is used by his faithful to ward evil. Thor is typically depicted as a Beastman, usually a goat, horse or ram.

#### TYR (ZIU)

God of war and justice. He is usually depicted as a Human, although a minority view holds him to be an Orc.

*BULLFINCH'S CELESTIALOLOGY, OR CLASSIFICATIONS OF ARCHONS*

## THE GAULISH PANTHEON

The Gaulish pantheon is a subset of the greater Celtic pantheon. Many of the archons worshiped in Gaul (France) are also worshipped on the British Isles and vice versa, usually with a slight variation in names.

**ARTAIOS**

Archon of agriculture. He is commonly depicted as a Oxman.

**BELENOS**

Known as 'the Shining One,' Belanos is the archon of the sun. He is commonly depicted as Eldren.

**CATUBODUA**

Archon of war and victory. Catubodua is similar to Morrigan and they may be the same archon. She also shares aspects of the Roman archons Libertas and Victory. Catubodua is commonly depicted as a Beastwoman of various types; her earliest depictions are as a Garuda (avian humanoid).

**CIMIANCINUS**

Archon of roads and travel. He is commonly depicted as a Huldu.

**DISPATER**

A Pale Archon who was ruler of the underworld and variously categorised as a demon or devil. He's currently believed to be a demon general and favourite of Paline. Dispater is commonly depicted as a devilishly handsome Eldren.

**GOBANNUS**

Archon of technology. He is often associated with Dianecht. Commonly depicted as a Cyclops or, less frequently, a one-eyed Orc.

**OGMIOS**

Archon of leadership and speech. He is also the archon of magic and the creator of the Ogham script. He is commonly depicted as a wise Eldren.

**ROSMERTA**

Archon of fire, fertility, and abundance. She is commonly depicted as a Huldu.

**SIRONA**

Archon of healing. She is commonly depicted as an Eldren.

**TARANIS**

Archon of thunder and lightning. Taranis may be the same archon as Thor, making him amongst the most widely worshipped archons in the Paynimry. He is commonly depicted as a Sheepman.

**VOSAGUS**

Archon of war. Commonly represented as a Dogman with a bow.

*BULLFINCH'S CELESTIALOLOGY, OR CLASSIFICATIONS OF ARCHONS*

## THE SLAVIC PANTHEON

**CHERNOBOG**

Archon of evil. Chernobog is a very recent addition to the Slavic pantheon and his name is often used to represent the Paynimry generally (usually in a negative light). When depicted at all, he stands as an Ogre-sized armoured warrior with a horned helmet.

**DAZBOG**

Archon of the sun and navigation. He is generally portrayed as a grizzled Human, although Aluminat theology holds him to be the demon lord of zoanthropes.

**JAROVIT**

Archon of fertility and vegetation. Many spring festivals in Slavic countries continue to honour him as a member of the Heavenly Host. Jarovit is generally depicted as a Horseman.

**KUPALA**

Archon of water and healing. She is generally depicted as an Eldren.

**LADA**

Archon of beauty, harmony and love. She is generally depicted as an exceptionally beautiful Eldren.

**MORANA**

Archon of death and winter. She is often depicted as a Gnome, but she has many guises. Some whisper that the Tsarina is Morana personified.

**PERUN**

Archon of thunder and lightning. Perun carries a mighty axe that always returns when thrown and he often hurls lightning balls and bolts at his enemies. Often equated with Thor and Thunor, Perun is usually depicted as a Goatman.

**RADEGAST**

Archon of hospitality, Radekast is also invoked whenever hospitality is refused or ignored. He is generally depicted as a Huldu.

**STRIBOG**

Archon of the sky and weather. He is commonly depicted as an Eldren.

**SVAROG**

Archon of science and technology. He is the outfitter of the archons and built Dazbog's sky-chariot. Svarog is generally depicted as an Eldren surrounded by artefacts of magic-fuelled marvels.

**SVETOVID**

Archon of war and prosperity. He is generally depicted as an Orc and is venerated by the Orcs of Transylvania. Svetovid is considered a member of the Heavenly Host.

**VELES**

Archon of magic, illusion, and trickery. He has many guises although he is often depicted as a Huldu. Some represent him as an Apophid.

**THE ZORYA**

Double guardians of the universe. Zorya Danica is the morning star and Zorya Vechernaya is the evening star. They are depicted as twin sisters, usually Human.

## Your Own Private Ruritania

Those well-versed in European geography have no doubt noticed that we've skipped over a number of European microstates, as well as glossed over many of the states that make up various confederations and empires. This is intentional, as this supplement paints the Continent with a broad brush that covers all of the major regions and not get bogged down in name-checking every autonomous or independent state.

That such states do exist, however, is an illustration that it's feasible to add fictional microstates that are distinct in some way from the rest of the region or to add colour to a character's background without attaching her to something 'official'. Perhaps you'd like to add a principality within the Austrian Empire that reflects Turkish culture, or an Italian city-state that is resisting attempts at unification while fully embracing the industrial revolution. It's a trivial matter to slightly amend the map to accommodate.

A perfect example of a fictional microstate is the German principality of Witgen in *FACES IN THE SMOKE VOLUME ONE* – *THE SECRET MASTERS*.

## ~ NATIONS AT A GLANCE ~

Each nation or region is given an 'At a Glance' overview. This section explains how the various terms are used in each entry.

### Governmental System

This entry explains the type of government that runs the nation. While no two nations are ran exactly the same way, they tend to fall into a few general categories. Note that the type of government listed is the de facto government, not the professed one. If a nation has a constitution and its monarch routinely ignores it, then that nation has an autocratic government, not a constitutional monarchy.

### Absolutist Monarchy

Also known as an absolute monarchy, the power of the government rests in a single individual or select group of individuals. The autocrat may or may not heed the advice of advisors, but in the end she makes all the decisions.

### Constitutional Monarchy

The nation is ruled by a monarch, but her powers are limited by a constitution. A constitution is the fundamental system of law, written or unwritten, that shapes and limits government. It also guarantees certain rights to the people of that nation.

## Great Britain in the Scheme of Things

While primarily about London, *The Smoke* provides a fair bit of detail about the British Isles as well. As that information did not include the ‘At a Glance’ sidebar we’ve included it here as a demographic comparison to the rest of Europe.

### Great Britain at a Glance

Governmental System: Constitutional Monarchy.

Currency: Sovereign (£1): 20 shillings: 240 pennies.

Religion: Aluminat (Anglican, Roman, Reformed).

Languages: English, Scots Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish.

	UPPER (10%)	MIDDLE (20%)	LOWER (70%)
Beastfolk (17%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (10%)	No	Yes	Yes
Eldren (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Gnome (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Huldufolk (5%)	No	No	Yes
Human (50%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (2%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (5%)	No	No	Yes

### Ionian Islands

The United States of the Ionian Islands is a federation of seven island states off the west coast of Greece. Once held by Venice and France, it is currently administered by Great Britain, which uses it as a staging ground for the Crimean War when not putting down local insurgencies.

The Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands is Sir Henry George Ward, who has a heavy-handed approach to governing. With the on-going Crimean War his actions are tolerated and there’s talk of turning the federation into a Crown colony. This concerns Greece and Britain is currently using it as leverage to keep Greece from fighting the Ottomans.

### Malta

A small archipelago in the Mediterranean south of Sicily, Malta has changed hands many times in its history. At the dawn of this century it had been held for over two and a half centuries by a military order, the Knights of Malta, under lease from the Holy Roman Empire. That ended when Napoleon conquered it and it was given to the British Empire as part of the Treaty of Paris in 1814 (although the British had militarily controlled it for over a decade prior). Like Gibraltar, Malta has become critical to Britain’s influence in the Mediterranean Sea and its role in shipping

is increasing with the traffic going through the new Suez Canal. Malta is currently serving a critical part in the Crimea War as a British base and hospital.

### Gibraltar

Known as ‘the Rock’ by the British, this strategic peninsula at the Atlantic mouth of the Mediterranean sea has been in British hands for almost a century and a half. Its stature has only increased its importance with the recent opening of the Suez Canal, as it makes Britain the gatekeepers to the Orient. The British base here also serves an important role as part of the supply line to the Crimea. The uppermost ‘pillar’ of the ‘Pillars of Hercules’ (the other being on the tip of Morocco), Gibraltar also plays a role in the legends of the Great Cataclysm. Several seaside myths hold that the Mediterranean Sea was once above ground and that the floods of the Great Cataclysm washed it away and forced the survivors north into Europe or south into Africa. The Pillars are believed to be the last bastion of the old civilisation, finally torn asunder in the aftershocks of the Great Cataclysm. A few ancient relics have been pulled up from the sea floor here and it is believed that larger vaults may still lie buried beneath one or the other ‘pillar.’





### Republic

A republic is a nation run by its people through a constitution. The constitution lays out the basics of the government and the powers of its various branches. Leaders are elected by the citizenry (not necessarily universally) or appointed according to the constitution, generally for a set term.

### Theocracy

A theocracy is a nation run according to the principles of a particular religion. In a sense it's a constitutional monarchy, but in practice theocracies tend more towards autocracies.

### Currency

Europe has about as many systems of currency as it does nations. The main coin is noted first along with its closest British equivalent. Smaller coins, if any, are listed with their values in relation to the main coin. Please note that currency values fluctuate all the time and are never truly 'fixed,' but for purposes of playability we've assumed that the various exchange rates are largely stable.

### Religion

While dominated by the Aluminat, Europe is home to other religions as well. In addition, the Aluminat itself has fractured into several major sects. This entry lists the dominant religion of the region first followed by any notable minority religions. This does not mean that other faiths aren't represented, only that their followers represent a small fraction of the overall population.

### Languages

Europe has more languages than it does nations, as many nations have several languages spoken within their borders. In some cases, such as France, even a single language can have such varying dialects that each dialect may as well be a separate language. As with religions the dominant language is given first, followed by any other languages spoken by at least a strong minority of the population.

### Breeding Table

This table offers the social class percentages in a given region as well as the percentages of subspecies. The table also includes the typical class(es) in which each subspecies is found in the region.



## ~THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE~

A majestic land of towering snow-capped mountains, magnificent castles and quaint villages dotting the hills and plains, Austria is a bastion of medieval Europe in the heart of the Continent. Only starting to shed its feudal past, most of Austria's wealth is in the hands of an aristocratic few while its peasants work the fields. Only the railways winding through valleys, the steamships chugging up and down the Danube and the aerostats floating through the Alps remind one that Austria is indeed entering the industrial age.

The Austrian Court often paints the picture of a regal emperor surrounded by provincial nobles, living a luxurious lifestyle made possible through Viennese sorcery while striking deals with ambassadors to expand his influence. In truth, however, Austrian power is starting to wane. Unlike the German Confederation or the Italian States, the various regions of Austria are held together only through ancestral rights and force of arms. Many resent Austrian rule and plot against it; Austria's strong reactionary response to such endeavours has only hardened their resolve.

Indeed, the main point to note about the portrait of the Austrian Court is that all of the nobles are Austrian or have been assimilated into the Austrian lifestyle. They no longer empathise with their constituents, and no more is this more pronounced than in Austria's Slavic holdings. Hungary has a long proud tradition of maintaining a distinctive identity in spite of its monarch; the pillaging of its fields by Austrian overseers infuriates it. The tension between German and Slav is also evident in Bohemia; the German bourgeoisie wishes to strengthen ties with the Confederation while the Czech majority simply wants to be recognised.

Once the head of all of the German states under the Holy Roman Empire, Austria vies with a growing, industrial Prussia over control of the German Confederation. Many German kings and princes favour Austria over Prussia merely because Austria is more likely to maintain the status quo rather than exert real influence. Indeed, while Austria's commitment to the Concert of Europe necessitates a divided Germany, the only thing stopping Prussia from taking an imperial crown is King Friedrich Wilhelm IV's reluctance to accept it from a committee. In addition, some German states were alarmed by the brutal lengths Austria was willing to go to quell the 1848 revolutions within its borders.

The current war in the Crimea has piqued the Austrian emperor's interest. While Austria joined in diplomatic talks, it was worried about supporting Russia, its traditional ally,

thus giving Prussia a pretext to annex some of its German territories. Conversely it didn't want to join the Allies and give Russia a pretext to annex some of its Slavic territories, especially since Austria required Russian aid to keep them during the Springtime of the Peoples. Caught between a rock and a hard place, Austria has chosen to wait and see, although Russia's successes is slowly convincing Austria to side with it.

### Austria at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy.  
 Capital: Vienna (Austria), Buda (Hungary), Prague (Bohemia), Sibiu (Transylvania).  
 Currency: Gulden (2s): 60 kreuzer: 480 Heller.  
 Religion: Aluminat (Roman, Evangelical), Sons of David.  
 Languages: German, Magyar, Czech, Slovak, Romani, Italian, Serb-Croat.

	UPPER (4%)	MIDDLE (6%)	LOWER (90%)
Beastfolk (20%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dwarf (26%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (4%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Huldufolk (10%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (35%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (2%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (2%)	No	Yes	Yes

\*Demographics in Lombardy-Venice are the same as those in the Italian States section, while demographics in Hungary are the same as those in the Danubian Principalities.

### Geography

The Austrian Empire covers a vast swath of central and Eastern Europe, making it difficult to generalise its overall climate and landscape. The western lands are fairly mountainous as the Alps stretch deep into Austrian territory, which keeps the region sparsely populated save for the enclaves of mountain-dwelling Dwarfs and Giants that make their homes in vast caverns.

North of the Alps lies the Danube River, the lifeline of the empire. It connects Vienna and Buda with the south German states to the west and Moldavia, Wallachia and the

Ottoman Empire to the east. Indeed, Chancellor Metternich sees an opportunity in the Crimean War for the Austrian Empire to absorb Moldavia and Wallachia to gain control of the mouth of the Danube in the Black Sea; he is in secret negotiations with Greece to split the Balkans. This is the most temperate region of the empire, with warm wet summers and cold dry winters.

North of the Danube is a land of low mountains, rolling hills and vast forests that stretches from Bohemia to the Grand Duchy of Krakow, terminating in the Carpathian Mountain range that separates Moldavia and Wallachia from the Empire. The Carpathian Mountains is a forbidding land, filled with isolated castles and ruins from the turn of the millennium when many paynim worshippers and monsters fled the march of the Aluminat across the continent. Even today, liches, vampires, zoanthropes and other Pale-aligned creatures dot the mountains; reclusive hunters that only come out to feed. Villages and strongholds in and around the Carpathians, especially in Transylvania, are resilient, self-sufficient and extremely wary of outsiders.

Between the Alps and the Carpathians lies the Great Hungarian Plain. This plain is home to most of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Grand Principality of Transylvania. It is prone to extreme temperature variations, with hot, rainy summers and bitterly cold snowy winters. This makes travel barely tolerable; ironically, given that it is the most conducive area of the empire for such a mode of travel, only one major railway crosses the kingdom.

The Austrian Empire also controls the Italian regions of Lombardy and Venetia in the south. Lombardy is nestled in the Po valley between the Alps and the Apennines. It tends to see hot wet summers and mild winters; the Po River connects Milan to the Adriatic Sea and serves as Austria's southern border. Venice gets colder than its western neighbours in the winter but winds from the sea tend to turn any snowfall into rain.

The Austrian Empire also includes the Kingdom of Dalmatia, a strip of mountainous land bordering the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea; the Dinaric Alps make up much of this land. The coast has warm dry summers and moderately cold, wet winters; the Dinaric Alps are heavily forested and get quite cold and snowy in the winter.

The Dinaric Alps have long served as a refuge for those fleeing tyranny; as with the Carpathians its mountains are dotted with ancient forts and their insides carved into deep caves.

## Gothic Horror

The preponderance of necromantic horrors, zoanthropes and other creatures in the eastern Balkans should conjure images of gothic horror such as isolated castles with undead lords or bestial creatures invading moonlit villages in search of an easy meal. This is intentional, as this area of *Victoriana* is designed to provide the types of adventures often found in gothic horror stories.

In addition, the preponderance of such creatures, as well as the local populace's belief and fear of them, has created an entropic bubble around the Carpathians.

This has the mechanical effect of moving the Celestial Engine 2 cogs toward Entropy for anyone travelling through them. This effect is reduced to 1 cog throughout neighbouring parts of Moldavia, Transylvania, and Wallachia. Travellers should beware; not only does this make magically-capable creatures more threatening, but it also pushes Liberators of Entropy ever closer to insanity.

## Government

Born from the ashes of the Holy Roman Empire, the Austrian Empire is a collection of central and eastern European states ruled by the Habsburg dynasty, currently invested in Dwarf Emperor Franz Karl I. Emperor Franz Karl rules

as an absolute monarch, but in truth he leaves most of the ruling to Gnome Chancellor Klemens von Metternich. It was Metternich's diplomacy that created the Concert of Europe which had prevented any major European wars until the Crimea, as well as ensured Austria's dominance within the German Confederation.

Metternich has also been instrumental in stifling revolutionary movements, relying on General Julius Jacob von Haynau to brutally suppress any opposition. The old general heads the Austrian military forces and his ruthless reputation gives potential revolutionaries pause before making trouble for the Austrian regime.

Emperor Franz Karl is a devout Roman Aluminat and has taken many steps to ensure its dominance within the Empire. The belief that the 1848 revolutions were fuelled by adherents of other religions resulted in restrictions on employment, appointments and even school attendance, and as the Evangelical Aluminat is part of the Aluminat Convention these restrictions mostly fall on the Sons of David. All government appointments and higher academic positions are reserved for Roman Aluminats or those willing to convert to the Roman Aluminat faith.

The offices of the Austrian Empire are centred in Vienna. Hungary is currently going through a change of capital as many nobles and governmental offices move from Pressburg to Buda. The more centrally located Buda and Pest, Buda's sister city across the Danube, has become a gateway between Austria, Bohemia and Hungary.





## Gryphon Cavalry

A unique aspect of the Austrian Empire's aerial forces is its use of gryphons. Found only in the Dinaric Alps, gryphons are notoriously difficult to train and as they are smaller than horses only small sapients can effectively ride them. Still, gryphon cavalry can easily navigate the hilly and mountain regions and their excellent night vision makes them a credible nocturnal threat to camped foes. With their acute eyesight, gryphons can also spot hidden scouts and would-be highwaymen from great distances.

A gryphon resembles an eagle with a lion-like body, although all four feet end in talons and its entire body is covered in brown or red feathers. In the wild gryphons build their nests on mountain outcroppings and they won't breed in captivity. In spite of their reputation gryphons are fiercely loyal mounts once trained.

### Gryphon

*Physical:* 9     *Initiative:* 8

*Mental:* 6     *Health:* 14

*Armour:* 2

*Special:* Acute Vision (sight) +4, Flight, Night Vision

*Damage:* Claw (6), Peck (4)

## Society

Due to the large size and composition of the empire, Austrian society looks very different depending on which part you are in. Old Austrian nobility includes a large percentage of Dwarfs, including the Emperor himself, and numerous marriages with German nobility have ensured that many Beastfolk are represented in the upper class as well. Many Slavic Eldren have Steppegoblin heritage. Karaka can be found within the middle and upper classes in areas previously influenced by Greek and Ottoman culture, particularly in the Kingdoms of Dalmatia and Hungary.

While Vienna is home to the largest Hermetic library outside of Geneva, Austria's German states have enthusiastically embraced industrialisation. The Austrian nobility eagerly displays new technological marvels and clockwork limbs don't carry the stigma that they do elsewhere. Ownership of technology is merely another emblem that differentiates the Austrian noble from the Hungarian.

The Kingdom of Hungary legally remains a separate entity, and this is reflected in its society too. Unlike westernised

Austria, Hungary still operates under a medieval agricultural system, with society divided between the noble magnates and the peasantry with little to no middle class. This, as well as isolation from its Austrian counterparts, has led to an insular nobility that is heavily reliant on tradition and magic. As a result, Austrian nobles perceive their Hungarian counterparts as backwards and inferior, even if they keep up the pretence of equality at social functions. For their part, Hungarians resent Austrian dominance and demand to be treated as an equal power to Austria rather than a holding.

## Naming Conventions

In addition to checking whether the upper class includes Steppegoblins, an easy way to tell whether one is dealing with an Austrian or Hungarian is by how they are named. While Austrian names follow the common convention of given name followed by family name, Hungarians place the family name (or initial, in the case of royalty) first.

Married Hungarian women use their husband's name, adding the suffix '-né' to the end of the given name to signify 'wife of.' Thus Hudek Bianka, when marrying Koltai Tivadar, would become Koltai Tivadarné. Prior to Habsburg rule married women simply kept their own names and it is still popular for them to do so in Hungarian social circles. Regardless of convention, children always take their father's surname.

Transylvania sits between Hungary and the Carpathian Mountains. Roughly divided between ethnic Hungarians and Romanians, Transylvania is a Grand Principality run by an Austrian governor. Curiously, the eastern edge of the principality has a large population of Orcs, likely due to it being one of the last areas conquered by 'western civilisation.' These Orcs are used to fending for themselves against the great threats amongst the Carpathian Mountains and intriguingly have a cosmopolitan culture due to Orc immigration (such Orcs tend to adopt the Hungarian style of family name first). Recognising Orcish solidarity and the need to secure the border, the Emperor recently appointed Orc General Karl von Schwartzenberg to be Governor of Transylvania.

Society in Lombardy-Venetia is stratified between Austrian administrators and the Italian populace. While Austrian rule has, for the most part, been smoothly run, nationalistic sentiment is high and the Italians yearn for an independent

state or unification with their southern neighbours. Older Lombards have seen their lands razed and neighbours killed time and again and the memory of Austria's brutal suppression of the revolutionary movements in 1848-49, especially the actions of General Haynau, is still fresh in their memories. Due to this most Lombards keep to themselves and interact with their Austrian overseers only when necessary.

### Industry

Austria is taking advantage of the industrial revolution, especially in Bohemia, where factories are popping up everywhere and railways criss-cross the land. Railways run from Milan to Prague and from there to other German states. As the Austrian nobility hungers for new technologies Prague and Vienna are quickly becoming urban metropolises. Given their country's mountainous terrain Austrians have embraced the aerostat, with the Vienna-Venice airway being a popular choice for middle and upper class Austrians that wish to do business or holiday on the Adriatic.

Most of Hungary is fertile farmland that generates a surplus of agricultural products. Unfortunately, the magnates are more concerned with living lavish lifestyles and keeping the peasantry 'in their place' rather than using the profits to modernise the country. Thus, only a single railway cuts through the Hungarian heartland, primarily to ship products west to line their products. The sole exception to this neglect is Transylvania, where the largely Orc border lords are building their own branch lines.

One area in which both Austrian and Hungarian nobility excel is magic. The Vienna Guildhouse is renowned as the second-largest Hermetic Guild in Europe and the University of Vienna is considered the greatest of magical teaching institutions. Hermeticists that can claim a 'Vienna education' are highly regarded in magical circles. On the downside, the university's association with the Praetorian Guard has led to accusations of secret Maleficium clubs holding meetings and performing dark rituals in the basements of university halls throughout the city.

### Vienna

Vienna, or Wien in its native tongue, sits along the Danube River. Its most striking feature, absent the mounted gryphons that periodically circle the skies, is that it is very much a city-within-a-city, divided by both a medieval wall and a grassy band, the Glacis, bordering it from river's edge to river's edge. This parade ground is often used by soldiers for ceremonial drills or for walking mounts (both terrestrial and aerial). The suburban part sprawls in all directions from the medieval city, including across the Danube.

The medieval part, protected by the walls, is still considered the fashionable part of the city, although noble palaces can be found both within and without. Vienna has a reputation for decadence, as princes sip coffee in cafés or tinker with magic and new marvels instead of tending to their duties. That said Vienna is still renowned as an academic and cultural capital. The venerable University of Vienna includes the most prestigious Hermetic faculty in Europe

## Der Prätorianergarde

Der Prätorianergarde (Praetorian Guard) traces its origins to Julius Caesar as an imperial bodyguard, although the current Order was established by Charles V in 1530. Over the centuries it has evolved from a purely military unit to a magical one; all current Praetorians are military officers with thaumaturgical doctorates. Their duties have evolved as well; they are charged with protecting the empire from all threats, magical and mundane, and they can be found throughout the Empire rooting out petty conjurers, maleficium users, rebels, and preternatural creatures. Unfortunately the Praetorian Guard's often clandestine methods, which include arresting unlicensed petty conjurers, have led the Guard to be accused of being nothing more than a de facto Inquisition. This is especially the case in Hungary, where the primarily Austrian Guard often takes control of local strongholds in its battles

against Carpathian threats. The Praetorian Guard enjoys a slightly better reputation amongst the German states as an alternative to the Prussian Hexenjaeger.

### Human Praetorian Guard

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 6      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 18  
*Armour Value:* 5 (lined soldier's coat)  
*Special Traits:* Order I, Demonology (*Protected Domain*), Necromancy (*Rest*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*, *Ectoplasmic Bonds*, *Heal*, *Steely Skin*).  
*Complications:* Zealot.  
*Damage:* Punch (3), Pepperbox Pistol (8), Sabre (9).

and the city is renowned for its music, boasting such names as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig von Beethoven, Franz Schubert, and Johann Strauss, Jr.

The medieval city is also home to the Hofburg, which is the imperial palace of the Austrian Empire. The Hofburg serves as the residence of the Emperor as well as a state building for important meetings. It's located on the south side of the old city. The Hofgarten and Volksgarten, two impressive gardens to rival Hyde Park, are found on the east and west sides of the Hofburg respectively. Ancillary structures, such as the Imperial Library and the K.K.Hoftheater nächst der Burg, are open to the public.

As befitting a city with romantic notions of the past the Vienna Guildhouse holds special prominence. Commissioned by Eldren Guildmaster Prince Eugene of Savoy in 1695, this stately high-baroque building stands out from even the impressive buildings around it. It is also home to the largest magical library outside of Geneva, although many Viennese hermeticists would contest Geneva's claim. The ageing Prince, who is now 193 years old, prefers to reside here rather than his home at Belvedere during the winter months.

Leopoldstadt, a neighbourhood within the heart of the city, is notable for its large Yehudi population. Yiddish, the language of East European Bene David, is more commonly spoken on the streets in this area than German. In spite of the restrictions placed on them in response to the recent revolutions, Viennese Sons of David are remarkably well-educated and take to new innovations more quickly than their Aluminat bourgeois neighbours.

Vienna is no less impressive beyond its medieval walls. Many nobles have built their summer palaces beyond the city walls and it is also the site of the Allgemeines Krankenhaus der Stadt Wien (Vienna General Hospital) as well as the Universität Wien (University of Vienna). The hospital is renowned for its psychodunamic research (housed in the Narrenturm) and the thaumaturgical program within the university is second to none on the Continent.

Another striking feature is the relative lack of industrial pollution. By imperial decree most major manufacturing and industrialisation is concentrated elsewhere in the Empire, preserving Vienna's romantic image as an aristocratic city. Unfortunately, while the air is indeed cleaner, Vienna has much the same sanitation problems as other cities and its streets are far from odour free.

The capital of the Empire, Vienna is a city of past glories. Austria's power is on the decline, but her people don't recognize that yet. Princes sip coffee in cafés or tinker with magic and new marvels instead of tending to their duties. The Emperor parades his stallions or listens to command performances by world-famous Austrian musicians while he leaves the running of his empire to his chancellor. Combined with the fact that the emperor keeps most manufacturing and industrialisation out of the city and in the Sudetenland, Vienna has a reputation as a decadent city where pleasure is sought out before serious work is even considered.

The medieval boundary of the city is still surrounded by a reinforced wall although Vienna has absorbed the neighbourhoods beyond it. Further distancing the medieval

## Viennese Coffee Culture

Since the turn of the 17th century Vienna has been known for its excellent coffee houses, primarily developed through the importation of Turkish coffee beans. The hot drink has taken the city by storm and numerous coffeehouses are now scattered throughout Vienna.

Viennese coffee culture is distinct from cafes in other European cities. They're crowded, smoke-filled, and double as gentlemen's clubs, many offering billiards, dancing and even restaurants. For most patrons, however, the main attraction is the excellent coffee and many Viennese could sip a cup or two for hours while socialising. These coffeehouses, combined with Vienna's lack of industry, has had a democratising effect on those living in the city; it's not uncommon for a noble, a banker and even a shopkeeper to be seen sipping coffee together while discussing the news of the day.

Enterprising petty conjurers have discovered that higher class customers are more prone to buy their wares if packaged as a cup of coffee and there are a small but growing number of coffeehouses in less savoury neighbourhoods that cater to them. Such concoctions are known as 'herbal coffee,' a polite way of referring to coffee that's been enchanted through petty magic. Particularly popular blends include *Cat Nimble*, *Healing Poultice* and *Rainguard*.

centre is the Glacis, a wide open grassy area that follows the wall. The Glacis is planted with trees and criss-crossed by various roads and walks; the Austrian army still conducts drills on it, although they are largely for ceremonial reasons. Given that the medieval wall aided the revolutionaries in 1848 and made it difficult and costly to retake the city, Chancellor Metternich is currently lobbying the Emperor to tear down the walls and Glacis to allow for new construction. Thus far the Emperor has only agreed to raze part of the Glacis for the Vienna Aerodrome.

## Milan

The chief city of Lombardy, the stylish city of Milan has fallen far since its glory days as capital of the Western Roman Empire and a medieval manufacturing powerhouse, although its current industrialisation is helping it to reclaim its former status. Lying between the Ticino and Adda rivers and named after the Roman camp on which it stands, the city is ringed by canals and the medieval city wall.

In the heart of Milan lies the Piazza del Duomo, where the cathedral and Palazzo Reale can be found. Milan is home to the oldest independent public library in the world, the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, a place of pilgrimage for the committed bibliophile (even if its books are, somewhat confusingly, organised by size rather than content). This is not the only confusing thing about Milan, given that its street numbering system starts at the Palazzo Reale before working out from the centre in the form of a spiral...

The Duomo, although an impressive Gothic building (being the fourth largest cathedral in the world), still remains unfinished, despite construction having started in the 14th century. It is home to the Iron Crown of Lombardy, used to crown the Kings of Italy, a beautiful and ancient piece of gold and enamel work set with 22 gemstones, constructed on a band of iron made from one of the nails used during Justas' crucifixion.

Milan is home to one of the most famous opera houses south of the Alps, La Scala. Although heavily influenced originally by the music of the French courts, Italy developed its own musical style from the 16th century onwards, typified by the works of Verdi, Rossini and Bellini, all of which can be heard in the magnificent (if somewhat noisy) theatre, where enthusiastic stock-trading often takes place in the pit during the performances.

## Pest and Buda

Buda was once the seat of Hungarian royal power, but lost its influence when it was sacked by the Ottomans in the early 16th century. The Hungarian government moved to Pressburg as a result and Buda, while flourishing under Ottoman rule, lost its importance. With the expulsion of the Ottomans during the Great Siege of Buda in 1686, when a Hungarian hermeticist enacted a fiery ritual that burned most of the Ottoman forces within the castle walls. Austria took the Hungarian crown and killed or expelled any non-Aluminat within Hungary's borders.

## The Scrofa Semilanuta

Tucked up high on an archway in the Piazza de' Mercanti is a carving of a most curious creature, the symbol of Milan known locally as the scrofa semilanuta (the half-woolly sow). These creatures were once common in the woods and hills around Milan and provided great sport for hunters, which led to the Romans naming the city Mediolanum ("in medio lanae"). Rare sightings of the creatures do still occur in isolated areas, and they are in high demand amongst cunning magicians as their tusks, hide, wool and fat are very useful in all manner of foci, particularly those relating to strength, protection and endurance (they also taste rather good).

*Scrofa Semilanuta*: PC: 6; MC: 6; Health: 6 dice; Armour: 3; Damage (Dice): Charge (4), Bite (3), Gore (males; 4)

### Kolonn Torgh

The Boar's Courage

*Ritual Cost*: 2

*Ritual length*: 3 hrs

*Activation cost*: 1

*Difficulty*: 0

*Activation range*: Self

*Duration*: Rounds

To imbue the focus, the natural magician must wear the tusks of a scrofa (or other wild boar) and spend the full ritual time confronting their fears, be they physical or psychological. They must then consume the raw heart of the scrofa from which the tusks were taken. Once activated, the recipient (who must be wearing the focus so that it lies over their heart) gains +3 to both their Fortitude and Resolve for the duration of the enchantment.

While Buda remains the seat of Hungarian governance (and the Citadella built to house an Austrian garrison while providing an intimidating presence), over the course of this century it is neighbouring Pest that is growing in prominence. One of the largest communities of Bene David call Pest home and are currently building the largest synagogue in Europe, appropriately named 'the Great Synagogue.' A strong Hungarian national identity is creating a local renaissance, with many new buildings dedicated to preserving and showcasing Hungarian culture. However, the Hungarians are concerned less with separatism and more with respect; the Pest revolution in 1848 was more about Hungarians wanting to be equals with the Austrians under their common monarch than about overthrowing them.

### Telluric Currents

Aetheric energies course through the world, cradling it in a web. These energies pool in certain areas, imbuing stronger magic where they touch. These currents are called Telluric lines and where they cross are called Telluric nodes. Such areas grant extra quintessence that a magician may tap to fuel her spells. For more information on telluric currents see the *Liber Magica*.

In some places telluric nodes are so strong that, in addition to providing extra quintessence, they actually increase the Entropy cogs in a given area. The Hot Springs of Buda is one such area in Europe; Stonehenge, Geneva, and the Carpathian Mountains are others.

The hot springs of Buda are known for their medicinal properties and there are many baths, public and private, scattered throughout the city. Petty conjurers claim that using these springs enhances their magic; this is true, and any enchantment whose ritual incorporates water from a Buda hot spring is treated as being an extra cog towards Entropy. Whether this is due to a particularly potent telluric node or other supernatural effect is unknown.

Pest and Buda are gradually being considered as a single city (locally known as Pest-Buda; eventually they are due to officially merge into 'Budapest') and they are symbolically joined by the Láncshíd, or Chain Bridge, which also symbolises the merging of Austria and Hungary. The single aerodrome that sits just north of Pest furthers this bond, and this rise in Pest's prominence has helped foster a cultural renaissance amongst Hungarians. No more is this nationalistic spirit exemplified than in the Magyar Nemzeti

Múzeum (Hungarian National Museum). It was on the steps of this neo-classical building where stirring speeches and poems roused the Hungarians to revolt.

Another prominent building in Pest is the Guildhouse, which sits along the Danube a block north of the Láncshíd. It's a new building, having only opened in 1854 and was somewhat controversial, as when the main 'Hungarian Guild' moved here from Pressburg the new building was expected to be built in the Old Town above Buda Castle. Instead, Hungarian hermeticists decided to put it in the heart of Pest, further reflecting the national spirit.

### Prague

Sitting in the shadow of Prague Castle, the city of Prague has been bustling for over a millennium. It is the capital of Bohemia and houses the crown jewels. Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV commissioned the magnificent Prague Bridge that connects the castle across the Vltava River to the medieval city as well as creating the Little Quarter on the bank below. Over the centuries the city has grown and the preponderance of grand buildings and cathedrals has garnered it the nickname of the 'city of a hundred spires.'

Prague is an old city dating back to at least the 10th century (in truth it is much older, but the ruins of the cities before it lie buried beneath the foundations). Until 1784 it was actually five cities merged into one. For visitors arriving from Vienna, the differences couldn't be more striking. Whereas Vienna is a romantic love letter to the past, Prague is a boisterous brass band. It is a bastion of industry and the numerous factories in and around it constantly feed the smog that obscures the oft-beautiful architecture of the city.

Prague is divided into five 'quarters.' The heart of Prague is the medieval Old Town, which is bounded by the Vltava River on its west and north; a wall and moat used to finish the boundary until it was dismantled in the 15th century with the building of New Town around it. Many churches border the Old Town Square, where Czech Jitka Hanus was burned for necromancy against the Aluminat Church in 1415.

Local legend claims that Hanus survived the flames and now sleeps with the spirits of slaughtered Czechs somewhere outside Prague, waiting for the day when she'll rise again and march against enemies of the Czechs riding a horse of fire and steel. Old Town is also home to the Yehudi Quarter, where the majority of the Bene David living in the city resides.

Old Town is typically considered the 'German' section of the city while New Town is mostly occupied by Czechs.

In addition, the northern part of Old Town has become the Yehudi Quarter, where a large population of the Bene David resides.

Across the river are the two remaining boroughs. Prague Castle dominates the Castle Quarter, followed by numerous noble palaces. Below it lies the Little Quarter, which developed into a district for the German inhabitants of Prague and over the centuries many noble houses were built there. An Italian neighbourhood has also thrived in the Little Quarter during the last three centuries; these are the descendants of artists, bankers and craftsmen that

flocked to Prague in the 16th century to partake in the opportunities presented with the city's expansion. The Little Quarter stands in contrast to the largely Czech (and correspondingly poorer) New Town across the river south and east of Old Town.

The two quarters on the left bank are united with those on the right by the Charles Bridge, a magnificent 30 foot stone bridge lined by 30 baroque statues and protected by three towers. It is the symbol of a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe, as Prague sits almost at the Continental centre. The bridge itself is symbolic of the city which, in

## Prague Mechanicals and Automata Company

Prague Mechanicals occupy the space between a standard automaton and mechanical men. Like Automata, Prague Mechanicals are not sentient; each is specifically programmed to carry out certain tasks. The difference is in their decision-making; Prague Mechanicals perform their functions so well that they seem to be run by a spirit. Prague Mechanicals do degrade over time; each contains enough 'brainpower' to run for about a month, after which it needs recharging. This 'brain recharge' is separate from whatever engine powers the body, and a few hermetic rabbis licenced by the Loew Company keep their congregations protected by recharging the local prince's Prague Mechanical.

It's rumoured that Rabbi Loew or a member of his Company once accidentally created a sentient Prague Mechanical. Whether this was because a spirit got caught in the process or the magical matrix somehow gained the spark of sentience is unknown – rumours vary as to whether the sentient Prague Mechanical was destroyed or escaped its fate. Regardless of the truth, the story is enough to keep potential rivals from copying Loew's methods too closely lest they let loose angry spirits upon themselves.

The statistic block below is for most Prague Mechanicals, but each is a custom-built creation and has different features depending on the owner's needs and price. A common feature is a Guild voice box that gives the Prague Mechanical a pleasant sounding voice.

### Prague Mechanical

*Physical:* 6     *Initiative:* 4

*Mental:* 4     *Health:* 8

*Social:* 5     *Quintessence:* 6

*Armour Value:* 6 (plated body)

*Special Traits:* None

*Complications:* Advanced Drone (has no independent thoughts, although it can anticipate needs and act accordingly), Repair

*Damage:* Punch (3 dice), tool blade (6 dice)



spite of its factories, boasts incredible baroque and Gothic architecture. If Vienna is the past and Berlin the future, Prague blends both comfortably in the present. One thing that unites the quarters is the numerous factories that have infiltrated all parts of the city. Prague has grown into a powerful industrial centre for the Austrian Empire.

Prague's signature industry is automaton construction. While animating dolls has been a trick of magicians for centuries, in the late 16th century Bene David Rabbi Judah Loew created a magical matrix that gave animated dolls a semblance of life. For the next couple of centuries the Loew family created 'golems' to serve Bene David congregations or for the amusement of princes, but they were time-consuming and expensive to create. With the advent of the industrial revolution, technologists have been able to make cheaper golems. As a result almost every court in Germany sports at least one 'Prague Mechanical,' as they are called today.

## Venice

Now under Austrian control, the undoubted jewel of the Adriatic Sea was an independent republic for over a thousand years. Ruled by Doges, (elected lords), the Venetians were a mighty commune of merchants and thieves, until their own 30-year war with the Ottoman Empire and the ascendance of Portugal's navy clipped their wings. Built across many tiny islands in a tranquil lagoon, the heart of the city lies on the Rialto, where refugees from the numerous Germanic and Hun invasions fled for safety and were welcomed by the local Sirenian population. The islands themselves are actually the tops of Sirenia, a Merfolk city beneath the sea.

Venice is renowned for its Venetian glass, which is primarily produced on the Murato (an isolated part of Venice). It, along with Trieste, is also an important port for the Austrian Empire. Trieste is already connected to Vienna via rail; plans to link Venice are already being put into effect.

## Sirenia

Venice is built atop small 'islands' that are actually undersea buildings for Merfolk. As with the city above, Sirenia is unique in that it is the only known Merfolk city in the Mediterranean and, indeed, around the Continent except perhaps the deepest parts of its seas. The Merfolk recall little of their history save that they came from 'Atlantis' and that they were originally land-dwellers who were transformed to survive during the Great Cataclysm.

The Sirenians claimed that they helped other survivors colonise the Mediterranean whilst they settled in a community they called 'Sirenia.' Due to this ancient exodus Sirenians have had little contact with other Merfolk communities over the millennia. While the Sirenians hoped to one day be restored to their original forms, they've accepted their fate and integrated with the world above as best they could. While few in number (it is believed that less than 2000 Sirenians live beneath Venice), the Sirenians became an integral part of Venice and some even work as navigators for Venetian ships.

The Sirenians live in what would be called 'high rises' in our world, with the exception that they are completely submerged and filled with water. Their design is alien to surface-dwellers, as they lack staircases and often have doors built into ceilings and floors. Only the uppermost floors are adapted for surface-dweller use, largely because these floors used to be surface buildings or basements that have sunk and been abandoned. Several Venetian basements actually have doors to Sirenia due to ancient contracts or other arrangements. Many of these

sunken chambers are now interconnected and resourceful rogues and thieves can navigate through the city using these passages while taking advantage of air pockets.

The Sirenians have been a part of Venice since its founding and still maintain cordial relations with their land-dwelling counterparts. This ancient alliance has been sealed annually through the 'Marriage with the Sea' ceremony. In times past, the Doge sailed out into the lagoon and cast a gold ring into the water, to be caught by his 'bride' and, just as the Doge was elected for life, so was his aquatic consort. Even though the position of Doge no longer exists, the ritual continues. Recently, the Austrian navy has moved into the Sirenian buildings beneath the shipyards. Through magic and technology those portions of the buildings that have been converted are now watertight, creating an underwater base for surface-dwellers. As the Austrian authorities were quite insistent on taking it, the acquisition has riled the Sirenians.

### Sirenian

Amphibious creatures with a variety of sapient kind upper bodies, Sirenian Merfolk are well adapted for swimming (although walking on dry land presents them with something of an issue). Usually reclusive, the Sirenians of Venice are considerably more sociable than those found elsewhere. As creatures of the sea Sirenians have little use for clothing or loose jewellery; to preserve Venetian sensibilities Sirenians often wear a tight tunic if they plan to be conspicuously above water while dealing with surface dwellers.



*Physical:* 5      *Initiative:* 4  
*Mental:* 4      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 4      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 0  
*Special Traits:* Water-breathing.  
*Complications:* Walks at a quarter-speed of its land-adapted counterpart.  
*Damage:* Fist (2); Tribal spear (6).

### Ciarpa

Another denizen of the laguna, the Ciarpa are an ancient and secretive race of aquatic detritus-eaters. Appearing as very large, bony fish (approximately the size of a gnome), their pectoral and pelvic fins resemble thickly-muscled arms with fine, multi-fingered hands. Their comedic appearance should fool no-one, however: they are immensely strong and tenacious when it comes to bagging a prize piece of refuse. Their underwater hovels are a topsy-turvy mix of what they have been able to scavenge and they maintain an uneasy alliance with the local Sirenians, who regard them in much the same way as the surface-dwelling upper classes regard the lower. Originally attracted to the area as a result of its increased urbanisation, they were able to keep the waters clean by scavenging discarded food, bodies and whatever else was thrown into the lagoon, but they too are now suffering from the growing pollution around Venice.

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 3  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 2      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 1 (scales)  
*Special Traits:* Water-breathing.  
*Complications:* Can only survive for very brief periods out of water. Virtually immobile on land.  
*Damage:* Charge (3); Fist (4). Improvised Weapon (2 - 6, depending on size).

While St Mark's Basilica is justly famous, any visitors to its attendant molo should exercise caution when walking near the two Byzantine columns erected there. As his reward for raising them to their current position, notorious medieval Dwarf engineer Black-legged Nick insisted that gambling be permitted in the area bounded by the columns (it being forbidden everywhere else in the city). Furious at having been outwitted, the Doge decreed that the spot would also be used for public executions, garnering the location such a vile reputation that, even to this day, locals will not set foot betwixt them.

Anyone foolish enough to step between the columns garners the Complication "The Evil Eye" (see the *VICTORIANA CORE RULEBOOK*, page 130), for the duration of their stay in Venice. This can only be negated by seeking out the correct charm against such ill-fortune from a local cunning magician (which will be in the shape of a red horn). The adventurer gains no additional option points while the curse is active.

The symbol of St Mark, patron saint of Venice, is a gryphon, which were used by the Venetian army as aerial cavalry mounts until the last squadron was destroyed during Napoleon's conquest of the city. There is one gryphon, however, that may yet come to the defence of his city. Captured from Piræus in Greece, this marble gryphon sits at the entrance to Venice's Arsenal. On his right shoulder and flank are carved numerous runic inscriptions, twined into the shape of a serpent. The runes themselves resemble Greek, but no-one has yet managed to fully decipher them. The man who liberated it, Francesco Morosini, claimed to know its secret, but he died almost 200 years ago without telling a soul.

## ~ THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES ~

The Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia are pleasant, temperate lands nestled between the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea. Wrested from the Ottoman Empire by Russia in the aftermath of the latest Russo-Turkish War in 1829, the newly autonomous principalities soon found themselves on the front line of yet another war between the two great powers. Now, under the military occupation of Russia and sniped at from across the Danube by the Allies, Princess Helena struggles to forge a strong, independent identity for her people in the face of annexation. Even before the Russian occupation, which began in

1853, the Danubian Principalities have found the path of independence to prove difficult. The Organic Statute left the country sharply divided between the boyar minority and the peasant majority and its agricultural economy remained. Paradoxically this is helping the Romanians cope with their new situation, as they've simply traded boyars for soldiers and their produce feed armies rather than being shipped to Constantinople.

As with the Black Sea, the Danube River, the principalities' lifeline to central Europe, is devoid of commercial traffic, as any ship that dared travel it would simply become a target for the cannons and magicians on either side of the river. Romanians along the river nervously look west for what they



believe is the inevitable day that Austria will come steaming down it to join the fight, as the deposed princes daily beg the Emperor to get involved. On that day, the Russian-backed Princess would likely be overthrown.

Sitting quietly in the background are the mysterious and magical Carpathians, throbbing with entropic energy. It is said that ancient necromantic horrors are quietly gathering; whether for the good or ill of the Danubian Principalities it is too early to say. Still, there are some that whisper that Princess Helena always looks to the Carpathians before making major decisions, so perhaps there is some truth to the rumours...

## Romania at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy.  
 Capital: Bucharest (Wallachia), Jassy (Moldavia).  
 Currency: Gulden (2s): 60 kreuzer: 1200 dinarii.  
 Religion: Aluminat (Orthodox), Sons of David.  
 Languages: Romanian, Romani.

	UPPER (10%)	MIDDLE (10%)	LOWER (80%)
Beastfolk (30%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (10%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren* (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (2%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Huldufolk (5%)	No	No	Yes
Human (30%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (2%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (10%)	No	Yes	Yes

\*primarily Stepegoblins.

## Geography

Both Moldavia and Wallachia sit on the upper eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula and are landlocked; Russia owns the small strip of land between Moldavia and the Black Sea while Wallachia's access is cut off by the Ottoman Empire. The boundary line between the two great powers is the River Danube, which, along with the almost perpendicular Carpathian mountains, shapes Moldavia and Wallachia.

In addition to the Russian and Ottoman Empires the Danubian Principalities share their Carpathian border with the Austrian Empire, specifically the region of Transylvania. To the west of Wallachia and below the Danube is Serbia,

an autonomous principality that is still under the control of the Ottoman Empire. The Danube River also connects the principalities with Austria, Germany and Switzerland as well as the Black Sea, granting them many potential markets.

The Danubian Principalities is a temperate region. Summers are warm and dry and winters are cold and snowy, with shortened autumns and springs. The land is hilly, forested, and fertile save for the highest peaks of the Carpathians which line the western edge of the Danubian Principalities. The forests have been shrinking as more of the land is claimed for agriculture.

## River Sharks of the Danube

With the Ottoman army sitting just across the river Russia does not want a threat from the west. Worried that Austria may decide to enter the war the Russian army has deployed Vila agents to scout the river and spy on Austria, both in Vienna and Hungary. These agents use the Liken Shape enchantment to become bull sharks, enabling them to traverse the Danube undetected. Fortunately for the Austrians, bull sharks are tropical animals and not native to Europe. Austrian river crews are trained to look out for 'foreign fish' and the Russian agents find it difficult to remain in the water for long during the winter months, as the water is too cold. Still, the Russian 'river sharks' have been very effective at gathering intelligence and it's only a matter of time before their mission turns to sabotage of Austrian vessels or assassination of key officers.

## Government

One could easily say that the government of the Danubian Principalities is the Tsarina, whose troops occupy the region. However, the principalities are nominally under the control of a single monarch, Princess Helena Koltsov-Massalski and managed according to the Russian-backed Organic Statutes implemented in 1831-1832 in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War. While these statutes created a legislature (made up of high-ranking boyars), an independent judiciary and reduced the power of the Orthodox Aluminat, most power was left in the hands of the lords (boyars), reaffirming the de facto absolutist monarchy.

The one power that the boyars in both principalities retained over the princes was the right to elect them, but the outbreak of the Crimean War and subsequent occupation by Russia effectively removed it. The elected princes fled

to Vienna while the Tsarina appointed a new princess and gave her dominion over both principalities without boyar consent.

Helena Ghica, a highly educated Human woman from a prominent Romanian family, found herself married to a Russian duke and living in Saint Petersburg. During a party she got in a heated discussion with Princess Nadja over the occupation of the Danubian Provinces. While her husband (and most of the guests) feared that the headstrong duchess was going to be punished for her insolence, Helena was instead rewarded; before the week was over the Tsarina

appointed Helena to be Princess of Wallachia, granting her dominion over Moldavia as well.

Helena moved into the palace in Bucharest; her husband, Duke Alexander Koltsov-Massalski, remains in Saint Petersburg (there are rumours that the two don't get along). As she was not voted into the hospodarship she is often seen at best a pretender and at worst a collaborator. In truth, the Princess does what she can to intercede for her people, asserting the principalities' autonomy in the face of occupation. Now having ruled for over two years the Princess has swayed some boyars to her side. She has also

## Carpathian Talons

Deep within the Carpathian Mountains, hidden by magic and guarded by the monsters that roam the mountainsides, sits Dracula Castle. Its owner is Vlad III, former Prince of Wallachia. He is an impossibly old Steppegoblin, but in spite of rumours to the contrary Vlad is not a necromantic horror. Through magical means and the natural entropic field permeating the mountains his aging has slowed.

Still, Vlad is aware that his blood and his wrath have doomed him to become a vampire – over the last century he's been working to overcome that. Part of his penance is his occasional aid to Wallachia from the shadows; he never takes credit, but he has been behind revolutionary movements and the removal of unpopular leaders. When he offered his hand once again, this time to Princess Helena, Vlad discovered something new – Princess Helena is also

a Nosferatu, albeit an unknowing one. This has given Vlad food for thought; with Helena by his side they could be immortal rulers. Towards that end he gives the Princess a hand whenever he can, hoping to gain her trust.

### Prince Vlad III of Wallachia

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 10  
*Mental:* 15      *Health:* 14  
*Social:* 15      *Quintessence:* 42  
*Armour Value:* 1 (cloak).

*Special Traits:* Entropy 4, Ageless (effectively), Necromancy (All), Thaumaturgy (All).

*Complications:* Bad Reputation, Expensive Tastes, Ruthless, Zealot (preserve his life).

*Damage:* Sword Cane (6).



been quietly building support for the concept of a unified Romanian state.

Helena's greatest rival is Russian General Andrea Petrova Dannenberg, who is in charge of the Russian forces. In spite of Romanian resentment at the Russian presence, General Dannenberg has garnered respect for repelling an Ottoman advance across the Danube in 1854. Known for her brutal efficiency, the Stepegoblin General understands that Princess Helena is a favourite of the Tsarina and treads more carefully with her than the General is comfortable with. Still, the two often clash over what is necessary to keep the principalities secure from future Ottoman, and possibly Austrian, advances.

### Society

The Danubian principalities are still sharply divided between noble and peasant. At the top are the high-ranking boyars who form the legislature, roughly akin to Britain's House of Lords. With the occupation the boyars are divided; some endear themselves to local Russian officers, some wait for word from their 'true' hospodars in Vienna, and only a few truly support Princess Helena. Regardless, all continue to participate in aristocratic gatherings and it can often be difficult to tell where a boyar stands; most boyars shift positions as easily as they change shirts.

Prior to the occupation the middle class was swelling, largely by foreigners looking for new opportunities as well as low ranking boyars looking to invest. There has also been a significant influx of the Bene David fleeing persecution in Russia. These Yehudi have brought their businesses, especially banking, along with them. Unfortunately, both the taxes levied by the National Assemblies and the Russian Occupation have stifled middle class growth and the bourgeoisie remains a small group envied by the peasantry and exploited by both the nobility and the Russian officers.

The majority of the population is made up of the peasantry. Exploited by the boyars the peasants work the farms in conditions little better than the serfdom that came before. These conditions were only eased just before the previous hospodars fled the country and the peasantry fears that Princess Helena will do little to aid them given the Russian army's needs.

One unifying factor amongst all social classes is the move to print books in Romanian and use Romanian as the academic tongue. This has served to instil the bourgeoisie with a sense of nationalism and also provide access to books that the Russians might not approve (especially the tracts of Russian revolutionary Maxim Bolshev). Revolutionary

texts have filtered to the peasantry, but the high rate of illiteracy has made it easy for boyars to find the one literate peasant that's causing them trouble.

Amongst the lower classes are the Romani, who in spite of their name are unrelated to ethnic Romanians (they comprise about 3% of the population). Having been slaves for generations, the Romani were freed as a result of the Organic Statutes. Magical Romani still faced strict persecution from the Orthodox-dominated Bucharest Guild until the Russians occupied the principalities. With the freedom to practice as they please many Romani have set up shops within Bucharest as well as the countryside. Queen Helena has been courting the Romani as well, using them as messengers to Prince Vlad and employing Romani magicians as bodyguards.

### The Romani

Although they are often called 'Gipsies' (due to the widespread but erroneous belief that they originated in Egypt), the Romani people actually trace their origins from south-west Asia and migrated to Europe around 900. They are a nomadic people, although some have been forcibly settled with varying degrees of success. Even 'settled' Romani often have to uproot and leave due to the widespread persecution levied against them.

In spite of claims to the contrary the magical population of Romani isn't any greater than that of the rest of Europe and there is no 'King of the Gipsies'; most Romani groups are insular and isolated, practicing ancient customs that simply seem strange to their neighbours. Most Romani worship the Heavenly Host, but this is more for convenience than belief; their beliefs are closer to Brahmanism.

Romani adventurers are always lower class (with the Foreigner complication) and can be of any subspecies, regardless of the nation in which they were born. Indeed, many of the Karaka and Stepegoblins encountered in Western Europe are Romani.

### Industry

Prior to the Russian occupation of Bucharest and Jassy both cities were transforming into industrial centres spurred on by increased trade and the need to develop militarily. The influx of Bene David not only established new banks but also connected the cities to the greater Continental financial

institutions. Unfortunately with the Russian occupation the munitions factories have been commandeered and other factories pressed into service with little return for their owners.

One interesting development in the magical industry is the prevalence of petty conjurers. Since the Russian invasion petty conjurers, who were barely tolerated in the Ottoman Empire and the resultant autonomous principalities, have discovered new opportunities. Most members of the Bucharest Hermetic Guild fled when the Russians invaded, but Princess Helena has coaxed enough of them out of hiding to re-establish the Guild and offer classes to Romanians who show talent.

## Bucharest

Bucharest is the capital of Wallachia and the de facto capital of Moldavia, given that Princess Helena chooses to reside here. The city lies 43 miles from the Danube, a region currently occupied by Russian military encampments. Prior to the Russo-Turkish War Bucharest thrived as a capital and guild city under the Ottoman Empire.

The Royal Palace is modest by princely standards, but Princess Helena refuses to commission a new palace while Wallachia is occupied. She'd hoped that this might endear her to her people, but the presence of a Russian Guard (at the insistence of the Tsarina) makes it seem as though the Princess is either a captive or needs foreign protection. The Old Princely Court, where Vlad III resided, is still standing, although it was heavily damaged in an earthquake in the early 18th century.

During its quarter century of autonomy Bucharest was modernised, replacing wooden roads with cobblestone, adding public fountains, and overall sculpting and beautifying the city to make it worthy of a capital. A garrison was also built for the Wallachian Army, although it now houses Russian officers. Currently General Dannenberg makes her home in Sutu Palace, built by a wealthy boyar family that was displaced when war broke out. The palace actually rivals the Royal Palace in opulence. It also serves as Russian army headquarters in Wallachia.

## Serbia

The third 'Danubian Principality,' the Principality of Serbia is still technically an Ottoman state, although unlike Moldavia and Wallachia the Ottomans still retain control. As with the other Danubian Principalities Orthodox Aluminat is the norm and the support of the church during Serbia's

rebellions against the Ottoman Empire, which eventually granted it autonomy in 1817. Belgrade, the capital, sits on the Danube River, connecting it to Austria and the German states.

The current Prince of Serbia is Milan Obrenovic II, a Brown Bearman and powerful clairvoyant. Having weathered a rebellion due to his father's often brutal autocratic rule, Prince Milan recognised the need for a constitution. He modelled it on the Organic Statutes of Moldavia and Wallachia so as to not agitate the Ottoman Empire or Russia. His regime, however, is under constant threat from rebel forces stoked by the Karadordevic family, whose patriarch was killed by Milan's father (with the Sultan's blessing) during the rebellions. A rebellion in 1842 was thwarted only by Milan's clairvoyant abilities.

Currently, Milan is playing a dangerous game. In spite of a request from the Sultan, Milan refused to send Serbian troops to the Crimea. He has also signed a deal with Wurttemberg to supply arms to his army and he is using this supply chain for secret negotiations with the Austrian Emperor. Should Austria go to war it's likely that Serbia will shift allegiances.

## ~ THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ~

For centuries France has commanded a powerful presence on the Continent and still shapes its course today. The ancien regime has been the model for other royal courts and governmental bureaucracies in Europe and French became the vernacular of the aristocracy. Students flocked to Paris for the best in education and Parisian culture set standards around Europe. That is, until it all came crashing down in 1789.

What started as an aristocratic protest over taxes soon spun into a peasant revolution and France shocked the world with the decapitation of its king and the declaration of a republic. The republic became an empire and France reshaped the Continent again under Emperor Napoleon, conducting a series of wars that toppled nations and changed borders. France's loss in that war is what led to the Concert of Europe, as the Great Powers created a framework to ensure long-lasting peace across the Continent.

In 1848 the French people again rebelled against their king, forcing him to flee across the Atlantic. France was now a republic once again and its success inspired a wave of popular revolutions across the Continent. This

time the Republic stuck as its monarchist citizens fled to neighbouring countries or across the ocean to Quebec. President Cavaignac proudly proclaimed that “the era of kings is over; France now belongs to her people!”

Unfortunately, France’s second revolution has not been what the people had hoped. The new government is more conservative than expected and Paris, once the jewel of Europe, is crumbling. Worse, France has gotten caught up in the Crimean War, which is draining its coffers and slaughtering its soldiers with no clear end in sight. The current state of the republic is causing unrest and some believe that a third revolution may be necessary.

### France at a Glance

Governmental System: Republic.  
 Capital: Paris.  
 Currency: Franc (1s): 10 decime: 20 sou: 100 centime.  
 Religion: Aluminat (Roman, Reformed).  
 Languages: French, Occitan, German, Breton, Catalan, Basque.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (20%)	LOWER (75%)
Beastfolk (19%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (2%)	No	Yes	No
Eldren (29%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gnome (7%)	No	Yes	Yes
Huldufolk (10%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (29%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (1%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (2%)	No	No	Yes

### Geography

Dominating Western Europe north of the Iberian Peninsula, France can be roughly divided into two regions: the plains in the north and west and the highlands and mountains to the south and east. The former has a moderate climate with warm wet summers and mild winters – Paris hardly sees any snowfall. The latter has a more temperate climate with warmer summers and colder winters while the highest points, especially the Alps, are covered in snow for up to half the year.

Most of France’s lowlands are fertile valleys centred on major waterways and much of this is agricultural; while France is quickly implementing railways these are primarily for moving agricultural products into Paris and port

cities for export. France is well-known for its vineyards, especially the sparkling white wine of the Champagne region. Ironically, the ‘sparkling white’ was considered an imperfection until it gained popularity in London over the last few decades.

The Massif Central, a large mass of mountains and highlands in south central France is separated by the Alps via the Rhône Valley. This makes the valley a vital link between the southern coastal region (and the Mediterranean in general) and northern France, but the unpredictability of the currents and water depth has generally made it hazardous until the introduction of railways through it. Some enterprising technologists have invented various types of hybrid ‘land and sea’ craft to navigate the river; the Rhône Race developed as a result and features the strange machines in competition with each other.

### A Common Tongue

While French is the official language of France, it is also the international language of Europe. Almost every European leader speaks French fluently and some, particularly in Prussia, Russia and Scandinavia, use it almost exclusively as the court language, regarding their native tongues as peasant languages. In spite of this, it may come as a shock to a visiting foreigner that French is something of a court language in its native country as well!

Dozens of languages are spoken in France; most of these fall into two broad categories: Oil and Occitan. The Oil dialects dominate northern France while Occitan is spoken mainly in southern France. Modern French is a dialect of Oil. Since the revolution there has been an official and systematic push to make all French citizens speak French exclusively, but most citizens outside of Paris and other major cities continue to speak in their native tongue while going about their daily lives. As this tends to accent their Modern French it is often easy to tell which region a French person is by how they speak French.

### Government

As might be expected for a nation that has changed its form of government several times over the last half a century, the current republican government is anything but stable. Emboldened by the flight of the nobility and wary of the bourgeoisie, French farmers and workers continually assert their desire for improved conditions. Unfortunately, this

## Living in the Shadow of the *Ancien Régime*

While its neighbours have watched as their colonies broke away and formed new regimes that dispensed with their former masters' governments, France has the opposite problem. It has dispensed with the aristocracy and redefined itself according to democratic principles while a former colony, Quebec, has adopted not only the old monarchical order but the very same monarch who once ruled France!

As France continues its slide into ineffective government and cultural decay, Quebec is experiencing a renaissance in old French culture. Many French nobles followed Louis VIII to Quebec, taking their servants and recipients of their patronage with them. Paris is challenged on every artistic, culinary and cultural front by Quebec City, and Parisian architects, chefs and artists often find themselves in the position of mimicking masters that have moved across the ocean. This has led to certain snobbery on the part of the Québécois nobility and has given citizens of France a bit of an inferiority complex, even if they are loathe to admit it.

The perceived success of the Kingdom of Quebec is also fuelling the royalist movement, especially amongst the bourgeoisie, in Paris. Even as it is moving into the previously unobtainable upper class, the bourgeoisie longs for the more profitable and prosperous economy of the Bourbon Restoration, in spite of the likely loss of liberty. Many of these royalists secretly work to reunite France with Quebec and bring the King back to the Palace of Versailles.

means that the government spends more time putting out revolutionary fires than actually governing.

Currently the President is Louis-Eugene Cavaignac, a Gnome army officer whose methodical leadership caused a lot of blood to be spilled in the June Days Uprising. While successful, his actions cost him the election for President to Alexandre Ledru-Rollin. Ledru-Rollins' more radical politics clashed with the liberal National Assembly and the resulting paralysis sparked a coup d'état attempt by Ledru-Rollins to take control and rewrite the constitution. Cavaignac suppressed the coup and Ledru-Rollins fled to London.

Since the coup, Cavaignac has had great influence over the National Assembly, particularly in getting them to support France's entry into the Crimean War and thus reassert itself as a Great Power. Thus far it has proven to be a poor gamble, and radical groups are gaining support as the cash-strapped government offers little job opportunities at home while sending French soldiers to war.

### Society

The First French Revolution was a shock felt across the Continent; given the preponderance of Eldren (Eldren account for almost 30% of the French population), conventional wisdom held that France would always be slow to change. Indeed, many French regimes spanned a century or more. What conventional wisdom overlooked, however, was that stagnancy breeds discontent. While

many Eldren were resented for remaining in positions of power for too long (lesser-lived sapient often grew old and died before they could advance), just as many Eldren spent their long lives in poverty, as decades-old slights were never forgotten.

When the revolution came many old nobles either met the guillotine or fled the country. Most went to neighbouring countries like Belgium or Great Britain, where they waited the return of the monarchy. The new government abolished noble titles and formed a republic but it wasn't long before Napoleon made himself Emperor and created many new titles.

While most of the old nobility remained abroad the defeat of Napoleon and subsequent restoration of King Louis VIII brought many of them back to France. When Louis was forced into exile most of those nobles fled with him to Quebec, leaving the French government in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

While the idea of a homogeneous France is largely considered a governmental fiction, it is difficult to even try to maintain in the corners of the country. The Alsace region in the north-east is historically tied to the German states and German dialects are most commonly spoken. In the south, Basques and Catalans often feel more kinship with their cultural counterparts in Spain than they do with the rest of France. In these regions, the lower class tends to speak the regional tongues while the growing middle class prefers French.

## Bonapartists

With the monarchy deposed and the republic in disarray, many French citizens retain romantic notions of France's recent imperial past. Stoking those feelings is the knowledge that Emperor Napoleon still lives, exiled on a small island in the South Atlantic. If only he could be returned to France, the country could take its rightful place as the most powerful nation on the Continent once more.

As Bonapartism is more of an ideal than a true movement it is manifesting in different ways. There are many Bonapartists sitting in Parlement and they wish to pursue legislation to demand Napoleon's return – once they know they have the votes, of course. Still others wish to mount a rescue mission on Saint Helena and forcibly return Napoleon to France.

Currently, Bonapartists remain a minority, but continued mismanagement of the Republic, along with Quebec's growing prestige, could fuel attempts to return the Dwarf emperor to his imperial throne.

## Industry

While there are several industrial centres dotting France, it remains primarily an agricultural society. While France has the largest network of railways on the continent (second only to Britain in all of Europe), there is no rush of country folk to the cities to toil in factories; France's reputation for food and wine keeps its agricultural economy robust.

One industrial area in which France excels is the aerostat. The pioneering work on lighter-than-air travel began in France and, in spite of Britain and Prussia's drive to build fleets of aerostats, Toulouse maintains the reputation of building the fastest, most efficient and comfortable aerostats in Europe and possibly the world. A handful of Toulouse engineers have been invited to Lisbon to work on Portugal's 'Twin Crowns' project.

Much of France's recent industrial growth can be attributed to the National Workshops begun under Louis Blanc during the Revolution of 1848. Blanc was a well-known socialist who designed the workshops to train workers while giving them jobs to improve France's infrastructure. Unfortunately, many workers have flocked to Paris to discover that there simply aren't enough government jobs and the workshops aren't helping them find employment elsewhere. Also, the

workshops are paid for by property taxes and many of the wealthy landowners have moved away, leaving the land in control of the government (which can't tax itself). This is fuelling new radical movements that want to force the government to find them work.

France is notable for being the only major Western European nation that lacks accredited thaumaturgical schools. This is a result of the first French Revolution, when the Université de Paris was abolished and the Université de France was established in its place. Most thaumaturgical instructors fled the country to teach elsewhere. Today, most French thaumaturses receive their degrees at the University of Vienna.

## The Beasts of Gévaudan

Gévaudan, renamed Lozère after the French Revolution, is a mountainous area of south central France. For centuries the villages of Gévaudan were plagued by attacks from strange wolf-like creatures. The French Guild began hunting the creatures in the late 18th century and discovered that the creatures matched the description of the sha, a large creature related to the jackal that once roamed northern Africa. Since then the shas have been discovered in the Alps and the Pyrenees as well. These sha have adapted to the colder environment with thick coats of tawny fur. They are over three feet in height at their shoulders, with the largest specimens approaching four. Sha are notoriously difficult to domesticate and many hunters have lost their lives in the attempt. Still, for those hunters that succeed the sha is a perfect companion against ferocious prey.

### European Sha

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 5      *Health:* 12  
*Armour:* 2      *Damage:* Bite (6)

## Paris

The capital of France, Paris is a melting pot of language, culture and character. For centuries it has been the model of royal life such that French supplanted Latin as the language of aristocrats long ago. It also has a reputation for being elitist and hostile, but lately that hostility has been replaced with self-loathing. For the cynical citizens traversing the dirty streets and passing the crumbling buildings of Paris on a daily basis, the best of the city left for Quebec almost a decade ago.



## The Crumbling City that Never Was

While in many ways a mirror, the Paris of *Victoriana* is charting a slightly different course than that of our world. For one thing, there was no July Revolution in 1830 and France was under the constitutional monarchy of a single ruler, the Eldren Louis VIII, until the 1848 revolution sent him fleeing to Quebec (where he now reigns as king). In our world, Napoleon's nephew came to power and overthrew the republic to become Emperor Napoleon III. In *Victoriana*, the absence of Louis-Napoleon (who lives with his uncle in exile) enabled former War Minister Louis Eugene Cavaignac to be elected President. Another critical difference is that the French constitution was amended to enable Cavaignac to run for a second term, although it looks doubtful that Cavaignac will serve a third term.

Currently, the City of Light looks much the same in *Victoriana* as it did in our world: a dirty and tarnished medieval city with many monuments that trumpet better days. What Paris lacks is hope; while Emperor Napoleon III started many beatification projects in our world to transform the city, President Cavaignac doesn't have the desire nor the purse strings to do so. The rebuilding of the crumbling city is left to bureaucrats and the wealthy bourgeoisie to donate time and money.

Like London, Paris was originally a Trojan city before the Romans came and made it their own. The collapse of the Roman Empire left France open to German invasions and much of the once-vast Roman city was destroyed. When King Clovis united the resultant Frankish kingdoms he made Paris his capital at the dawn of the 5th century. From that point forward Paris has been the most important city in France and a magnet for intellectuals and the elite. Unfortunately, Paris has seen better days. The new Republican government is short on funds and the Crimean War is draining away what little the treasury gathers. Notre Dame Cathedral, the symbol of the Aluminat in France, still looks imposing from a distance but up close it's all peeling, faded paint and crumbling, weathered decoration. Tuileries Palace, once the home to royalty, now sits boarded and unused, having been looted during the Second Revolution.

Also of concern in the Left Bank are the catacombs. In order to solve the problem of cemetery overflow many former mines in the southern part of the city have been converted into a mausoleum. Initially open to visitors, the Mausoleum was closed to the public after a necromancer raised an army of the dead to unsuccessfully overthrow Louis VIII in 1830. The King's quick action limited the damage and since then the mausoleum has only been opened four times a year, and even then only after Parisian authorities first sweep the tunnels for ghouls and necromantic horrors that may be lurking inside.

Still, Paris is a cultural and intellectual centre in spite of its gritty appearance. The right bank of the Seine is swollen



with students and faculty of the University of Paris. The petty bourgeoisie, many of whom were bankrupted by an economic recession in 1846-1847 but did their part to dampen the revolutionary fervour of the proletariat, are using their influence on the government to ensure the stability of their holdings and businesses over true reform. While this has resulted in middle class Parisians being labelled "les fausses bourgeoisie" by the revolutionary press, this impoverished middle class is helping preserve French art, culture, and cuisine under less-than-ideal circumstances.

One place where the glory of the Ancien Regime still flickers is the Paris Guildhouse, which occupies the old Fortress of the Knights Templar. Fastidiously looked after by Guildmaster Anne Marie Louis d'Orleans (the old Eldren prefers her sobriquet of "La Grande Mademoiselle"), the palatial interior is an opulent testament to the past (even at their most fervent the revolutionaries steered clear of the Guild). Given her vast contacts throughout the Continent Mademoiselle turned down Louis XVIII's offer to head the Quebec Guild and instead maintains aristocratic French traditions amongst hermeticists in France. Many visiting hermeticists prefer to be pampered in Guild quarters rather than take their chances in the city. It is worth noting that the French Guild was the first to accept Magnetism as 'true magic' alongside Hermeticism, largely due to the accurate predictions of celebrated Gnome Clairvoyant Michel de Nostredame.

## Bordeaux

Currently the shining jewel of French port cities, Bordeaux has benefited from its wine production and overseas trade. In the 18th century there was a major effort to beautify the city and over 5000 new structures were built and this has made Bordeaux the model for the French government as they look to beautify Paris. The railroad has only increased Bordeaux's importance as it has made it possible to transport goods to and from the rest of France.

Bordeaux has had a troubled history. For 300 years it was ruled by the English, who gave its inhabitants a wide berth and self-determination. When France annexed it in 1453 Bordeaux resisted stricter French rule and, as the majority of its people weren't Roman Aluminat, put Bordeaux against Paris in the Wars of Religion; the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre took place here.

When the French Revolution broke out Bordeaux was relatively stable; its bourgeoisie was used to operating independently of aristocratic rule. Unfortunately, as the revolutionary government fractured in Paris it affected Bordeaux as well and the city fell to chaos during the Reign

of Terror. Later, during the Napoleonic Wars, Bordeaux suffered an English blockade. In spite of all this Bordeaux currently thrives and its beautiful 18th century city centre remains grand. The city is still a lucrative centre of trade, especially with the New World. Currently, wine exports to the Kingdom of Quebec are banned, but this has only created a robust smuggling operation, as many Québécois nobles are thirsty for French wine. New York City has become a popular 'half-way' point for illegal sales to Montreal and Quebec City.

## Calais

Calais has always had ties to Britain; it was held by England for over 100 years until 1558 as an important foothold to the Continent given its proximity to Dover and during the Napoleonic Wars Emperor Napoleon had prepared an invasion of Britain from it. It is a major port and has had a thriving textile industry for centuries. As such, and with continued British corporate investment, it is one of the most industrialised areas of France. Calais' entrance into the industrial revolution as well as its location has made it the natural end point for Brunel's Grand Tunnel, which is expected to open in the summer of 1856 and enable locomotives to travel between Calais and Dover.

## Lyon

Lyon is an old city, having been built by the Romans around 43BCE. As the gateway between north and south in the Rhône Valley, Lyon quickly became a major city in the Roman Empire. By the Middle Ages it had become a prominent centre of the Roman Aluminat faith as well; many cardinals were ordained there and several ecumenical councils were held there as well.

During the Renaissance Lyon had become active in the silk trade and became one of the largest printing press centres in Europe. During the French Revolution, however, much of Lyon was destroyed by the Revolutionary Army when its leaders stopped supporting the Revolution. Emperor Napoleon later rebuilt Lyon and decreed that all the courts of Europe (at least those influenced by France) had to use Lyonnais silk. This caused an economic boom. Unfortunately, and perhaps ironically given Lyon's stance in the French Revolution, this economic boom fostered three major worker uprisings known as the Canut revolts ('canut' being the term for a silk worker). The first of these was in 1831, during an economic collapse of silk demand. The canuts succeeded in getting the local prefect to fix the price of silk, but manufacturers balked and refused to fix the price; they also reduced canut wages. The canuts revolted

and took the town, using the symbolic 'black flag' for the first time. King Louis VIII sent an army to settle things, and further bloodshed was avoided.

With the perceived failure of the first revolt many republican agents came to Lyon and began plotting in secret. Tensions boiled over again in 1834 when the manufacturers, in spite of an economic boom, lowered canut wages. Revolutionaries stormed and plundered the arsenal, taking control of the city until the army restored order. 10,000 revolutionaries were tried en masse in Paris the following year and sentenced to deportation or other strict sentences.

While unsuccessful, this second revolt inspired many workers during the Revolutions of 1848, including an additional one in Lyon. While this one also failed, the three revolts have fostered a growing socialist movement within Lyon and several revolutionary writers have used the city's circumstances for inspiration. Maxim Bolshev has noted that if there was ever a place to establish a worker's paradise, it would be Lyon as fully half of the population are canuts and the silk factories are always running.

## Toulouse

Toulouse is an ancient city that is also ushering in the modern era; it is at the forefront of aerostat and ornithopter design. Toulouse sits above the foothills of the Pyrenees in the narrowest part of France between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. It also sits on the Garonne River, connecting it commercially with Bordeaux. Originally built as a Roman fort, Toulouse has thrived on trade ever since.

Toulouse is also a spiritual and cultural centre, preserving Occitan traditions; the University of Toulouse, established in 1229, includes one of the few European academies to preserve the magical skill of Bardism, which was once widely practised in southern France. It was also created to teach 'proper' Aluminat theology to dissuade heretical movements.

Toulouse is also home to the 'Gargas Spider,' a strange relic uncovered in the Caves of Gargas in 1780. The Gargas Spider is ancient and apparently heavily damaged, but Guild artificers have been able to ascertain that it was once some type of one-manned vehicle, probably antediluvian. The materials and magic used on the relic are still largely unknown, but some of the artificer's discoveries have been used in aeronautics design. Indeed, it is believed that the secrets of this vehicle helped launch the largest aeronautics industry in France. The Gargas Spider itself remains locked in a hangar near the airport.

## The Caves of France

There are many extensive cave networks in southern France, particularly from the foothills of the Pyrenees to the Dordogne River. Throughout history these caves have been used as shelters, mines and even mushroom farms, but in truth they hold far deeper secrets.

The caves have a connection to the antediluvian world, as spelunkers have discovered records of sapient fleeing sinking continents and battles against strange creatures on their walls. Deeper exploration has proven difficult due to the many strange creatures that inhabit the caves; most have an unfortunate appetite for sapient flesh. In addition, some of these caves connect to an ancient underground city in the Pyrenees that is still used by smaller sapient today (it's considered part of Andorra), but most of these passages were blocked centuries ago.

Occasionally, a forgotten monster claws its way to the surface to terrorise local villages, usually resulting in calls to the local Guild for aid. Unfortunately, the caves have also been home to necromancers and other Maleficium practitioners, many of whom hope to awaken buried demons.



## ~ THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION ~

The peoples of the various kingdoms and principalities of Germany are in search of a national identity. The dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire during the Napoleonic Era ended an almost 850-year reign of German emperors over oft-warring states. The new German Confederation is an echo of that arrangement without the figurehead of an imperial ruler.

With the rise of nation-states and the industrial revolution creating more connections amongst them, the various German monarchs are faced with the realisation that they need a stronger union. Currently, two nations vie for that title and each offers a stark choice. Austria is steeped in tradition; its monarch is descended from the last Holy Roman Emperor and represents the Old Guard, an absolutist aristocracy that preserves magic and tradition. Prussia, on the other hand, represents the industrial new order, as factories dot its lands, running day and night to churn out new machines.

### Germany at a Glance

Governmental System: Constitutional monarchy.

Economy: Industrial.

Currency: Mark (2s): 16 schillings (Hamburg);

Gulden (3/8): 60 kreuzer (Bavaria); Thaler (6s): 30 silbergroschen; 360 pfennige (Prussia); Thaler (6s): 36 mariengroschen, 288 pfennig (Hanover).

Religion: Aluminat (Evangelical, Roman).

Languages: German, Flemish, Dutch, Danish, Silesian.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (20%)	LOWER (75%)
Beastfolk (29%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dwarf (19%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (1%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (3%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (1%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (2%)	No	No	Yes
Human (38%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (3%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (3%)	No	Yes	Yes

With France, Great Britain, and Russia occupied with the Crimean War Prussia sees an opportunity to exert its influence over the rest of the confederation. Only Austria gives it pause, but with each passing day Austria looks less

and less able to prevent it. As a strong Central European industrial nation would shift the balance of power in the Concert of Europe many agents, both domestic and foreign, work to ensure that the status quo remains, at least until the Crimean War is over.

Interestingly, while the major heads pursue their agendas for control of Greater Germany, they tend to overlook the growing Pan-Germanism of the lower classes. This growing desire for leaders to do what's best for the German people, rather than petty local concerns, has nurtured the communist movement. The communist call for reform flared in 1848 and, while the German monarchs did their best to quash the movements, it will likely flare again.

The German Confederation is made up of nearly 30 kingdoms, principalities and city-states, but the foremost amongst them are Bavaria, Hanover, Hamburg and Prussia.

### The Trias

With Austria and Prussia constantly vying for control of the German Confederation the rest of the states constantly find themselves having to choose sides. While there are some states that would prefer one or the other to take control there are several that would like a third way, one that removes both Austrian and Prussian influence. King Maximilian II of Bavaria is quietly offering that option.

Dubbed the 'Trias,' the Bavarian plan is for the middle and smaller states of Germany to unite in its own confederation or greater kingdom to counter the influence of Austria and Prussia. While the offer is tempting to many states, currently the risks outweigh the benefits. No state wants to surrender its independence and some, especially those bordering Austrian and Prussian lands, fear annexation. Finally, a German state that didn't include Austria or Prussia would echo the French-dominated Confederation of the Rhine under Emperor Napoleon. As a result, the Bavarian plan has largely fallen on deaf ears.

However, Prussia's recent establishment of the Hexenjäger has caused some concern, especially in the way it was strong-armed through both the Federal Convention and the Consortium of Hermetic Guilds. While ostensibly created to protect the German Confederation from unlicensed magicians and other preternatural threats, the Berlin-based Hexenjäger effectively gives Prussia a spy network throughout Germany. Austria balked at this, but as it had a history of using its Praetorian Guards within the confederation for much the same reasons it had little moral ground on which to stand.

With the on-going Crimean War Austria is increasingly looking east as Prussia greedily eyes Germany. Should Austria get drawn into the war then nothing can stop the Prussian machine from overrunning the Confederation. The German states can't rely on war-weary Britain or France for aid, causing many German royals, especially George V of Hanover who is used to having British support, to take another look at the Bavarian proposal.

### Geography

The German Confederation cuts a large swathe across north-central Europe. Its western edge is lined with heavily forested hills, which that meld into the rolling fertile plains that span the northern part of the land. South Germany is a mountainous region that abuts the Alps. The three major rivers of Germany are the Rhine, which flows from the Swiss Alps through western Germany and spills into the Atlantic through the Netherlands; the Elbe, which flows from Bohemia through the heart of the Confederation and out into the North Sea; and the Danube, which starts in the Black Forest of Baden and winds its way across southern Germany before cutting through Austria and the Danubian Principalities to empty into the Black Sea. Overall Germany has a temperate climate with a full suite of seasons, although it is occasionally subject to long winters or hot, dry summers. From late autumn to early spring the German sky is almost perpetually overcast. Along the North German plain the temperature is a bit cooler than inland due to the Scandinavian air. While the plain is relatively dry the mountains of Southern Germany are very wet, with frequent rain in the summer and snow in the winter.

The Black Forest is particularly noted throughout the German states as a particularly beautiful wooded mountain range and there are several hiking trails throughout its length. Unfortunately, these trails are quite hazardous due to the large packs of unicorns that inhabit the forest. In response, the Schwarzwaldförster (Black Forest Rangers) offer their services as guides and hunters. The Schwarzwaldförster are possibly responsible for the legend of maidens attracting unicorns as they often use 'helpless victims' as unicorn bait.

### Government

On paper, the German Confederation no longer exists; it was replaced by a federal government with a hereditary emperor at its head. Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV's refusal to take the crown, as well as Austria's continued assertion of influence, has preserved the confederate status quo and dissolved most ambitions of a unified Germany – or at least a unified Germany that simply isn't absorbed by Austria or Prussia.

Friedrich Wilhelm IV is a canny leader. He realises that his Boarman heritage causes other leaders, especially in north and Western Europe, to underestimate him and favour Austria's positions. As a result he tended to lean on his Dwarf wife Elisabeth for support, but after her death in an Austrian aerostat accident he's come to rely on his envoy to the Frankfurt Assembly, Otto von Bismarck, to be the face of Prussia. Partly as a reaction to his wife's death, Friedrich has fully embraced the industrial revolution, believing that Austria's reliance on magic is what doomed the aerostat.

## The Great Canal

One of the great Continental achievements of the industrial revolution is the building of the Großer Kanal, or Great Canal, which connects the Rhine (through the River Main tributary) to the Danube in Bavaria. For the first time in history a boat can enter a country in Western Europe, in the Netherlands, and travel through Central and Eastern Europe before coming out the other end in the Black Sea. This has enabled products to flow freely from one end of Europe to the other while the railways try to catch up.

The project was the dream of King Ludwig of Bavaria who commissioned a Guild Artificer, the Gnome Heinrich von Pechmann, to design it in 1822. It took von Pechmann six years to design and ground was broken in 1828. It took the better part of a decade to build the wide canal, which relied heavily on magical mechanics to operate the locks and displace the water, along with the intricate landscape that von Pechmann had designed alongside it. The canal was finally opened to great fanfare in 1844 and has boosted Bavaria's standing amongst the Confederation.

Currently, Maximillian II is using the Great Canal as a symbol for his Trias proposal, noting that both Austria and Prussia rely on it for commercial enterprises and that Bavaria controls the flow between the two ends of Europe. Unfortunately, the importance of the canal is largely symbolic, as both Great Powers of Germany have extensive railways to transport goods to and from ports beyond Bavaria's borders.

Towards that end he has opened the Prussian treasury to transform the state into an industrial giant. While the Prussian people reap the benefits, their spirits have been dampened by Friedrich's rescinding Prussia's more liberal policies.

King Maximilian II of Bavaria took the throne when his father Ludwig abdicated after allowing Bavaria to become a constitutional monarchy. The Dwarf monarch is well-educated and worldly; he sounds professorial in conversation and sponsors both academic and industrial pursuits. He has also given Bavaria a reputation for tolerance and German scholars who were barely tolerated in their old states have flocked to Munich. Maximilian's marriage to Maria, first cousin to Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, has fostered his tolerance for other religious views. In spite of his marriage Maximilian feels little kinship with Prussia and is busy promoting his 'Trias' to keep Bavaria free from Austrian and Prussian influence.

King George V was almost passed over for the Hanoverian throne; his blindness called his fitness into question until the Hanover Guildmaster offered the then-prince magical spectacles that restored most of his vision (the Human prince's blindness made him the butt of crude jokes when he married Marie of Saxe-Altenberg, a Foxwoman, but their marriage remains a strong one). While technically a constitutional monarch George tends to rule as an autocrat and he prefers Austria to Prussia, a position of which he makes no secret. Hanover's familial ties to Great Britain (George is Victoria's cousin) has tempered Prussian ambitions. While receiving the proposal with interest, George has thus far rejected the Trias as he fears that, with Hanover sandwiched between Prussian lands, King Friedrich Wilhelm would use the Trias as justification to annex Hanover. Ironically, now that Great Britain is caught up in the Crimean War, George is weighing whether Hanover needs the Trias to supplement his armies for the 'inevitable' Prussian invasion.

### Society

The German kingdoms and principalities are caught between the romantic notions of the past and the industrial future. Almost all of the states have drafted constitutions yet the kings and princes routinely disregard them. The aristocracy does its best to ignore the growing calls for liberal reforms as it hangs on to the past. Perhaps ironically, in spite of the aristocratic desire for the old ways the German aristocracy is among the most diverse on the Continent, with subspecies normally relegated to the lower class becoming monarchs. Indeed, this is often mistakenly seen by foreigners as a sign that German monarchies are more progressive.

In Prussia, the lesser nobles, or junkers, own vast estates and control much of the government and the military. Unsurprisingly, they support the monarchy and oppose most liberal proposals. Junkers generally lack actual noble titles but tend to use 'von' or 'zu' before their family names. Junkers are primarily Evangelical Aluminat.

Nestled between the upper and middle class is the bildungsbürgertum . Roughly corresponding to the British gentry (middle class with the Higher Station privilege), the bildungsbürgertum are an elite, educated class of commoners. Unlike the rest of the middle class the bildungsbürgertum put an emphasis on education rather than wealth – the vast majority of German attorneys, bureaucrats, hermeticists, physicians and technologists come from this class. The bildungsbürgertum are often at the forefront of liberal reforms, guiding the middle and lower classes.

Amongst the lower classes the flame of Pan-Germanism has not yet been extinguished. The fact that the Prussian king is seen as 'more German' than the Austrian Emperor encourages the German people to look towards Prussia for unification, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by King Friedrich. As his factories pump out more arms, the King has allowed Prussian agents to funnel them to German revolutionaries in the hopes of toppling governments and giving Prussia a reason to annex their lands.

### Industry

In the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars the major powers of the Concert of Europe preferred north-central Europe to be a collection of loosely organised states to act as a buffer and prevent future wars. It was precisely this arrangement that facilitated the rapid growth of German industry in the 1840s, when the small, isolated states found it useful to connect with each other. With the railways came the sharing of resources and the fruits of industry. Prussia in particular benefited, as it was easily able to ship coal and weapons from its mines and factories in the Rhineland to Berlin and East Prussia

Some of Prussia's biggest industrial assets are its weapons factories in Essen. Chief among these is the Krupp Cast Steel Works, which is currently producing battlefield marvels made of steel. Two of its most interesting innovations are the Black Widow, a six-legged vehicle with a mounted cannon, and the Goliath, a 20-foot-tall lion-headed automaton. While the King insists that Alfred Krupp keep such designs within the kingdom, Krupp's cannons are sold throughout the Continent.



Spurred on by worries that the Crimean War could cause unrest through the Confederation, several German companies are cranking out firearms. The Royal Württemberg Rifle Factory hastened production of their new Vereinsgewehr percussion rifle to market to compete with the Bavarian Jäger rifle and the Dreyse needle gun. The Royal Württemberg

Rifle Factory also produces the Treeby chain gun, a 14-shot rifle contracted from a British inventor.

Germany has also become a banking giant. With the crisscrossing of resources within Germany and throughout the Continent, banks thrived lending money and converting

## German Engineering

Following Britain and Prussia's lead, the Confederation is growing into a highly industrialised region. Here are a few of the more well-known products coming out of German factories.

### JÄGER RIFLE

This muzzle-loading weapon is ubiquitous amongst German military forces and often has a sword bayonet attached. One curious feature is that the muzzle-loading rod is kept in the bayonet sheath, rather than carried on the rifle itself.

### TREEBY CHAIN GUN

This weapon is unique in that each chamber attached to a belt that loops below the barrel. In spite of the obvious advantage of having 14 shots before reloading, the belt must be rotated and locked manually; this increases the time between shots. On a Foul Failure, the shooter forgets to lock the barrel and the bullet explodes inside the gun, destroying it and causing 5D to the shooter.

### VEREINSGEWHR PERCUSSION RIFLE

This rifle is adapted for cavalry use, hence its shorter range. This is somewhat made up for by its increased firepower.

### WITGEN ELDRITCH TURRET REVOLVER

A Prussian adaptation of an American eldritch pistol, the turret revolver holds a five-chambered wheel that automatically rotates with each shot. While the turret revolver, unlike its pepperbox cousin, is incapable of volley fire, it's valued amongst hermeticists for its light weight, smaller size and overall elegance. A turret revolver can be loaded with Aetheric Bludgeons or Aetheric Bolts.

### BLACK WIDOW

This fearsome vehicle looks like a giant six-legged spider. The weapon mount is actually within a turret on the underside of the carriage; crewmen enter from the top.

Handling: 0, Movement: 25mph, Scale: Large, Health: 20, Armour: 6, Crew: 4, Passengers: 0, Range: 30 minutes, Traits: Noisy (+1 black die on Stealth rolls), Armament: Cannon (13D, area effect, ROF 1/3)

### GOLIATH AUTOMATON

Essentially a giant-sized automaton in the shape of a lion-man, the Goliath is made even more fearsome by the Gatling gun mounted in one arm. The other hand carries a large sword-shaped club (more for bashing than slicing) that is sometimes made even more menacing by running aetheric or electrical charges through it. Fortunately the Goliath's prohibitive cost prevents most armies from fielding more than a handful of these on the battlefield.

*Physical:* 4      *Initiative:* 1  
*Mental:* 2      *Health:* 30  
*Social:* 9\*      *Quintessence:* 0  
*Armour Value:* 6

*Special Traits:* None

*Complications:* None

*Damage:* Punch (14), Club (20), Gatling Gun (15)

\*Intimidation rolls only, otherwise Social is 0.

FIREARM	SKILL REQUIRED	DAMAGE DICE	ROF	SHOTS	RELOAD	RANGE	SPECIAL ATTACKS	COST
Witgen Eldritch Turret Revolver	Firearms	8	2	7	5	20 yds	n/a	£70
Jäger Rifle	Firearms	11	1	1	5	250 yds	n/a	£4
Treeby Chain Gun	Firearms	12	1/2	14	14	250 yds	n/a	£6
Vereinsgewehr Percussion Rifle	Firearms	12	1	1	5	175 yds	n/a	£34



currency. Prussia established a customs union, the Zollverein, which the majority of German states, excluding Austria, have joined; Hanover was a notable holdout until 1851. One notable feature of the Zollverein is the permanent fixing of exchange rates amongst the various currencies of the German states, making it easier for members of different states to do business with each other.

## Berlin

Capital of Prussia, Berlin is a growing industrial centre of steam and steel. It is the major railway hub for Prussia and Northern Europe in general. The Norse goddess Eir stands atop a chariot above the Brandenburg Gate, symbolising Order (through peace and the resultant prosperity), and everything about the growing city seems to embrace it.

Factories can be found all throughout the city, some never closing as gas and electric lights enable labourers to work through the night. Technologists peddle wares to the growing middle class as well as the old nobility, as magic is increasingly seen as 'Austrian obsolescence.'

In spite of the emphasis on Order and industry, the Berlin Guild is fairly robust. Friedrich Wilhelm University produces some of the best artificers in Europe (Great Canal builder Heinrich von Pechmann and British engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel were educated there) and those that remain in Berlin quickly become part of the many industrialisation projects around the kingdom. The Berlin Guild is also a prime recruiting ground for the Hexenjäger, leading many to wonder whether the Guild controls the Hexenjäger or vice versa.

## The Hexenjäger

The Hexenjäger (witch hunters) were created by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in order to protect the kingdom from petty conjurers, Maleficium users, and other preternatural threats. The Hexenjäger is a military order but each member is subject to Guild approval before joining. While the order is technically limited to Prussian lands, the King has interpreted the German Confederation's constitution as enabling the Hexenjäger to operate anywhere within its borders (although they usually steer clear of Austrian-held lands). Hexenjäger have the ability to deputise locals and to receive aid from other military units, making them a dangerous force to contend with.

For more information on the Hexenjäger, see *Faces in the Smoke Volume One – The Secret Masters* (although note that, in the current edition, the group was actually formed under Friedrich Wilhelm IV rather than Wilhelm I).

### Goatman Witch Hunter

*Physical:* 6     *Initiative:* 5

*Mental:* 6     *Health:* 10

*Social:* 6     *Quintessence:* 18

*Armour Value:* 5 (lined soldier's coat)

*Special Traits:* Order I, Demonology (*Protected Domain*),

Necromancy (*Rest*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*),

*Ectoplasmic Bonds*, *Invisibility*, *Spyglass Eyes*, *Steely Skin*

*Complications:* Zealot

*Damage:* Punch (4), Eldritch Turret Revolver (8), Sabre (10)

## Frankfurt am Main

Centrally located amongst the German states, Frankfurt am Main, or simply Frankfurt, is the capital of the German Confederation and host to the Frankfurt National Assembly. Given its access to the Rhine via the River Main and its central location, Frankfurt has always been a hub of German – and European – trade. The building of railways has only increased its importance, connecting it not only with Berlin and Vienna but also Brussels and Paris.

Frankfurt is a free city, making it a state in its own right. Delegations from every German state have homes in Frankfurt and their desires for the comforts of home have spawned many new businesses that cater to regional tastes. As a result the city is extremely cosmopolitan, drawing the best in coffee houses, operas, restaurants and theatres. Its markets and stores are stocked with goods from all around Germany and Western Europe. There's also been a corresponding increase in vice and crime; necromantic horrors hide in the shadows of numerous alleys to prey on the unwary.

One of the poorest parts of Frankfurt is the Yehudengasse ('Yehudi Alley'), a curved street that once sat just outside

the medieval city walls. For over three centuries, Yehudi residents were limited to settling here and by the dawn of the 19th century it was one of the densest populations in Europe, with thousands of Yehudis crammed into small flats in crowded buildings. During Napoleon's control, restrictions on the Yehudi were lifted and although the Frankfurt government soon rolled back the reforms, they didn't require the Yehudi to move back in. Consequently, most Yehudi abandoned the Yehudengasse, leaving it to devolve into the poorest rookery in the city. 'The Alley' shares a connection to the Labyrinth and hosts one of the largest 'goblin markets' in Europe. It is said that if one braves the Alley looking for something on the night of a full moon then an imp will appear and provide it, so long as the buyer is willing to pay the unusual price.

## Hamburg

A city-state, Hamburg's position as a port on the Elbe is making it one of the fastest growing cities on the Continent. It is the largest transatlantic port in Europe and more travellers to the New World embark from Hamburg than from anywhere else. As a result the port forms the heart of

## Yehudi Schism

For centuries, the Bene David (Sons of David) have been spread throughout Europe in isolated communities. Without a central authority and risking persecution wherever they went, the one thing that tied the various Bene David communities together was the concept of Yehudiel, or 'All is One' in rabbinical parlance. Every community attempted to practice their faith as their ancestors had in the Levant, using the same holy texts, prayers, and traditions. In this way they could share kinship with far-flung communities and easily accommodate Yehudi travellers. While there were some regional deviations in worship, for the most part the Bene David have kept the major tenets of their religion uniform.

This concept of Yehudiel was challenged in Berlin by Dr Abraham Geiger, a Bene David hermeticist who travelled around the synagogues of the German Confederation and noted that slavish dedication to Order, as he believed 'Yehudiel' represented, was largely replacing mystical thought and the desire to become close to the Divine. He noted that Yehudis with thaumaturgical talent tended to study in rabbinical schools rather than the Consortium-sponsored universities and only practised magic on a very limited basis. Dr Geiger soon came to the conclusion that such hermeticists were simply incapable of performing more magic as their devotion to Order inhibited them.

Dr Geiger met with other like-minded rabbis and together they sought to reform the Bene David, stressing one's personal relationship to the Heavenly Host through the aether and abandoning the religious dogma that had guided them for centuries. Needless to say this did not go over well with many congregations; rabbis critical of Geiger's new 'reformed' Yehudism worked against the establishment of 'temples' (Geiger's preferred the term to 'synagogue') in German cities, some of them encouraged to do so by the Ophanim.

Nevertheless, Reflective Yehudism's message of assimilation into local culture while remaining spiritually pure is proving very popular. Unfortunately, the promise of assimilation is acceptance, and thus far this has not happened. At best, many German states have lifted the most onerous restrictions on Yehudis but have not granted them full rights. Nevertheless Yehudi culture is flowering in the German states thanks to Reflective Yehudism and most of the university thaumaturgical doctorates awarded to Yehudi students over the last few years have been from Reflective congregations.



the city and many of its warehouses are stocked with goods from all over the world; several canals connect the Alster and Elbe rivers as well as provide water access to the port; Hamburg actually has more bridges and canals than Venice. Hamburg's financial strength is renowned throughout the confederation and is home to the oldest stock exchange in Germany. The Hamburg mark is the standard by which all German currencies are compared.

Unfortunately, one of the events that has 'helped' the reconstruction along was a great fire that ravaged the city in 1842. Believed to be started during a conflict between a demonologist and the Hexenjäger (who did not have permission to act within the city), the resulting destruction has driven a wedge between Hanover and Prussia. King Maximilian II of Bavaria has been quick to use this to lure the city's rulers into joining the Trias. Ironically, while the rebuilding of Hamburg is transforming it into an industrial centre that mimics Berlin, the Great Fire and Prussian ambition has kept the city-state from allying too closely with it.

## Munich

The capital of Bavaria, Munich is a city with a very rural character and, as with the kingdom to which it belongs, seems a very different and distinct place than the rest of the Confederation. Part of this is because, due to its location near the Alps, Munich has the highest concentration of Dwarfs, Gnomes, Huldufolk, and Orcs amongst the German states, and it is due to this and King Maximilian's enlightened rule that Munich has a reputation for tolerance. This has led to many controversial scholars flocking to Munich and enhancing the prestigious reputation of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, which boasts the most non-Aluminat professors of any university in Europe.

A growing city, Munich boasts many new buildings, especially along the Ludwigstraße, or Royal Avenue, which was built in the 1810s and 20s. Most of the impressive buildings were influenced by Italian architecture, especially the renaissance and Romanesque styles, including the Bavarian State Library, the Munich Guildhouse, St Ludwig University Church and the university buildings. Munich is also at the forefront of autogyro and ornithopter design and much of its aerodrome is dedicated to the small aircraft.



## ~ THE KINGDOM OF GREECE ~

While perhaps the oldest civilisation in Europe, the Kingdom of Greece is ironically one of its youngest nations, having only toppled Ottoman rule in 1832. It also has territorial ambitions, as it wishes to claim the entirety of the southern coast of the Balkan Peninsula as well as Crete and Rhodes, all of which are still under Ottoman rule (see The Great Idea sidebar). This threat, combined with the Crimean War, has resulted in the British increasing their presence on the Ionian Islands (which are also coveted by Greece).

The Allies in the Crimea War have reason to worry. Both Greece and Russia share the Orthodox Aluminat rites and these traditional ties are still being used to influence Greece. If Russia can draw Greece into the war then critical resources will have to be devoted to protecting Ottoman interests in Constantinople and perhaps close the strait to British and French vessels. Britain has already made a preemptive move by blocking the Athenian port, a move that has agitated many Greeks.

### Greece at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolute Monarchy.

Economy: Agrarian.

Currency: Drachma (1s): 100 lepta.

Religion: Aluminat (Orthodox, Roman), Followers of the Word, Sons of David.

Languages: Greek, Albanian, Romani.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (10%)	LOWER (85%)
Beastfolk (20%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (7%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Gnome (5%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (7%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (30%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karakon (10%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (5%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (10%)	No	Yes	Yes

While King Otto is still reluctant to side with Russia (he is smart enough to know that the Allies, on the brink of collapse in the Crimea, would relish the opportunity to 'win' in Greece), he is secretly negotiating with Austria to support the latter's efforts to push the Ottomans out of the

Balkans. Otto hopes the Allies collapse from war fatigue soon and that Russia supports their efforts in carving up the peninsula.

### Geography

While Greece has historically included most of the southern Balkan peninsula, the official borders of the Kingdom of Greece are largely confined to the region beneath Thessaly, including the Peloponnese peninsula. This peninsula is little more than a giant mountain with 'fingers' extending out into the sea - there is little fertile farmland and communities tend to be isolated from each other, accessible only by boat or mountainous roads.

The landscape is, however, dotted with ancient ruins, some denoting ancient cities that still exist, while others mark cities or temples long forgotten. Occasionally a Greek shepherd stumbles upon a hidden chamber that still contains ancient relics, but most such treasure troves have been pillaged over the years.

### Government

The Kingdom of Greece is ruled by the Dwarf King Otto, brother to the Bavarian King. While elected by the Greek people to be their king, Otto rules as an absolute monarch. This initially caused much friction as Otto put most of his decisions in the hands of three Bavarian advisors, but his inclusion of Lord Byron into his circle has helped mollify opposition. At Lord Byron's suggestion Otto has adopted the Orthodox sect of the Aluminat and his marriage to the beautiful Human Amalia of Oldenburg has garnered him approval in the eyes of his subjects.

In response to vocal opposition to his absolutist rule Otto has allowed the creation of a unicameral Senate in 1844,

again aided by Lord Byron's appeal to national interests. This parliament is effectively an advisory committee although Otto has granted it the authority to run many day to day operations.

### Society

Greece is a poor nation; its lack of fertile farmland has enabled what little there is to be controlled by a few wealthy landowners; most Greeks eke out a living shepherding or fishing. The shipping industry and the blue diamond boom have helped foster a nascent middle class, but the outbreak of war and the resulting British blockade has stalled its growth.

King Otto has attempted to bring the pomp and circumstance of Bavarian court life to his Athenian palace, but his roving eye and multiple affairs have damaged his reputation as a good monarch, especially since he has most recently fallen for Jane Digby, an Eldren adventuress who had previously had an affair with his father. Queen Amalia tolerates his unfaithfulness and there are rumours that she has caught the eye of Lord Byron.

The klephtes form a distinctive subset of the lower class. Brigands during Ottoman rule, klephtes formed the backbone of the revolutionary army and many now congregate in the mountains along Greece's northern border to harass and raid Ottoman convoys and towns. The Ottomans have their own klephtes, or *armatoloi*, which are Greek brigands that have been persuaded to fight for the Ottoman cause. As a result the border is the scene of several brushfire wars. Compounding problems is that some klephtes continue to pillage from Greek communities, conveniently laying the blame on their Ottoman counterparts.

## The Great Idea

Ever since Greece won its independence from the Ottoman Empire it has dreamed of reuniting all of the traditionally Greek lands under a new Byzantine Empire. All of these lands, Macedonia and Thrace to the north, the western Turkish coast to the east, and Crete and Rhodes to the south, currently belong to the Ottoman Empire. Because of this the Greek Government sees an opportunity in the Crimean War. Russia may be autocratic but it professes the same Orthodox variation of the Aluminat (although the Tsarina puts her own spin on it) and Britain has infuriated Greece by blocking the port of Piraeus to keep the Greeks out of the war.

With the war going badly for the allies, however, King Otto is emboldened. He's tasked Lord Byron with creating new poems and slogans in support of Greek Unification while urging the British to respect Greek sovereignty. In addition, the Greek Government is in secret negotiations with the Austrian Empire to split the Balkans while leaving Greece in full control of the Bosphorus strait. Only Austria's fear of an emboldened Prussia joining the Allies and invading has thus far precluded any action.

### The Harpies

In ancient Greece there was a subspecies of sapient known as the Harpy, which was a form of Beastfolk that combined avian traits with a humanoid form. Harpies were amongst the upper classes in Eastern Mediterranean societies; in Egypt some Harpies, known there as Harus, even became pharaohs. The Harpies became legendary for their frenetic aerial fighting tactics that often baffled their enemies.

Harpies were especially prevalent in Crete until that civilisation fell, seemingly overnight. Surviving Harpies escaped to the Ionian Islands where they remained isolated and mistrusted by the other sapients (what happened in Ancient Crete is unknown but the Harpies were clearly blamed for something horrible). Today, a small colony of Harpies exists on the two small islands of the Strofades, rarely venturing out. Due to increased tolerance, many Harpies have become Followers of the Word and only begrudgingly supported Greek independence. They largely remain autonomous, and due to this the British have enabled them to remain part of Greece when they took over the Ionian Islands.

### Industry

Much of Greek industry is agricultural, although poor farming conditions make it a harsh living. Fishing and shipbuilding are prominent, although Greece still relies on foreign loans to modernise its cities. The telegraph is helping to connect the various communities of Greece.

Under advisement from the Senate King Otto is allowing it to redistribute Ottoman estates to war veterans and other

poor Greeks. While most of the fertile lands are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, these parcels are helping to give the Greek people a sense of autonomy and at least the illusion of equality, as many Greeks were servants to Ottomans prior to the revolution.

### Athens

Known as the birthplace of democracy, Athens is an ancient city that has been continuously occupied for over three millennia. It is still dominated by its Acropolis, upon which the Parthenon, a temple dedicated to Athena, still stands. Over the last few centuries Athens was a modestly-sized town, but when it was chosen to be the new capital of Greece after the revolution, King Otto had the royal palace built here and greatly expanded the city.

Athens is also the seat of the Greek Senate. Some say that Athens' soil is steeped with democracy and its people forced King Otto to abandon absolutist rule for a constitutional monarchy in 1843. In truth, it likely had more to do with Otto surrounding himself with Bavarian advisors and soldiers, making the Greeks feel as if they'd traded one foreign government for another.

Athens is a landlocked city and reliant on the port at Piraeus for shipping. As with Athens, this formerly small village is seeing rapid expansion and industrialisation as it transforms into the major port in Greece. Only 5 miles south from the capital, Piraeus is currently occupied by the British navy as a warning to Greece to leave the Ottoman Empire alone during the war.

## Blue Heart Diamonds

A favourite jewel of the aristocracy and hermeticists, blue heart diamonds are found almost exclusively in the South Aegean Sea. They are violet diamonds that, when charged with quintessence, create a light blue display of flickering aether within the centre. They are believed to have been belched from the earth by the Thera volcano in 1630 BCE and most blue heart diamonds are found by fishermen who inadvertently scoop them up from the sea floor as they cast their nets. There have been attempts at mining the now-underwater volcano caldera at Santorini, but actually finding a blue heart diamond is rare; it appears they were brought forth from deep within the earth.

Blue heart diamonds are very rare; a single carat typically cost about £400 prior to 1855. In 1855 a 'mother lode' was discovered just off the coast of Peloponnesus. The price soon dropped to about £20 per carat but within months the mother lode was deemed spent and the price has steadily risen to about £150.

1 quintessence point per day is necessary to keep the blue flame alive within the jewel; those who own the jewel to 'keep up appearances' generally only invest the quintessence before a social occasion. Blue heart diamonds make excellent heartstones; they cut ritual times to a third and can hold up to 18 quintessence points. It's rumoured that blue heart diamonds of five carats or more can hold exponentially more quintessence, but such jewels are extremely rare.



## Delphi

Considering that it's been destroyed for over fourteen centuries, Delphi has played a big role in Greek independence. The Temple of Apollo at Delphi was a very powerful node of aetheric energy. Not only did it provide sorcerers with an almost inexhaustible supply of quintessence, but it also enabled the Pythia, a high priestess, to speak with the archons directly. While the temple and city were destroyed around 400CE, the Filiki Eteria rediscovered the node prior to the Greek Revolution.

While the raw power of the node had faded over time, it still enabled a new Pythia to make contact with karabim that were once aspects of the Classical pantheon. These archons provided her with support that helped the Filiki Eteria guide the Greek Revolution. As the new Pythia contacted these archons using old and forgotten rites, some wonder whether these karabim are indeed acting in the name of the Heavenly Host or their own interests. A few whisper that they are actually Pale Archons seeking to cause discord in the region.

## Mount Olympus

While Mount Olympus sits comfortably within Ottoman borders it is still a symbol of Greek unity. The Greeks believe that the Old Gods that brought them to this land watched over them from its summit and thus Mount Olympus is a symbolic goal of the 'Great Idea.' Many believe that the Old Gods brought the treasures of Atlantis and other ancient lands with them, determining to share them with the Greeks only when they were ready. As a result many Greek revolutionaries believe that some such treasures are still buried within Mount Olympus and organise secret missions to explore it. Their hope is that an ancient weapon

may be found that can push the Turks out of Europe forever - some fear that the revolutionaries, and all Greeks, may regret whatever they awaken.

## ~ THE ITALIAN STATES ~

A land united by history and culture, yet divided by petty rulers, Italy, or perhaps more importantly the Roman Empire, serves as an ideal for both the Aluminat and European monarchs to follow. Indeed the German word for 'emperor,' which is used by the Austrian Emperor and a theoretical German Emperor, is 'kaiser,' a corruption of 'Caesar' (as is the Russian title of 'Tsar' or 'Tsarina'). After the fall of the Roman Empire there have been several attempts to continue or rebuild it, the last such attempt being the loosely organised 'Holy Roman Empire' that was largely centred on the German states. In spite of this shared heritage and romantic notions of unity, modern Italy is still a long way from being anything other than the boot-shaped landmass jutting out into the Mediterranean Sea. Instead, it is a collection of kingdoms, duchies and communes: each with their own language, and all fiercely proud and distrustful of one another. And with good reason, given that they've all spent centuries attempting to annex and plunder their neighbours. On top of this 'local' enmity, the three grand empires of Austria, France and Spain have continually vied for supremacy, often leaving the Italian countryside resembling little more than a field in which a giant and bloody tug of war has taken place. It is little wonder, then, that the Italian peasants are not particularly enthusiastic regarding unification; after all, one taskmaster is pretty much the same as any other when you're already under the yoke.

## Italy at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy (Modena, Two Sicilies), Constitutional Monarchy (Parma, Sardinia, Tuscany), Theocracy (Aluminat States).  
 Economy: Agrarian (budding Industry in the Two Sicilies).  
 Currency: Lira (1s): 100 centesimi (Sardinia); Roman scudo (5s): 100 baiocchi; 500 quattrini (Aluminat States); Florin (1/6): 2.5 paolo; 100 quattrini (Tuscany); Piastra (6s): 240 tomesels (Two Sicilies).  
 Religion: Aluminat (Roman).  
 Languages: Italian.

	UPPER (10%)	MIDDLE (10%)	LOWER (80%)*
Beastfolk (20%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (5%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (15%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gnome (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Huldufolk (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (35%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (5%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (4%)	No	No	Yes

### Geography

Geographically speaking, the mainland is split in two by the peaks of the Apennine Mountains, running down the spine of the country from the Alps in the north to the tip of Italy's toe in the Mediterranean Sea, separating east from west. Most of the mainland is, therefore, a series of thin coastal plains backed by steep hills and mountains, with the exception of the broad and fertile plain in the very north of the country. What plains there are in the south tend to be avoided, being fetid malarial swamps; those in the north have long been tamed by industry and agriculture. For all practical purposes, however, there are four 'Italian' regions: the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the south, the Aluminat States in the centre, the Kingdom of Sardinia in the north-west, and the Austrian controlled territories of Lombardy and Venice in the north-east (as well as their 'protective' presence in Tuscany). The latter territories are covered under the Austrian Empire entry on page 22.

### Government

There is no central government in Italy nor is there anything resembling a confederation. Austria has control of Northern Italy, troops in Tuscany, and great influence over the Aluminat States, checked somewhat by the French

garrison in Rome and the technological innovations of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The monarch with the most grandiose ambition for Italian unification is Eldren King Victor Emmanuel II of Sardinia along with his Human Prime Minister, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour. Sardinia joined the Crimean War in the hopes of winning British and French support for his expansion, but the poor performance of the Allies has only weakened his position and he fears an emboldened Austrian Empire may march west.

Victor Emmanuel currently has eyes on Parma, which is ably ruled by Empress Josephine (the title is one of respect; she is for all practical purposes a Duchess). Josephine, who runs her Duchy as if it were a French imperial court and who has secured visits from Napoleon's children, politely accepts his courtship in the hopes of securing freedom for Napoleon, perhaps to fight in the Crimean War. She continues to refuse his marriage offer, though, out of fear of Austria.

Duke Francis V rules Modena and Reggio. He is married to Princess Adelgunede of Bavaria (both are Dwarfs), making him brother-in-law to King Maximilian II of Bavaria and King Otto of Greece. He is also part of the Austrian aristocracy and when rebellion came in 1848 it was Austrian troops that restored him to power. In spite of his Austrian ties Francis is a popular ruler, as his rulings are just and he often uses his skills as a surgeon (thaumaturgical medical doctor) to aid the poor. Due to his popularity it is generally believed that revolutionary agitation comes from Sardinian agents rather than his own subjects.

The Aluminat States that cover much of central Italy are really a single entity, as the Conclave tends to work in concert. The pious but shrewd Cardinal Governor Luna Savelli, who rules from Castle Gandolfo, is considered the first among equals when it comes to Aluminat State policy. Cardinal Savelli's prominence, both as a powerful hermeticist and a (Human) woman, is a bit disconcerting to the rest of the Conclave and her considerable military and political skills are often downplayed. Nowhere is this more evident than the 1848 revolution, when French forces were given full credit for rebuffing Garibaldi's republican army. Garibaldi himself often remarks that "if not for that cunning, flame-haired Cardinal the Republic of Italy would still be standing!"

Southern Italy is ruled with an iron fist. King Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies has used secrets mined from Pompeii and Stromboli to enhance his army and navy. Currently, Ferdinand doesn't seem to have imperial ambitions, but he certainly sees Sardinia as a threat to his power.

## The Carbonari

The Carbonari is a secret society, or more accurately a loose association of secret societies, that wishes to end tyranny in the Italian States. The name Carbonari means 'charcoal-burners' in reference to the secret nightly meetings they hold. The Carbonari lack a definitive mission statement; each group has its own agenda to press for liberal reforms and how best to attain them. One thing that unites the groups is the tricolour flag of blue, red, and black.

The Carbonari first became active during the Napoleonic Wars, acting against the French-supported rulers of various regimes. With the French gone the Carbonari have turned their attention to Austria in the north and Sicily in the south. They instigated rebellions in Sardinia and Sicily in 1820, only to be crushed by Austrian troops that had the support of Rome. Rebellions in the Aluminat States a decade later also ended in failure.

While the two events ended with the capture and execution of several Carbonari leaders, other cells survived and are biding their time. In a curious move, many such Carbonari actually support the idea of a united Italy under a constitutional monarchy free of Aluminat influence.

### Society

It is difficult to treat Italian society in general terms, as it is a loose collection of unaffiliated states, but broadly speaking they are all monarchies with an aristocratic upper class and commoners that work the land. In addition the major cities have a strong middle class forged by centuries of trade throughout the world. Given their connections to other European nobility, especially France and the German states, Italian nobility follows the continental model where entire families are noble.

In the Aluminat States heads of prominent families could be raised to the position of cardinal or, more commonly, cardinal-in-faith. A cardinal-in-faith has the status of a Cardinal and is not part of the Conclave; as this position is usually given to family members of cardinals, the unofficial term 'cardinal-nephew' is often used to describe them ('cardinal-nephew' is the origin of the word 'nepotism,' for the obvious implications). The Famiglie Anziane, or 'Old Families,' is an association of Sicilian merchant families that was formed in the early 17th century to protect their

cargoes from piracy. While this need has waned by the 19th century, the old associations remain and the various families continue to help and support each other. King Ferdinand's iron-fisted rule has only stoked the need for 'unofficial protection' and the Famiglie Anziane can offer it, for a price.

## The Many Sects of the Aluminat

Unlike the various Christian faiths in the Europe of our world, the Aluminat of *Victoriana* has held together as an umbrella faith since the Council of Geneva. The communal nature of Aluminat leadership has caused many differences to develop within even a single sect even as all sects agree on basic principles.

There are five major sects of the Aluminat. The Roman Aluminat, which is conducted in Latin, is the oldest and most widespread sect in Europe. The Orthodox Aluminat is primarily confined to Eastern Europe, especially in Greece and Russia. The Reformed Aluminat is strong in France and Scotland while the Evangelical Aluminat is widespread in the German and Austrian states. The Anglican Aluminat is England's state religion.

Due to regional variations subsets of sects often refer to themselves by their nation or region rather than the greater sect as a whole. Thus a Scot may consider herself a member of the 'Scottish Aluminat' rather than a Reformed Aluminat, while a Russian professes his faith in the 'Russian Aluminat' rather than the Orthodox Aluminat. For practical purposes the terms for major sects are used in the information blocks below each country name.

In addition to the five sects, there are a number of Aluminat-derived faiths that have either broken away or are considered heretical as they wish to 'purify' the Aluminat. These faiths are collectively known as Evangelical Puritanism (not to be confused with the Evangelical Aluminat). While the inclusive nature of the Aluminat tends to reabsorb these offshoots over time, new Evangelical Puritan sects form as quickly as old ones are absorbed.

### Industry

The Italian States have a pastoral character as the vast majority of Italians are farmers and fishermen. The picturesque countryside is broken up by beautiful cities

with grand buildings designed and built by the artisans that make up much of the middle class. Indeed, Italian architecture is so well-valued in the rest of Europe that many successful Italian artisans go abroad to seek work.

Italians are a devout people and most see magic at best as a necessary evil. Thus, there are few Guildhouses in the Italian States and most of these are in major cities. The Aluminat States lack Guildhouses, as all hermeticists are expected to serve the Church and thus their meeting places are attached to local cathedrals.

One region of Italy that is seeing an industrial boom is the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, especially in the cities of Naples and Palermo, the greatest symbol of which is the incomplete bridge that will one day connect Sicily to the mainland. Unfortunately, the growth of industry has done little to create a middle class, as the government-owned factories offer long hours and little pay. It is perhaps telling that the Kingdom's industrial machines aren't the product of innovation but rather artificer insight into incomplete, ancient engines recovered from Vulcan's Forge.

## Bologna

Huddled at the foot of the Apennine Mountains where the Reno and Saverna river valleys meet, the many-towered city of Bologna is an important crossroads in Italy. Part of the Aluminat States, it was originally given to the Conclave by the Emperor Charlemagne in the 8th century. Its summers can be humid, and it often suffers from the cruel Bora winds which sweep down from Siberia in the winter. Since medieval times it has been a significant textile centre, heavily involved in both the wool and silk trade. There are good road connections to Rome and Padua, its railway lines still under construction.

Even more progressive than its northern neighbour Padua, women in the city are accorded equal status with men, a situation brought about through necessity after the horrors of the Thirty Years War. Once a very powerful commune of hereditary magicians, the city's male population was devastated by the bitter conflict; so, too, was its architecture. Beginning in the Middle Ages, each sorcerous family built its own tower for protection, and to house their collections of alchemical and magical paraphernalia. At one point there were over 180 towers in the city, but now only 20 remain. Of these, two act as the city's Guildhouse, where what little that could be salvaged from the wreckage is now housed. Known (accurately enough) as 'the Two Towers,' the former homes of the Asinelli (the tallest of the two) and Garisenda families are the symbol of Bologna's vanished might. Their

thick, square, stone bases taper to thinner brick walls and both towers lean alarmingly as a result of the damage they have sustained.

The university's science institute is housed in the Archiginassio Palace. It was here that Luigi Galvani carried out his experiments on animal electricity, which novelist Mary Shelley used as the inspiration for her most famous work. Unfortunately for Galvani, his research caused him to fall foul of both the Aluminat and the Consortium, who rightly feared that he was straying dangerously close to necromancy. Although a statue in his honour was proposed by his rival, Volta, his memory and his work have been greatly suppressed in his home town.

## Florence

Known locally as Firenze, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany lies nestled in the valley of the River Arno. It stands on the Via Cassia, the main road north from Rome, and may easily be reached by train from Pisa and Bologna, and by vettura from Milan (although the direct journey is not an easy one, making it preferable to aim for Bologna in the first instance).

The birthplace of the Renaissance, this former medieval city-state was once the banking capital of Europe, although now it specialises in scientific discovery. Since the radical Aluminat priest Savonarola held the Bonfire of the Vanities in the Piazza della Signoria in 1497 with the express purpose of destroying sorcerous equipment, adjuncts and texts, magic has not been welcomed within its ancient walls, and it is the only major city in Italy that does not have its own Guildhouse. Yet despite its apparent adherence to the Aluminat's concept of Order, neither of its major holy buildings (Il Duomo and the Santa Croce) has ever been completely finished. Indeed, Santa Croce is more notable for the famous scientists and artists interred within its vaults (giving rise to its other name: 'the Temple of the Italian Glories').

The Accademia del Cimento was established in the mid-17th century to attract scientists of all stripes to the city. It was set up by a descendant of the Medici who first encouraged Huldu polymath Leonardo da Vinci to push beyond his purely artistic endeavours. Indeed, the standard laboratory manual of the 18th century was written here, and its museum possesses many an early scientific and engineering marvel, including the mechanical lion built by da Vinci for the King of France. Based on Marzocco, the city's heraldic lion (now residing safely in the Bargello whilst his copy, along with the city's Lion-men militia, stands guard in the Piazza della Signoria), the automaton walks forward a set



number of paces before his chest opens to reveal a cluster of exquisitely wrought il giglio, the city's other heraldic emblem, the three-petalled iris (or lily).

### A Celestial Palindrome

In the floor of the Baptistry in the Piazza del Duomo lies a very unusual marble tombstone, older by far than the surrounding black and white mosaic floor. Whilst legend has it that it was laid by the Strozzi family over 800 years ago, it bears no name. At its centre is a sun, surrounded by an obscure inscription which reads the same backwards as it does forwards: "*en giro torte sol ciclos et rotor igne*." This has been poetically translated as "by my fire, I, the sun, do make the spheres move around as I do move." Surrounding this phrase is an ancient astronomical zodiac. Given that Galileo Galilei spent some time in Florence, there are those who believe his heliocentric view of the universe may have been inspired by this curious object. Despite the many rumours of cosmological treasures hidden in the tomb below, the exact contents remain a mystery, as the Florentine Bishops are, understandably, reluctant to disturb it.



### Naples

On the coast of the Bay of Naples, between the volcanic menace of Mount Vesuvius and the fumarolic Phlegraean Fields (which the Romans believed was the entrance to the Pale), the city is the capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. It was here that King Ferdinand II oversaw the building of Italy's first steamship and railway before branching out into the ornithopter business. But although the immediate area around Naples is highly industrialised, the rest of the southern mainland is stuck firmly in an almost-feudal past.

The original settlement was part of the Greek kingdom of Magna Graecia; the site was chosen and named in memory of the Sirenian Parthenope, whose body washed up on the islet of Megaris. When the time came to expand, the inhabitants built a 'new town' on the shore - Néapolis - which came under the influence of many conquerors over time: Romans, Byzantines, French, Austrians and Spanish, to name but a few. Merfolk are common in the waters of the Bay, although they are much shier than their Venetian cousins.

Naples is a very strange, as well as beautiful, city. Much more superstitious than the north, the whole area is pervaded by a fascination with death. Perhaps this comes from residing in the midst of a highly active volcanic region (the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum lie only a few miles east) or the land's long association with magic and spirits. The Roman Aluminat is nominally the chief faith, although various death cults and highly pagan practices abound, including the blood cult of Saint Janaris.

The local Roman Governor tried to sacrifice Janaris, an early Aluminat bishop, during a ritual at Puteoli's amphitheatre. That having failed, he had the priest beheaded on a hill overlooking the volcanic crater of Solfatara. A witness collected some of Janaris' blood in two glass ampoules; the dried blood contained within is displayed twice a year (April and October) in the Duomo di Santa Sophia Assunta where, after sufficient priestly prayer and chanting by the "Family of Janaris" (a collection of old crones who appear for the ceremony), it liquefies. The Consortium believes this to be an alchemical trick, but have been refused permission to examine the vials' contents.

One of the strangest obsessions, though, is with the Lotto. Here, superstition and greed merge through the medium of the *Smorfia*, a book of dream and symbol interpretations that tells you which numbers to pick for the weekly draw, which takes place with a great deal of ceremony in the Great Hall of Castel Capuano on a Saturday afternoon.



## Vulcan's Forge

'Vulcan's Forge' is the name given to a string of volcanoes stretching from Naples to Sicily through the Mediterranean Sea. The most famous of these volcanoes is Mt Vesuvius, which destroyed Pompeii. Legend also has it that there was once a large Cyclops settlement within Mount Stromboli before the Cyclopes were "driven out beyond the Pillars of Hercules." Aluminat teachings hold that the Cyclopes were servants of the archon Vulcan who refused to accept the teachings of the Eight Voices, but some scholars believe that the settlement was the remnants of an antediluvian civilisation and contained many ancient and powerful machines.

Regardless, the Cyclopes were gone by Year 1 and subsequent delves into the various volcanoes and mountains revealed a network of passages that possibly ran from Naples to Mount Etna in Sicily. Two things hindered further exploration – the first was the fact that these volcanoes were active (as the ruins of Pompeii attest) and secondly one of the last dragons, Ascultone, took residence in Vulcan's Forge. Ascultone terrorised the region for centuries before being slain around 800 (this is more legend than fact and most such tales end with Ascultone being buried in magma).

More recently, explorers from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies have uncovered Cyclopean relics and Neapolitan artificers have been surprised to discover how much they resemble modern technology with only a few aetheric flourishes (indeed, the remains of a railroad have been discovered in the caves, although in such shoddy condition that it would take decades to rebuild even if one could stop the regular magma flows within the tunnels). King Ferdinand II hopes these new technologies will make him a major power in the region and he is almost ready to challenge British dominance of the Mediterranean passage as a show of power.

## Padua

Besides the banks of the Bacchiglione River in the vastness of the Venetian Plain stands Padua. Patavium to the Romans, the city was founded by Prince Antenor after his flight from Troy. Antenor's resting place was discovered in the late 13th century, during the digging of foundations for the Foundling Hospital. Consisting of a cypress-wood coffin inside a lead sarcophagus inside a marble sarcophagus, the casket was gigantic in size. It contained

an enormous skeleton, sword in hand, and an inscription of the prince's name. Despite his obvious size, Paduans do not take kindly to any suggestions that their founder may have been a slow-witted giant (who were once quite common across the northern plains). The sarcophagus can still be viewed, under a small brick portico on the site of the now-demolished church of San Lorenzo.

Padua lies not far to the west of Venice, and can easily be reached from there by train; the line connecting the two was opened in 1845, and was one of the first in Italy. If coming from Pisa, it is best to head back to Florence first before travelling on by vettura, passing through Bologna on the way.

The University of Padua is the second oldest in the country; its palazzo, Il Bò (The Ox), is named after the inn that originally stood on the site. As with many of the northerly cities, Bull-men are a common sight. Another common sight is that of female students and lecturers, far more so than usual, as the first ever doctorate awarded to a woman was given to Helena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia here in 1678. Not only is the university (and Padua) renowned for its enlightened view of female emancipation, it also boasts the oldest anatomy theatre in the world. The celebrated father of anatomical pathology and necromancer hunter extraordinaire, Giovanni Battista Morgagni, carried out his most famous work here last century. His treatise *Morbidus Inlecebras* is still widely regarded as the masterwork on how to prevent oneself from falling prey to the dread Maleficium.

As well as the oldest anatomy theatre, the university is also in possession of the oldest botanical gardens in the world, both of which help to make its medical school justly famous. Although Padua does have a Consortium Guildhouse, it is natural magicians who hold the greatest sway here, working closely with their scientific brethren to develop botanical treatments for a wide variety of ailments.

Another of the university's specialities is clockwork, and it was here that striking clocks were invented. The example in the Piazza dei Signori is a magnificent one, showing not only the time with a 24-hour dial, but also the days of the month, the sun's path across the heavens and the phases of the moon.

## Pisa

Pisa lies along a branch of the Leopolda railway, which runs from Leghorn to Florence. Standing on the Tuscan coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, Pisa was once a bustling port city and one of Italy's four medieval maritime republics before



the River Arno changed course, silting up the harbour and ending the city's prosperity. Indeed, large swathes of the city are in a ruinous state, not helped by the attempted Reformation under Napoleon. Allegedly founded by the Etruscans, even the Romans considered it ancient.

On the northern edge of the Piazza del Duomo, across from the city's rather unfortunate campanile (known more commonly by its soubriquet 'the Leaning Tower'), lies the holy field of the Camposanto, a walled cemetery that also acts as a museum for the city's ancient and plundered relics. Usually kept locked, the key can be obtained from the custodian, who conducts guided tours on application. The venerable paintings and sculptures hidden within speak of a dark past for the land on which the city stands, given that the majority depict the demons and other foul beasts of the Etruscan pantheon. Further evidence can be found in the legends of the local saint, Ranieri, whose chief concern was casting out said demons.

### The Anagtii

One of the Etruscan carvings in the Camposanto shows the capture of a gigantic snake in the woods near Pisa. On either side of the cage are semi-saurian creatures, closely resembling the Apophids of Egypt and the Naga of India. Originally from the Oscan lands of the Marsi, east of Rome, the Anagtii were once common along the Apennine chain. Their continued existence is debatable, but there may still be one or two enclaves in hidden mountain valleys, given the long-lived nature of Reptilefolk. However, the city's last encounter with a truly ancient (and, therefore, massive) Anagtii was in the 13th century, when its escape from captivity and subsequent dispatch further exacerbated the already precarious state of the Leaning Tower. They worship a serpentine archon, Anagtia, after whom they were named.

For more information on Apophids see *STREETS OF SHADOW*, page 140.

There must also have been a great difficulty with necromancy in the region as, during the Third Crusade, the Archbishop of Pisa shipped back over 50 boatloads of soil taken from the site of Justas' execution, using it to form the grounds of the Camposanto. This miraculous earth renders anybody buried in it to dust within 24 hours. The official Aluminat line is that the corpse dust thus produced is both holy and wholly inert, making it useless for any form of necromantic operation. However, the locked status of the

Camposanto and the various protective sigils around the site might suggest otherwise...

### Rome

The Eternal City may not have retained its former imperial glory, but as the seat of the Roman Aluminat it still exerts a great degree of spiritual and temporal power. Built on the banks of the River Tiber at its only natural crossing point, it may be accessed by sea from its port at Civita Vecchia, or by a combination of road and rail from Florence.

The Quirinal Palace, on the Quirinal Hill, is the home of the Conclave. The site was carefully chosen as Quirinus, although a Paynim archon, was viewed as the personification of the Roman people, a mantle the Conclave was keen to assume when they themselves rose to power. It is from here that the Eight Cardinals Vox ('Cardinals Voice') rule Rome and the Aluminat in general.

The Roman Guild is located on the other side of the Tiber, on Mons Vaticanus, where the Guildhouse, library and archive incorporate the tomb of the powerful sorcerer-emperor, Hadrian.

Perhaps the greatest symbol of ancient Rome, the Coliseum was once the centre of its dark, sorcerous practices. Not only did the games feed the Romans' bloodthirsty passions, they also provided the power for their ruler's demoniacal magics, carried out in the name of the war-god, Mars. Once the Aluminat became the Empire's official religion in the early 4th century, the Coliseum was purged with fire by the Conclave, and the gladiatorial games stopped. A century later, it was badly damaged in an earthquake, generally believed to have been caused by a failed attempt to re-enact the Maleficium rituals of the past. Since then, a confraternity of monks has been stationed in the northern third of the arena, charged with maintaining the sanctity of the site.

### Romulus and Remus

Everyone knows the popular version of the myth: the bastard children of Mars, left to die but suckled by a kindly she-wolf, go on to found the most powerful ancient empire on Earth. And, as with every myth, the story contains a grain of truth. The children of two devas, from their mother, Larentia the wolf-goddess, they each received a different gift: Remus was granted that of magic and foresight; his brother, that of lycanthropy in its truest sense. Romulus became a warrior-priest in the service of his father, Mars, whereas Remus chose to follow the path of Minerva, the deva of wisdom and magic. The founding of Rome was not so much a squabble over which hill the city should be built on, but which path

it should follow; Romulus' murder of his brother sealed the fate of the western world for the next thousand years, setting it on a course of bloodshed, tyranny and war.

### Larentians

The descendants of Romulus, these zoanthropes (or Larentians, as they name themselves, in honour of their she-wolf ancestor) are able to control their transformation and cannot transmit their curse through a bite, as it is a purely hereditary state. Rome and the surrounding towns and villages are home to a number of these creatures, who ruthlessly hunt down other forms of zoanthropes, whom they believe taint their divine inheritance. Several prominent Larentians are secretly sponsoring the current excavation of the Lupercal, or 'Wolf's Grotto,' on the Palatine Hill, where legend says that Romulus and Remus were raised. Their exact reason for doing so is, as yet, unclear...

Larentians use the same template as Zoanthropes in the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*. They are considered to have the Shapeshift ability and do not suffer the ill-effects of a full moon. Only the wolf form may be taken. If the Game Master allows an adventurer to be a Larentian then the BP cost is 6. All adventurers must take the Vow: Hunting Zoanthropes. Most Larentians are Italian, but there are exceptions.

### Saint Maxius

The Roman Aluminat has another reason to despise the Coliseum: their most holy saint, Maxius, was sacrificed on the spot to consecrate the ground prior to its construction. A Roman centurion, Maxius faithfully served the Empire until he came to witness the persecution of the early Aluminat church. Inspired by the righteousness of the warrior-rebel Justus' teachings, and now fully aware of his own leaders' corruption, he became one of Rome's first converts. Although he survived Nero's attempt to rid the city of the Aluminat menace with the Great Fire (a strategy that got somewhat out of hand), Emperor Vespasian decided to make an example of him by demonstrating precisely what would happen to any citizen who dared defy the might of Rome.

Those who miss the Rookeries of London would do well to visit the Testaccio, a poor suburb built on Rome's 8th 'hill' (formed in ages past from a gigantic pile of discarded, broken amphorae). It lies along the Tiber, to the south-west of the Aventine Hill. The area is notable for two things: the pyramid of Cestius (the location of Remus' tomb), and its famed (or feared) fortune-tellers.

### The Daughters of Remus

Although masquerading as charlatans, the fortune-tellers of the Testaccio are actually gifted clairvoyants. They protect their ancestor's tomb, and the secret cave on the vineyard-covered slopes of the Aventine Hill where he cast the fateful augury that led to his death. They also control the Bocca della Verità (the gigantic and fearful stone 'mouth of truth'), used to initiate new members into their order.

### Turin

Turin is the capital of the Piedmont region, and the Kingdom of Savoy. One of the most industrialised regions of Italy, Piedmont still depends on agriculture and sericulture for the majority of its income, although it is rapidly expanding its railways and heavy industry with support from Britain, mainly in the form of coal (something which Italy desperately lacks). The winters here are cold and foggy, with lots of rain. The summers are warm, although hailstorms are not unknown.

An ancient city, it stands at the confluence of two major rivers, the Po and the Dora Riparia, and has been largely rebuilt and remodelled since the Congress of Vienna, although its origins as a Roman military camp can still be seen in the grid formation of its streets. The Italian version of its name is Torino, "the little bull", which has been incorporated into the city's standard.

Unsurprisingly, Oxfolk are common in the outlying countryside where they predominantly work the fields as labourers. Architecturally speaking, Turin is a city of porticoed arcades, tree-lined avenues and public parks, renowned for its chocolate and aperitifs.

Turin is home to a particularly old university, first established in the early 15th century. Law is taught here above theology (Italy, as a whole, has a preponderance of lawyers thanks to its complex history), although the casual visitor will be more interested in the university's numerous museums. Of particular note is the Museo Egizio (located in the Academy of Sciences), which houses a remarkable collection of Egyptian papyri, used by the noted Gnome scholar Jean-Francois Champollion to decipher the hieroglyphic code of the Pharaohs. The university is also home to Turin's Guildhouse, located in the Castello di Valentino in Valentino Park.

## The Papiro Regio Mystery

Allegedly a list of all the gods and pharaohs who ruled ancient Egyptian, this papyrus was found in Luxor in 1820 and sent back to Turin amid great excitement and expectation. However, when the carefully packaged parcel was unwrapped, the papyrus was little more than a pile of fragments. Even after careful reconstruction, over half the scroll was found to be missing. Other writings can be glimpsed on the reverse of this royal canon, which some claim are ancient business accounts, but others (particularly those in the Consortium) suspect that the scroll's original purpose may have been akin to that of a grimoire. There is even speculation that the papyrus received isn't the same as that sent from Egypt. Where the rest of the papyrus is, what it truly records and who damaged it, remain a mystery.

Turin's cathedral, the Duomo di Torino, stands on the site of the Roman Theatre, but is not particularly worthy of any note. The tiny chapel attached to it is far more interesting, given that it is home to one of Italy's greatest Aluminat relics: the Mask of Tamit.

### The Mask of Tamit

Legend has it that after Tamit's execution, a death mask was created by a Levantine craftsman at the behest of the local Roman governor, as a macabre form of trophy. The craftsman cast the mask in iron, which he polished to a midnight gloss. During the process, the craftsman's reverence towards his subject and his recital of the Pale Rider's creed "We are Righteous, we bring Serenity" (since adopted by the Ophanim) imbued the mask with power, enabling anyone who wore it to fully comprehend the path of Order.

Any comments that the mask was used to imitate Tamit, rendering her post-death appearance to the other Voices as well as on the Day of Aluminat in 70CE somewhat less of a miracle, are treated as heresy by the Aluminat church and are best kept to oneself, particularly as it is also rumoured that the Inquisition used to use the mask to force heretics to see the error of their ways.

When the Mask is worn the wearer hears the soft whispers of Tamit in her ear on an almost subconscious level. Wearing the Mask shifts the wearer 1 Cog towards Order; she may also use her Order cogs for any attacks she makes (not just firearms), as a Templar, without spending a Fate point.

Once the Mask is removed the wearer must make an Average Resolve roll. Should she fail to get at least one success then she gains the Sheep personality trait as a complication and the Mask of Tamit never works for her again. Due to this danger the Aluminat priests in charge of the Mask are extremely careful with whom they loan it.



## ~ THE LOW COUNTRIES ~

While three distinct countries today - Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg - the Low Countries share a history that goes back as far as the Roman Empire. Eventually they came under Spanish rule until the upper part revolted and formed the Dutch Republic; the southern part, while technically independent, remained under Spanish influence. Napoleon united the Low Countries and, after brief ownership by Austria, they remained united as a kingdom until Belgium broke away in 1830.

For two centuries the Dutch Republic thrived on its dominance in world trade. Over the last century Britain has whittled away that dominance and today the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC or 'United East India Company') stubbornly holds onto Indonesia as Britain digs into South-east Asia. William III has enacted many liberal reforms but he still rules with a strong hand.

Both Belgium and the Netherlands are in the throes of industrial revolution, with Belgium decidedly gaining the upper hand. Since its independence, Belgium has become an industrial powerhouse and, like Great Britain, avoided the revolutionary fervour that burned across the Continent in 1848.

### The Low Countries at a Glance

Governmental System: Constitutional Monarchy.

Economy: Agricultural (Netherlands), Industrial (Belgium).

Currency: Gulden (2s): 100 cents (Netherlands); Franc (1s): 100 centimes (Belgium).

Religion: Aluminat (Reformed, Roman).

Languages: Dutch, French, German.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (30%)	LOWER (65%)
Beastfolk (15%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (2%)	No	Yes	No
Eldren (25%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gnome (2%)	Yes	Yes	No
Huldufolk (5%)	No	No	Yes
Human (48%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (1%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (1%)	No	No	Yes

### Geography

The Low Countries have a maritime climate, which gives them cool summers and mild winters, with precipitation, usually rain, being evenly distributed throughout the year. Most of the Netherlands and northern Belgium are flat plains, protected from flooding by a series of embankments and polders. The rest of the Low Countries is marked by gently rising hills and plateaus, with the mountains of the Ardennes covering the southern part of Belgium and northern Luxembourg. The remainder of Luxembourg is marked by heavily forested hills and fertile valleys.

### Government

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is ruled by the Human King William III since his father's abdication during the 1848 revolution. William III accepted the newly created position of 'constitutional monarch' but he loathes the limitations placed on him. He's repeatedly considered abdicating in favour of his brother Henry (which would cause a constitutional crisis) and has mentioned relinquishing power the moment his son William turns 18 (in 1858). His

disinterest in governing has kept the reforms intact, but he's dissolved the cabinet and parliament several times and often arrests (and sometimes threatens with execution) anyone who upsets him.

William's Human wife Queen Sophia, on the other hand, has fully embraced the liberal reforms and resents her husband's attitude; she resents his numerous extra-marital affairs even more. She also gets along terribly with her mother-in-law (who is also her aunt) and despises the fact that her husband often chooses to side with her (which is naturally opposite Sophia's). She's made it quite clear that she would prefer to rule the kingdom in her husband's place and some believe that she may be planning an accident or coup.

William's brother Prince Henry, a hermeticist and member of the Navigator's Guild, controls Luxembourg as Governor, although William remains its Grand Duke. Henry has a rather large stake in the VOC and has been using it to modernise the Duchy. Luxembourg is part of the German Confederation and receives significant support from Prussia, which Prince Henry intends to use to amend the Luxembourg constitution (making it more conservative).

Henry has one additional secret; both he and his wife, the popular Queen Amalia, are vampires. Thus far this secret has been kept from William and Henry goes to great lengths to keep his nocturnal activities secret, using the new railroads to snatch victims from other German states.

Belgium is ruled by Eldren King Leopold, the only monarch it's ever known in its quarter-century existence. Leopold has taken great pains to establish diplomatic relations with all of the major powers. He helped arrange his niece Queen Victoria's marriage and has acted as her advisor on occasion; he married the daughter of the French (now Québécois) king, and he gave his daughter's hand in marriage to the Viceroy of Milan.

He has also established relations with Russia, leading to Allied fear that Russian agents are using Belgian diplomats and industries to spy on Britain and France. As a French-speaking monarch with a small but powerful country, Leopold holds great influence over the French people, especially in northern France, who often feel neglected and exploited by the often-paralyzed republican government. There is a growing movement within French monarchist groups to retake power and, instead of inviting King Louis VIII home, installing Leopold instead.

## Society

In spite of lagging behind its southern neighbour, the Netherlands has a thriving middle class, largely due to the success of the VOC and trade in general. More money is being put into industry and more and more of its rural population are moving to the cities to work in factories or aboard ships. Opportunities are plentiful and liberal policies are granting more rights to the people.

Belgian society is starkly divided between Flanders and Wallonia. Flanders, or the northern part of the country, is Dutch-speaking and primarily agricultural, with widespread poverty and little in the way of a middle class. Wallonia, on the other hand, is French-speaking and highly industrial, attracting workers not only from the Belgian countryside but also French workers from across the border. It should come as no surprise that there is a strong revolutionary movement within Flanders to break away from Belgium and re-join the Netherlands.

## Industry

The main industries of the Netherlands are shipbuilding and trade. In addition to being on the Atlantic coast, the Netherlands is also notable for being the mouth of the Rhine. This grants it access through the centre of the Continent to the Black Sea via the Danube. While this trade corridor is somewhat negated by the ever-growing rail network, it nevertheless remains a powerful symbol of Dutch trade.

Belgium's *sillon industriel* (industrial valley) is at the forefront of industry on the continent, producing vast amounts of coal and steel. These in turn have enabled Belgian industrialists to manufacture firearms and steam-driven marvels on a large scale and many militaries throughout the Continent are using Belgian weaponry. Many of the mines use automata and steam-driven harnesses for heavy labour and these designs have been adapted to make truly frightening battlefield marvels.

## The Hague

While Amsterdam is the official capital of the Netherlands the Dutch government actually meets in The Hague, making it the *de facto* capital. The city itself is largely a governmental and bureaucratic centre, as well as hosting the main Guildhouse. Both the royal family and Parliament reside here.

Due to its central location between Austria, Britain, France and Prussia, the Hague is effectively an ongoing international conference and more Continental issues are resolved here than in Geneva. More importantly, it's a

place where Allied diplomats can legally meet their Russian counterparts as the Netherlands is neutral ground.

## The Navigator's Guild

Once known as the Astrologer's Guild, the Navigator's Guild is a sub-Guild of the Consortium that focuses on helping ships sail safely through the waters while ensuring that they reach their destinations. Located in Amsterdam, the Navigator's Guild is a gathering place, cartographical library and learning centre for hermeticists who specialise in being hired as ship navigators. Although initially formed in 1590 to aid Dutch vessels, the guild soon attracted foreign hermeticists as well as the pre-eminent institution of its kind.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no specific curriculum or Hermetic College devoted to navigation. Instead, those hermeticists who choose this profession use a variety of magical methods to divine proper courses for ships and ensure the safest voyage possible. In fact, the Navigator's Guild as a whole is much more likely to accept petty conjuring and other types of magic in addition to hermeticism and sigil scribing, as many such techniques have worked for centuries. Needless to say, being a member of the Navigator's Guild is very prestigious and guild members are asked for directions and forecasts on newer technologies like aerostats and automobiles. Even railway engineers employ them to predict the weather or other hazards the train may face while on its journey.

## Amsterdam

Amsterdam is the official capital of the Netherlands although it would be more accurate to say that it is the commercial capital, as both the VOC home office and the Navigator's Guildhouse is located here. Amsterdam's dominant role in Dutch trade is reflected in the city, which has a cosmopolitan feel and many treasures bought, taken, or torn from the East. The city is also known for its religious tolerance and members of the varying Aluminat sects mingle freely. There is also a significant and growing Bene David population.

Amsterdam is the symbol of Dutch culture and home to the Rijkmuseum, which is currently housed in the Royal Palace (one of three; the other two palaces are in The Hague). The city is criss-crossed by numerous canals and is known as the 'Venice of the North.'

## Brussels

Capital of Belgium, Brussels sits within Flanders and so Dutch is the primary language, although the court language is French. It is the hub of the nation's growing railway, roadway and telegraph network and, through Belgium's quick adoption of technological innovations, Brussels is a thoroughly modern city with adequate plumbing and public transportation. The Senne River, upon which the city was built, has been completely covered over to keep its pollution away from the residents.

One area where Brussels' modern character is notably absent is the Grand Place, a square of ornate Gothic and Baroque buildings that were once used as commercial guildhalls and the town hall. After being ransacked by revolutionaries during the Napoleonic Wars the grand buildings have been left to rot. The only exception is the *Maison du Roi*, which still serves as the Brussels Hermetic Guildhouse.

## ~ THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE ~

The Ottoman Empire stretches from the Balkan Peninsula to Tunis in North Africa. For centuries it has been in control of the Eastern Mediterranean and the nations of Europe became accustomed to its stable presence for the Eastern trade while thwarting its attempts to expand deeper into the Continent. The breadth of Ottoman control gives many Europeans the impression that the Followers of the Word and the Ottoman Empire are one and the same, a monolithic nation of heathens that have rejected the teachings of the Eight Voices (although it would be more accurate to say that the Aluminat refuses to accept the new teachings of Order).

Over the last half a century, Ottoman power has declined. The empire's policy of home rule has given rise to autonomy, and many regions of the empire act as if there were no sovereign beyond the regular tribute or are agitating for independence. This weakening has resulted in the creation of the Greek Kingdom and the Danubian Principalities, as well as an emboldened autonomous Egypt that is in control of the new Suez Canal.

This has now given rise to the Eastern Question, as the Great Powers of Europe struggle with their concern over a collapsing stable empire and the chaos that would result. It was this fear that led to the Great Powers' intervention in the Syrian War, a civil war between the Sultan and the Egyptian governor. It was also this fear that led to the Crimean War when Russia threatened to take both land and control of the Black Sea from the Ottomans.

To shore up Ottoman power Sultan Mahmud II and his son Abdülmeceid have instituted a series of reforms (known as Tanzimat) in order to modernise the Empire; many of these reforms involve adopting Continental models as well as institute a sense of Ottoman nationalism. Many European diplomats, however, have noted that many of the reforms seem designed to appeal to European diplomats more than produce actual reforms. Unfortunately, the poor performance of the Allies thus far in the War has done little to convince the Sultan to redouble his efforts at reform. It is also re-stoking revolutionary sparks in Greek territories that failed to secure their independence with Greece, including Crete, Cyprus, and Rhodes.

*The Concert in Flames* concentrates on the 'Turkish' part of the Ottoman Empire, specifically its Balkan holdings. Further details on the rest of the Ottoman Empire will be explored in future supplements.

### Turkey at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy.

Economy: Agricultural.

Currency: Lira (10s): 100 piastres.

Religion: Followers of the Word, Aluminat (Roman).

Languages: Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Magyar, Greek, Romani, Macedonian.

	UPPER (15%)	MIDDLE (5%)	LOWER (80%)
Beastfolk (23%)	No	Yes	Yes
Dwarf (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Eldren* (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Gnome (2%)	Yes	Yes	No
Huldufolk (2%)	No	No	Yes
Human (45%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karakon (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Ogre (5%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (7%)	No	Yes	Yes

\*almost half are Steppegoblins

### Geography

Turkey is largely mountainous, with its lowlands primarily confined to the coast. This gives the coastlines hot summers and mild winters while most of the interior gets warm, wet summers and cold, snowy winters; it can get bitterly cold in Eastern Turkey, often dipping to -40°F during the coldest months of the year. Most large urban centres are confined



to the coastline while smaller settlements dot the interior. Much of central Anatolia (the Asian part of Turkey) is defined by large mountains and small lake basins created by rainfall running through the limestone mountains (making the water salty). There are also many strange rocklike formations known as 'fairy chimneys,' tall columns of rock carved into basins over time via waterfall. Several of these are hollow (although too small to enter), leading some to believe that an ancient ruin, possibly antediluvian, sits deep beneath the surface.

Turkey's most prominent geographical feature is the Bosphorus Strait, which connects the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. It is this feature, as well as the capital that sits on it, that is highly coveted by the Ottoman Empire's enemies. For Russia, it is a necessary link to warm waters, while for Greece it is an ancestral entitlement.

### The Mountain of Order

Mount Ararat holds a special place in the Levantine religions. When the world was destroyed by the Great Cataclysm a small number of sapient were deemed worthy by the Ophanim and escaped destruction via a flying airship (artists have long represented this as a wooden sailing ship with avian-like wings, but more modern scholars believe it to actually have been an aerostat).



The vessel was guided to Mount Ararat, which shone like a beacon via the glory of the Ophanim. The survivors settled along the land around it (primarily in the Tigris-Euphrates region) and it is believed that the airship was scuttled atop Mount Ararat before being consumed in fire. A small monastery dedicated to the Ophanim Samael and Eisheth sits atop it; only those truly dedicated to Order are permitted to enter and receive their wisdom.

### Government

With the Crimean War going poorly, Human Sultan Abdülmecid is currently distressed. The Ottoman economy, reliant on the Eastern trade, is on the verge of collapsing due to the onerous taxes charged by local authorities. There is also agitation for home rule, if not outright independence, from all parts of the empire outside of Turkey. And, in spite of the Sultan modernising the armed forces, the Russians made short work of the Black Sea fleet and only the aid of European allies has kept the Ottomans from collapsing entirely against the Tsarina's might.

Traditionally, the Ottoman government has been an absolutist monarchy governed by the principles of Order laid out in the Word. The government has also allowed Aluminat and Bene David subjects to have their own legal courts based on their own principles of Order so long as a Follower of the Word was not involved in the dispute. While this system worked when subjects defined themselves by religion, the rise of nationalism has challenged it and other powers, seeing easy lines to carve out new buffer states, are all too eager to exploit them.

In order to keep these nationalist interests from destroying the Empire, the Sultan, along with his Grand Vizier (currently Karakon Mehmet Ali Pasha), has been adding to the Tanzimat reforms begun by the Sultan's father. These reforms, are designed to present a 'European-style' government and culture, and promote an 'Ottoman' identity that treats all Levantine subjects more or less equally. Unfortunately, Russian successes in the war have stayed the Sultan's hand in instituting major reforms as he can't afford to have it look like a sign of weakness.

### Society

Ottoman society is primarily feudal, with a ruling upper class and a peasant lower class. With the growing industrialisation and more uniform trade, a middle class is quickly developing in the major cities; Constantinople's middle class is flush with foreign immigrants. Still, much of the empire remains agrarian, with a small number of nobles collecting taxes and enforcing laws.



With the Tanzimat Ottoman culture, especially in Turkey, is influenced by Europe. The fez has replaced the turban as the standard headgear and many Turks, especially in the middle and upper classes, have adopted European styles of dress.

Due to its relative remoteness and isolation the Anatolian plateau has become home to many sapientia that have felt persecuted elsewhere, making it one of the largest concentrations of Karaka and Orcs in the world. These 'Anatolians' tend to live a nocturnal lifestyle, remaining hidden in their mountain homes during the day and venturing out at night when it's safer.

### Industry

While much of the Empire is agrarian there is a booming industrial revolution in the cities, especially Constantinople. Railways have been laid across Thrace and Anatolia to convey a sense of nationalism, facilitate trade and, most importantly, enable the Sultan to mobilise troops should the Russians march on the capital. In addition, the Sultan

has also conceived of a grand bridge that will connect Constantinople with Anatolia across the Bosphorus Strait.

It should be noted that Nithamiyeen tradition and the Second Pillar of the Word draw a sharp distinction between good magic and the Maleficium. As such, magicians, or 'magi,' have been accepted members of the upper class for centuries and it is believed that magnetists, with the Word committed to their aetherically touched minds, have greater insight into Order. Petty conjuring is generally considered a science, although magi are quick to point out that petty conjurers have little idea of what they are doing and are more easily swayed to the Maleficium.

Ottoman magi have never formed a guild; they simply follow the instructions for magic use in the Word. As aristocrats they generally have their own libraries and they act as personal tutors for students that show an affinity for magic. Still, in accordance with the push for 'modernisation,' every major Ottoman city has a 'Magi Club,' which substitutes for a Consortium Guildhouse.

## Janissaries

The Janissaries were an elite order within the Ottoman Empire similar to the monastic knightly orders of the Aluminat. Originally recruited from captured Aluminats who were "touched by the Word" (converted to a Follower), the Janissaries were an elite fighting force feared and respected throughout the Ottoman Empire by those unlucky enough to face them in battle.

Over time, relaxed recruitment and lifestyle restrictions weakened the order's discipline and they lost their commitment to both the Sultan and Order in general. The Janissaries became the true power behind the throne, bullying sultans into granting privileges and arranging coups when a particular sultan proved too intransigent. Things came to a head in 1826 when Mahmud II created a new modern army and informed the Janissaries that they would have to adapt. Instead, the Janissaries revolted. Predicting this, the Sultan was ready and his new army slaughtered the Janissaries.

Not all of the Janissaries were killed. In spite of the order's decline over the centuries an elite corps remained. These 'true' Janissaries adhered to the original rigorous discipline of the order and never wavered in their faith in the Word. They did not participate in the machinations of the order nor did they revolt against the Sultan. In spite of this, the Sultan still condemned them and these elite Janissaries were suddenly without a home or sponsor.

The Tsarina offered the Janissaries sanctuary in return for their service. Over the last quarter of a century the Janissaries have participated in Russia's wars with Persia and the Ottoman Empire, including the Crimean War. In addition the Janissaries have also participated in many of the national movements within the Balkans, including fighting alongside the Greeks in their War for Independence. The Janissaries accept any mercenary contract as long as the Commander receives sanction from the Ophanim (usually during evening prayers).

The Janissaries, like their noble forebears, see each other as their only family and are dedicated to fighting for Order. Beastfolk comprise the vast majority of the order and new recruits are expected to commit the Word to memory and convert upon initiation. As agents of Order, the Janissaries utilise the very best of new technologies, including aerostats and other steam marvels. The main fortress of the Janissaries is hidden somewhere within the Caucasus Mountain range, although smaller satellite fortresses can be found along Russia's western border.

## Damascus Steel

For centuries blades forged of Damascus steel were potent symbols of Order. Exceptionally well-crafted with water-like patterns in the steel, Damascus swords were extremely resilient and sharp. In addition, they had the ability to disrupt spells and cut through magical armour as if it were un-enchanted. Many Pale Riders, dragon hunters, and even Inquisitors carried Damascus blades, although the secret of their manufacture has been lost or, more accurately, disappeared. The secret of Damascus steel was carried by the survivors of the Great Cataclysm and was an effective weapon against the magical creatures populating the new continents. Made from wootz steel (developed in South India), freshly forged Damascus blade must be bathed in dragon's blood in order to gain their special properties. As dragons no longer exist in the world (at least to the best of anyone's knowledge), it is no longer possible to forge Damascus blades.

In game terms, Damascus blades are relics. They do the same damage as a normal blade of its type, but any AV due to magical properties is ignored when struck by a Damascus blades. A Damascus blade wielder may also add 6 dice to her Resolve + Concentration roll (or other resistance roll) when resisting a spell effect.

## Constantinople

Constantinople is the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The city has many other names, including 'Kostantiniyye,' which is used by the ruling class, and 'Istanbul,' which is used by common Turks. It was once the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (or simply 'the Roman Empire' after the Western Roman Empire fell), which later historians dubbed 'the Byzantine Empire' based on Constantinople's original name as the Greek city of Byzantium. For most of its history it was fortified with many walls and gates, but today many of those walls have crumbled or been demolished to make way for the expanding city.

The Sultan and his family (which includes a harem) reside at Topkapi Palace, but a new residence, Dolmabahçe Palace, is nearing completion. The new palace boasts many European architectural styles, gilded ceilings and luxurious surroundings that were lacking in the old palace.

The Hagia Sophia is an impressive house of worship that has been recently and magnificently restored by Abdülmecid.

Originally built as an Orthodox Aluminat church celebrating the Wisdom of the Heavenly Host imparted on the Eight Voices, it was transformed into a mosque when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople in 1453.

Of particular note is the Grand Bazaar, an indoor market where shoppers walk pedestrian streets lined with kiosks filled with vendors, Turkish and foreign, hawking items from three continents. It is the largest market of its kind on the Continent. Unsurprisingly, it also has a connection to the Labyrinth through the Goblin Market. Imps disguised as vendors can preternaturally glean what a shopper really wants and offer it to him in return for some non-monetary price. This price is rarely worth the gain, but shoppers generally don't realise the truth of the bargain until it is too late.

## Crete

The island of Crete contained one of the Continent's oldest civilisations of the post-Cataclysmic era. Dubbed the Minoan civilisation by German professor Dr Karl Hoeck in 1823, this was the kingdom of the legendary King Minos and engineer Daedalus. Since then it has changed hands many times; currently it is in Ottoman hands although most of the population is Orthodox Aluminat and identifies with Greece. The Greek population revolted along with Greece and staged another unsuccessful revolt in 1840; in both instances the Ottomans retained control.

Crete is also notable for being the 'fool's gold' of ancient relics. The island is littered with them, hidden in ruins, caves, or just beneath the waves. Most of these relics are rather complex and, even if they emit magic, no one has been able to get them to work. Most such relics are hauled off to museums or perched on fireplace mantels as conversation pieces.

That changed when Dr Karl Otfried Müller, a German Gnome hermeticist, came to Crete in 1840. While excavating the ruins of Knossos and partially translating the ancient scripts he came to some startling conclusions.

First, he determined that many of the 'useless' relics discovered were simply parts of larger 'magical machines' and therefore incomplete. He determined that the Minoans had an understanding of science that surpassed the limits of contemporary knowledge; Daedalus, for all of his marvellous inventions, barely scratched the surface of what the Minoans were once capable. Dr Müller further hypothesised that it is possible that the legendary Colossus of Rhodes may have been such a relic.

Second, he determined that, rather than being one of the first post-Cataclysmic civilisations, the Minoans may actually have been one of the last antediluvian ones, perhaps a surviving outpost of Atlantis. This may actually make the Minoan civilisation older than Egypt or Mesopotamia and the possibilities are currently being hotly debated in universities across the Continent.

If this weren't enough, Dr Müller has made one extremely controversial conclusion. In the ruins of the palace he discovered hidden entrances to an underground labyrinth full of broken machinery and bones. The bones were all of Beastfolk and, given the equipment and the bindings, Dr Müller determined that this was a vast prison of some sort. Either the Minoans felt the need to contain the Beastfolk population or, more radically, this may be the 'birthplace' of Beastfolk sapient. Dr Müller also notes that due to the nature of the damage, some of the Beastfolk revolted and escaped. Currently he is researching whether the prison is related to the aristocracy of Egypt's Old Kingdom, which it is commonly believed mainly comprised Beastfolk.

## ~ THE KINGDOM OF PORTUGAL ~

In many ways Portugal is a crumbling kingdom on the verge of being reborn. For centuries Portugal was amongst the largest empires in the world, claiming colonies and outposts throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Along with Spain it continued the Inquisition long after its official end in 1648. Unfortunately, its influence has waned considerably in the 19th century and it is now considered one of the poorest nations in Europe.

In 1821 the Inquisition was disbanded and Brazil, Portugal's largest colony, declared independence the following year, taking the Portuguese king with it. Civil war soon followed between 1828-1834 between absolutist and liberal factions, with peace restored in favour of the former king's daughter. Her son, the current King Pedro V, is busy transforming Portugal into an aetherically-fuelled industrial power.

Today, ancient castles perched atop the cliffs of Portugal watch over small port cities struggling to adapt. Railways are carefully laid aside treacherous marshes and around winding hills and mountains. Aerostats and steamers transport Portuguese wine to markets throughout Europe. Unfortunately most of the industrial transformation is limited to the largest cities, leaving most of Portugal lagging behind its neighbours. Worse, Lisbon itself is gripped in a preternatural melancholy that has made it a beacon for creatures of Entropy.

### Portugal at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy.  
Economy: Agricultural.  
Currency: Real (0.05d).  
Religion: Aluminat (Roman).  
Languages: Portuguese, Spanish.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (10%)	LOWER (85%)
Beastfolk (20%)	No	Yes	Yes
Dwarf (3%)	No	Yes	No
Eldren (6%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (2%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (7%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (21%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (28%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karakon (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Ogre (2%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (5%)	No	No	Yes

### Geography

Portugal occupies most of the western half of the Iberian Peninsula and borders only Spain, although where the border actually lies is a matter of dispute between the two powers. The Tagus River, upon where the capital Lisbon sits at its mouth to the Atlantic, roughly divides the country between the mountainous north and the lowland south. The Tagus originates in Central Spain and is connected to Madrid through its tributaries.

Northern Portugal is almost completely covered in mountains and plateaus, broken only by the various rivers that cut through them. Giants roam many of these plateaus and many domestic animals such as cattle and pigs can be found in larger varieties here. Cities and fortresses line the coast, many of them carved out of the sides of cliffs that jut into the sea. Southern Portugal is marked by its lowlands and its unpredictable coastline - lagoons and marshes dominate and only recently have engineers begun stabilising them. It can get quite hot in the summers, sometimes breaking 100°F.

### Government

While Portugal has a constitution it is still effectively an absolutist monarchy, with the whim of the current monarch determining to what extent liberal reforms are promulgated. Thus far, the young Pedro V is adhering to the spirit of the charter and is cultivating popular support at the expense



of his more conservative ministers. He is carefully shaping policy in order to industrialise Portugal and strengthen its rather poor economy.

Unfortunately, Pedro V is only 18 and has spent most of his adolescence learning hermeticism. His plans are grandiose but not often practical; his greatest example is the 'Twin Crowns' project, a large aerostat that he hopes will bring luxury travel between Portugal and Brazil. The aerostat is being designed and built by French engineers and thus providing little support for local economies. In addition it's taking up a lot of capital that could be used for infrastructure.

Still, Pedro V is handsome and charismatic and his bachelor status makes him very popular at royal balls both at home and abroad. In spite of his inexperience Pedro V is keeping Portugal stable and united, unlike its larger neighbour to the north and east.

### Society

While starting to make strides at industrialisation, Portugal is still an agricultural nation. Nobles own property while the people farm it. The small middle class made much of its money in trade, but with each passing year the trade routes are running dry or disappearing. Most merchants are investing in Portugal's remaining African colonies, while some are investing in new industrial projects.

With a dwindling economy the nobility is worried that the peasants may revolt; thus great effort is spent at stifling liberal reforms, especially in government. Pedro V is acutely aware of this and straddles the fence. He offers enough to the people to keep them content while assuring the nobility that no one is taking anything away from them.

Portugal is a deeply religious country and almost its entire population is Roman Aluminat. For centuries Sons of David and Followers of the Word were forced to convert or be

## Troll Marshes

Given the breadth of the marshy Portugese coastline it should come as no surprise that they are infested with marsh trolls. In fact, Portugal is believed to have the highest population of marsh trolls on the Continent. Many hunters make a good, if sometimes short, living thinning the troll population. "Taking a stroll through the marshes" is seen as a test of bravery.

The preponderance of trolls has also led to an intense study of them in the University of Lisbon. Noted Gnome botanist Félix de Avelar Brotero published *Anatomica de Trollum* (1830), in which he argued that marsh trolls are more properly plants than animals (or more accurately fungi, although current classification considers fungi to be plants). He believed that their regenerative ability is fuelled by consumed and stored animal fat. He also noted that marsh trolls seem to be "more cunning" when working within a group and hypothesised that marsh trolls may have a semi-magnetic ability or "group intellect" that enables them to work together effectively.



expelled from the country. The Portuguese Inquisition monitored such converts in an attempt to verify their sincerity and use of petty magic was seen as 'faking conversion.' Thus religion plays a major role in the lives of the Portuguese, even after constitutional reforms to separate church and state.

Portugal is sometimes defined as 'the High-Low Land.' This is not only due to the geographic division between north and south but also due to its significant Giant population on the plateaus of Northern Portugal and the large Huldufolk population in the south. In addition, Portugal's previous conquest by the Nithamayeen brought many Karaka to its shores. Many of them remained in Lisbon after the Reconquista, converting to the Roman Aluminat.

### Industry

Much of Portugal's industry is in wine-making, especially in the orchard-rich northern region. Portuguese farms have also imported and planted American crops such as corn and potatoes and are finally producing enough grain to export.

Portugal's industrial progress has been slow through most of the century but Pedro V's efforts to modernise his kingdom has led to unprecedented, albeit small, growth. Paved roads and railways are stretching up and down the country and Lisbon is connected to other major European

cities through aerostat travel. Its once-mighty sailing fleet is being replaced with steamers.

Much of this new technology is fuelled by magic and the University of Coimbra has one of the best artificer programmes in its Thaumaturgical School. In particular the university is known for its development of steam-driven harnesses, which were originally developed to help combat marsh trolls. In addition, the legacy of Nithami rule and the current need to combat despair in Lisbon has made the University of Coimbra the foremost authority on Alchemy on the Continent outside of Constantinople.

### Lisbon

Lisbon is the capital of Portugal and its chief port city; in the days before steam most American-bound European ships launched across the Atlantic from its docks. In spite of its ancient pedigree (Lisbon is the oldest city in Western Europe) much of Lisbon's architecture is new; over the last century Lisbon was torn asunder by two major events. The first was an earthquake in 1755 that killed almost 40,000 people (a fifth of the population) and levelled the city. The second was the sacking of Lisbon by Napoleon during the Peninsular War in 1807, during which many of the new buildings were damaged and pillaged.

## Aftershocks

While most believe that the earthquake of 1755 and the resulting fires and tsunamis were natural occurrences, the truth is much more sinister. In 1750 King Joseph was crowned and the Marquis of Pombal was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1755 the Marquis was also appointed Secretary of State, which made him the most powerful figure in Portugal.

This appointment didn't sit well with the old aristocracy, as the Marquis lacked proper breeding as a Huldu and, worse, he was introducing many fundamental reforms to the country. This fostered a stronger middle class and restricted Aluminat influence. A secret group of nobles and old merchants, o Desamparou ('the Forsaken'), turned to the Maleficium to halt the Marquis' reforms. They succeeded on calling on the Pale Archons, but they got far more than they'd bargained for.

Lisbon sat on a major telluric node which was suddenly infused with the dark, aetheric lacing of Maleficium. It ripped a temporary portal to the Pale as it destroyed the city, enabling many demons and other Entropic creatures to slip

through. Realising what they'd done the nobles tried to undo it, but the Pale infected them with overwhelming despair. Only the combined efforts of Aluminat agents and other adventurers in the city were able to contain the damage, but the city would never be completely purged.

Thanks to a hermetic ally the Marquis survived an encounter with a demon and in gratitude he convinced the King that a Guildhouse was needed. He also used the pretext of rebuilding the city to send agents, os Cavaleiros da Esperança (the Knights of Hope), to root out Entropy agents.

Today, there are still Pale Champions of Entropy in the city. There are more vampires dedicated to Despair in Lisbon than in any other city in Europe and a few demons lurk in alley shadows and forgotten basements. Some believe that fado music is the work of Pale-inspired Bards to dupe the residents into accepting Despairs, others believe the Bards are simply helping them cope (the truth, as always, is somewhere in between). It is largely a quiet war, fought in the darkest corners of the city beneath the pale moonlight, but the soul of the city is at stake.

These events, plus the disintegrating Portuguese economy, have fostered a communal state of melancholy amongst the people. While King Pedro V is doing much to counter this with new industrial projects, many in Lisbon still lament that their parents and grandparents made money trading overseas while they toil in factories. Rather than see industry as a revitalised future, the tendency of the people is to see the piping smoke as a reminder of glory days long gone. This is best reflected in the fado music of the city, melancholy songs that lament the loss of the past.

Still, in spite of the spirit of the people Lisbon is rebuilding with many new grand avenues and colourful terraced homes running up and down Lisbon's seven hills. While historically Portugal was as resistant to hermeticists as Spain (and even today most Portuguese hermeticists are also clergy and meet in local cathedrals), Pedro V's relaxed attitude towards magic has led to the building of the first Guildhouse in Portugal.

The Castle of São Jorge sits on a hill and overlooks the oldest part of the city. Prior to the Lisbon Catastrophe the castle was used as a hospital and garrison, afterwards it housed an observatory. One of Pedro V's reforms was to convert the castle into an aerostat station, so that passengers could enter and exit aerostats in the heart of the city.

## ~ THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE ~

The Russian Empire is a vast territory that spans three continents, extending from Eastern Europe across North Asia and into Alaska in North America. Since 1725 it has had but a single ruler, the notoriously frosty Tsarina Ekaterina. It is a nation of contrasts, where most of its people live in serfdom while women have rights equal to men; where magic is strong enough to resist the industrial revolution yet it has done little to improve the lives of Russians.

It is purely through the Steel Tsarina's will that the Empire has held together so well through various peasant revolts and assassination attempts. As with everything Russian, the Tsarina's ruthlessness in suppressing these acts is matched only by her justice. Executions are quick and as painless as possible, and she doesn't take vengeance on the families of the condemned. In Russian eyes that makes her a compassionate empress, even if they still want her removed.

Currently, Russia is embroiled in the Crimean War. It was supposed to be a regional conflict with the Ottoman Empire but Russia miscalculated the wider political situation. The

Tsarina expected Austria's support and was rejected; in spite of Austria's potential change of heart the Steel Tsarina is not one to forget. Still, she knows that she needs to end the war soon; her magical reserves are depleting and if Austria or Prussia were to side with the Allies the Tsarina would be forced to sue for peace.

### Russia at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy.

Economy: Agricultural.

Currency: Ruble (3s): 100 kopeks.

Religion: Aluminat (Orthodox), Followers of the Word.

Languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Livonian, Turkish.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (15%)	LOWER (80%)
Beastfolk (18%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (2%)	No	Yes	Yes
Eldren* (20%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (5%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (2%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (1%)	No	No	Yes
Human (44%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karakon (4%)	No	Yes	No
Ogre (1%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (2%)	No	No	Yes

\*almost half are Steppegoblins

### Geography

Russia is a difficult country to define geographically as it is large enough to effectively be its own continent (in terms of comparison the Russian Empire covers more square miles than any of the continents of South America, Europe, Antarctica, or Australia). For the purposes of *The Concert in Flames* the focus is on the geography of Russia west of the Urals.

The Russian plain makes up most of Eastern Russia and is the largest mountain-free landscape in Europe. It has a varied mix of terrain, from vast forests to rolling plains. Summers are warm and wet, winters cold and snowy. Occasionally, Russian winters can be especially brutal and twice in recent memory has a brutal Russian winter thwarted an invading army; Sweden in 1708 and France in 1812. It is whispered in both instances that the Tsarina herself commanded the elements to batter Russia's enemies, although most believe the events to be mere coincidence.

The Russian plain is framed by the Ural Mountains in the east, and the Caucasus Mountains in the south. The Urals are home to many Giants and wyverns. It gets bitterly cold in winter and comfortably warm in the summer; there is usually plenty of precipitation. The Caucasus Mountains are taller and generally even colder; Mount Elbrus is the tallest point in Europe. Mount Elbrus is frequently cited as a possible refuge for survivors of the Cataclysm, although there are no records and most academics dismiss the notion as based merely on the mountain's height.

### The Russian Aluminat

The Russian Aluminat church is a variation on the Orthodox Aluminat sect. That said it is a bit more than simply a national variation with a few cultural or ritual idiosyncrasies. Unlike the Conclave and similar high councils of other Aluminat sects, there is no committee of equals; the Tsarina is the ultimate authority and Matriarch of the Russian Aluminat. While the Tsarina does not hold herself up to be an archon, her people often pray to her rather than the Heavenly Host. For Western theological academics this is dangerously close to heresy.

In addition, the Tsarina has relaxed restrictions on petty conjuring and other forms of magic; while the Hermetic Guilds in Saint Petersburg and Moscow still refuse to acknowledge them, petty conjurers are not persecuted within the Russian Empire and are allowed to practice openly. Most Russian units have at least one petty conjurer amongst them.

The rites and rituals of the Russian Aluminat are functionally identical to the Orthodox Aluminat and a member of the latter church would recognise a Russian Aluminat mass as a close cousin, albeit in Russian.

### Government

Tsarina Ekaterina is the Russian government. While the boyars pretend to have some control, they act only according to the Tsarina's whim. To do otherwise would be to risk death or worse – the Tsarina's fits of anger are the stuff of legends. Even amongst Peregrines, Ekaterina is eccentric; she feels every emotion with an unearthly intensity. She could be the greatest of friends one moment and then, after the slightest of perceived slights, sentence that person to death (which she normally carries out personally). The Tsarina's icy reputation is little more than a façade to keep her emotions in check; she adopts her persona of Princess

Nadja (see the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*, page 305) to help her focus and remain stable.

Unlike virtually every other nation in Europe, Russia lacks even the pretence of a national assembly. Should the Tsarina require opinions she engages nobles directly and routinely orders several to reside in Saint Petersburg should she need their council (a 'privilege' most nobles dread). In spite of the Steel Tsarina's fickleness and lack of a true national government, Russia runs fairly efficiently, if only due to its pastoral nature; most serfs spend all day working and don't have time to agitate.

In addition to being the Tsarina, Ekaterina holds the title of 'Queen of Poland.' Poland is technically an autonomous kingdom ruled by a namestnik (or viceroy), but since its inception in 1815 the kingdom's autonomy has been increasingly eroded in favour of Russification. The current namestnik is Ivan Paskevich, a Dwarf Cossack general. Currently Paskevich is under orders to secure the western border and prepare for an invasion should Austria or Prussia enter the war on the side of the Allies.

### The Morskoy Volk

The Morskoy Volk, or 'Sea Wolf,' is a Polish national and revolutionary. She swims through the northern seas in her marvellous submersible, the *Mora*, and terrorises Russian shipping interests. She and her elite crew also work as mercenaries, so long as the job or the reward harms Russia in some way.

No one knows exactly who the Morskoy Volk is. Those who have seen her say she's Human, possibly with an extended lifespan (in spite of decades at sea she is always described as youthful in appearance), and likely from a Polish magnate family that lost power when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth fell to Napoleon. She is also rumoured to be a magician and fights like a Cossack. Her submersible employs a unique blend of science and sorcery that allows it to move silently through the sea and even become invisible.

Her often lurid exploits, both real and imagined, are fertile fodder for penny dreadfuls. The Sea Wolf is usually portrayed as a beautiful, stoic and devout Roman Aluminat who wants to topple the wicked Russian Tsar and restore her beloved country. How much of this is pure fantasy remains to be seen and those that have met her would prefer 'ruthless' to 'stoic.'

## Society

Russian nobility is very European in appearance and character, having been encouraged to shave their beards and adopt European styles of fashion by Pyotr the Great and his wife. The Tsarina keeps order by grants of land and serfs and what she gives, she can take away.

In spite of the current war, the court language of Russia is still French. When questioned about this, the Tsarina simply dismissed it with a wave of the hand and says "the only true 'French' are in Quebec."

That said there are a number of nobles, especially outside the major cities, who continue to wear Russian dress and speak the Russian language with each other. These nobles, especially old Eldren, resent the changes and believe Russia is losing its soul. For such Russians titles are almost meaningless; barons, counts, and princes garner more respect for their breeding and landholdings rather than their actual title.

The large middle class percentage is misleading; in terms of a mercantile middle class Russia would be lucky to see 5%. Most of this 'middle class' is Cossacks, autonomous semi-militaristic groups that inhabit southern Russia. The Cossacks are given a privileged status within the empire in return for their military service to the Tsarina. They are feared warriors and many practice the magnetic discipline of Mysticism, which only adds to their prowess in battle. As with the rest of Russia, both men and women serve as warriors.

### The Vila

Like the Pyetra (see the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*, page 54), the Vila is an elite female unit that answers only to the Tsarina and the Crown Princess. Unlike the Pyetra, however, the Vila is a covert force that is used for assassination and espionage. Thus the magic its members wield tends to aid in deception and infiltration more than brute force. The Vila also draws from a broader pool as females of any subspecies can be Vila. All that is required is utter dedication to the Tsarina.

Most Russians are stuck in the meagre lower class of serfdom. Virtual slaves to their land the serfs toil endlessly for their masters. Unlike the Westernised nobility they still wear traditional clothes and, in the case of the men, continue to grow their beards. Interestingly, the middle

class are allowed to own serfs as well and over have the workers in Russian factories are serfs. A serf's life is heavily regulated by his owner and serfs need permission to marry someone outside the owner's sphere of control.

## Industry

Pyotr the Great felt that Russia needed to be more like the rest of Europe; thus, he encouraged industry and attracted foreign investment. Ekaterina, on the other hand, saw the industrial revolution as a tool of the Ophanim and acted against it. She detested the chimney smoke that poisoned the skies and considered railways blemishes on the land. She saw little need for technologies when Nature and magic could already perform the same tasks and, in many ways, better. As such, Russia's industry remains primarily agricultural, with serfs doing work the way they have been for centuries.

One area that is flourishing is magical studies. The Tsarina's influence on the Russian Orthodox Church (of which she has appointed herself a Matriarch, effectively the first among equals) has enabled her to amend the 11th Commandment to "Thou shalt preserve the Balance between Entropy and Order; magic is a tool to that end." As such, all magic save Maleficium is accepted and respected in Russia.

## Russian Wyverns

While most domesticated wyverns in Europe trace their ancestry to the Alps, wyverns used by Russia hail from the Urals. Such wyverns are heavier and more aggressive than their Alpine cousins.

They are notoriously difficult to train and many a would-be wyvern rider has been shrugged off to his death by an irritated mount. Although found throughout Russia, these wyverns are known as 'Kurgan wyverns' due to the extensive wyvern training facilities in the eponymous city.

Kurgan wyverns tend toward blue-grey in colour and have a leaner, sharper face than European wyverns. It is said that Russian animist wyvern riders can make their mounts breathe fire, but this is usually dismissed as propaganda.

### Kurgan Wyvern

*Initiative:* 8    *Physical:* 14    *Mental:* 8

*Health:* 22    *Armour:* 3

*Damage:* Bite (11), Claws (10), Tail Stinger (6 + poison)





## Saint Petersburg

Built on land captured from Finland in 1703, Saint Petersburg is a young city. Most of it is built in baroque and neo-classical styles although more recent buildings take other inspirations. While created by Pyotr (Peter) the Great, the city is actually named for the Voice Matthias, who was known as 'the Rock' (petra in Greek) for his great faith.

Saint Petersburg is the seat of the empire and the Tsarina dwells here in the Winter Palace, built for Pyotr and greatly expanded by Ekaterina. Peter and Paul Fortress, along with its eponymous church at the centre, predates the city and still stands as a garrison and prison. The city also sports one of the grandest looking Guildhouses in Europe, as if to thumb its nose at the repressed Consortium. The Guildhouse occupies the neoclassical Marble Palace, which was built by one of the Tsarina's former lovers, Count Grigory Orlov. Unlike many Guildhouses in Europe membership is open to all practicing magicians that can pay the fees.

The Church of St Justina on the Griboedov Canal is a stunning example of a modern revival of medieval Russian architecture as it was finally completed in 1845. The walls and ceilings are covered with intricate mosaics as well as pictorial depictions of St Justina's exploits in the 17th century as a member of the Pale Knights. Although believed to be of Polish origin, St Justina is now considered the patron saint of Russia.

An interesting marketplace is 'the Passage.' The Passage is a three-storeyed shopping mall with a glass-and-steel ceiling that caters to the growing bourgeoisie and aristocracy. In addition to numerous shops it also has

various entertainments, such as coffeehouses and a wax museum. Due to the relaxed attitude towards magic many petty conjurers and magnetists ply their trades here, offering paying customers magical cures or fortunes. The basement contains less savoury offerings including a brothel and a 'serf market.'

## MOSCOW

Moscow sits on the Moskva River (the two places share the name) and was the Russian capital for over four centuries. The city itself is built around a fortress, or Kremlin. The city had a downturn in population during the 18th century when the capital was moved to Saint Petersburg and further decimated by a necromantic plague and a fire during Napoleon's occupation (which some whisper was started by the Tsarina herself, declaring that she'd rather see it "burn with the rats inside" than remain in French hands). These events required the city to be almost completely rebuilt over the last few decades and its population is growing again.

Currently the city is being rebuilt along a grid-like pattern designed by General Bashilov. Industry is prospering in the city (some note sarcastically that it's because the Tsarina isn't paying attention) and a railway has been laid between Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

## Koschei the Deathless

Koschei is an ancient and powerful litche who resides in Moscow. His origins are mysterious, although some say he is actually Ivan Ivanovich, a sorcerer and the son of Tsar Ivan IV ('the Terrible'), killed by his father's own hand during an argument. Since his mortal death, the now deteriorating

Koschei (a name he gave himself, as it means 'scrag') still tries to help the land that he loves while struggling with his necromantic lifestyle. As with his father, Koschei has an unstable personality that is made only more so through his litedom.

As typical of the land in which he dwells, Koschei oft-times seems to be two people. He may be a helpful ally offering his services in return for some favour or he may be an amoral predator snatching and killing people for his own entertainments and experiments. At times he seems a patriot aiding against foreign invaders; at other times he attacks Russian nobles and serfs.

Some believe that Koschei used the Plague of 1771 to create an undead army that quelled the rioting populace from ineffective leadership during the crisis as well as take advantage of the situation for himself. When Count Orlov arrived to stabilise the situation he was able to reach an understanding with Koschei and the zombies dutifully marched into bonfires, taking much of the plague with them.

## ~ THE SCANDINAVIAN CONFEDERATION ~

While all of the countries and peoples share a geographical and cultural history to varying degrees, the Scandinavian Confederation is a recent creation. It is a loose alliance of five nations: Denmark, Finland, Kvenland, Norway, and Sweden. Finland's inclusion is a bit of a legal fiction, as, like Poland, it is really part of the Russian Empire. Unlike Poland, though, Finland has yet to undergo 'Russification' on a massive scale. Finland, for example, supports Russia in the Crimea but hasn't committed troops (the 1852-54 Kven-Swedish War provided a convenient excuse to keep Finnish troops in Finland).

Scandinavia is known for being one of the most diverse regions of Europe in terms of sapiency. Most of the Continental subspecies are well-represented and Giants and Huldufolk are in the upper classes in some areas. This is due to both the rugged conditions of Scandinavia as well as its breadth; the Confederation includes most of Continental Northern Europe as well as Iceland and parts of Greenland. The Confederation has extended the offer of membership to Jotunheim (in Greenland), but thus far the Jotun Queen has declined in spite of Kvenland's membership.

In addition to being tied to Russia through Finland, the Scandinavian Confederation is tied to the German Confederation through the Duchies of Schleswig and

Holstein, which, while not technically part of Denmark, are ruled by the Danish King. The Danish desire to annex the northern part (and the German desire to keep the Duchies intact) led to the Schleswig-Holstein War (1848-51), which resulted in the status quo remaining.

### Scandinavia at a Glance

Governmental System: Absolutist Monarchy,

Constitutional Monarchy (Denmark).

Economy: Industrial (Denmark, Norway, Sweden),  
Agricultural (Finland, Kvenland).

Currency: Speciedaler (1/2): 120 skilling (Norway,  
Kvenland); Riksdaler (4d): 24 skilling (Sweden);  
Rigsdaler (7d): 96 skilling (Denmark).

Religion: Aluminat (Evangelical).

Languages: Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Kven,  
Sami, Russian.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (20%)	LOWER (75%)
Beastfolk (15%)	No*	No	Yes
Dwarf (20%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (5%)	Yes**	Yes	No
Giant (3%)	No*	No*	Yes**
Gnome (1%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (15%)	No***	No***	Yes
Human (25%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (10%)	No*	Yes	Yes
Orc (5%)	No*	Yes	Yes

\*Yes in Kvenland

\*\*No in Kvenland

\*\*\*Yes in Denmark (Iceland)

### Geography

Geographically, 'Scandinavia' refers only to the peninsula that contains Norway, Sweden, and parts of Finland and Kvenland. The western coast is dominated by fjords, inlets surrounded by mountains dipping into the water. Many of these fjords contain villages and small towns along the shores and are protected by numerous small islands. The temperature along the coast is surprisingly mild, with highs near 60°F in the summer and only dipping below freezing in the winter.

The peninsula is, however, dominated by its mountains. These rugged mountains practically rise from the waters of Norway and stretch across Sweden. Vegetation is sparse

and the climate is colder; the Giants of Northern Scandinavia survive on lindorm meat or (more frequently) raiding the Swedish forests. Snow can be found year round in the higher regions. In the northern parts of Scandinavia, above the Arctic Circle, the sun never sets from May through July, hence the flag of Kvenland that depicts a 'midnight sun,' a yellow sun on a black field.

The mountains taper off in Sweden, leaving over half of it as heavily forested lowlands. Most of Sweden's farms are in the southern part of the country. Due to the Gulf Stream Sweden is surprisingly warm for its latitude, with summer weather often in the low 70s and the winters straddling the freezing line; it gets quite a bit colder as one moves north. Precipitation is low and it's not uncommon for residents of Southern Sweden to not see any snow during the winter.

### Lindorm

The lindorm is a large draconic creature with a grey-scaled serpentine body and powerful forelimbs. It is perfectly adapted to alpine environments and snakes along mountain ranges using a combination of slithering and sledding techniques; lindorms can also swim.

While unintelligent, lindorms have an animal cunning that prompts them to gather treasure. Some of this they leave near their abodes (usually within a cave or ravine) in order to attract would-be treasure hunters and turn them into daily meals. Perhaps ironically, lindorm is considered a delicacy in Scandinavia.

*Initiative:* 6    *Physical:* 16    *Mental:* 3  
*Health:* 30    *Armour:* 5 (heavy scales)  
*Damage:* Claw (12), Bite (10 + grapple)

Finland is heavily forested and marked by thousands of lakes cutting across its southern region. Winter rules in Finland, being longer than summer in the northern region and snow covers the ground for 6-7 months of the year. As with Sweden Southern Finland is milder and this is where most of the population lives.

Denmark is primarily flatlands and rolling hills with mild summers and winters. The northern part of the peninsula is marked by bogs, marshes and sand, making it a popular place for burials and unfortunately a haunt for necromancers in addition to the usual marsh trolls. Due to the mild winters it rarely snows in Denmark.

Iceland is often considered home to the Huldufolk, although there were plenty of them in Europe before Eric the Red set foot on it. Iceland is cool throughout the year, with summer temperatures in the high 40s. The north-west gets significantly more snow than other parts of the island; it snows almost a third of the year. Most of Iceland is plateaus and mountains; most settlements are along the fjords that surround the island. Iceland also has a lot of geothermal activity below its surface, resulting in many geysers across the island.

### Government

The Scandinavian Confederation is more of a loose alliance than a true government; each nation sends a representative to a 'Thing' which is usually held annually in Christiana, although a Thing can be called whenever a member requests it. As a confederation of five with two members typically voting as one, any proposal must have unanimous consent in order to be enacted.

The Human King Oscar of Norway and Sweden is a political moderate; while he detested his father's absolutist tendencies he is cautious about giving away too much power. He dreams of turning the Confederation into a true Union, although he understands that Russia's interests would prevent it. Oscar is married to the Duchess of Parma's granddaughter, the Human Josephina, his devoted wife who helps shape his more liberal policies. Unfortunately, Oscar's numerous extra-marital affairs have strained their initially happy relationship.

While Oscar largely rules from Christiana he has appointed Norwegian Dwarf Severin Løvenskiold to be Steward of Norway. Educated in Germany, Løvenskiold is well versed in mining and industry in general. In order to compete with Prussia (and perhaps ward off Russia), he advocates turning Norway into an industrial state. He shares his king's dream of a united Scandinavia but is fearful that allowing 'uneducated peasants' to have too much of a say would court disaster. Norway's laws are passed by the Storting, an elected legislature. The Storting is more liberal than the King and Løvenskiold clashed with them over the Nobility law; ultimately the Steward lost.

The Eldren King Frederick VII of Denmark is a popular monarch, having given up absolutism and enabling the creation of a constitution three months into his reign. His popularity only increased with the 'successful' Schleswig-Holstein War. That said, Frederick has more 'Eldren eccentricities' than normal and he was the black sheep of his family before taking the throne. He proved an exceedingly difficult husband and had his two marriages as Crown

Prince dissolved. He is currently married to the Human Countess Danner, a former ballet dancer and commoner. While no children of hers can take the throne, the nobility hopes that Frederick will take a proper wife after she dies.

Giant King Donar III of Kvenland rules from his throne in Muspelheim, which is built into a mountainous plateau. Donar is an isolationist; what he wants most of all is for his subjects to be left alone. He joined the Confederation in 1854 as a result of the Kven-Swedish War, when he realised that Finnish and Russian troops had allied with the Swedes against him. Donar's exceptional intelligence has made him both paternal and isolated from his fellow Giants. At the membership ceremony Donar was infatuated with feature singer Henriette Widerberg and invited her to be his court singer. Due to her influence Donar has begun to adopt 'civilised dress' and some fear that his infatuation could hurt his chances of marrying into the nobility of Jotunheim and bringing it into the Confederation.

While Donar holds all of the power, Halmar Olafson, a crusty old Dwarf, wields a great deal of influence. The unofficial 'Mayor of Muspelgruver,' Olafson controls the mines of Muspelheim and therefore its wealth. Olafson handles trade both within and without the kingdom and he controls supply and demand. Should Donar ever cross him Olafson could shut down Muspelgruver in an instant and there's little the Giants could do to stop him. While Donar resents Olafson's position he acknowledges the need for a strong manager in the mines and tolerates him. Donar has other ways of dealing with Olafson than forcefully reopening the mines.

While Tsarina Ekaterina of Russia is also the Queen of Finland, she has found it useful to treat the Grand Duchy as autonomous in order to have influence within the Scandinavian Confederation (which it needs to keep its Baltic ports open). The Tsarina's interest in Finland began in 1796 when the Crown Prince of Sweden came to court the Tsarina's 'daughter.' The meeting went so poorly that the Tsarina, in her guise as Princess Nadja, almost killed him in a duel. Sweden's actions during the Napoleonic Wars a few years later gave the Tsarina a pretext to annex Finland, which also resulted in Gustav IV's abdication.

To further satisfy her 'revenge' against Gustav, the Tsarina arranged for Gustav's son, to be Grand Duke of Finland. In an interesting diplomatic move, she forced the new Grand Duke to marry Ilyana Cherny, the Eldren Russian General who headed the Russian invasion of Finland, and furthermore she gave Ilyana the title of 'Grand Princess,' which set her above her husband. This actually suited the

young Gustav just fine, as his role is ceremonial and his duty is simply to provide an heir. Unfortunately, Grand Princess Ilyana has little respect for her husband and their infrequent meetings are awkward at best.

In spite of being a Russian General and the reputation that follows it, Grand Princess Ilyana has little thirst for battle and is generally a kind and fair monarch. She used the circumstances of the Kven-Swedish War as an excuse to keep her troops from going to the Crimea and instead used them to keep the peace at home. Her efforts have resulted in the Scandinavian Confederation thus far remaining neutral and creating a 'Free Passage Zone' that has prevented British and French warships from blockading Saint Petersburg and other ports.

### Society

Scandinavian nobility can be quite complex, especially since most of the nations have been a part of each other at various points and many nobles hold lands in different Confederation countries. Denmark, for example, has a traditional noble structure (all family members are noble) while Norway passed the Nobility Law in 1821 that abolished noble titles. While current holders could keep them, many nobles actually resided in Denmark and simply kept their Danish titles. Other noble families merely became untitled aristocratic ones and continued mingling with the other upper classes of Europe. In addition, while the Nobility Law ended the titled class there is no universal suffrage; voting is still limited to officials and property owners, keeping an elite class intact.

There is an erroneous belief amongst many Europeans that the Kvennish culture resembles Norway's Viking era. This is primarily due to their style of dress (the Kvennish prefer homemade clothing) and the frequent raids Kvens, especially Giants, make into Sweden and other fertile areas outside its borders. In truth, the Kvens have little desire to expand; they simply want to be left alone. They raid because they are poor negotiators and have a 'relaxed view' on personal property. With Kvenland's entrance into the Confederation such raids are no longer condoned and negotiations ensure a steady supply of goods, but many Swedes and others feel that they are being extorted, as the alternative to giving up goods to the Giants is to risk a raid.

Swedish nobility follows the British model in that only the head of the family gets the title. This, however, was only put in place in 1809 and anyone considered 'noble' at the time of its signing could remain so. At present there are still many untitled Swedish nobles, especially amongst the longer-lived subspecies, entitled to privileges normally reserved for heads of household.

Finland, which follows the continental model of all members where a noble family being noble, is a special case. When Gustav IV gave up Finland he released the Finnish nobility from their fealty to Sweden and in practice the Finnish nobility has proven loyal to Russia since the Grand Duchy's creation. Grand Princess Ilyana takes great pains to make her court seem 'Finnish' rather than Russian, and maintains primarily Finnish advisors.

### Jätte Mördare

The Jätte Mördare, or 'Giant Killers,' are professional mercenaries that specialise in killing or driving away Giants. In the past, when Giant raids were more frequent, Swedish farmers and rangers often hired Jätte Mördare to keep Giants from pillaging their livelihoods. It was (conveniently) believed that Giants weren't truly sapient, so they were treated like bears or wolves.

With Kvenland's acceptance into the Confederation the Jätte Mördare profession was outlawed and replaced with the Gränslandet Rangers, wandering patrols that 'coax' Giants away from inhabited areas. Many former Jätte Mördare have joined the new organisation and only fight Giants if they resist. There is still a demand for Jätte Mördare by rural folk who feel that the rangers are ineffective. Such folk turn to Jätte Mördare who still practice their profession in secret.

### Industry

Scandinavia is still a largely agrarian economy; Europeans in more industrialised states often look to the Nordic countries as an ideal. Small towns are separated by swathes of forest and mountains, giving Scandinavians vast natural resources to tap. Most of the fish, animals, crops, timber and minerals are exported, raising the standard of living for many. While the industrial revolution is starting to make inroads in the major cities, Scandinavia is still awash in pastoral shades. This is not to say that the Confederation doesn't have its issues. Norway's lack of fertile farmland has resulted in crushing poverty amongst most of its people. Kvenland burns up many resources with little to offer in return. The ice industry, while helped by new refrigeration technologies, is also being replaced by them (why transport ice if you can make your own?).

Railways start to connect the major cities of Scandinavia together. Christiana and Stockholm are connected by rail while the Helsing Bridge, which is built between Helsingborg

and Helsingor, connects Copenhagen to Stockholm by rail and is a symbol of Scandinavian unity. Copenhagen is connected to Christiana and Helsinki by steamship and all capitals except for Thrudheim are serviced by the Pan-Scandinavian Aerostat Line.

### Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark. It sits on the islands of Zealand, Denmark's largest island, and Amagar. The city is the major trading hub of the Confederation and home to the Nordic East India Company. The city is known as the 'City of Spires' as most buildings are more-or-less at the same height with only the various church and palace spires breaking the horizontal plane. The city is still surrounded by ramparts although there are plans to demolish them.

Copenhagen is also known for being the 'Home of the Last Dragon.' In 1807 a British fleet attacked Copenhagen to steal its fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. During the battle Christiansborg Palace, home to the royal family, exploded as a large reptilian creature rose from the flames. The creature attacked British and Dutch alike, burning the ships in the harbour even as it set light to the city. Accounts differ as to whether the creature was a dragon, which had not been seen in centuries, or a summoned demon. In either case it took the combined might of British and Dutch cannons to bring it down and the creature finally sank into the harbour. To this day Christiansborg Palace lies in ruins.

The royal family, which had fled the bombardment, moved into Amalianborg Palace, where they reside to this day. It sits just east of the Evangelical Aluminat Frederik's Church, or 'the Marble Church,' which was designed to commemorate the 300 year reign of the Oldenburg dynasty (of which Frederick is a member). It sat unfinished for over a century before investments from the Nordic East India Company finally enabled it to be completed.

The Evangelical Aluminat Church of Our Voices can be found in the southern part of the city. The church is unique in that it has a corkscrew-shaped spire that is shaped by a winding external staircase. Due to the almost unbroken skyline, visitors that stand atop the staircase can see the city laid out before them.

### Muspelheim

The capital of Kvenland is known as the 'triple city' as it has three distinct neighbourhoods that act almost independently from one another. Originally known as 'Thrudheim' after



the archon Thor, Queen Gefjun officially changed the name in 1536 in resignation that her neighbours had long dubbed the city after a land of Giants in Norse mythology. The most visible part of Kvenland is Muspelgate, a neighbourhood that lies on the tip of a fjord. It is a trading port and the size of a small city on its own.

From Muspelgate, travellers can take a precarious road through the lower part of the mountain to a plateau beyond it. This is the heart of Muspelheim, Muspelomstol, where the King keeps court and the Giants reside. Muspelomstol resembles a colossal version of a Viking village with a large hall; smaller sapients need to beware or get inadvertently trampled underfoot. Giant caves are also hollowed out from the mountainsides facing towards the plateau.

The most curious part of Muspelomstol is its Concert Hall, which accommodates both Giants and smaller sapients. Donar had this, along with a neoclassical palace next to it, built for Henriette Widerberg. Unfortunately, the presence of lumbering Giants made it difficult for Widerberg to live inside, so the palace lays empty as Widerberg resides in Muspelgate.

In the mountains surrounding Muspelomstol and beneath its plateau are the vast mines, primarily run by Beastfolk, Dwarves and Orcs. In addition to the mines is a vast subterranean city, Muspelgruver. Most of Kvenland's wealth comes from these mines. There are various points to enter and exit Muspelgruver, most notably a railway that hauls precious minerals out of the mines and into Muspelgate to be processed and sold. As the mines require

a lot of machinery, many vents spew steam, ash and fire, giving Muspelheim and its mountains a warm glow in the twilight and darkness.

## A Tale of Two Muspelheims

Modern academics note that many of the myths in the various Paynim pantheons are half-remembered references to the Antediluvian world. Thus, while modern Muspelheim is not connected to the old, it's possible that the ruins of the original may lie nearby. It could be buried under rock, sitting at the bottom of the Arctic Ocean or even standing tall on a forgotten, ice-locked island.

At least one saga tells of Surtr, King of Muspelheim, joining with the Nergaleen in the Cataclysmic War. In return the archon Nergal bestowed his blessings, which some scholars believe were great and terrible relics.

Chief among these was his flaming sword that laid waste to entire armies. Should Donar or another Giant manage to get a hold of the sword then he could not only unite the Giants of the world into a vast army, but he could also summon the war machines of old to aid him. Some whisper that the sword was discovered and is at the heart of Muspelheim's mining operations, powering the machinery with aetheric and elemental force; if so then Olafson has kept the secret to himself.

## ~ THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN ~

Spain is an ancient land whose position at the mouth of the Mediterranean has made it an international crossroads for centuries. Spain has been controlled by Romans, Goths and the Nithamiyeen before finally uniting a nation-state of its own. After 'discovering' the New World Spain became the largest empire in the world, until political strife, religious wars and, finally, the rebellion of most of its overseas territories while it was devastated by the Napoleonic Wars saw its decline. While France has been sending troops to an unpopular (and currently unsuccessful) war in the Crimea, trouble is brewing along its southern border. After three recent civil wars, Spain is barely held together by Queen Isabella II as her uncle, who actually has the stronger claim to the throne, plots against her from Trieste. Much of Northern Spain is loyal to Don Carlos and, should he return, Spain would erupt into civil war once more, possibly with Austrian aid.

### Spain at a Glance

Governmental System: Constitutional Monarchy.  
 Economy: Agricultural.  
 Currency: Doubloon (3s): 2 escudos: 80 reales.  
 Religion: Aluminat (Roman).  
 Languages: Spanish, Basque, Catalanian, Galician.

	UPPER (10%)	MIDDLE (10%)	LOWER (80%)
Beastfolk (10%)	No	No	Yes
Dwarf (10%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eldren (25%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Giant (2%)	No	No	No
Gnome (1%)	No	Yes	No
Huldufolk (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Human (43%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (2%)	No	No	Yes
Orc (1%)	No	No	Yes

Isabella's government is unstable, with military generals fuelling the two major political parties, the Moderates and the Progressives. The former more or less sided with Isabella while the latter looked to use the threat of violence to push reforms. As warriors, these politicians use the threat of force to oust troublesome ministers and jockey for position. Unsurprisingly, this has led to the creation of a third party, the Democrats, who want to overthrow the monarchy altogether.

The people of Spain are deeply religious, putting their faith in Order and, by extension, the Aluminat. As such there are no official Guildhouses in Spain and academic universities are overseen and regulated by the Church. That is not to say that there aren't magicians in Spain, only that they are associated with the Aluminat and have to be very careful about their activities.

### Mythical Spain

Spain seems to attract more than its fair share of creatures and monsters from bygone eras. In addition to the Giants that still roam Northern Spain there are artefacts and relics left behind by a colony of Cyclopes that no longer exists; indeed the evidence suggests that these were larger than normal Cyclopes and less advanced than their modern cousins.

Spain was once home to several dragons. Julius Caesar personally attested to spotting four of them while in Spain – he personally slew two. In addition to the dragons there is also evidence that several subspecies of *Reptilo Sapiens* once made their home in Spain, especially in the southern regions. If that weren't intriguing enough, at least one legend in Northern Spain speaks of an amphibious 'fish man' that washed ashore. Unlike the Merfolk, this sapient, while humanoid, had scales that covered his body and a more 'fish-like' upper body.

What all of these details have in common is that Spain is an ancient land that was home to several cultures, some that possibly pre-date the Golden Age. Spelunking in caves and digging mines can often uncover wondrous and alien artefacts, many of which may be incomprehensible to modern sapients.

### Geography

Spain is a mountainous country. The Pyrenees act as Spain's border with France, while the Cantabria Mountains stretch across the rest of Northern Spain below the Bay of Biscay. This range also forms the northern range of the mountains that line the plateau upon which most of Spain sits. The plateau itself is bisected by the Sistema Central mountain range into distinct northern and southern areas. Climate-wise this is a region of contrasts, with hot summers and cold winters. While there is little rainfall in the summer there is lots of precipitation in the remaining months. The Sistema Central cuts completely across the plateau but there are ample passes to move across the mountains.



There are several lowland regions in the north-east, south-west, and along the coast. Northern Spain west of the Pyrenees is the greenest part of the country, with warm summers and mild winters. This area is marked by green pastures and lush forests. South-eastern Spain, by contrast, has little rainfall and temperatures during the summer often break 100 °F. The north-east is more temperate and has more rain throughout the year.

### Government

Queen Isabella II rules from Madrid. As a monarch she has many strikes against her; Carlos has the stronger claim to the throne under Salic Law, Isabella is a Huldu, and she is a magician. In fact, it is said that only a few days before her father's death she told her uncle he would tear apart the country to take her crown – an instance of her budding magnetic abilities.

In spite of her mother being replaced during her regency with the progressive General Espartero, Isabella has swung in the other direction during her reign. She is also seen as flaunting her marital vows by having several affairs (her nickname is 'Doña Juanita') while military politicians use heavy-handed tactics to get their way. This has made the Queen quite unpopular, but there is a method to her

madness. The affairs are a ruse and she enables unpopular laws to be enacted to help root out rebellious elements. Whether she succeeds in building a stronger country or hastening its destruction will be proved in time.

The current Prime Minister of Spain is Human Baldermo Espartero, a general and the last regent before Isabella took power at the age of 13 as a result of a military coup over Espartero's 'overzealous' crushing of republican rebellions. Still a progressive, he returned from self-imposed exile to Britain in 1848 and continued his progressive policies, although he is unsuccessfully playing a balancing act between placating the liberal reforms the people clamour for and the reactionary elements within the government and the clergy.

Ironically, Espartero's main threat is coming from his own War Minister, Leopoldo O'Donnell. He supported Isabella's mother and tried to oust Espartero from power a year into the latter's regency. He was sent to Cuba in 1843 as a general and brutally put down a slave revolt a year later by claiming they'd been 'possessed' by Pale Archons. He returned to Spain and, using a number of popular issues as a pretext, marched on Madrid with his army in 1854. He was stopped by Espartero, who offered him position as

## La Inquisición Secreta

Although officially disbanded in 1834, the Inquisition is alive and well, largely due to the Carlist Wars. During the First Carlist War the Inquisition remained in place in the Carlist areas fighting against the Crown. Isabella's disbanding of the Inquisition was a ruse to appease her liberal supporters and, effectively, make remaining members of the Inquisition traitors. At the same time, she reorganised the Inquisition into a new covert organisation that continued to investigate 'sorcerers and witches.'

Isabella II is the head of La Inquisición Secreta; in fact the primary reason why she is so inattentive to running the country is because she is engrossed in ferreting out magical enemies. Currently her agents are investigating Northern Spain and recruiting wayward hermeticists. Isabella understands that the Inquisition has to work slowly and carefully to avoid scandal, but she also knows that each new day brings Carlos closer to another war.

As a covert organisation, members of La Inquisición Secreta are generally embedded in local communities

and maintain cover identities. Communications between members and the organisation take place during confession with properly vetted priests. La Inquisición Secreta counts many magnetists amongst its ranks and generally keep a low profile when conducting missions. Should a confrontation be called for then the organisation sends in Los Cazadores de Brujas, an elite unit of witch hunters that are stationed in a castle outside of Madrid.

### El Cazadore de Brujas – Wolfman Witch Hunter

*Physical:* 9

*Initiative:* 6

*Mental:* 6

*Health:* 12

*Social:* 9

*Quintessence:* 18

*Armour Value:* 4 (lined coat).

*Special Traits:* Order 1, Clairvoyance (*Aura Reading, See the Supernatural*), Demonology (*Protected Domain*), Necromancy (*Rest*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt, Ectoplasmic Bonds, Instant Beauty, Invisibility, Spyglass Eyes*).

*Complications:* Zealot.

*Damage:* Punch (3), Pepperbox Pistol (8), Sabre (10).



War Minister in exchange. In spite of this O'Donnell plots to replace Espartero as Prime Minister.

Infante Carlos is the Dwarf brother of Isabella's father Ferdinand VII and, under Salic Law (in which a daughter can't inherit the throne), Carlos should be king. Ferdinand changed the law in 1830 but it was never officially proclaimed. Thus, when the King died three years later, Carlos asserted his claim to the throne. He was resisted by Maria Christina, Frederick's wife, who'd become regent upon his death. Carlos raised an army to take the throne by force and had the backing of many within Northern Spain.

During both wars Carlos had Austrian backing but promises of military support never came; Britain and France warned off Austria (rumour has it that Carlos received this news as he considered taking Madrid – his failure to do so left his side of the war in tatters). The second civil war had the unfortunate timing of the Springtime of the Peoples; Austria couldn't send forces while its own people were rebelling. Now, with the Crimean War occupying Britain and France, Austria is reconsidering sending a force to reinstall Carlos and possibly hand Austria Gibraltar.

### Society

Spain follows the Continental system in that entire families were considered 'noble' even if there was only one title holder. One additional quirk of the Spanish system is that all dukes and some other nobles have the title of 'grandee,' which sets them apart from the rest of the nobility. Grandees were originally granted to indicate a special status when speaking with the King, but the title has become hereditary. Any grandee, no matter what his title, takes precedence over a non-Grandee noble. The Queen addresses grandees as "My Cousin" and non-grandees as "My Kinsman."

Untitled nobles are known as hidalgos. Many hidalgos claim to be from ancient noble lineage for which there is no record. As such, they enjoy the privilege of being exempt from taxation. Thus, there are hundreds of thousands of hidalgos who owe no money to the Crown. The title was also awarded for those providing service to the Crown, usually of a military nature. All of the Basques are considered hidalgos, meaning that Spain gets no funding from the entire region. Needless to say, there are many who wish to reform the system. Another particularly Spanish tradition is the siesta, a two or three hour break in the afternoon, usually beginning at 2 o'clock. Most businesses close at this time so workers can spend time with their families before returning to work and working late into the evening. In the hotter regions of Spain it's not uncommon for people to nap as well.

### The True Art

While pistols and walking canes have largely replaced swords in duelling and self-defence respectively, the sword remains the symbol of the well-heeled aristocrat and seasoned military officer. Many of the well-to-do still practice the art of fencing, especially amongst the longer-lived sapients. Eldren in particular have been instrumental in preserving old techniques that would otherwise have been forgotten long ago.

France has traditionally been the keeper of the fencing flame, but with the latest revolution many of the best fencers fled abroad. On the Continent this leaves Spain with the largest aristocratic Eldren population and, by extension, the most expert fencers. Every major city in Spain has several fencing schools and Toledo blades are considered the finest in Europe.

Most Spanish teachers use the Destreza system, which applies mathematics and science to its techniques. The fencer imagines herself in the centre of a circle and uses her opponent's size to best determine the points of attack. Unlike French fencing, which concentrates on thrusting techniques, Destreza encourages the fencer to use the most effective means of attack, whether it be a cut or a thrust.

One important point to note is that, at this point in its development, fencing is not a sport entered lightly. The weapons used are designed to kill, and opponents rarely wear protection. Even a friendly duel is likely to end with one or both opponents bleeding.

### Industry

In spite of its dedication to Order, Spain lags behind other European nations in terms of industry. Railways are in their infancy and factories have only just begun to spring up in the cities. The lack of industrialisation is largely due to the impact of the Spanish civil wars as well as lack of government investment; Spain's coffers are sparse due to a significant percentage of hidalgos. Most industry occurs in the most rebellious areas, where autonomous groups like the Basques and Catalonians better their own lives while clandestinely building weapons of war for the coming (third) Carlist War.

Spain is the only European nation that lacks Guildhouses, but this does not mean that Spain lacks licenced hermeticists or a place for them to congregate. Here, thaumaturgical studies

are still overseen by the Aluminat and only religiously devout students have a chance at becoming Doctors of Thaumaturgy. 'Hermetic clubs' are actually attached to the local cathedral and most Spanish hermeticists also serve the Church in some capacity.

The city of Toledo has been known for its steel since Roman times and in recent centuries it has become known as the producers of the finest swords in Europe. Almost every aristocrat in Europe owns at least one Toledo ceremonial sabre. In addition to being of the finest quality, many Toledo swords can be purchased with enchantments and sigils embedded in the blades; the University of Toledo offers a thaumaturgical sword-smithing degree. These magical enhancements have helped keep the Toledo sword-making businesses alive after the industrial revolution mechanised blade-making.

## Madrid

The capital of Spain, Madrid is nestled within the Sistema Central, almost in the centre of the country. Its choice of capital was one of convenience rather than practicality; it was a neutral site that lacked ties with other regional powers when Philip II united the nation. It doesn't even sit on a major river, although the Manzanares does eventually connect to the Tagus through yet another river, the Jarama.

With virtually no grand buildings to start, the King issued a decree that all inhabitants had to reserve a floor of their homes for diplomats. Incensed by this, many residents built their homes with only one storey (an enterprising Dwarf developed a technique to build two-storey homes for smaller sapients that looked like a single storey from the façade). As most of the original homes were modest to begin with, this gives the impression of Madrid being a small walled town than a royal capital. That is not to say that Madrid lacks some impressive buildings. The longest street in the city is the Calle de Alcalá, which contains many large palaces and other grand buildings commissioned after Madrid's promotion to capital, including the impressive Alcalá Gate. The Teatro Real ('Royal Theatre') sits in front of Isabella's palace. The largest church in Madrid is the neoclassical San Francisco el Grande Basilica, which contains great paintings by various masters.

## Barcelona

Barcelona is the regional capital of Catalonia. It is also the major Spanish seaport along the Mediterranean. Important strategically, the city is heavily fortified and, until recently, hasn't expanded much beyond its walls, giving the city a

cramped feel. Now, as the industrial revolution has taken hold, suburbs are sprouting around factories outside the city walls.

The centre of the city is a maze of narrow streets dominated by medieval buildings; a few date back to the Roman Empire. La Rambla, a long, wide, tree-lined boulevard, runs through the centre to the sea. La Rambla is the heart of the city with many magnificent buildings straddling it. A fortress was built overlooking the city in the 18th century where, at the turn of that century, the 'metre' was established as a unit of measurement.

In spite of its support of Carlos many Catalans are revolutionaries that are more concerned with their autonomy (if not outright secession). This has encouraged more radical anarchists and Bolsheviks to take root and occasionally terrorise more conservative elements in the city. La Rambla contains a bloody example, as Aluminat buildings were burned during a riot in 1835. Many clergy were massacred during this event and it is said that their spirits still haunt the boulevard to prey on the unwary. Lately these revolutionary groups are being stirred up again as automated machinery is being brought to the new factories, replacing jobs that workers have done for centuries.

## Basque Country

One of the areas in Northern Spain that is proving difficult for Isabella to control is the Basque Country, which primarily includes Navarre and surrounding provinces (including parts of south-western France). For centuries Basque Country has been distinct from its neighbours – its language is completely different from the Romance languages surrounding it and Dwarfs are as prevalent here as Eldren are in France and the rest of Spain. These elements coupled with local traditions have made Basques feel a distinct cultural identity that likely predates the Roman conquest.

The turn of the century has proven difficult for Basques, as they largely lost their autonomous status on both sides of the border. The Basques sided with Carlos in the hopes of regaining it and now that Isabella has secured her throne she has little reason to grant them new privileges. Currently, the Basques are biding their time with other dissatisfied regions, particularly Catalonia, until Carlos can lead a rebellion once more.

Of great concern to the government in Madrid, however, is the rapidity in which Navarre and the surrounding areas of Northern Spain are industrialising. Using Giant labourers

## Andorran Blades

Andorra is a tiny country nestled within the Pyrenees. For centuries it has been jointly ruled by France and Spain although it acts autonomously. In fact, any move by either of the two countries toward complete annexation would invite war from several European countries. This is due to the 14th century discovery of crysteel in the mines deep beneath the country; ensuring Andorra's autonomy ensures accessibility to these blades for all. Smaller deposits have been found elsewhere, but Andorra seems to be sitting on the mother lode.

Crysteel is a diamond-like gem that is typically found in long, cylindrical shapes. They can be cut into blades and have an extremely sharp edge that easily bypasses armour. Such 'Andorran blades' are highly coveted and prohibitively expensive due to the rarity of the gemstone and the laborious technique in crafting it. In truth, Andorran blades are often purchased for decorative reasons rather than defence, as they have a habit of shattering when parried. Crysteel armour can be created as well, but its tendency to fracture when struck has made it undesirable on the battlefield and its lack of pliability makes it to ungainly looking to be decorative.

Andorran blades cost 7x the price of a similar metal blade. When striking an opponent an Andorran blade halves the protection of any non-magical armour worn. When used to parry or if they are otherwise struck they have a 1-in-3 chance of shattering. A bullet hitting crysteel automatically shatters it.



Bilbao has become the hub of a rapidly spreading railway network across Basque Country. Several new machines are being built, many of them 'impossible' by current industrial standards. The Guild believes that the Basques have a high concentration of Daedalans (magnetists with a mechanical affinity) and are using them in conjunction with Basque sigils and aetheric minerals to 'leap forward' in industrial technologies. Unfortunately, Spain's reluctance to rely on Guild investigators means that it has to rely on the Inquisition, which obviously has its own set of problems.

## ~ THE SWISS CONFEDERATION ~

Prior to Napoleon's invasion Switzerland was a lot like the German Confederation: a loosely aligned group of regions (called 'cantons'). Napoleon turned the country into a

republic, but the new country remained divided between Roman and Evangelical Aluminat sects. Largely confined to the political arena, these tensions escalated over the establishment of the Consortium's Aethereum in Geneva; while the Guild professed independence, many Reformed Swiss believed it to still be under the Aluminat's influence. This led to a brief civil war and the establishment of a true republic in 1848.

By its nature Switzerland is a bastion of neutrality. Its position in the centre of Europe coupled with its lack of strategic worth makes it an excellent place for Continental negotiations. Geneva is often chosen due to the symbolic neutral and pan-European nature of the Consortium as well as its idyllic location on the lake.

Switzerland has also managed to erase most of the class distinctions regarding breeding and it is not uncommon to find a small canton run by a Beastwoman or even an Orc.

## Switzerland at a Glance

Governmental System: Republic.  
 Economy: Industrial.  
 Currency: Franc (1s): 100 centimes.  
 Religion: Aluminat (Roman, Reformed).  
 Languages: German, French, Italian, Romansch.

	UPPER (5%)	MIDDLE (25%)	LOWER (70%)
Beastfolk (15%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dwarf (23%)	Yes	Yes	No
Eldren (5%)	Yes	Yes	No
Giant (2%)	No	No	Yes
Gnome (10%)	Yes	Yes	No
Huldufolk (5%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Human (30%)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ogre (5%)	No	Yes	Yes
Orc (4%)	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Geography

Switzerland is a landlocked country and home to the highest mountains in Europe. The Alps provide a natural defence from invaders and most of the people live on the plateaus in between.

### Alpine Mysteries

Being the highest point in Europe there has been much speculation over the millennia that the Alps are home to the ruins of a great civilisation that survived the Great Flood and are thus full of magical treasures. In truth, the Alps were a land of Giants that was largely ignored by the Antediluvian civilisations until the waters rose and the Alps grew higher. It then became a refuge with the fleeing remnants of civilisation vying with giants over limited land space. The result was a series of skirmishes and battles. In the end, the remnants of the previous civilisations survived by burrowing into the mountains where Giants couldn't go. Uneasy truces were made between the Alpine immigrants and the Giants as the residents dug deeper. Eventually, they found - something. And it was something terrible. Many Alpiners died as they fled to the greener pastures revealed by the receding water, carving warnings against going too deep.

What is beneath the Alps? It was once a Reptilefolk outpost in the era before the Antediluvian civilisations. The Alpiners uncovered many fossils of dinosaurs and other magnificent creatures before digging deep enough that they disturbed

something. Many of the relics they found this deep were impossible to decipher, as they were meant for a different kind of sapient mind. They also discovered malicious tribes of Kappa, who for centuries were called 'cave trolls' by the Swiss, living amongst the ruins of this alien, reptilian settlement.

The smallest of the Reptilefolk, Kappa are rarely taller than three feet; particularly elderly Kappa may be four or five feet tall. They are amphibious and move like salamanders across rock faces. Kappa encountered in the Alps are very xenophobic and untrusting; for centuries it was believed that Kappa were semi-intelligent like the Marsh Trolls - it was only with the advent of the Oriental trade that Europeans discovered more civilised Kappa and made the connection. In Switzerland, the Kappa are primitive and highly territorial and live in small bands; for them, modern Sapient are simply a food source.

## Kappa

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 3  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 0      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 1 (hides)  
*Special Traits:* Night vision  
*Complications:* None  
*Damage:* Knife (4), Spear (6)

### Government

The Swiss people have always preferred local rule to some higher power; this is reflected in the current government. The Swiss Constitution is modelled on that of America and France; the legislature (Federal Assembly) is bicameral, with a Council of States made up of two deputies from each of the 22 cantons, and a larger National Council based on population.

The executive branch is an eight-member Federal Council; each member save one is elected by the Federal Assembly and is in charge of a particular department, such as Finance, Military, or Trade & Customs. The unelected member is the Chair of the Department of Magic; this seat is always reserved for the current Supreme Thaumaturge. While the head of the Federal Council is technically the President (currently Dwarf Jakob Stämpfli), in truth the President's role is largely ceremonial; the Council makes its decisions by consensus. But for all intents and purposes, the Supreme Thaumaturge wields the most influence on the Council and, by extension, the entire government.

The current Supreme Thaumaturge is Helvetia Perchan, an ancient Eldren who participated in the Thirty Years' War and has been the only Supreme Thaumaturge of the Consortium since its inception. Like the Federal Council President, Lady Perchan is merely the first amongst equals in the Consortium's High Council although her words carry great weight. In both the Federal Council and the High Council one ignores Perchan's council at their own risk.

Perchan's Eldren eccentricity is that she is a perfectionist and this has gotten severe in her advanced age. She should have resigned her position decades ago but she insists she hasn't found the right candidate to succeed her. In councils she often gets bound up in minutiae and wastes more time on process than in getting things done. The fact that the Consortium operates as if it were still 1648 is largely her fault. Perchan commands a great deal of respect and she is quite genial when not stressing over particulars, making it difficult for the Grand Thaumaturges to remove her.

### Society

Swiss society is almost unique within Europe in that there is little centralised 'culture,' there is no Swiss language or singular identity that is quintessentially 'Swiss.' Linguistically the Swiss are divided into French, German, and Italian populations and religiously the Swiss are divided between Roman and Reformed Aluminats. The average Swiss citizen sees herself more as a member of her canton than as Swiss, with particular regional customs and traditions that aren't shared by Swiss in other cantons.

Social class is also muddled in Switzerland. For all practical purposes, the Swiss tend to treat each other as equals. There are noble families, but their influence is limited to respect and wealth; they get no privileges under the law. The members of different social classes mingle freely and have adopted the etiquette of the 'middle class standard.' Aristocratic Swiss do not flaunt their wealth and poor Swiss try to hide their lack of it.

With the new constitution there are attempts to foster a national identity, but such attempts are overshadowed by Switzerland's place in international politics. When governments wish to speak they often contact the Consortium directly, bypassing the Swiss government (currently seen as investment increases in Geneva at the expense of Bern). Switzerland's neutrality also prevents its citizens from defining themselves against common enemies. Without a strong national government getting involved in world affairs, the Swiss mindset of individualism is reinforced.

## Guild Rings

While not universal, it's common for graduates who officially enter the Guild to purchase a 'Guild ring' that signifies their new status. Originally these rings were made of silver, but the discovery of pure platinum toward the end of the 18th century has led to most Guild rings now being fashioned of platinum. The gemstone is largely personal preference although blue sapphires are now the most common, with blue heart diamonds reserved for the wealthiest hermeticists. While most Guild rings are cosmetic, some hermeticists have them enchanted as heartstones.

### Industry

Switzerland's economy is largely rural, although the industrial revolution has developed within the cities, albeit in a different form. Swiss industrialists rely on hydraulic power and aetheric energy rather than steam, as there is no shortage of waterfalls or eager hermeticists within the country. Aetherically-powered clockwork devices are ubiquitous within the major cities and Talman's Clockworks Company in Bern produces the most automata in Europe outside of Prague. Geneva is renowned for its mastery of clockwork limb replacement.

Switzerland has the largest population of wyverns in Europe and thus the most trainers of wyverns in Europe. There is at least one wyvern training ground in every major city and aristocrats come from all over Europe to purchase trained wyverns.

Switzerland's main industry, of course, is magic. The Consortium of Hermetic Guilds is headquartered in Geneva and rests on a telluric hub of aetheric energy, making it one of the most magically-rich areas on the Continent. Due to this influx of energy the Celestial Engine is pushed 2 Cogs to the left of anyone within Guild grounds (including the Hermetic College of the University of Geneva) and 1 Cog to the left in the city.

Switzerland is still largely inaccessible beyond winding roads and rivers; railways are only begun to be built across the country and currently there are no international railways. Switzerland does have a thriving aerostat transportation system that is considered amongst the most profitable on the Continent. Even the Guild maintains a small aerostat fleet for its members' use in shuttling to and from the Aethereum.

## Alpinism

In 1854, British Dwarf mountaineer Alfred Wills climbed the Metterhorn mountain and Gnome artificer Felix 'Fuzzy' Rambert dodged boulders hurled by Giants to land his autogyro on the summit of Königs Spitze a few months later, there has been a rush of would-be adventurers looking to climb all of the mountains in the Alps.

Such alpine journeys are fraught with danger. In addition to avalanches, strong winds, hidden crevices and other natural hazards, mountaineers have to deal with territorial Giants, Kappa and wyverns. Kappa in particular are a crafty threat, employing a variety of creative traps in order to ensnare victims and cook them for dinner.

Still, the prestige of climbing a mountain currently spurs many mountaineers to brave the dangers. Some of them have even formed 'Alpine Clubs' in their home cities. Many of these clubs hold different levels of prestige based on how a mountain is climbed; more weight is usually given to someone who scales a mountain versus someone who uses science or sorcery to do the same.

### Bern

Bern is the capital of Switzerland (although one can be forgiven for thinking it's Geneva). It is the seat of the Federal Assembly although the Federal Council usually meets in Geneva out of respect for the Supreme Thaumaturge. The city is almost completely surrounded by the Aar River which connects to the Rhine, which reinforces the canton's connections to the German Confederation.

Bern retains much of its medieval character in its architecture (and looks the most medieval of any major Swiss city). The most dominant landmark is the Bern Minster, a Reformed Aluminat cathedral with a still-uncompleted tower (in spite of construction starting in the early 15th century) that dominates the skyline ("it would be finished if this were Geneva" is a common refrain). Similarly, the plans to build the Federal Palace to house the new government still haven't made it past the drawing board. In spite of these slights industry marches on in Bern as new factories open around the medieval city.

Another symbol of Bern's dubious status as the capital is the Bärengraben, or 'Bear Pit.' The bear has long been the symbol of Bern since its founder, Duke Berthold V of Zähringen, named the city after the first animal he killed in the wood that would be cleared for it back in 1191. Since then, bears have been kept in pits around the city. Two years ago, the last of the bears died and it was determined a new pit needed to be built. The empty old one is yet another reminder that Bern doesn't shine as brightly as Geneva.

It is little wonder then, how Bolshevik elements are strengthening in the city. As Bern is the largest canton in Switzerland, some revolutionaries believe it is time to

overthrow the ineffective federal government and replace it with one that will respond to the needs of Bern directly. It's worth noting that many other cantons feel the same...

### Geneva

Often hailed as the unofficial capital of Switzerland, Geneva is a French-speaking city with a Reformed Aluminat majority. Geneva sits on the shore of Lake Geneva in the south-westernmost corner of Switzerland. While it neighbours France, Geneva is a Reformed Aluminat city and thus its inhabitants feel little fellowship in spite of French being Geneva's main language. In spite of this Geneva's position on the Rhône River and proximity to southern passes along the Alps fosters commerce with Southern France and Sardinia.

Nestled along the edge of the lake and bisected by the river Geneva is a very picturesque. Mountains line Lake Geneva and the city, in spite of losing its defensive walls, still exudes an isolated, medieval feel that is only strengthened by the multitude of scholars that inhabit the city. As most of these scholars are well-to-do and the city has a reputation for clockworks, it should come as no surprise that many scholars, both mundane and magical, are adorned with clockwork marvels.

Geneva straddles the Rhône River, resulting in two unequally sized parts of the city. On the right bank is the smaller part of Geneva, a quarter known as Saint Gervais. It's primarily home to the working class. On the left bank is the old city, including some buildings that go back centuries. The quarters of Eaux, Vives and Carouge are found here, as are the business, financial and industrial hearts of the city.

Four bridges span the Rhone. One, a long wooden bridge is in front of the Hotel des Bergues in Saint Gervais. A narrow suspension bridge is in front of the Hydraulic Machine. Two small bridges are at the bottom of Rues Rousseau and De Coutance. A fifth bridge is at a right angle to the Rue Rousseau Bridge and connects to Ile Rousseau.

## L'Ordre de Villard

The Order of Villard is a hermetic order dedicated to hunting and destroying automata and Mechanical Folk that have gone rogue. Headquartered in Geneva, the Order also has a large presence in Prague as well as other industrial centres. Members of the order usually have military experience and are trained in the use of Maleficium, specifically to send spirits back to the beyond.

Given their violent profession and the threats they face, some members of the Order have clockwork limbs to replace those lost in the hunt. It is considered a badge of honour to replace one's limb with a mechanical one from an automaton or Mechanical Man that the hunter had personally felled. Many hunters take such 'trophies' from exceptionally well-crafted prey in case they need to replace a limb later.



The city was once ringed by massive medieval fortifications, but the Grand Council began dismantling them in 1841, despite the protests of the Guild who favoured the walls remaining in place as an added measure of protection for their university. Still, the walls aren't completely gone and their impression is still felt by the local population who, much to the confusion of visitors, still refer to them when giving directions.

While no railways have yet to be laid between Geneva and its neighbours, there is an aerodrome at the edge of the city that services the large number of academics and hermeticists that visit or live in the city. Geneva is perhaps the most-trafficked city in Europe in terms of aerostat travel and it is rare indeed not to see two or three aerostats in the air above the city at any given time during daylight hours (aerostats rarely travel at night due to risk presented by the mountainous terrain).

Geneva has become the centre of hermeticism in Europe. The Aetherium, the largest Guildhouse of the Consortium, is a magnificent neo-classical building that sits near the shore of the lake; the Thaumaturgical College sits behind it connected by a small courtyard. The presence of the Aetherium has a marked impact on the city. In addition to the changes in the Celestial Engine (see Industry), aetheric energy permeates the city and occasionally 'awakens' magical abilities that a resident or foreign traveller didn't know she had.

In addition, Geneva is becoming a magnet for supernatural creatures drawn by the scent of magic. The Aetherium and the high population of magicians have also affected Geneva culturally; mechanical marvels are rarely displayed openly as status symbols. An exception to this is clockwork, which has a long history within the city and is often animated by magic rather than mundane means.

### Mechanical Men

Given that the Consortium makes its headquarters in Geneva and the city's reputation for clockworks, it should come as little surprise that Geneva has the largest population of Mechanical Men amongst all the cities in Europe. In contrast to standard automata, of which Prague may claim the greatest number, Mechanical Men marry an automaton body with an independent spirit. The spirit is magically bound to the automaton and manipulates it as it would one of flesh and bone.

With the Consortium's dominance in Swiss politics, Mechanical Men have more rights in Geneva than anywhere else in Europe. Most Mechanical Men are former magicians



or wealthy individuals that sought to cheat death by means other than Maleficium. While most European states consider binding a spirit to an automaton a form of necromancy, the Consortium officially sanctions it providing it was performed by a hermeticist with a Maleficium licence and it can be proven that the spirit was bound voluntarily. Also, Mechanical Men must allow the majority of their wealth to be redistributed as if they have died except for small amount set aside for maintenance.

It's an open, dirty secret amongst the Guild that Mechanical Men aren't stable; while a well-oiled and maintained

machine might last centuries the mind controlling it tends to lose touch with its sapiency at a much quicker rate. This is because that, regardless of its capabilities, a mechanical frame is a poor substitute for a sapient body.

A Mechanical Man cannot 'feel' as he once did, or enjoy eating and drinking or indulging in more intimate pleasures. The frustration, depression and rage that results can be dangerous as well as shred the Mechanical Man's remaining sanity. In such cases the Order of Daedalus is called upon to end the threat and any legal protections the Mechanical Man may have had are revoked.

### New Complication: Aetheric Withdrawal\*

While many magicians come to study at the University of Geneva, the shifting of the Celestial Engine has a hidden danger. Magic is more easily manipulated within the walls of the university and lesser magicians tend to find it more difficult to practice magic once they've returned home. In most cases this is simply an adjustment that the magician makes with a little more practice and effort.

In your case, however, you have difficulty adjusting to the increasing difficulty of spellcasting outside of Geneva and you get easily frustrated whenever you fail. Whenever you try to use a magical ability and fail, you must make an Average Resolve roll. If you fail to get at least one success then you suffer a 2 black dice penalty on any magical rolls you make until the end of the scene.





# CHAPTER II

## THE CONCERT IN FLAMES



# THE CONCERT IN FLAMES

*The Concert in Flames* is a fast-paced thriller that takes the adventurers through western and central Europe to prevent a mad hermeticist from bringing the wrath of a powerful Old God upon the planet. Throughout the course of this penny dreadful the adventurers have an opportunity to reshape Continental politics, including the possibility of ending the Crimean War without setting foot in Russia!

Gamesmasters that have run previously published penny dreadfuls may note a marked difference in tone, as these earlier adventures emphasised investigative associations by adventurers that are just beginning their careers. *The Concert in Flames*, by contrast, assumes the adventurers are seasoned and capable of getting in and out of dangerous scrapes with forces intent on killing them. The default assumption is that the adventurers are members of the Star Chamber association, but in fact any band of adventurers with a few penny dreadfuls under their belts should do just fine!

## The Star Chamber

If the Gamesmaster is using *The Concert in Flames* in conjunction with a previous version of *Victoriana* then she may be wondering what the Star Chamber is. Simply put, the Star Chamber is a secret group of British agents tasked with protecting the Empire from any who would attempt to destroy it, both from without and within.

Agents are drawn from all walks of life; adventurers belonging to it may be of any social class or occupation. They are exempt from the common courts and answer directly to the Queen, the Prime Minister and a trusted handful of Peers and unofficial advisors. Agents that abuse their privilege are 'disappeared.'

## The Rubber Band Snaps Back?

As presented, *Victoriana* is a world in which the broad sweep of history matches our own but the details often stray. This is the 'rubber band theory.' *Victoriana* sometimes pulls history away from its destined path but eventually the rubber band snaps back into place, keeping the flow of history intact. But, as *Victoriana* enters 1856 there are several big differences that threaten to snap the rubber band, offering the possibility that the latter half of the 19th century and beyond could play out very differently from our own.

This penny dreadful provides the scissors to cut the rubber band for good. Depending on how the adventurers do, France and Austria could crumble, leaving Prussia, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the Italian States to dramatically redraw the boundaries of Central Europe.

Alternatively, the rubber band may be ready to snap back. This penny dreadful offers that option, with the potential ending of the Crimean War, the coronation of an Emperor in France and the replacement of Austrian Emperor Franz Karl with the one from our world, Franz Joseph. While not

exactly like our world (Napoleon would effectively replace the real world's Napoleon III), the Europe of *Victoriana* would be essentially the same heading into the 1860s.

Does any of this invalidate the material in the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*? Of course not! Europe has a history of shifting monarchies and governments throughout the 19th century; a Gamesmaster running an on-going *Victoriana* campaign would likely do this on her own if drawing inspiration from history. All *Victoriana* products presume the status quo of the beginning of 1856, but, as Countess Lyonesse noted, 1856 would be one of the most adventurous years of her life and *Victoriana* in general. This penny dreadful offers the Gamesmaster an opportunity to show her players that their actions and missteps can truly change the world.

Throughout this penny dreadful there will be similar sidebars. These are designed to highlight potential world changes and offer advice on how to adjust them to the needs of your penny dreadful. While changing the status quo can be fun, it shouldn't be at the expense of a future penny dreadful idea a Gamesmaster has in the back of her mind!

One other aspect that sets this penny dreadful apart plot-wise is the number of associations involved. Throughout the course of this penny dreadful the adventurers come across agents of the Night Choir, the Silencius, the Thulian Order, the Praetorian Guard and the Vila. Some are friends, some are foes; and sometimes it is difficult to tell which is which.

### Background: The Legacy of the Thirty Years' War

The plot of this penny dreadful hinges upon the result of the Thirty Years' War, when a particular knightly order prevented the destruction of the world by imprisoning an abomination that threatened to destroy the world. Presently, a secret organisation known as the Thulian Order wishes to release the abomination, known as Chernobog, to further its own ends. Unfortunately, Chernobog cannot be contained and, once released, will embark on destroying the world. How did this abomination come to be? For the answer one must look to the past.

Centuries ago, as the Roman Empire and its Aluminat-controlled successors marched across Europe, the Paynim followers did not go quietly. Paynim warriors fought the Aluminat at every turn, slowing the pace of conversion but never quite turning the tide. Slowly but surely, Europeans adopted the Aluminat.

As the Paynim resistance was decimated they grew desperate and the survivors of these Paynim traditions banded together. The longer they did so, the more their traditions melded, causing their respective archons to meld together; all war archons, for example, became a single entity accepting prayers from worshippers of Ares, Morrigan, Svetovid and Tiw. This merging was unwittingly furthered by the Aluminat, who often lumped the Paynim archons together with the pale archons as simply 'Legion.' As Eastern Europe was the last to be converted, the local name for Legion, 'Chernobog,' became the standard bearer of Paynim prayers.

By the dawn of the Thirty Years' War, Chernobog had become more than just a convenient short-hand; it had melded together and embodied all of the darkest, most powerful, angry and desperate aspects of all Paynim archons in Europe and its borderlands. It was no longer simply an archon but an abomination, one focused towards a single purpose, the destruction of the Aluminat and the Order it represented. Chernobog's sapient agents tore the Holy Roman Empire, the Aluminat's strongest symbol, apart and plunged most of Europe into a great war amongst

the various Aluminat sects. As these forces destroyed each other Chernobog worked to win the hearts and minds of the peasants caught in the middle.

The Aluminat Order of the Knights Palatine was tasked with destroying Chernobog. The Conclave hoped that capturing or killing a few Paynim leaders would fracture their forces enough to break the power Chernobog held, but the Pale Knights, over the course of their mission, discovered to their horror that, after centuries of oppression and prayers, Chernobog was more than just a potent archon. Its power had intertwined within the aetheric matrix that held the world together. Not only did Chernobog have the power to tear the world apart, but attempting to destroy it would result in the same. As the war raged, the Pale Knights hatched a daring scheme. Telluric lines of aetheric energy criss-crossed the Continent and almost all of them converged at a single point: Lake Geneva. The particular acoustics of the surrounding mountains could be used in a Bardic ritual that could not only bind and trap Chernobog, but ensure that its power was diluted throughout the Continent. Thus, if the abomination could not be destroyed, its power could be sapped enough to negate its threat.

Using an Aluminat conference in Geneva as a lure and further using the telluric lines to pull Chernobog to the lake, the Pale Knights used all of their power to trap the abomination. Although most of the knights fell that day in the end Chernobog was trapped. As the knights represented the best from all over the Continent their example inspired an end to the war as the Council of Geneva, already there as part of the trap, acted as a magical and religious extension to the Peace of Westphalia.

The Consortium of Hermetic Guilds was created as a distinct entity from the Aluminat and established its international headquarters, the Aetherium, above Chernobog's aetheric prison. The Inquisition, now seen as the 'enabling agent' that led to the creation of Chernobog in the first place, was officially disbanded (no new members would be inducted into the Pale Knights for similar reasons). The Consortium was now responsible for the policing of magicians and established the Silencius to do just that.

With the world having teetered on the brink of destruction, both the Aluminat and the Consortium chose to downplay the role Chernobog played in the Thirty Years' War. They ensured that the history books treated it as a largely sectarian conflict and no mention was made of the abomination's imprisonment. Only the Conclave, a handful of Grand Hermeticists, and the surviving Pale Knights knew the truth.

This almost-catastrophe affected the aether as well. More specifically, it pushed many archons into becoming Ophanim. The Ophanim believe that the only way to protect the world is to preserve it, draining away all of Entropy's influence. The Ophanim hopes that this will dissolve Chernobog's attachments in the world, ultimately isolating the abomination enough to destroy it. Over the last couple of centuries the Ophanim has been preaching Dogma and limiting the use of magic any way they can. This has led to the Aluminat policy of hermeticism as a necessary evil and the declaration of any magic that threatens Order to be Maleficium.

Today, only Grand Hermeticists know the ritual necessary to tap into Chernobog's diluted power. Usually, this provides just enough power to move the Celestial Engine one cog towards Entropy for any given spell. It has also saturated Geneva, where the prison gem is located, so that Geneva is always a cog or two closer to Entropy than the rest of the Continent. Most of these hermeticists believe that the prison gem is actually a finite reservoir of Chernobog's quintessence and use it sparingly. Only the Supreme Hermeticist (and select others) know the truth: that the seething, raging abomination is still trapped inside, desperate for release. What no one knows is that, while

trapped in its prison, Chernobog has become convinced that the only way to save the world is to utterly destroy it.

## The Thulian Plan

The crux of this penny dreadful is the Thulian Order, which plans to use the power of Chernobog to tilt the world back towards Entropy with the Thulians in control of the new world order that results. For centuries, the Thulian Order had been content to play a long game; recent events, however, have forced them to accelerate their plans. Over the centuries the Order has uncovered several references to the Nergaleen, a demonic army in the service of the Mesopotamian Archon Nergal. The Nergaleen are believed to be the cause of the Great Cataclysm that destroyed the Golden Age of Magic and reshaped the world. Recently a Thulian submersible excavating a sunken city in the Atlantic discovered a crystal that was aetherically active. While the Thulians could not fully comprehend the aetheric information being broadcast by the crystal they understood enough to know that the Nergaleen are returning.

High-ranking Thulian Grand Hermeticist Joseph Fouché offered a solution. In his duties as a member of the Silencius he destroyed a Hungarian Litche, Szabo Elek, who was a

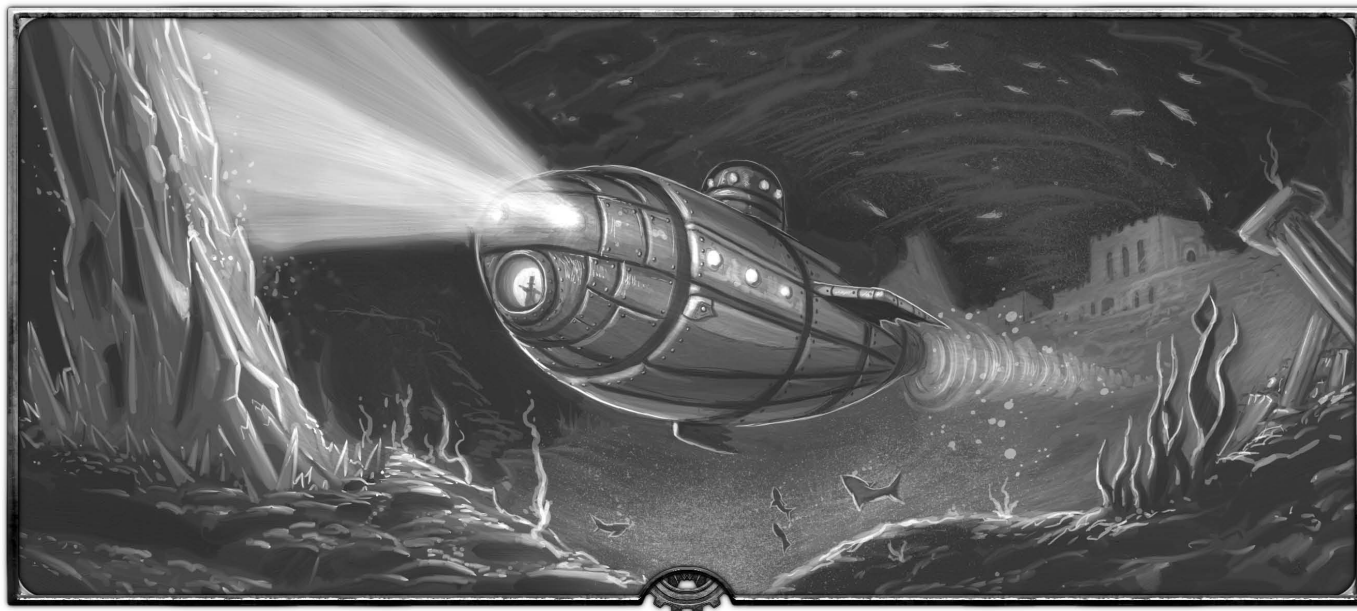
## The Silencius and the Thulian Order

Grand Hermeticist Joseph Fouché is a member of both the Silencius and the Thulian Order. The Silencius is the secretive 'internal affairs' organisation within the Consortium of Hermetic Guilds; it's tasked with ensuring that hermeticists practice magic appropriately as agreed to by the various Guilds under the Consortium's umbrella. The Silencius is unique in the Consortium in that it is truly an international organisation; while each national Guild operates according to its own structure the Silencius acts as 'quality control' and ultimately answers only to the Supreme Hermeticist in Geneva. While this gives the Silencius a lot of power, the organisation is careful not to abuse it. Most hermeticists held to be in violation are given multiple opportunities to 'shape up' before more direct action is taken.

The Thulian Order is a secret society that has been festering in the Consortium since its inception. Named after an antediluvian continent that sank during the Great Cataclysm, the Thulian Order believes that the world should be ruled by hermeticists. As many hermeticists feel that their ability to manipulate the aether sets them apart from the rest of Sapiency, the Thulian Order has had no shortage of recruits. Over time, the Order has worked its way into almost all of the Guilds, often taking ranking positions. Indeed, it was a coup when Fouché was accepted into the Silencius; the Thulian Order now has the ability to judge.

The Thulian Order also sees the Roman Aluminat Church as a threat, since it considers Nergal an Ophanim. The Order hopes that the revolutions destabilise France and Central Europe enough to push back Roman Aluminat influence (primarily through the creation of a strong Non-Roman German Empire). Once the Order has cleansed Central Europe, it plans to turn its attention towards Italy and Spain.

More information on both the Silencius and the Thulian Order can be found in *Faces in the Smoke Volume One - The Secret Masters*.



founding member of the Consortium prior to his Litchedom. While perusing the Litché's library and journals Fouché discovered the truth about Chernobog. Fouché realised that if Chernobog could be released it may have the power to move the world towards Entropy and thus make magicians more able to withstand the Nergaleen.

While initially at a loss as to how to tap that power that was so carefully imprisoned, Fouché soon discovered a means of releasing him by overcoming the protections that held him. Professor Jacek Bronowski of Vienna University believed that it was possible to 'rejuvenate' a faded archon by recruiting more believers. Towards that end Bronowski and his 'Night Choir,' a social revolutionary group within the university, promoted the idea of 'Citizen Liberty,' a re-flavoured Roman archon (Libertas) recast as a revolutionary icon. Unfortunately for Bronowski, his efforts largely failed. While 'Citizen Liberty' inspired a few magicians on a local level, she never became the archon he'd hoped she'd be and the movement she fostered, the Springtime of the Peoples, largely failed outside of France.

Fouché believed that Bronowski was onto something, but he simply wasn't focused enough. While the idea of Citizen Liberty could fuel Chernobog, the aetheric matrix that bound him in Geneva was powerful enough to keep intermittent attempts to free Chernobog out; after all, faithful Paynim worshippers have been sending him prayers for years to no avail. What was needed was a focus, a massive container of worshipper-charged quintessence that could break through the matrix and fuel Chernobog with enough power to set him free.

Ironically the key to release Chernobog lies in the hands of his jailors. The newly formed Consortium of Hermetic Guilds chose Geneva as its headquarters because it intended to use fragments of Chernobog's power to fuel its more ambitious magical experiments. While such use only provides a small opening into the matrix, it is enough for someone with enough power to blast it wide open. Once Chernobog, now Citizen Liberty, was free, he could continue to soak up the quintessence generated by successive revolutions and grow in power, hopefully pushing the world towards Entropy and empower magicians to repel the coming Nergaleen.

Fouché chose Oskar Hahn, an estranged member of Bronowski's Night Choir, as his catalyst. Hahn was a mediocre composer at best but his heart was revolutionary. He'd broken with Bronowski over accusations that he'd plagiarised *Regina*, which was correct, but he was desperate to use the opera to succeed where Bronowski had failed. Unbeknownst to Hahn, the Thulian Order covered up any further suggestions that the opera was plagiarised and had already seeded the Night Choir with an agent of their own, Rosine Urmacher.

All that was needed was for the Thulians to pick the perfect time to strike. The French people unwittingly made that decision for them, as their dissatisfaction with the ongoing Crimean War prompted the French government to ask Britain to release Napoleon. The latter complied and now Napoleon was returning home to found the new French Empire. His coronation would coincide with the Austrian unity concert. With two swift blows, the Thulian Order



could eliminate two emperors and throw Europe into chaos. Even better, a third of the Aluminat Conclave are presiding over the coronation, enabling the Thulian Order to strike a serious blow against the church.

Toward this end the Thulian Order has acquired a large blue diamond that they cut into four pieces. The largest diamond would be sent to Fouché's residence in Geneva, where it would receive quintessence generated by the other three and then be used to open Chernobog's prison. The other pieces were slated to go to Paris, Pest and Prague. The Night Choir would foment rebellion in these cities and fuel their corresponding blue diamonds, which in turn would fuel the master diamond. Once full, the master diamond would release its energy, releasing Chernobog.

Unfortunately for Fouché he has made three miscalculations. First, while the Choristers of the Night Choir are aware that they are performing assassinations, they had no idea of the destructive power that they are unleashing. Arnaud

Montesquieu, the Chorister in Paris, discovers this while preparing for the coronation and threatens to derail the plan.

Second, Fouché has underestimated the power of Chernobog. With the Thulian Order's strong presence in the German Confederation, Fouché believes that he can manipulate Prussia into becoming a strong central state while pushing Chernobog's efforts into Italy or Russia. Unfortunately, Fouché's plan works too well and the strength of 'Citizen Liberty' makes Chernobog too powerful and uncontrollable.

Finally, Fouché underestimates the tenacity of the adventurers. Their investigations into the Parisian plot forces Fouché to reorganise his plans as they unfold, inadvertently introducing weaknesses into his scheme. By following these clues, the adventurers can unravel the mystery in time to stop Chernobog from consuming Europe, and eventually the world, in the flames of its wrath.

## *Regina*

As in our own history, *Regina* is an opera written by Albert Lortzing. Composed during the 1848 revolutions, the opera depicts the tensions between moderate and radical factions within the proletariat. In our world Lortzing's opera was never performed until the end of the 19th century and even then it was heavily edited (Lortzing never saw it performed, having died in 1951), but in Victoriana the opera was purchased by Oskar Hahn and rewritten to be a subtle but scathing indictment of the Austrian government.

As rewritten by Hahn the opera still unfolds in three acts revolving around workers in a factory. In Act I the workers are striking and torn between the moderate and radical factions led by Robert and Stephen respectively. Stephen kidnaps Regina, the factory owner's daughter, when royal forces storm the factory and burn it to the ground. Robert is interrogated by the Royal Captain, who doesn't entirely trust Robert and cautions him to go home. Instead, Robert swears to find Regina, his fiancé.

In Act II Stephen takes Regina to a 'republican base' that is consecrated by the Old Gods; he intends to use enchantments and arms stored there to aid the revolutionary cause. He is stopped when Robert, Regina's betrothed, storms the base with the moderate faction and kills Stephen, freeing Regina. The workers between the two factions unite and agree to work towards a constitutional state together.

In Act III Robert, Regina and the workers discover that they are surrounded by royal forces that have already decimated the republican army. The Royal Captain orders them to surrender. Regina begs Robert to surrender, believing that she can sort it all out once the tensions are relaxed. Robert, now a radical like Stephen, believes that the royal forces will kill them anyway as examples. He decides to use the black powder stockpile to blow up everyone in a grand revolutionary gesture.

Realising that this isn't the way to reform, Regina begs him to reconsider. When Robert refuses, Regina shoots him and orders the workers to surrender. The Royal Captain enters and comforts her as the curtain falls.

Adventurers asking about the opera can, with a Routine (+3 dice) Presence + Conversation, General Knowledge, or High Society roll, discover that this opera has a juicy reputation. It was actually shut down by the Austrian police on the second night of its performance due to charges of sedition. Only Oskar Hahn's vigorous defence of the opera as actually mocking Prussia has enabled the opera to continue and the notoriety gained from this incident has made the opera very popular in other cities within the Empire as patrons flock to see it, hoping to discern for themselves whether the satirical target is Austria or Prussia.

## Getting the Adventurers Involved

This penny dreadful is designed for adventurers in the action-adventure mould. Towards that end *The Concert in Flames* is designed for the Star Chamber association. It can also be played with any adventurers with a strong enough reputation to be considered as part of an escort or entourage for a special ambassador. As the Countess Lyonesse isn't a typical ambassador or known for her adherence to convention, it is entirely within her character to select adventurers who are 'interesting' to her no matter what their qualifications. Should any such adventurers ask why they were chosen, the Countess offers a sly smile and says that they were favoured by the 'Mad King' with no further explanation.

Alternatively, Parisian adventurers can be used, especially those working for the Département aéthérique of the Sûreté (the French version of Scotland Yard's Aetheric Branch). In this case the investigators are put on the case (or employed, if they are private investigators) by Chief Inspector Danton. The penny dreadful unfolds naturally in such a case, as France would want them to continue their investigations into Austria and Switzerland just as much as Britain would.

## A Note on Language

The bulk of this penny dreadful takes place in areas of Europe where English isn't the primary language. As the adventurers are likely to be British, this can pose a problem for adventurers who aren't fluent in French, German, or Italian. Furthermore, with each language costing 4 XP just to get '0' level, they aren't likely to pick up a rudimentary understanding of 1 or 2 languages before the penny dreadful begins. The Polyglot talent is a cheaper option.

Adventurers may also use Thaumaturgy, but it is rather limited, offering a hermeticist only a few minutes of communication. While it's possible that the Star Chamber or the Guild may have minor relics that confer foreign languages this option should be carefully considered as it can make knowing foreign languages moot and chip away at the diversity that is Europe.

A more satisfying option is simply for the adventurers to ask for local assistance. A French police officer or Austrian guide can act as a go-between and provide the Gamesmaster with an opportunity for humorous mistranslations or duplicitous double-dealings. In addition, several of the more prominent supporting characters would probably know English or another language with which the adventurers are familiar in addition to their native tongue.

## Blood on the *Streets of Shadow*

If your group has already played through the adventures in *STREETS OF SHADOW* then the situation looks even more desperate for Britain. While calls for revolution have died down since the Conscription Bill was tabled, the aftermath of events in the final chapter (without spoiling things) leaves Britain in a very difficult place politically to continue throwing resources into the Crimean War. In short, Britain has even more impetus to end the war and the Countess' mission becomes that much more desperate.

## When Adventurers Go Astray

The chapters as presented in *The Concert in Flames* follow a natural progression; the adventurers begin in Paris and end up trying to stop Napoleon's assassination. Clues in Paris lead to Vienna and Prague, but the time crunch encourages a stop in Vienna first. Once there, the adventures learn they need to get to Pest-Buda quickly before a second assassination, this one against the Austrian Emperor, occurs. After that the adventurers finally investigate Urmacher in Prague, which in turn leads them to the climax in Geneva. It sounds so simple, doesn't it?

Of course, players being what they are, someone in any given group is going to suggest going to the cities out of order and will likely drag the rest of the group with them. Don't panic! As long as the Gamesmaster has an understanding of the overall Thulian plot, she can adjust things on the fly.

The most likely deviation is that the adventurers decide to visit Prague before Vienna or Pest-Buda (depending on the train route). In this case, they may meet, or more accurately, accuse Rosine Urmacher of being complicit in Napoleon's assassination attempt. Unfortunately, Fouché's influence and connections within the Austrian authorities ties up Centurion Bohn's investigation.

Before they can get much further, the adventurers receive a communiqué from Countess Lyonesse to rendezvous with her in Pest-Buda, as she fears for the Emperor's safety tonight!

Rosine Urmacher uses this opportunity to move her remaining automata to her staging ground at Mount Blanik. Should the adventurers remain in Prague to pursue her she sends automata after them while she travels to the staging

ground to begin the march a day earlier than planned. This attack offers an opportunity for Rabbi Obediah Spinoza to get involved and help the adventurers defeat Urmacher before (hopefully) having time to make a difference in Pest-Buda.

It's also possible that the adventurers may travel to Geneva early or otherwise alert the authorities before the Thulians can release Chernobog. Should that happen then Fouché, already in Geneva, moves to assuage the Guild's fears by 'arresting' all Thulians. In truth, he's simply removing them from danger before he destroys the Aetherium. If the adventurers suspect Fouché and share their concerns, then Fouché allows himself to be arrested without revealing the

plan. He is a true believer in the danger of the Nergaleen and would gladly sacrifice his own life to save the world.

Below are the rail and aerostat travel times between cities. It's also interesting to note that air travel doesn't significantly reduce travel time; in fact, as aerostats tend to have fewer daily flights, rail travel is likely still the fastest option.

Here are rough rail travel times:

3 hours	Vienna to Pest-Buda
4 hours	Vienna to Prague
6 hours	Prague to Pest-Buda

## A Timeline of Events

As a number of events in this penny dreadful take place at predetermined times, it is useful to have a reference for them. This should guide the Gamesmaster when her players are trying to accomplish things between events. As always, the Gamesmaster is the final authority of what happens when, so don't feel you have to stick to the timeline if shuffling things a bit helps the penny dreadful along. In addition to the 'hard points,' we've also listed the adventurers' most likely actions along the timeline. These are in italics as they may change depending on the adventurers' actions.

Day 1 (morning):

Countess Lyonesse recruits the adventurers. They travel to Paris.

Day 1 (evening):

A ball in Napoleon's honour takes place at Tuileries Palace. Arnaud Montesquieu is killed while on his way to the ball.

*The adventurers investigate the murder scene and Notre Dame cathedral.*

Day 2 (morning):

*The adventurers continue their investigation. They uncover a revolutionary plot that may lead to an assassination!*

Day 2 (11:00am):

The Thulian Order launches an aerostat to assassinate Napoleon at his coronation.

*The adventurers learn of Urmacher's potential involvement.*

Day 2 (noon):

*The last musketeer tells the adventurers that Chernobog is back.*

Day 2 (evening):

*The adventurers board a train to Vienna. They stop for the night in Munich.*

Day 3 (morning):

Oskar Hahn commits suicide. The Tsarina leaves St Petersburg.

*The adventurers arrive in Vienna. They encounter family and associates of Oskar Hahn.*

Day 3 (noon):

The Austrian Emperor and his wife board a train for Pest-Buda.

Day 3 (evening):

Franz Karl hosts a celebratory dinner in Buda. The Thulians attempt to assassinate Franz Karl on the bridge between Pest and Buda.

Day 4 (morning):

*The adventurers travel to Prague. They meet Rabbi Obediah Spinoza.*

Day 4 (noon):

Urmacher's army marches toward Prague.

*The Tsarina arrives in Prague. She offers to help the adventurers.*

Day 4 (nightfall):

The Thulians free Chernobog. The adventurers, with help from the last of the Pale Knights, try to re-imprison it.



Here are rough aerostat travel times; in the event the adventurers try to get to Geneva, aerostat travel is the only viable option.

3 hours	Vienna to Pest-Buda
3.5 hours	Vienna to Prague
5.5 hours	Prague to Pest-Buda
9.5 hours	Prague to Geneva
10 hours	Vienna to Geneva
12.5 hours	Pest-Buda to Geneva

Note that these rough travel times don't include waiting times to board or unanticipated problems along the way; cattle sitting on tracks or a fast-moving storm could add hours to the travel time.

## ~CHAPTER I~ PARISIAN OVERTURE

In the first part of this penny dreadful the Night Choir is preparing a major revolutionary protest to take place just as the Emperor is being crowned. Chorister Arnaud Montesquieu believes that the marvels he's received from fellow Chorister Rosine Urmacher will limit the destructive damage to "the symbols of oppression, Emperor and Church," while energising the people to rise up, storm government buildings and proclaim a new Third Republic.

Once he installs the organ and prepares the ritual, however, Montesquieu realises that containment may be a problem and the power unleashed could be far more destructive. As a 'true believer,' Montesquieu can't condone killing hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the proletariat. He unfortunately voices this concern to Urmacher's associate in Paris, Wolfgang Rucht. Taking his cue from Fouché, Rucht arranges for an 'unfortunate situation' for Montesquieu. Fortunately for the Thulian Order, the plan is far enough along to survive without him.

The adventurers are invited to Paris as part of Lady Philippa Duquesne, Countess Lyonesse's entourage. Countess Lyonesse has been chosen to be Britain's special ambassador to France to see the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor before moving onto Vienna to entreat Emperor Franz Karl to join the war against Russia. Once in Paris, the adventurers uncover a plot to assassinate both the new Emperor and a third of the Aluminat Conclave. They also discover that the plot extends to Austria as well.

The penny dreadful assumes that the adventurers are members of the Star Chamber assigned to protect the Countess and follow her orders. If not associated then they were hand-picked by the Countess to join her; declining was never an option (it's also possible that the adventurers are French agents working for Danton - adjust accordingly). In any event, the adventurers find themselves standing in the aerodrome at Kensal Green as their bags are loaded onto the *AS Invincible*, the most luxurious British aerostat that ferries passengers between London and Paris.

Countess Lyonesse, who is in her mid-70s but looks about 25 (by non-Eldren standards she is attractive, although amongst her own she's actually on the plainer side), soon arrives in her carriage along with her valet and bodyguard, Mr Singh. Mr Singh is a Tigerman who wears morning dress modified to accommodate his clockwork left hand. He also sports a turban rather than a hat.

The Countess thanks the adventurers for coming and tells them that they can enjoy the amenities of first class service for the three-hour journey to Paris. She warns them that, with the announcement of Napoleon's arrival yesterday, there have been many demonstrations in the streets, both in support and protest and the adventurers should be on their guard. Officially, they are her bodyguards and servants, but as (possibly provisional) members of the Star Chamber they are primarily tasked with ensuring that Napoleon's coronation and the negotiations with Austria go smoothly. The Queen and Government do not want this last desperate plan to fall apart due to any unseen circumstances.

It's a late morning flight that serves a buffet luncheon in first class (if the adventurers haven't met one another yet this is a great opportunity for them to get acquainted); the aerostat touches down in Paris in the early afternoon. The Vincennes Aerodrome is on the left bank of the Seine just outside the city. The grounds are fenced in and heavily patrolled; in spite of the pouring rain a large crowd of protesters taunt the adventurers from the other side of the fence as they exit, held in bay only by fearsome-looking Paris police officers (including several Ogres).

The Countess Lyonesse tells the adventurers to pay them no mind, but even she sticks close to Mr Singh. The Countess expects the adventurers to take a separate carriage, although she allows one or two to join her if they insist.

In either case it isn't long before several bottles, bricks, shoes and other items are thrown at the carriage; occasionally one flies through a window but causes little damage. The carriage takes them to Le Meurice hotel, which sits conveniently

close to Tuileries Palace and grants the adventurers a view of the city as they cross the Seine and the Ile-de-la-Cite to get to the hotel. While Paris is filled with many beautiful buildings, most are cracked and chipped; noticeable ruts pepper the streets as well. The grey sky and pounding rain only emphasises that Paris is a city in decay.

Of particular note are the numerous posters and slogans plastered all over the city. Most are simply expressions of revolution calling for a 'third republic.' The graphical ones depict a goddess in black classical clothing and holding a sword and hammer. The portrait is unusual in that it is definitely Eldren; most symbols of a proletariat revolution favour subspecies more commonly found in the lower classes (any French adventurer or supporting character may point out that Eldren can be found in the lower class in France). Many of the banners are torn, replaced with "Vive l'empereur!" although there are several "Mort à l'empereur!" signs strewn about as well. There are also several impromptu crowds being ginned up by revolutionary speakers, at least until police officers arrive to shoo them away. Occasionally an officer or two is overwhelmed and has to beat a hasty retreat. Paris is obviously a tinderbox on the verge of being lit - adventurers who have played through *Streets of Shadow* will recognise these signs all too well.



Adventurers paying attention to the crowds can, with an Easy (+6 to dice pool) Wits + Perception roll, notice a common song being sung amongst the various groups. The refrain is *La liberté est notre droit!* (*Liberty is our Right!*) but it matches the rhythm of *La Marseillaise*. It is the latest revolutionary anthem to be making its rounds - French adventurers who make a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + General Knowledge roll recall that it's a recent song, only about two weeks old. Adventurers who make a Good Success (3 successes) on the roll further note that it's an adaptation of a revolutionary song that's been making the rounds in the Austrian Empire over the last few months. (If the adventurers are members of the Sûreté then the Gamesmaster can work this in whenever appropriate, but certainly before **Scene 7 - The Chorus of Flame**).

## Welcoming Committee

Everything that happens to the adventurers prior to the ball in SCENE 1 - THE LAST REPUBLICAN BALL is flavour text and after the ball the adventurers begin their investigation. For some groups, this is a long time to go without seeing any action. Fortunately, Paris is filled with angry and desperate citizens and adventurers itching for a fight would have little trouble being accommodated. Most ruffians are desperate members of the lower classes and well-dressed 'betters' make good targets for their rage.

If the Gamesmaster wishes to start things with a bit of action, or if she merely wants to drive home how bleak things have become in the city, she can have a band of ruffians accost the adventurers. A small band may break past the aerodrome fence and accost the adventurers, several ruffians may attack the carriage (in this case it is the adventurers-only carriage that gets attacked; the driver of Countess Lyonesse's carriage continues on to ensure her safety, or a few ruffians may rob an adventurer that goes for a walk. Alternatively, the adventurers may see a crime in action and determine whether they should put their duty aside to aid the victims.

### Ruffians - Beastman Brigands

Physical: 6      Initiative: 3

Mental: 2      Health: 8

Social: 3      Quintessence: 0

Armour Value: 1 (great coat).

Special Traits: None.

Complications: None.

Damage: Punch (4), Knife (7), Life Preserver (6).

## Scene 1 - The Last Republican Ball

The coronation of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte is to take place tomorrow. Tonight there is a ball that Napoleon is throwing in the Tuileries Palace, which is being hastily restored after the better part of a decade of neglect and vandalism. Even after the valiant attempt much of the palace is still as much crumbling ruin as the other great buildings in the city, as those upset at the Emperor's return have been making life difficult for those involved in restoring it.

All ambassadors are invited to the ball. In addition, there are a few dignitaries, including three Cardinal Voces, Grand Hermeticist Joseph Fouché of the Vienna Guild and Grand Duchess Josephine of Parma (Napoleon's former wife). Countess Lyonesse of course attends and she'd accept any adventurer of appropriate breeding as an escort (given France's republican nature she's not adverse to a middle-class escort if there are no upper-class adventurers available, but she'll ensure that he is 'properly' attired).

Other upper class or respectable middle class adventurers are also allowed to attend; the rest have to stand at the outskirts or mingle in the servant's hall. Mr Singh prefers the former; he doesn't like to let the Countess out of his sight.

This scene is primarily designed to introduce the adventurers to some of the key players in this chapter and the adventure in general. Once the adventurers have gotten a chance to mingle and learn key bits of information about the important characters, it's probably time to move to **Scene 2 - Murder Most Foul!** Of course, there are still opportunities for action if a Gamesmaster wishes; a group of revolutionaries might break into the palace or accost ball-goers on the street.

### Napoleon Bonaparte

The master of ceremonies, Napoleon Bonaparte, is 87 years old, although he looks and acts about 50 by Human standards (he is a Dwarf). He makes no effort to conceal his deep tan and looks a bit uncomfortable in the latest fashions - he hasn't had much occasion to dress up over the last few decades. He is obviously still smitten with Josephine although he tries to maintain a respectable distance.

There's a youthful fire in his eyes when Napoleon speaks of Russia, almost as if he revels in the thought of a rematch. The fact that the French Army is in tatters is of no concern to him; as far as he is concerned he is only one coronation speech away from the army swelling with eager new recruits and an influx of money to outfit them from friendly nations.



### Grand Duchess Josephine of Parma

It's an open secret that Napoleon wants to remarry Josephine, as their annulment was purely for her benefit and protection. As an Eldren, Josephine doesn't look as if she's aged a day since her abdication and she is truly enjoying the attention befitting an imperial once more; her duties as a Grand Duchess have been taxing over the last few decades and she may finally put the political courtships to rest.



She spends much of the evening alternating being welcomed back to France and cautioned against moving too quickly to resume her title, but Josephine seems unconcerned. In truth,



Napoleon has already told her privately that he intends to marry her before resuming the throne and she is expected to travel with him to Notre Dame in the morning for just that purpose.

### President Jean-Baptiste Cavaignac

President Cavaignac is a conflicted man. The Gnome had served under Napoleon during the first empire, but the restoration is a clear indictment of his failure as a president; he is also acutely aware that this is the likely opinion of everyone else in the room. Napoleon's 'good-natured barbs' at his regime aren't helping matters and he presumes that he'll soon serve in a ceremonial position.



To ward off his bad mood Cavaignac concentrates on the party itself. He is especially looking forward to meeting Arnaud Montesquieu; in spite of their apparent political differences, Cavaignac enjoyed his musical compositions and laments his loss as a sacrifice for the revolution. Cavaignac counts his blessings that Montesquieu fled to Vienna rather than join King Louis in exile, otherwise he would not have had the opportunity to return and compose the music for the coronation. Unfortunately, Montesquieu had to finish preparations this evening but promised Napoleon he'd arrive by 10 for the toast (more information on Arnaud Montesquieu is found in **Scene 2 - Murder Most Foul!**).

### Chief Inspector Georgette Danton

Head of the Sûreté, Georgette Danton is the youngest child of revolutionary leader Georges Danton. She never knew her father as he was executed before her birth. She

looks almost half her age thanks to some Eldren blood in her family (although she is Human). Danton is unmarried and unescorted, but this is largely due to her not finding a suitable partner and, as she is feeling too old for children, she doesn't really see the need. It's obvious that she and Countess Lyonesse have had a long friendship; the two spend most of the party chatting with each other.



Danton is very concerned about how the change in government will affect her department and whether she'll be allowed to remain in her position. Napoleon has assured her that he has no plans to change the Sûreté (after all, he is the one who created it during the first empire) but Danton doesn't quite trust him.

If the adventurers are part of the Sûreté rather than British then Danton has brought them along in case there's trouble. One adventurer acts as her escort while the others enjoy the party; as Napoleon created their department it amuses him to entertain some of its members.

### Grand Hermeticist Joseph Fouché

Joseph Fouché is an interesting guest at the party; were it not for his status as the head of the Vienna Guild (and thus holds great influence over the Praetorian Guard) and special ambassador he would not have received an invitation, and in spite of all that Napoleon is still resisting the urge to expel him. Amongst other things, Fouché had been Minister of Police under Napoleon but advised against him returning when he was exiled. Fouché then served under Louis VIII in the same position before heading to Austria and eventually becoming the head of the Vienna Guild.

Fouché holds the sobriquet of ‘the Butcher of Lyon’ over his slaughter of liberal moderates in Lyon during the first French Revolution.



Fouché is an Eldren who looks to be in his early 30s (in truth he is 97 years old). His formal dress, complete with embroidered cloak, makes him look as if he belonged in the 17th or 18th century. While he realises Napoleon would rather he be elsewhere, Fouché is on official business. He is due to arrive at the Annual Consortium Conference in Geneva tomorrow (his missing the coronation suits Napoleon just fine). The week-long conference has the Crimean War on the agenda as well as the possibility for the Supreme Hermeticist’s retirement. Fouché ‘humbly’ intimates that he is the favourite to replace her.

While no one knows this (but la Grande Mademoiselle suspects), Fouché is a ranking member of the Silencius. He’s using this position to protect his fellow Thulians while the plan unfolds.

### La Grande Mademoiselle

Anne Marie Louis d’Orleans is the Guildmaster of Paris. La Grande Mademoiselle is over two centuries old and appears to be an 80 year old woman. She’s seen France go through many changes in her long lifetime and seems somewhat relieved that France will once again be an empire. Toward that end she wears an elaborate formal dress that was in style towards the end of the 17th century.

La Grande Mademoiselle is deferential to Fouché, although she still considers him an impetuous boy. He did flee to

Austria after all and she waves off any notion that it had to do with the Vienna Guild being amongst the best in Europe. She wishes him luck at the annual conference, claiming that she’s simply too old to make the journey. Fouché would counter that she simply doesn’t want to miss all the coronation pomp and circumstance and he’d be correct.



### The Three Cardinal Voces

It is customary for three Cardinal Voces to attend the coronation of an emperor and thus Matthias, Tecla and Xanthos are here (when installed, a new Cardinal Vox takes the name of one of the Eight Voices). Matthias is an elderly Huldu, although he looks like a wizened child. Tecla is a Human woman and recently installed; she is in her late 50s. Xanthos is an ancient Sheepman and is wheelchair-bound, pushed by his Ogre servant Vittorio. Matthias and Tecla are Italian (Tuscan and Neapolitan, respectively) while Xanthos is a Spaniard.

All three are politely formal and refrain from dancing or socialising beyond newsworthy topics. They have a tendency to finish each other’s sentences, which can be a bit unnerving. All three believe that Napoleon Bonaparte’s coronation is a good thing and one that will hopefully bring peace to Europe.

### The Last Musketeer

An interesting guest is Isaac de Porthau, an old rotund Eldren who is a couple of decades older than La Grande Mademoiselle. Long since retired as both a Musketeer and Knight Pale, Porthau chose to remain in France rather than

flee to Quebec where “they try to pass off beaver as coq au vin!” He also disavows the new Québécois Musketeers as “a poor homage” to his old unit. Napoleon invited Isaac to further cement his position as the latest French monarch, but the absent-minded Isaac is more interested in the buffet than offering toasts to the new emperor.

Porthau takes the opportunity to heckle Fouché (whom he calls “Le Boucher”) over the loss of Szabo Elek, a fellow Pale Knight. Fouché led a team of hermeticists into Szabo’s home and killed him 5 years ago. In his defence Fouché points out that Szabo had become a Litche, but Porthau just sneers and laments that Szabo was one of “the last three” and his last true friend.

Should the adventurers engage him, Porthau speaks longingly about his old comrades and his adventures with them. “The last three” were the last of the Pale Knights to survive; with Szabo gone only two remain, but Porthau protects his former comrade’s appeal for anonymity. He notes that his ‘beloved’ Justina made the same appeal before returning to Poland, but as a human she must be long gone by now. He also says that the final knight, presuming he is still alive, has little use for the Aluminat.

Adventurers that try to pry the information from him are faced with a daunting roll – Porthau’s reputation (and weak memory) gives him a SC 20 and, as he takes oaths seriously, adventurers take a Difficult (6 black dice) penalty on their rolls. If the adventurers succeed then Porthau reluctantly tells them that last he knew Sir Obed was in Vienna.

He also recalls the ‘Palishness’ of the Thirty Years’ War and how he’d been inducted into the Pale Knights to fight the most terrible creatures that the Maleficium and the Paynimry had to offer. He notes that as bad as things are in the Crimea they couldn’t possibly compare to what he and his comrades in arms endured. He then offers a toast to peace and returns to pillaging the buffet table.

### Other Ambassadors

Several nations have sent ambassadors to Napoleon’s coronation and the Gamesmaster should feel free to introduce NPCs who may feature in her future penny dreadfuls. Notably absent are Austrian, Prussian, Scandinavian and Russian ambassadors, as the first three have declared neutrality and welcoming Napoleon could be seen as a violation, while Russian’s absence is due to the ongoing war with France.

## The Rubber Band Snaps Back?

In our own world, France is already an empire again in 1856, ruled by Napoleon III (Napoleon’s nephew). Napoleon III had actually beaten Cavaignac to become the second republic’s first president in 1848 and initiated a coup when the new constitution barred him from a second term (President Napoleon had lobbied for an amendment and almost succeeded; in *Victoriana* Cavaignac did). In *Victoriana* France has a large population of Eldren who often replace two or three lifetimes in our world (which is why the numbers are off for the Louises and why King Louis VIII reigned for the entirety of the restoration). By having Napoleon effectively take the place of his nephew, history starts snapping back in place for France.

If the Gamesmaster is uncomfortable with returning France to empire, then Napoleon could be replacing Cavaignac as president (he’d certainly have the votes) or simply accepting the post of Field Marshall. In either case there’d still be a lot of pomp and circumstance, as Napoleon’s return is being played up for Austria, Prussia and Russia. If this is the case then a significant proportion of the French people become Bonapartists clamouring for his coronation and Napoleon himself may work behind the scenes to bring this about; certainly a positive outcome to the Crimean War would strengthen his position!

Of course, there is also the possibility that the Night Choir succeeds and assassinates Napoleon. It’s also possible that a revolutionary might shoot Napoleon in the street, hoping to save republican France from returning to a monarchy. Napoleon may even find himself killed on the battlefield. In effect, there are numerous ways to play this penny dreadful as written and still remove Napoleon in the near future.

Whether Napoleon remains is of little immediate concern. While his coronation rekindles hope in the hearts of the French people and possibly shifts Continental politics, it won’t clean the streets of Paris in a day or provide jobs for all of the unemployed. In short, the France as described in the gazetteer is still the same France, albeit with a recent shift in governmental authority. Napoleon realises he has a lot of catching up to do before instituting major changes in policy.

## Scene 2 – Murder Most Foul!

It's fairly late into the party before someone notices that Montesquieu has still not arrived; this likely falls to President Cavaignac, as he is the one most eager to meet him. Montesquieu was expected around 10 pm. At 10:30, Cavaignac approaches Danton and requests that she send someone to go looking for him.

At this point, an adventurer's curiosity (or Countess Lyonesse) prompts her to ask about the importance of Montesquieu (unless they've already learned of him from Cavaignac). Arnaud Montesquieu is considered one of France's great composers. The Dwarf has monarchist sympathies and fled to Vienna during the second revolution. He returned with the announcement of Napoleon's return and offered his services at the coronation. Not only that, but he was instrumental in getting Notre Dame Cathedral ready in time.

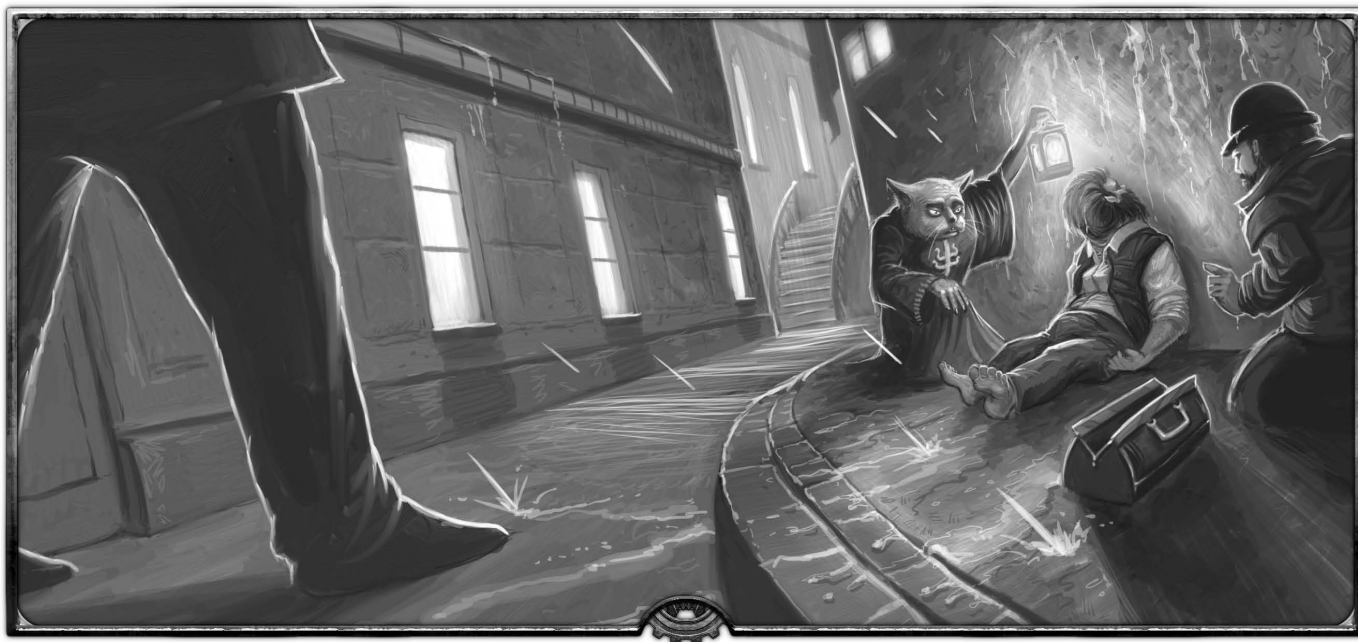
Understanding Montesquieu's importance to Napoleon, Danton orders the police to fetch him at Notre Dame; failing that, she tells them to search the most likely routes between the church and the palace, noting that the Ile-de-la-Cite is not a safe place during the day, much less in the dead of night. Countess Lyonesse offers her services as well; she knows that the police are overwhelmed as it is, so the more eyes the better. Whether working for the Countess or Danton, the adventurers soon find themselves rushing out into the dark, rainy night.

The Gamesmaster can allow a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Navigation roll (Streetwise can be used as a

complementary skill) for the adventurers to find the carriage first; otherwise, they are summoned to the scene within the hour. Montesquieu, or rather his corpse, has been found in an alley in a rough neighbourhood in the centre of the Right Bank; it's definitely off-course from any direct route to the palace from the church.

The Dwarf's body lay against one wall in the alley. His head is almost completely twisted around: it's obvious that his neck was snapped. An Average Wits + Medicine roll reveals that someone very strong must've done it, such as an Ogre or preternatural creature. He's also been robbed: he's missing his hat, jacket and boots (none of which anyone braving the weather tonight would go out without) and there are no valuables on his person. (What happened, of course, is that Montesquieu sent a message to Rucht. Rucht hired Dumont's carriage and took Johann with him to meet Montesquieu. He then had Johann kill Montesquieu and dump the body. The two dealt with Dumont soon afterward).

Whether the adventurers are working for Danton or the Countess, the investigator in charge, Julian Lepin, soon arrives. He is a smartly dressed Gnome smoking a cigarette and is a 20-year veteran of the Sûreté. He steps into the alley as if he should be the only one there and doesn't mind saying so. He also sees it is an open-and-shut case: Montesquieu was robbed and killed, probably by desperate Parisians or anti-Bonapartists. There is certainly no shortage of suspects. He thanks the adventurers for their time and sends them on their way.



Curious adventurers probably won't accept Lepin's assessment and wish to investigate on their own – after all, the coronation begins in the morning. They probably think about going to the cathedral, Montesquieu's residence or put their ear to the street (**Scenes 3-5**). Adventurers that need a bit more prompting receive a visit from Antoinette Cartier first thing in the morning (**Scene 6 – A Concerned Note**).

### A Dangerous City

Paris is a very dangerous place. Neglected by the last king and with little done after the Revolution, the crumbling city is full of desperate people. Many who flocked to Paris with the promise of work have found little more than lectures and the understaffed police department can't have eyes everywhere, especially on the unlit streets. While Napoleon's return offers a glimmer of hope, it is far from affecting daily lives at this point.

One way to drive the poverty home is to have the adventurers periodically accosted by beggars, prostitutes and street performers looking for coins; some of them may even take the opportunity to pick a pocket. In more dangerous areas of the city, especially the Ile-de-la-Cite (the main island on the Seine on which Notre Dame de Paris sits) the adventurers should be wary; they may find themselves baited into an alley to be robbed or accosted on the street. Such incidental encounters are also useful to break up the investigative scenes.

### Scene 3 – The Cathedral

Rain lashes the streets and the gas lamps gutter in the wind as the adventurers arrive at the cathedral. Fortunately the street along the façade is a shining beacon that cuts across the grime and misery of the island; it's obvious that the Parisian government wants to put on its best face for the Emperor's coronation. A few police patrols walk up and down the street to dissuade people from loitering, including rousting homeless vagrants sheltering under the awnings of closed shop doors or chasing away the occasional drunken Parisian shaking his fist and shouting revolutionary slogans or even support for the new empire.

Notre Dame Cathedral is still a magnificent building dedicated to the Voice Tecla, but peeling paint and cracked stone, as well as missing steeples and ornamentation, hint at

better times. A hastily erected iron fence protects the church from vandalism, but an ambitious criminal could likely scale it easily. The entire façade of the church is covered in scaffolding and cloth tarps that are vainly trying to keep the hasty restorations beneath protected until tomorrow's coronation; the restoration committee would like the façade to shine at least.

The front gate is locked but the adventurers can see light from within; obviously someone is praying or working late. Shouting for assistance summons the night watchman from inside the church. He's an old Dwarf, Henri Dubois, who walks with an obvious limp as he shines his lantern in the gate's direction, shouting back that he'll be right there.

Henri Dubois was a lieutenant under Napoleon during the first empire; he still wears his meticulously clean lined officer's coat. His limp is due to a shrapnel injury that never healed properly; he's also missing two fingers on his left hand and has wicked scarring across his face. As Dubois draws closer it's obvious that he's been drinking to stave off the evening chill. In spite of his obvious discomfort, Dubois is rather cheery; he's thrilled that Napoleon has returned to reverse France's ill fortunes.

Unless the adventurers are obviously police officers Dubois apologises for the closure of Notre Dame – he has orders to keep everyone out tonight; the Bishop doesn't want to risk anything happening to the decorations. If the adventurers have sanction from Danton then Dubois lets them inside; otherwise it takes an appropriate social roll to get Dubois to open the gate.

Once the adventurers step inside the church they find themselves inside a beautifully decorated nave and an elaborately decorated proscenium where the coronation is to take place. Should the adventurers question Dubois he confirms that Montesquieu was here tonight until about 9:30; he then hailed a carriage to go and see Napoleon (Dubois is rather wistful about the notion).

Dubois notes that the carriage arrived sometime after 9 and remained in the area; doubtless the driver saw the light in the church and figured there was a fare waiting. Dubois recalls that the Driver was a Huldu and he had an Ogre footman. He also believes there was someone else in the carriage, but he couldn't see who it was.

The gorgeous and brand new organ is built against the wall beneath the large window that sits above the doors of the façade. It is a mechanical masterpiece that utilises some aetheric energy in its design. It proudly boasts the Urmacher



name on a nameplate above the keys; adventurers with any musical skill immediately recognise it as from one of the premier mechanical companies in Europe, based in Prague. An adventurer making a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Engineer (Mechanical) roll notes that it's possible to program the organ by setting a lever and playing a tune; the organ 'remembers' the sequence and can replay it.

An adventurer examining the organ and the proscenium, and who makes a Difficult Wits + Engineering roll (Lore or Magical Skill can be used as a complementary skill) notes that the two objects contain sigils and heartstones that are designed to act aetherically together to amplify and focus a large magical effect. What's missing is a driver; either a powerful magician or other big reservoir of energy is needed to charge it.

Suspicious adventurers may try to remove or sabotage the organ and/or proscenium in (correct) anticipation that they have something to do with the upcoming coronation. Unfortunately, all they've effectively succeeded in doing beyond putting the authorities on notice (which strengthens security) is make the deadly energy blast that much more potent. Without the focus, the blast destroys much more of Paris.

Adventurers seeking someone to speak with at the church are directed to Archbishop Marie-Dominique-Auguste Sibour, a pleasant and pious Eldren priest who is chief amongst the eight bishops of Paris. He can tell them the following:

- Montesquieu was a tireless perfectionist. He constantly attuned the organ and the proscenium to the choir and orchestra, frequently making adjustments to the equipment. The archbishop chuckles as he notes that Montesquieu acted as if one dissonant note would absolutely ruin the coronation. He always worked late into the night.
- The proscenium was built by French carpenters to Montesquieu's exacting specifications and torn completely down twice due to something being 'off.' The organ was imported to Paris from Prague thanks to Montesquieu's Viennese contacts. It was largely donated, with France bearing only the cost of the shipping.
- The organ arrived by aerostat from Germany. Montesquieu mentioned that he had other 'party favours' brought along as well, but never indicated what they were.

- In spite of his efforts, Montesquieu was not quite the man he appeared. If Montesquieu truly was a monarchist then the Archbishop would expect him to be devout as well. The Archbishop observed Montesquieu fidgeting nervously during the daily masses held for the workers and he didn't seem to know the revised version of the mass that the Aluminat instituted after the Springtime of the Peoples. Those are not the signs of a regular churchgoer.

### Scene 4 - Montesquieu's Residence

Montesquieu lives in a modest apartment in Le Marais that oversees the bronze Elephant of the Bastille, a clockwork monument erected by Emperor Napoleon. The elephant raises its trunk every hour and trumpets a number of times equal to the current hour. As the howdah is accessible and the elephant sits on a spot drenched with revolutionary symbolism, this has become a popular site for revolutionary rallies. Montesquieu specifically chose his apartment for the view of the Place de Bastille as it inspired him.





The house is run by Gnome Jocelin Mourer, a feisty widow who is shattered to learn of Montesquieu's death; he was a model tenant. His apartment is locked but Mourer happily opens it for the police or his beneficiaries; adventurers lacking either need to overcome an appropriate social roll (adventurers have 3 black dice added to their roll, as Mme Mourer knows this is improper). If the adventurers manage to avoid Mme Mourer then the lock can be easily picked with a Difficult (3 black dice) Dexterity + Pick Locks skill. Alternatively the apartment can be entered from the upper floors via the rooftop but during the day it's difficult to not be seen.

The door opens into a large salon that looks out onto the street. The salon is dominated by a compact but gorgeous Urmacher piano and a library of books rests against one wall. To the left of the salon is an open dining area, to the left of that is a door leading into the bedroom. The most prominent wall decorations are Montesquieu's University of Vienna diploma and a large portrait of the Eldren 'Citizen Liberty.'

Just inside the door is an edge desk standing below a mirror. A handful of opened letters are stuffed into a letterbox on one side. Adventurers perusing them find one piece of interest. It is a letter written in German from Oscar Hahn and postmarked Vienna, Austria (see the handout, below). The envelope is postmarked two days ago; presumably Montesquieu received it yesterday.

The library contains several books on scholarly subjects, all written in German or Latin. There are also a significant number of musical books, including a well-thumbed few on Bardic magic. Finally, there are quite a few books on political and social revolution; it would seem that Montesquieu was quite a fan of the topic. While this doesn't necessarily implicate him as a revolutionary, the distinct lack of books or treatises arguing the other side shows a disinterest in either promoting a monarchist agenda or refuting the claims made in the revolutionary books.

Montesquieu's bedroom is very well furnished; while it is obvious that Montesquieu has taken pains not to be seen as ostentatious, he definitely sleeps in comfort. Sitting on a nightstand by the bed is a daguerreotype of a beautiful Eldren woman who resembles the woman on the Citizen Liberty poster in a fashionable Rossini dress holding a Chinese fan. If the adventurers remove the photograph from the frame, they find a hidden message. It says "All my love, Lorelei."

### Scene 5 - Paris Legwork

The information found at the crime scene, the cathedral and Montesquieu's apartment is intriguing, but hardly conclusive of anything. Thus, the adventurers may wish to put their ear to the ground to see if they can come up with any more leads. Time is of the essence, as the coronation is set to begin at 9am.

*Dear Arnaud,*

*Be calm, my friend. I share your concerns regarding the preparations but we've been planning this too long to overly concern ourselves with unanticipated (and possibly unfixable) circumstances. I trust in your ability to make the coronation memorable in spite of the short timetable – it appears that Napoleon always proves difficult! In any case should you have any lingering concerns then you should consult with Herr Rucht. There is little I can do here given the circumstances.*

*I wish you well on the coronation ceremony; I'm satisfied that you have produced a memorable piece that shall resonate throughout the city! As you know I have to see to some final preparations of my own in Pest-Buda. I hope that both of our imperial performances succeed (if not then we shall have to rely on Sophia). It shan't be long now before the Night Choir sings its final chorus!*

*Long live liberty!*

*Oskar*

*Post Script: Lorelei sends you her best wishes!*

No matter what time the adventurers go looking, Paris is already affected by the coronation. During the evening and all through the night people of all political stripes have staked out positions along the planned carriage route which slows traffic and, occasionally, sparks fist fights and worse between those of differing opinions. Should the adventurers have tipped the government off about a possible assassination attempt then the entire eastern end of the Ile-de-la-Cite is in lockdown with French police going door-to-door to remove occupants to shelters on the west side.

Things get even more chaotic around 10 am, when Napoleon springs a surprise. He isn't going through the Ile-de-la-Cite to Notre Dame as planned, but rather cutting through the Right Bank so that he can give a speech at the Bastille Elephant (a clockwork monument he'd built) before heading south to the cathedral. He has called on the army to assist and they somewhat enthusiastically usher people out of the way and block off the new route as confused citizens swamp the city in an attempt to reposition themselves.

Adventurers trying to find the Huldu and the Ogre are going to have an Incredibly Difficult (9 black dice) time with a Presence + Streetwise roll (this drops to Very Difficult or Difficult if the adventurers canvas the Left Bank or the Aerodrome, respectively). If they manage to succeed they learn that the Huldu's name is Pierre Dumont and he usually operates around the aerodrome.

- On an impressive success (6 successes) they discover that his carriage was discovered this morning near St Germain de Pres (roughly the other side of the river from the Louvre). They're unlikely to find Dumont's body as it is currently anchored to the bottom of the Seine (Johann's work).
- Adventurers following the clues to the aerodrome likely tip off Rucht, who launches the aerostat early if need be. This offers the adventurers a chance to deal with the aerostat threat before it moves into position (and definitely causes Fouché and the Thulian Order some concern, as the adventurers are obviously master investigators).

Adventurers looking into revolutionary activity and making an Average (Difficult (3 black dice) for non-Parisian adventurers) Presence + Streetwise roll learn the following:

- Arnaud Montesquieu is not a monarchist. He has always been a champion of the people, albeit one careful to protect his musical reputation. He went to Vienna to aid the revolution there.

- Montesquieu penned *La liberté est notre droit!* as a rallying song. It's adapted from a similar song used by German revolutionaries (a bit of a red herring, as Austrians are 'German').
- Montesquieu brought instruments for the revolution. Calliopes are going to play outside the cathedral and rally the people with *La liberté est notre droit!* (another red herring. While the calliopes do help increase and channel the fervour and quintessence of the crowd, it is the aerostat that actually absorbs the energy).
- Word of mouth amongst revolutionary groups is to get their people surrounding Notre Dame to sing *La liberté est notre droit!* This is intended to drown out the new church organ (ironically it's to help the organ by providing it with quintessence drawn from the crowd).

Adventurers looking into Montesquieu's family history and who make an Average (Difficult (3 black dice) for non-Parisian adventurers) Wits + High Society roll learn the following:

- Most of Montesquieu's family have fled to Belgium or Quebec.
- His only known relative living in Paris is Antoinette Cartier, his niece. Cartier's husband is in the Crimea.

Presuming the adventurers spoke with Antoinette Cartier early enough, an adventurer may know of the Thulian Order, presuming she makes a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Lore (or Magical Skill) roll. Alternately, they may try the Paris Guildhouse for information.

The Guildhouse is actually a fortress that once belonged to the Knights Templar. In stark contrast to the rest of the city it's currently being extensively remodelled thanks to private donations, a fact Lepin spitefully points out. The interior is even more opulent, looking like the interior of a palace from the *Ancien Regime*. Adventurers who are members of the Guild are immediately welcomed and asked if they need accommodation. Lepin and other non-Guild adventurers are escorted to a comfortable waiting room. They are offered refreshments as La Mademoiselle appears and offers to answer any questions they have (only if this takes place before 11:30 - she goes to the cathedral at that time).

- Montesquieu is not a member of the Guild, although he does have minor artificer training in the use of magical instruments. He is also likely a Bard, although the Guild does not endorse Bardic magic; it's considered

'petty' and straddles the border with Maleficium. If Montesquieu were to receive Bardic training, Vienna University, with its Continental reputation for both musical and magical studies, would be a likely place to acquire it.

- The phoenix holding two wands is the symbol of the Thulian Order, a minor fraternity within the Guild that believes that all magicians are aristocratic. Mademoiselle believes the Order originated in the Berlin Guild and members are primarily German, where aristocratic titles are often seen as 'petty' compared to other European nations. She has recently seen one Parisian Guild member, Simon Garnet, wearing a similar pin, but he's currently in Portugal.



- If the Thulian Order is involved then the Geneva Council of 1648 grants the Consortium the authority to investigate possible crimes. Mademoiselle informs the adventurers that she is not begging them off but rather advising the Consortium to be involved in a concurrent investigation. There's a modicum of secrecy involved, but Mademoiselle tells the adventurers not to be surprised if a 'hermeticist of quality' asks them some questions in the near future.

## The Itinerary of the Coronation

Napoleon's coronation largely follows the same as his original coronation in 1804. This itinerary guides the adventurer's actions as it not only follows Napoleon's movements and the Thulian plot, but it also may limit where the adventurers can go as security keeps the avenues clear for the procession. Access to the Ile-de-la-Cite is severely restricted if the adventurers have tipped off Napoleon that someone has the means to kill him (he's well aware that at least some French citizens would like to see him dead).

- 9 am The Conclave delegation leaves the palace and rides to Notre Dame. A special mass is said to bless and prepare France for the coronation of its new emperor.
- 10 am A cannonade announces the departure of Napoleon. Napoleon leaves the palace with Josephine as the French military change the processional route. They parade through the Right Bank until they get to the Bastille Elephant, from where Napoleon stands and gives a grand speech about returning glory to France.
- 11 am Napoleon and Josephine enter the cathedral, where an impromptu nuptial ceremony is held. This startles the Thulians, as the launching of the Coronation Aerostat is timed with the organ music and offers an opportunity for adventurers inside the cathedral to note that something is wrong.
- 11:20 pm The aerostat uses its aetheric cannon to obliterate Notre Dame Cathedral and everyone inside.

## Scene 6 - A Concerned Niece

Antoinette Cartier née Montesquieu is Arnaud's niece. She lives in the Montesquieu home in the theatre quarter of the city just north of the Louvre. It's a comfortable house on a usually quiet street, but the imminent coronation has several demonstrations, liberal, anarchist, monarchist and Bonapartist, marching up and down it in an attempt to garner support.

The Paris police informed her of her uncle's death at first light. Should the adventurers visit before that they have to

convince her butler, a beefy Human named M Toussaint, to allow them inside after which it takes half an hour for Mme Cartier to be roused and dressed. She has tea and pastries brought out to them as she arrives in a simple morning dress. She is a mousy woman but carries herself well as the matron of the house - this, of course, crumbles when she hears the news and it takes her several minutes to compose herself again. Otherwise, she's already borne the brunt of the shock and is making the best of it. If the adventurers needed prompting then she'd already gone to the police, which informed Danton who in turn informs the adventurers that Cartier has information of value. Inspector Lepin also pays her a visit, but he was only concerned with formalities and ended the interview after a few rote questions.

Cartier wants to speak and so long as the adventurers can reassure her with an Average Presence + Social Skill roll, she imparts the following information:

- Arnaud Montesquieu was certainly a republican, perhaps even a radical. He also had little love for the Aluminat. He often fought with his monarchist father, although they were careful to keep their disputes private. His father, her grandfather, is a musician as well and currently resides in Quebec.
- Because of his beliefs Cartier was surprised when her uncle returned from Vienna and offered his services to Napoleon, even promising to help get Notre Dame ready in time for the coronation. When she questioned him about this, her uncle dismissed it as "perhaps I'm getting mellower in my old age."
- He was greatly troubled when they had dinner together three nights ago. He was eager to get back to work, which wasn't a surprise, but he was struggling over something about the preparations. He'd said "I don't think I can contain it." When Cartier questioned the statement, Montesquieu told her he was simply worried that the acoustics were going to be off for the performance. She could tell he was lying, but she wasn't able to prompt him further.
- Cartier believes her husband to be dead as the result of a premonition she had when kissing him goodbye. When Montesquieu remarked at dinner that she was holding up well, she mentioned to him that she was prepared for the worst and told him of the premonition. This upset him - he hadn't realised that Cartier might be clairvoyant and hastily finished dinner "to get back to the project." She hasn't heard from him since.
- While helping Montesquieu with his cloak, Cartier did catch a glimpse of something. She saw a woman in black point a sword at Paris. The city burst into flames as a phoenix rose from it, clutching a wand in each claw. Night descended on the burning city as a choir sang. The woman in black joined them in song. (Obviously this refers to the Night Choir, the Thulian Order, Chernobog and the current plan to assassinate Napoleon).
- Given Montesquieu's reaction to her magnetic abilities, Cartier didn't share her vision with him. She now wonders if she should have.

### Scene 7 - The Chorus of Flame

By 11 am it seems that all of Paris is in the streets, chanting "Vive l'empereur!" There are a few "Mort à l'empereur!" chants as well, but largely from alleys or other hidden spaces; no one risks garnering the attention of a rifle-toting soldier or a police officer. There certainly seems to be more of the former than the latter on the streets, adding to the tension. At times, especially when the line of soldiers brutally suppress citizens breaking the lines, it almost seems more a coup than a coronation. A few French wyvern riders also patrol the Seine, forcing those in the water to keep their heads down.

There are surprisingly few revolutionaries around the Elephant of the Bastille, especially given the Bastille's history and importance to the revolution. Armed soldiers ring the monument, keeping the crowds at bay until the arrival of Napoleon. He exits the carriage, leaving Josephine inside, as he scales the elephant's howdah and addresses the crowd. He gives a rousing speech and, at the end, notes that it is the dawning of a glorious destiny for France. He points south towards an aerostat rising from the aerodrome. It is brightly painted with red, white and blue stripes representing the tricolour flag (this, of course, is the repainted *Hoffnung von Dresden*, the Urmacher aerostat that brought the organ and the calliopes. It's been fitted with the aetheric cannon). As if anticipating Napoleon's gesture the side of the aerostat sparkles with a glowing gold outline of an eagle that resembles the one emblazoned on the Bonaparte banner.

The revolutionaries are swarming around Notre Dame Cathedral or, more likely, along both sides of the Seine. The bourgeoisie of the Ile Saint-Louis are largely Bonapartists and keeping the revolutionaries off the island. A few revolutionary groups have chartered boats and are surrounding the big island, forming an artificial reef that

stretches from bank to bank. The soldiers have given up trying to remove them and are instead content on scowling from the bridges and riverbanks while the wyvern riders buzz over them.

Almost as one, the revolutionaries are singing *La liberté est notre droit!* Adventurers making Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception rolls can hear where the piping music accompanying them originates. There are two calliopes on either side of the Seine blaring the instrumental part of the song over and over. Each calliope is attended to by saltimbanques dressed as clowns. The calliopes are magnificently designed and each has an automaton perched atop it dancing to the music (these automata are purely decorative).

An adventurer making a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll notes that there are small antennae on the top of the calliope that seem to be moving independently of the automaton. With a good success (3 successes) the adventurer notes that the antennae are pointing at the tricolour aerostat. Adventurers with the *Magic Sense* magnetic ability can feel quintessence being generated, gathered and funnelled. Adventurers casting *Visus Praetor* (*Second Sight*) can see the energy from the crowd being drawn into gems (blue diamonds) concealed beneath the antennae and projected in a concentrated form to the glowing aerostat.

Should the adventurers attempt to stop or damage a calliope then the saltimbanques attack, quite possibly alongside any revolutionary bystanders.

#### **Saltimbanque – Rabbitman Acrobat**

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Stone Cloth).  
*Special Traits:* Agility, Combat Sense, Gal sigil (+3 to damage), Stone Cloth.  
*Complications:* Show-Off.  
*Damage:* Kick (8).

#### **Saltimbanque – Human Conjurer**

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 6      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 18  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Stone Cloth).  
*Special Traits:* Petty Conjuring (*Edge Sharp, Sleep, Stone Cloth*).  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Sword Cane (7).

#### **Beastman Revolutionary**

*Physical:* 5      *Initiative:* 1  
*Mental:* 1      *Health:* 6  
*Social:* 1      *Quintessence:* 0  
*Armour Value:* 0  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Punch (3).

#### **Human Soldier**

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 3  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 5      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 2 (soldier's coat).  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Punch (3), Rifle (12), Rifle Bayonet (8).

Adventurers who realise that attacking the calliopes directly will invite too much resistance can instead goad the soldiers into doing it for them, especially if they have reason to believe the calliopes are being used to harm the Emperor.

Unfortunately, most of the quintessence the aerostat needs to fuel its cannon will already have been gathered by the time all four calliopes are shut down and the aerostat can still draw quintessence from the chanting crowds on its own, albeit less effectively (and, in any case, the aerostat will have more than enough to level the cathedral by the time it gets into position).

The aerostat circles the island once to draw as much quintessence as possible from the crowd before changing course and passing directly over the cathedral. Adventurers inside the cathedral at the time of the impromptu wedding may, with a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll, notice a Human woman up on the second floor looking out the window and back to the organ with a panicked expression. This is Mademoiselle's 'known' Thulian, Simon Garnet, who secretly returned to Paris to ensure that the organ is working properly. He rushes to the organ and makes a few adjustments before fleeing the cathedral under the pretence of running an errand for Mademoiselle.

If the adventurers try to intercept him he defends himself while telling them that "if you start running now you may avoid your fate!" If he can, Garnet flies up to the tricolour aerostat to join her comrades.

## The Mark of Thulia

The Thulian Order identifies each other with a symbol, a phoenix clutching a wand in each talon. The emblem is not ostentatious and, unless someone is specifically looking for it, easily blends in as a modest brooch, cufflink, ring, or walking cane adornment. More elaborate versions are used during Thulian gatherings.

To the Consortium at large, the Thulian Order is a German fraternity of hermeticists that have an inferiority complex to the hermeticists of the Great Powers (while Prussia is technically a 'Great Power,' it's considered the least of the others). There are similar fraternities in other Guilds that are social clubs for those that feel being a magician makes them superior to other sapients (a not uncommon view amongst Consortium members). Any suggestion that the Thulian Order is a Consortium-wide conspiracy is dismissed as ludicrous.

In Paris, Simon Garnet wears his emblem as a ring, while Wolfgang Rucht wears a lapel pin. Johann the Sentinel is not a member; he's merely Rucht's manservant.

At some point, the adventurers are going to have to realise that they need to stop the aerostat (although evacuating the cathedral is also an option as long as the aerostat pilot can see that firing the weapon would be useless; otherwise, thousands of Parisians are still in danger!). Shooting at the

aerostat from the ground has little effect; the adventurers need to get airborne.

### Simon Garnet - Human Thulian

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 9      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 24  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin)  
*Special Traits:* Entropy 1, Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*, *Flight of the Wyvern*, *Steely Skin*), Twisted Hazel Wand (all spells do an additional die of damage).  
*Complications:* Zealot (Thulian).  
*Damage:* Aetheric Bolt (9).

Some adventurers may have magic, marvels, or relics that can get them up to the aerostat; otherwise, the adventurers need to flag wyvern riders down and ask for a lift. Fortunately, there are a few flying over the Seine; flagging one requires a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Presence + Social Skill roll. Asking a soldier or police officer to flag one down is automatically successful; the soldier or officer blows his whistle a certain way to summon one. Once summoned, of course, the adventurers are going to have to convince them to give the adventurers a lift. Each wyvern can only carry one additional passenger on its back but can take an entire carriage in its claws.

Unfortunately, the aerostat crew is on watch for anyone getting too close and they fire at anyone approaching from the promenade around the aerostat cabin. Presuming that the adventurers can get inside they see a large apparatus





built into the floor of the aerostat. The apparatus appears to be a six foot tall rune-studded column that is about two feet in diameter and has a giant blue diamond mounted in the centre. The entire column is crackling with blue energy and anyone foolish enough to touch it takes 9 dice damage.

The power of Chernobog emanates from the column and touches magnetic minds. An adventurer with any magnetic abilities gets a powerful image of Citizen Liberty with burning red eyes and casting a demonic shadow. Clearly there's some major Maleficium at play. Adventurers with the *Know Living History* or *Psychometry* abilities see a tranquil lake surrounded by mountains (Lake Geneva). Adventurers with the Glimpse ability have the same image, but a giant charcoal-black winged and horned demon bursts from the lake with a flaming sword. Adventurers that cast *Visus Praetor (Second Sight)* see that much of the quintessence within the diamond is going somewhere else, somewhere south of here. Adventurers that make an Average Wits + Sigil Magic (or Lore) roll can read enough of the sigils to realise that while much of the quintessence is being stored for something, much more of it is being cast towards another blue diamond cut from the same gem.

Unfortunately, the adventurers don't have the luxury of time to decide what to do at first. Johann is in the room and tasked with defeating anyone who enters the room that doesn't belong. If Simon Garnet is aboard then he will be here as well. Within two rounds Wolfgang Rucht also joins the fray, coming down from the cockpit. All fight until killed or incapacitated.

Once the crew is dealt with, the adventurers have to figure out how to disarm the weapon. It can be destroyed, but it has an AV 10 from the crackling energy and 20 SP. If this is done the blue diamond explodes causing 12 dice damage to everyone in a 5 yard radius. A quick and dirty way to 'disarm' it, of course, is to simply bring the aerostat down. They could pilot it down themselves or crash it into the ground or the Seine. From that point the Paris Guild can take over to diffuse the weapon.

Should Wolfgang Rucht be in the cannon room when the aerostat passes over the cathedral he offers the power phrase necessary to fire it (it's the rather unimaginative "discharge and destroy!" in German). This can take as many rounds to happen as the Gamesmaster deems dramatically appropriate - the adventurers should have some chance to stop it, after all! Should the adventurers fail then a large blue beam bursts from the bottom of the aerostat and incinerates the cathedral. If the organ and proscenium are intact then the shockwave also destroys much of the east

end of the island. Without the organ and proscenium the blast expands half a mile in radius, enough to consume the throngs of people surrounding the cathedral along the riverbanks.

Should the Thulians completely succeed (they've assassinated Napoleon and contained the blast) then the blue diamond absorbs the energy from the crowd and sends it through the telluric lines running through Paris (to fill the other blue diamonds). The Thulians aboard the aerostat use a fraction of Chernobog's power to summon a powerful thunderstorm that rips through Paris but leaves the aerostat unaffected. With this cover (and aetheric lightning bolts) the aerostat heads towards the French Alps, where the Thulians plan to crash it and make their escape.

If the Thulians only partly succeed, then the blue diamond still drains into the telluric lines, but this completely burns out the blue diamond. Realising their situation, the Thulians attempt to crash the aerostat to cover their escape, which is a rather unceremonious run through the French countryside.

#### Johann - Ogre Sentinel

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 2  
*Mental:* 2      *Health:* 28  
*Social:* 4      *Quintessence:* 0  
*Armour Value:* 0  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Large Wrench (10).





**Wolfgang Rucht – Orc Thulian**

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 9      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 30  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin).

*Special Traits:* Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*, *Flight of the Wyvern*, *Steely Skin*), blackthorn wand (+2 dice when casting *Aetheric Bolt*).

*Complications:* Zealot (Thulian).

*Damage:* Eldritch Sword\* (10/13), *Aetheric Bolt* (8).

\*see **Eldritch Weapon** sidebar below.

**Aerostat Crew – Beastfolk Mercenaries**

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 3  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 3      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 2 (coveralls).

*Special Traits:* None.

*Complications:* None.

*Damage:* Club (5).

**Hoffnung von Dresden (Tricolour), Aerostat**

*Handling:* 0      *Movement:* 55 mph  
*Scale:* 0,      *Structure Pips:* 0  
*Armour:* 0      *Crew:* 0  
*Passengers:* 0      *Range:* 0  
*Traits:* 0      *Armament:* 0

**Intermission**

Hopefully, the adventurers stop the aerostat from destroying the cathedral. In this case they are in Napoleon's debt and they are amongst the first to whom the Emperor awards his Legion of Honour (effectively making them members of the upper class in France). Any captured aerostat crew are imprisoned and are almost guaranteed execution. Napoleon reluctantly allows Simon Garnet and Wolfgang Rucht, if captured, to be made available to the Guild for questioning, but he is keeping them in French custody to be tried for regicide, mass murder and, in Garnet's case, treason. Presuming Countess Lyonesse is still alive she thanks the adventurers for uncovering and defeating the plot. They've preserved a powerful ally and necessary piece to the puzzle of negotiations needed to end the war. Now they have to go and secure the final piece: Austrian support.

**Eldritch Weapon £55**

An eldrich weapon is the melee version of an eldrich pepperbox pistol. It is an enchanted melee weapon that is activated by verbal command. It is usually preloaded with the 2 Quintessence needed to power it, although if the user is a magician or has Entropy 2 or more then she may channel her own quintessence into it. A typical eldrich weapon does an extra 3 lethal dice of aetheric damage and lasts for 3 rounds. If the user is channelling her own quintessence then she may substitute her Resolve for the number of rounds if more than 3.

An eldrich weapon may be recharged by any magician that holds it and pays the 2 Quintessence cost. Unlike using *Lymma*, eldrich weapons cannot be overcharged to do more damage; attempting this would destroy the aetheric matrix surrounding the weapon and dissolves the magic (it still, however, does damage as a normal weapon of its type). An eldrich weapon can be crafted to do more damage, but the cost is exorbitant. Eldritch weapons that do more than an extra 6 dice of damage are almost unheard of and are more properly relics.

A missile can be an eldrich weapon. As the magic is instilled in the missile, this makes eldrich missiles effectively one-use weapons. The magic stays with the missile until the duration ends, meaning that an eldrich arrow lodged into a victim would still do its eldrich damage each round.

## When it all goes wrong

As is often the case with the best-laid plans of mice and men it's possible that this chapter ends in utter failure, not only wiping Napoleon and Notre Dame off the map, but Countess Lyonesse and a good chunk of Paris to boot. If the adventurers were anywhere nearby they were also likely killed when the aetheric shockwave blasted the city. Penny dreadful over, correct?

Not necessarily. While it is true that the Thulians succeeded, their use of the weapon may have failed to harness the quintessence they needed (as they obliterated the 'worshippers'). They've also tipped off British and French intelligence. Captain Danton was in charge of security and not inside the cathedral when it exploded and Countess Lyonesse had reported back to London. With the capabilities of the Thulians on full display *someone* is going to scrape a team together and investigate.

Regardless of how closely the adventurers guarded their findings, there is still more than enough open evidence to point in the direction of Prague or Vienna. It's no secret that Montesquieu's 'gifts' came from Urmacher's in Prague and that he taught at Vienna University. Either of these leads could take the adventurers to Pest in time to stop the next part of the Thulian plan.

On top of all this, the explosion of aetheric energy was *felt* by the Tsarina, who recognised Chernobog's signature. While the success or failure of the aetheric energy build-up prompted her to activate agents in Vienna, an explosion that almost released the super-archon is enough to get her directly involved. It's possible that the next group of adventurers pursuing leads in the Austrian Empire may be Russian rather than British or French!

The adventurers get one more clue before leaving Paris as well. Isaac de Porthau, 'the Last Musketeer,' summons them to his bedside – he suffered a major heart attack during the incident (this, of course, presumes he didn't perish in the blast (at which point the adventurers are likely in the dark until they meet Rabbi Obediah Spinoza in **Chapter IV Prager Bridge**). He was a guest at the coronation). He is dying but he needs to tell the adventurers something. He gestures for them to come close and he offers the following in a hoarse whisper "the Dark One is coming! I - I felt him – his talons have pierced my heart! You must stop him before...find the last...Pale...Knight..." he trails off. His last words, spoken while his eyes are closed, are "You are here? I'm sorry, Justina" as he dies.

Should the adventurers mention that there are loose ends to tie up from their discoveries during the investigation Countess Lyonesse frees them to do so. She has ample personal protection in the form of Mr Singh and the threat to the British Empire outweighs her own safety. She cites the Parisian plot as an example: had they stuck by her side they'd all be dead now!

Countess Lyonesse does not have aerostat travel lined up to get to Vienna but considers it unnecessary, locomotive travel is just as fast and convenient. She plans to leave

within a couple of hours and spend the night in Munich before reaching Vienna in the morning. Her audience with the Austrian Emperor is scheduled for the day after her arrival. Of course, the adventurers can take the train straight to Vienna if they wish; she can telegraph ahead for them.

At this point, Fouché is pulling strings behind the scenes. He's cutting his losses for Garnet and Rucht but he understands that this only helps further his plan. As a ranking member of the Silencius he enables some of the 'harmless' Thulians to be interrogated or watched, but ensures that the principals in his plan remain unmolested.

### Researching the Pale Knights

It's likely that the adventurers may research the Order of the Knights Palatine at some point, especially given Porthau's membership and his cryptic last words. An Average Wits + History (or Theology (Aluminat)) roll garners the basics: from the time of the first Conclave in Rome during the 2nd century there has existed an elite knightly order known as the Order of the Knights Palatine (after the Roman hill on which each knight took his or her pledge).

These knights vowed to continue the work of the Eight Voices by acting as new 'pale riders,' rooting out Maleficium

users and their Pale patrons. Due to this and the similarity of the word 'Palatine,' these knights are often known simply as 'Pale Knights.'

As the Church grew it became necessary to create new knightly orders and, eventually, an Inquisition, to combat the Aluminat's enemies. Through it all the Pale Knights remained a small, elite order, often leading and teaching these new groups. The Pale Knights' reputation for accepting only the best was put to the test when the Aluminat fractured; the Pale Knights continued to recruit from the new sects and even from other Levantine faiths. That said the Pale Knights always acted in unison and ultimately for the good of the Aluminat Church its faithful.

The last great mission of the Pale Knights was to root out Maleficium during the Thirty Years' War. They almost met their match against the greatest of the Paynim sorcerers who drew power from the terrible Slavic Archon Chernobog (the Dark One), but while the majority of the Order fell enough of them were able to break Chernobog's power on Earth and destroy his servants.

While the Order of the Knights Palatine were never officially disbanded, no new knights were inducted after the Council of Geneva in 1649. Since then, the Order slowly dwindled as its members perished.

Adventurers that make a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + History (or Theology (Aluminat)) roll are able to find the names of the knights who survived the imprisonment of Chernobog.

They are as follows:

- Elek Szabo was a Hungarian knight and founding member of the Consortium of Hermetic Guilds. He was a Gnome who was so obsessed with immortality that he became a Litche. The Austrian Guild destroyed him in 1851.
- Spanish Huldu Don Enrique Castellanos returned to Toledo, where he died peacefully of old age in 1698,
- Isaac de Porthau is a former King's Musketeer who resides in a stately home just outside of Paris.
- There is some confusion regarding Dame Justina of Bialystok; some accounts have her dying during the final battle while others say she survived and went home. In any case, the Polish Human should have died of old age by now.

- Sir Obediah Spinoza – A Dutch Yehudi Dwarf, Sir Obediah was believed to have settled in Vienna. He hasn't been heard from since.
- Sir Spiridon of Constantinople was waylaid and killed by Paynim sorcerers on his way home from Geneva in 1850.

### Researching Chernobog

Inquisitive adventurers may also try to learn more about Chernobog at some point. Everyone knows that Chernobog was the Dark One, a major Paynim archon that was the face of Aluminat resistance from the Middle Ages up through the Thirty Years' War. Everyone also knows that the Heavenly Host finally destroyed Chernobog at that war's conclusion.

Adventurers making a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Lore (or Theology (Aluminat)) roll can learn the following:

- There was a major Paynim plot behind the scenes during the Thirty Years' War. Many inquisitors lost their lives trying to root it out. In the end, it was the piety and skill of the elite Pale Knights that carried the day as, infused with power from the Heavenly Host, they destroyed Chernobog and left his worshippers powerless.
- The newly formed Consortium of Hermetic Guilds took the quintessence drained from Chernobog and kept it in the Aetherium at Geneva. This potent quintessence is occasionally used to power great hermetic rituals. Only an elite few know the ritual needed to tap it.
- Adventurers that make this roll with a good success (3 successes) feel that there is a bit more to the story than they are being told. Only by interviewing a Guildmaster can the adventurers learn the truth (and only with the right approach – Countess Lyonesse could be a great help here): Chernobog was never destroyed, only imprisoned.
- As an amalgam of many archons it is too tied to the Earth, destroying Chernobog would destroy the world as well. Fortunately, the power of the binding ritual, combined with the general knowledge that Chernobog no longer exists, keeps the abomination safely trapped. It is theoretically possible for Chernobog to break the bonds, but the Guildmaster doubts that there are enough Paynim worshippers left to fuel Chernobog to the breaking point.

## Russian Roulette

Regardless of how well the adventurers do in thwarting the Thulian plan, enough of Chernobog's essence seeped through to garner the Tsarina's attention. After all, she was there when the Pale Knights trapped the super-archon and she remembers what it felt like. She immediately activates an agent in Paris to carry out her own investigation.

Once the agent has interviewed Antoinette Cartier and Inspector Lepin (under the guise of a newspaper reporter), the Tsarina decides that the awakening of Chernobog is a worse threat to her people than a few miles of geography. After all, Chernobog feels her as well and it's likely he'll march right through Austria and Prussia to get to her. The Tsarina must protect her people.

In her guise as Princess Nadja the Tsarina charts an aerostat to Vienna. While she prefers more magical means, she understands that aerostat is the fastest way to get there and, even then, it'll take 19 hours to reach Vienna, or likely sometime on the second day after the assassination attempt on Napoleon. In the meantime, the Tsarina orders her agent to continue her investigations. She travels non-stop, putting her in Vienna in the morning, or about when the adventurers would get there if they spent the night in Munich. As such, certain scenes may have to be altered according to the situation.

The Tsarina's Vila agent is Rasia Sezjova, a beautiful Eldren woman who speaks perfect English, French and German (amongst other tongues). She's currently adopted the guise of Rochelle Paul, a Parisian newspaper reporter who is trying to uncover the facts surrounding Montesquieu's death and the attack on Napoleon (in other words, her cover story is what she's trying to accomplish).

Rasia Sezjova is also useful to the adventurers as a magnetist if they lack one, to get the necessary flashes of insight from the blue diamonds.

Rasia Sezjova - Eldren Vila Agent

*Physical:* 9

*Initiative:* 9

*Mental:* 10

*Health:* 12

*Social:* 9

*Quintessence:* 24

*Armour Value:* 4 (lined cloak).

*Special Traits:* Petty Conjuring (*Befuddle, Cat Nimble, Healing Poultrice, Liken Shape*), Night Vision, Polyglot, Spiritualism (*Aura Reading, See the Supernatural*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt, Instant Beauty, Invisibility, Steely Skin*).

*Complications:* None.

*Damage:* Kick (4), military sword (9), Whitworth pistol (11).



## ~ CHAPTER II ~ VIENNESE GADENZA

After the events in Paris, this chapter is more of a fact-finding mission before the adventurers move onto Pest-Buda. The adventurers learn a bit more about the Night Choir while hopefully avoiding a trap set by the Thulians. They may also discover a Russian agent following their every move;

but is she friend or foe? But first, the adventurers need to get to Vienna. Countess Lyonesse planned to take the train from Paris; presuming the adventurers join her then they enjoy first class accommodation. If the adventurers choose to travel on their own then they book according to their station. In either event it takes about 12 hours at best to get to Vienna (not factoring in the 1 hour time difference or train delays). They need to change trains in Strasbourg and cross Bavaria to Munich. The Countess sees little sense in arriving in Vienna in the small hours of the morning

so she plans an overnight stay in Munich; whether the adventurers remain with her or continue on is up to them.

In Munich they embark on the Great Western Railway through Salzburg and straight through to Vienna. Presuming this adventure taking place in the summer or autumn this journey is pleasant for the most part, as the climate is temperate and the rolling southern hills with the Alps in the distance provide spectacular views. In bitter weather the cars are heated, but obviously first class gets priority on coals.



The capital of the Empire, Vienna is a city of past glories. Austria's power is on the decline, but her people don't recognise that yet. Its coffee houses are full of nobles discussing politics and its theatres are full of patrons eager to see the latest opera or play. The Emperor parades his stallions or listens to command performances by world-famous Austrian musicians while he leaves the running of his empire to his chancellor. Combined with the fact that the Emperor keeps most manufacturing and industrialisation out of the city and in the Sudetenland, Vienna has a reputation as a decadent city where pleasure is sought out before serious work is even considered.

Adventurers from Paris arrive at the new Wien Westbahnhof railway station to the west of the medieval city. Between them lies the Vienna Aerodrome, which sits on a part of the Glacis that was ceded to it only a few years ago. Countess Lyonesse has secured rooms at the Mehlgrube, an expanding hotel in the old city; should the adventurers arrive without her then she telegraphs the hotel to have their accommodations ready.

One potentially alarming thing that the adventurers can learn with an Easy (+3 to dice pool) Wits + High Society or Politics (or a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + General Knowledge) roll is that Emperor Franz Karl is preparing to go to Pest for a special concert in his honour as King of Hungary. The Emperor plans to leave at 12 pm although the concert isn't due to begin until 7:30 pm (or, let's face it, whenever the Emperor is ready!).

As the adventurers travel through the city they notice many posters with the image of Citizen Liberty on them. They are not, however, revolutionary posters. Instead, the woman is depicted as the lead in a production of *Regina* currently playing at the *Theatre an der Wien*.

### Scene 1 - The Russian Gambit

Rasia Sezjova arrives in Vienna first thing in the morning. If the adventurers spent the night in Munich then she is on the same train. At this point, Rasia is only watching them; adventurers who make a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll realise that a beautiful, smartly dressed Eldren woman occasionally smiles at them as she jots some notes on her paper. If approached, she uses her Parisian journalism cover story; her notes bear her out.

If the adventurers don't notice her, or if Rasia comes to Vienna without them, then she arrives and makes contact with Professor Jacek Bronowski. Bronowski's information is enough to send her on to Pest-Buda, but she keeps her eye on the adventurers; she may end up needing their assistance.

It's entirely possible that the adventurers and Rasia cross paths during their respective investigations in Vienna, especially when they are at the university; on Bronowski's advice she interviews Lorelei Nieder as well. At this point Rasia is a shadowy presence, touching elements of the investigation just before or after the adventurers do or sharing fleeting glances from across the campus or the concert hall. Presuming the adventurers don't back her up against a wall in Vienna, she takes the same train to Pest-Buda with them.



If the adventurers do confront her, she maintains her cover story. Only if the adventurers aren't buying it does she break down and tell them the truth; the Tsarina is concerned that a dark force is being reawakened. She doesn't trust them enough yet to offer her assistance, but assures them that the Tsarina doesn't want the revolutionaries to succeed any more than the adventurers do. From this point forward, Rasia fades into the shadows until she is needed.

### Calling on the Cavalry

With one emperor threatened (or even killed) and another in danger, the adventurers may logically warn the Viennese authorities or the Guild. Unfortunately, Grand Hermeticist Fouché wears a lot of hats in Vienna, investing a lot of power in a single individual.

He is the Guildmaster of the Viennese Guild, making him the second most powerful magician on the Continent. In addition, Fouché is a sub-magister within the Silencius, the Guild's 'internal affairs' organisation and thus has great influence over the Praetorian Guard. This makes Fouché a very powerful individual within the Austrian Empire and thus anywhere the adventurers turn officially to for assistance, Fouché likely pulls strings in the shadows.

Fouché already has his eyes on the Thulian Order – interference from the adventurers only speeds up his plans to round them up and send them to Otrante Palace outside of Geneva for 'interrogation' (in truth they are preparing for Chernobog's return). Should the adventurers prove a greater nuisance then Fouché orders them to be arrested and confined for questioning, preferably until after Chernobog has risen. In this case the adventurers may find themselves fugitives within the borders of the Austrian Empire.

Gamesmasters should note that while the Praetorian Guard is a far-reaching organisation, there is only a handful of them (the lowest ranked) in each city and, of these the majority are on other assignments. Providing the adventurers take reasonable precautions and maintain a low profile, they should still be able to navigate the cities without too much interference.

Should the adventurers find themselves confined, then they have two options to free themselves. The first is Divine providence, which arrives in the form of the Tsarina's Vila (she needs allies and the adventurers will do). The second is to convince the local centurion that the Emperor's life is in danger. While this requires a lot of convincing, the centurions are not puppets and when in doubt their loyalties lie with the Emperor, not Fouché.

The three centurions that the adventurers are likely to meet are the Human Arnold Decker (Vienna), Eldren Wilma Adler (Pest-Buda) and Human Ulf Bohn (Prague).

### Centurion – Human Witch Hunter\*

*Physical:* 9

*Initiative:* 7

*Mental:* 9

*Health:* 14

*Social:* 9

*Quintessence:* 30

*Armour Value:* 5 (lined soldier's coat).

*Special Traits:* Order 1, Demonology (*Protected Domain*), Natural Charisma, Necromancy (*Rest*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*, *Ectoplasmic Bonds*, *Flight of the Wyvern*, *Heal*, *Steely Skin*).

*Complications:* Zealot .

*Damage:* Punch (4), Eldritch Turret Revolver (8), Sabre (10).

\*Decker has a clockwork eye (vulcan's eye). Adler has Spiritualism abilities (*Aura Reading*, *Grace*, *See the Supernatural*) and does 1 less point of STR damage. Bohn carries a wizard's staff (accuracy +1, 7 damage, electrical discharge can add +6 damage for up to 10 rounds [need not be continuous]) instead of a sabre.



### Thema - Human Witch Hunter

Physical: 6 Initiative: 5  
 Mental: 6 Health: 10  
 Social: 6 Quintessence: 18  
 Armour Value: 5 (lined soldier's coat)  
 Special Traits: Order 1, Demonology (*Protected Domain*),  
 Necromancy (*Rest*), Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt*,  
*Ectoplasmic Bonds*, *Heal*, *Steely Skin*).  
 Complications: Zealot.  
 Damage: Punch (3), Pepperbox Pistol (8), Sabre (9).

### Scene 2 - Viennese Legwork

Presuming that the adventures arrive in Vienna on the day after the assassination attempt on Napoleon, the adventurers aren't likely to have a lot of time to investigate before rushing to Pest-Buda to protect Emperor Franz Karl. As the trip takes about 3 hours, the adventurers probably won't want to spend more than half the day in Vienna. Still, there are several leads they may track down while they are here.

The first avenue they may try is Oskar Hahn's residence. If so then go to **Scene 3 - The Hahn Residence**. Adventurers that wish to visit Professor Bronowski at the University of Vienna should go to **Scene 4 - The University**. Adventurers who decide to look into the Viennese production of *Regina* should go to **Scene 5 - The House of Citizen Liberty**.

Another avenue for the adventurers to pursue is the Viennese Guild. Currently the Guildmaster, Grand Hermeticist Fouché is in Geneva. In his stead the highest ranking member of the Guild is Dr Sanja Frisch, a Human

alienist and surgeon who also happens to be the second most powerful hermeticist in the city. If the adventurers look for her at the Guildhouse they are directed to the Narrenturm, or 'Fool's Tower,' the mental ward inside Vienna General Hospital.

Dr Frisch meets the adventurers in her office. She is cool and professional woman in her mid-30s, with a charming smile. She has a weakness for cigars and lights one as soon as she sits, offering some to the adventurers. Dr Frisch offers to answer any questions they have but to please be mindful that she has many patients to see and exorcisms to perform.

- If asked about the Thulian Order, Dr Frisch notes that there are several hermeticists that believe they are 'privileged' due to their abilities, but there is no Thulian fraternity within their ranks of which she is aware. Besides, Fouché would have rooted them out if there were. He is quite skilled at that sort of thing.
    - If the adventurers have a hermeticist amongst them Dr Frisch puts a finger to her mouth and makes a 'shh' sound after her comment regarding Fouché. A hermeticist would automatically know that Dr Frisch is referring to the Silencius - Fouché is obviously a ranking member.
  - Oskar Hahn is not a member of the Guild. While Vienna University does licence Bards, Dr Frisch does not believe Hahn has any magical talent.
  - Both Hahn and Montesquieu were students of Professor Jacek Bronowski, a Polish national and Russian exile. Bronowski was once the head of an unsanctioned 'study group' known as the Night Choir. Their political activities during the 'Springtime' got Bronowski into quite a bit of trouble.
- Adventurers may also simply ask around about Oskar Hahn. A Difficult (3 black dice) Presence + Streetwise roll gains the following:
- Hahn was a modest composer at best until he hit success with *Regina*, but he has yet to produce another opera to supplant it.
  - 'Citizen Liberty' is modelled on Eldren actress Lorelei Nieder, who is currently performing the lead in *Regina* at the Theatre an der Wien.
  - Oskar Hahn is currently in Pest-Buda preparing a special Unity Concert for the Emperor. The concert is

designed to put Hungary on equal footing with Austria (this is said with some contempt) and is due to be performed tonight.

Adventurers may also take the opportunity to look for Sir Obediah Spinoza. If the adventurers don't know that he is a Bene David, an average Presence + Streetwise roll enables someone to point them towards Leopoldstadt, as an Iberian surname attached to a Codex personal name usually denotes a Yehudi. Should the adventurers go to Leopoldstadt and make a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Presence + Streetwise roll (or a Difficult roll if the adventurer is Yehudi or considered a 'friend' to the Yehudi community) learn the following:

- Sir Obediah never liked having the knightly title. He preferred to be known as Rabbi Spinoza.
- Rabbi Spinoza came here to marry. He stayed until the expulsion of the Yehudi in 1670. If the adventurer made a good success (3 successes) then she learns that Rabbi Spinoza settled in Prague, where he is believed to still reside.

### Scene 3 – The Hahn Residence

Oskar Hahn lives with his family in a comfortable home just off the Landstrasse outside of Stuben Gate, making it a pleasant walk through the Glacis and over the canal. This enables Hahn to slip into the university, where he teaches, without dealing with the congestion of city life. His home sits a block away from the main thoroughfare, a short walk from the Customs House, giving him and his family relative peace and quiet.

Oskar Hahn is not in Vienna when the adventurers arrive (presuming the adventurers visit on the day after Napoleon's attempted assassination); he's currently in Prague. He's left his family at home: his wife Trula and their two small children, Arvin and Stefanie (twins); a third is on the way (all are Human). The house has a small staff of servants led by imperious butler Oxman Friedrich Holmann.

Holmann acts as the gatekeeper and begs callers off; he expects 'the master of the house' to be home within a day or two. A successful opposed social roll prompts him to begrudgingly allow them to sit in the parlour while he fetches Frau Hahn. The parlour is tastefully decorated with photographs of Hahn and his family; the lack of forebears indicates he has only recently come into wealth. There is a grand piano in the room with an assortment of compositions from *Regina* on the music shelf. There are also

several unfinished pieces heavily marked and rewritten – a successful Average Wits + Art (musical composition) skill enables an adventurer to recognise that the person who wrote them is frustrated and the unfinished pieces greatly resemble pieces from *Regina*. It's as if the composer was trying to recapture the magic of the previous opera.

A Huldu servant brings the adventurers some refreshments and Frau Hahn arrives a few minutes later, helped by Herr Holmann. She's obviously well into the pregnancy. She apologises for her condition as she sits in a comfortable chair – normally she's a more enthusiastic host. Frau Hahn is still quite a young Human woman and fresh-faced; she has a good life.

She allows Holmann to pour some coffee before answering questions. She asks the adventurers why they have called but it's only a courtesy; she doesn't feel that she has anything to hide. Herr Holmann, on the other hand, stares at them with a burning intensity. Asking appropriate questions gains the following information.



Note: If the adventurers dally in Vienna and don't interview Frau Hahn until late afternoon, she receives news from Pest-Buda authorities that her husband committed suicide that morning (see **Chapter III – Pestian Crescendo**). This is quite a shock to her and the information presented below should be amended accordingly:

- Oskar Hahn had a difficult upbringing. His father wanted him to follow him in the banking business.



Oskar, however, wanted to be a music composer. Unfortunately, he hadn't had any success until the revolution inspired him to write *Regina*. In the last five years the play has made his career. She's a bit worried that none of his subsequent operas have been successful, but thankfully subsequent performances of *Regina* have provided a steady income for the family.

- Oskar Hahn is not a bard nor has he any other magical training.
- While it was initially in danger of censorship, Hahn successfully argued that the play was actually a satire on the Kingdom of Prussia. The runaway success of the opera has enabled him to get a job as a music instructor at the university.
- Frau Hahn is aware of her husband's liberal leanings – she felt he'd spent too much time with his Polish mentor, Herr Bronowski, at the university. He used to call his evening meetings with Bronowski 'choir practice.'
- If asked (delicately!) if her marriage is a happy one, Frau Hahn holds back tears. She has tried to make the marriage work, but Hahn spends so much time in Vienna with his lead actress, Lorelei Nieder, that she believes he is having an affair. He insists this isn't the case, but he is utterly fascinated by Nieder.
- Oskar Hahn is currently in Pest-Buda, where he is conducting a special version of *Regina* for the Emperor

as part of a 'unity concert.' Given the importance of the event Frau Hahn expected to go, but Oskar was adamant that she was in no condition to travel. He also said he was worried about political events and could only ensure his own protection.

- She is very concerned for him; she received a telegram first thing this morning from him in Pest-Buda that simply said that he loved her and the children. It was almost as if he never expected to see them again.

Should adventurers burgle the house they discover a large number of revolutionary tracts in Hahn's study. A Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll also uncovers a copy of the original *Regina*, written by Albert Lortzing. The play is heavily annotated and reworked, ostensibly by Hahn. There is also correspondence that verifies that Hahn and Lortzing were acquainted during Lortzing's stay in Vienna and that the play is properly his. Hahn was simply offering suggestions to improve it.

### Scene 4 – The University

The Universität Wien (Vienna University) is the oldest German-speaking university in the world. It's actually spread throughout Vienna, but most of the campus sits just inside the Stuben Gate on the eastern wall. The church has a strong Aluminat influence on its architecture and its character. Church influence was gradually replaced by Guild influence and today Vienna University is the most prestigious hermetic school in the world.





At the dawn of the century a musical society pushed to create a music school. This 'Society for the Friends of Music' had several bards in their ranks and they were able to get Bardism legitimised as a subject for magical studies, although it's still classified as 'petty conjuring.' The presence of magic in music did get a musical college incorporated into the university and it is here that Arnaud Montesquieu taught for a few years before returning to France.

If the adventurers have already spoken to Frau Hahn then they know to look for Jacek Bronowski. Without this information the adventurers are going to have to ask around the university for people who knew Oskar Hahn. This requires a Difficult (3 black dice) Presence + Conversation roll (this is considered a 'middle class' use). If successful, the adventurer is directed to Professor Bronowski, a Polish exile and bard.

Professor Bronowski is a barrel of a Human with thinning, greying hair; his best years are obviously behind him. The bass tones of his voice are still booming when he speaks and he remains quite animated; if the adventurers meet him during class then they find him leading them in a timing exercise; the huge man skips from one side of the room to the other, having his students pound on their desks asynchronously to teach them about the different levels of timing in modern music.



Bronowski is also a liberal or, more accurately, a radical. A few decades ago he was a rising star in Saint Petersburg, composing scores for ballets, concerts and plays. While an

excellent composer in his own right, Bronowski enhanced his performances with the magical art of bardism, both on his own and with selected protégés.

While quickly becoming the toast of Russia, Bronowski was Polish and, fuelled by his parents' memories of an independent nation, longed for his homeland to be in control of its own destiny. As a faithful Aluminat, Bronowski prayed for his people's deliverance from the 'heretical' Tsarina.

When the Polish revolution rose up against Russia in 1830, Bronowski supported them; he was so disheartened by both its failure and the Tsarina's brutal and ruthless suppression that he found that he lacked inspiration and could no longer work in Saint Petersburg. He headed west and settled in Austria, where he found work as a professor at the University of Vienna. While his own muse was muted he could still teach music and he became a popular professor.

If the adventurers meet Bronowski after Rasia has been there then he is visibly disturbed; he's upset that he was coerced into aiding the Tsarina. He says nothing to them about it, but he is sipping vodka from his hip flask a bit more than he should. In either case it's easy to get him to talk as he ultimately has little to share:

- Bronowski formed the Night Choir soon after becoming a professor. It was intended to be a forum for liberal debate and ideas; the secrecy was simply to protect members from reactionary authorities.
- The Night Choir wasn't limited to bards and Bronowski invited Hahn to join. Hahn was full of revolutionary energy and convinced Bronowski to use the Night Choir to fuel the Springtime of the Peoples.
  - If the adventurers can make a Difficult (3 black dice) social roll, then Bronowski admits that he'd come up with a theory that social agitation was akin to praying and that enough 'true believers' in the cause could attract a patron archon and possibly make it stronger. Unfortunately, his attempt at uniting everyone behind 'Citizen Liberty' was limited and only France managed to topple a government.
- 'Citizen Liberty' was modelled on the beautiful Lorelei Nieder, an Eldren actress who captured Hahn's heart.
- After the revolution was crushed in late 1848 Bronowski was visited by Fouché. He was warned not to use his Bardic talents for revolutionary activity again and he

was required to submit a paper on how he achieved it for further reference. Bronowski notes with amusement that he left out key components – he can't give away all his trade secrets!

- Bronowski supported Hahn's efforts but noted that the composer had little natural inspiration. Still Bronowski knew he would make a good teacher and help get him a position at the university not long after the revolution. Bronowski later had a falling out with Hahn over *Regina*, as Bronowski was acquainted with German composer Albert Lortzing and was familiar with his work. More importantly, *Regina* looked like nothing Hahn had ever produced. Bronowski suspected him of passing off Lortzing's work as his own after Lortzing died in 1851.
- Knowing the Guild was watching him, Bronowski ended the Night Choir. It's quite possible that Hahn continued meeting with them, as he and Nieder kept the same circle of friends.
- Soon after the opera's inaugural performance, Hahn was arrested by the Praetorian Guard. He must have convinced them that the opera wasn't seditious, as he was freed and *Regina* continued to be performed. Bronowski suspects that the notoriety acquired from the arrest helped generate interest in the opera throughout the empire.

## Scene 5 – The House of Citizen Liberty

Lorelei Nieder is not a revolutionary; she is a vampire and she enjoys feeding on musically creative mortals. That said she was quite fond of Montesquieu and still favours Hahn. Fouché knows what Nieder is and has been keeping her as a useful tool. He sent her a message that the adventurers were responsible for the death of Montesquieu and they are now pursuing Hahn. Fouché is counting on her rage to deal with them and he won't be disappointed.

The Theater an der Wien was built at the turn of the century and sits on the Wien river, hence its name. It is a grand theatre that hosts operas and ballet as well; currently, of course, it is running *Regina*. Banners and posters adorned with the name of the play hang at various points around the building.

The opera runs from 7:30pm to 10pm. Unless the adventurers have returned to Vienna after the events in Pest-Buda it's unlikely that they will still be in the city when the performance begins. In any event it takes little

negotiation to purchase a ticket late, providing that they pay full price and agree to sit in the back so as to not disturb the opera in progress. Even if they don't decide to watch the opera (or arrived at another time) they can still get a copy of the programme.

Of particular note on the programme is that Lorelei Nieder is the lead and Johann Strauss, Jr is the orchestra conductor. The composition is credited to Oskar Hahn. A likeness of Lorelei Nieder's face graces the cover of the programme and, accounting for some artistic licence, strongly resembles the Citizen Liberty painting in Montesquieu's apartment as well as the woman in the daguerreotype. The ticket booth operator informs them that Lorelei Nieder is practicing on stage.

As a vampire, Nieder can't use her vampiric talents during the day. Fortunately for her, she is a practitioner of Maleficium and can summon demons to do her bidding. If the adventurers arrive during the day, she welcomes them and asks the actors working with her to leave the auditorium until she summons them. She then tells the adventurers to wait while she slips out of her costume and into something more appropriate.

As soon as she leaves the room, locking the door behind her, Nieder summons two Demons of the Second Pale Circle. They appear on the stage and attack the adventurers! Nieder uses this opportunity to escape by casting *Aer Amiculum* (Aethereal Cloak). See the sidebar **An Encore Performance** on the following page for more details. Assuming the adventurers are too busy to do so, one of the actors sees what's happening and summons the authorities. Unfortunately, the adventurers are unlikely to get any assistance for 1D+2 rounds and even then it is probably an ill-equipped beat cop or two (although Rasia Sezjova could make her appearance).

### Demon of the Second Pale Circle\*

*Physical:* 12      *Initiative:* 5

*Mental:* 2      *Health:* 16

*Social:* 0      *Quintessence:* 30

*Armour Value:* 6 (oozing slime).

*Special Traits:* Entropy 6, Ageless, Incapacitating Attack (Entangle), Poison (x3), Protean.

*Complications:* None.

*Damage:* Stinger (10 + poison), tendrils (6 + entangle).

\*Entropy embraces change and diversity; the demons here differ a bit from those in the *Victoriana Core Rulebook* and are the preferred minions of Chernobog worshippers.

## An Encore Performance

Given that two demons ransack the auditorium prior to the performance, Regina is cancelled for the evening. That is not the end of Lorelei Nieder, however. She follows the adventurers and strikes when the opportunity presents itself, most likely during an evening train ride or in their hotel rooms. At this point, she has command of all her vampiric abilities. During the attack Nieder blames them for the death of Montesquieu and, if appropriate, Hahn as well. This should tip the adventurers off that someone fed her misinformation. Unfortunately, Nieder is likely to take that information to her grave (unless the Gamesmaster needs her to feed him a clue).

### Lorelei Nieder – Eldren Vampire Diva

*Physical:* 12      *Initiative:* 8

*Mental:* 8      *Health:* 12

*Social:* 15      *Quintessence:* 24

*Armour Value:* 4

*Special Traits:* Entropy 2, Ageless, Attribute Change (+3 to Dexterity, Fortitude and Strength, +4 to Presence), Beautiful +2, Demonology (*Aethereal Cloak*, *Demonic Dominion*, *The Revelation of All*, *Summon Second Circle Demon*), Immunity: Poison, Immunity: Sleep & Sleep Magic, Life Drain (blood drain via bite), Necromancy (*Raise Lesser Undead*, *Raise Greater Undead*, *Voice of Control*, *Warp Dead*), Regeneration (x2), Rise Again (may be stopped by decapitation, so long as both head and body are burned), Thaumaturgy (*Botheration*, *Darkness*, *Farspeech*, *Flight of the Wyvern*, *Instant Beauty*, *Steely Skin*), Unstoppable.

*Complications:* Eldren Eccentricity (Rage), Bane (garlic, wild rose and other wholesome herbs), Hunger (must feed on 6 pints of sapient blood per night (enough to kill

most sapients) – a pint from a sapient with the same sin of the vampire is worth 3 pints), Requirement (nocturnal; a vampire can only regenerate and use her vampiric talents during the night), Repelled (holy symbol held by a believer), Vulnerability (wooden or iron stake through the heart paralyzes it).

*Damage:* Punch (5), bite (6; when bitten, the victim suffers either a wave of euphoria or a draining paralysis; they must make a Resolve roll and score at least 2 successes to take any action while being bitten).



## Intermission

Should the adventurers inform Countess Lyonesse that they suspect trouble in Pest-Buda or otherwise ask her to accompany them there they discover that the Emperor has already left her an invitation to come should she arrive in Vienna early enough. Armed with the information gleaned from the adventurers she telegraphs ahead that she fears for the Emperor's safety. The trip to Pest-Buda takes about three and a half hours.

### A Change in the Thulian Plan

The need to assassinate Napoleon was both a curse and a blessing to the Thulian Order. While it made the Thulians tip their hand early, it also showed them that the focusing mechanisms on the calliopes were unnecessary; the larger

blue diamonds could absorb enough quintessence on their own. Thus, Fouché was able to quickly alter plans enough to give the Praetorian Guard something to uncover while leaving the crux of his Pest-Buda plans – the assassination of the Austrian Emperor and the retaliatory strike from the Citadella – intact.

If the attack on Napoleon was completely successful then the Thulians keep the original plan of assassinating the Emperor in the National Theatre and using the submersible to prompt a military response by attacking the Citadella from the water. The Gamesmaster can easily reorganise this as necessary, including when and where to place new adventurers (as a 'complete success' in Paris likely means the adventurers either died or failed to uncover any leads).

## ~CHAPTER III~ PESTIAN CRESCENDO

Regardless of the direction the adventurers take, by the time they get to Pest-Buda they'll probably be rushing. The Emperor is making a show of visiting Pest-Buda in his role as Hungarian King in spite of any possible revolutionary activity. The clock is ticking and the Thulian Order is ready to strike...

The Hungarian city of Pest (often considered together with its river neighbour as Pest-Buda) lies on the eastern side of the Danube; the railways from Prague and Vienna straddle the north of the river through Pressburg, which was the former Hungarian capital prior to Buda's elevation at the turn of the century. The adventurers arrive at the Pest station, which lies in the heart of the city.

In spite of the imposing and beautiful buildings throughout the city the adventurers can see Buda Castle and the Citadella looming on a hill across the Danube, a constant reminder that Hungary is under Austrian rule. This is only further punctuated by the fact that the royal castle stands largely unoccupied while the freshly built citadel to its south contains a full garrison of Austrian troops.

Still, the adventurers may be surprised to discover that, once they leave the station full of Austrian nobles and officials boarding carriages to take them across the Lánchíd, or Chain Bridge, to neighbouring Buda, there's a great nationalistic spirit amongst the Hungarians. Even in the

shadow of tyranny (and the occasional Austrian wyvern rider) they build architectural marvels to their culture and proudly hang signs in Hungarian. It's difficult to believe that, less than a decade ago, their autonomous ambitions were brutally crushed by the heels of Austrian boots.



### The Rubber Band Snaps Back?

In our own world, Franz Karl never took the Austrian throne. In 1848, his bSpinozaer, Emperor Ferdinand, abdicated during the Springtime of the Peoples and Franz Karl renounced his claim in favour of his son, Franz Joseph, who would rule the Austrian Empire and later Austria-Hungary, until his death in 1916. In *Victoriana*, Ferdinand never took the throne due to a failed chirurgy that left him permanently incapacitated. Franz Karl has been ruling in his stead ever since. As a Dwarf, it's entirely possible to have Franz Karl rule until 1916 in Franz Joseph's place (indeed, he could fill out Charles I's term as well) and continue to fill the role that Austria-Hungary filled in the latter part of the 19th century and into the early 20th. Thus, the rubber band snaps back.

That said if the Gamesmaster allows Franz Karl to be assassinated in this adventure then Franz Joseph could step into his father's footsteps and, with the aid of the Concert, regain control of the empire.

Of course, if the Gamesmaster wishes to follow the natural repercussions of the assassination then it is likely that Hungary successfully revolts, possibly along with Bohemia and Austria's Italian possessions. In this case the Thulian plan succeeds and Prussia moves in, taking Bohemia and strengthening its control over the German States. It's even possible that Austria, now isolated, may submit to the Prussian Crown too.



Presuming the adventurers arrive before the opera begins, Hungarians line the streets of Buda and Pest to cheer the Emperor on along the carriage route to the National Theatre on Kerepasi Street. This, of course, takes it across the Chain Bridge, which is still less than a decade old and through the main thoroughfares of Pest.

After the concert the Emperor is hosting a party at Buda Castle and, before leaving in the morning, hopes to placate the Hungarian people with a speech on Hungary's importance to the empire and the appointment of a new Hungarian-born Viceroy.

As Countess Lyonesse is an ambassador she and her entourage are accommodated in Buda Castle, although adventurers travelling on their own can certainly book a hotel in Pest (this is the more likely option if the adventurers are French, although Chief Danton's friendship with Countess Lyonesse is enough to secure them rooms at the castle).

Adventurers heading to Buda Castle note that there's construction beneath the palace in front of the Chain Bridge; a tunnel has been built so that those travelling through the city can more easily access the other side of the hill. Currently it's open to foot traffic, but it's being widened to accommodate carriages.

### Scene 1 – A Threat Removed?

Presuming the adventurers arrive in Pest-Buda at least a couple of hours before the concert then they have time to meet the Emperor and other notables in Buda Castle. Security is tight and the adventurers may be surprised to discover that the Viennese garrison and the Praetorian Guard already suspect an attempt on the Emperor's life; there are elements amongst Hungarians of all classes that wish to see Hungary as a sovereign nation. A grey sky covers the city and it smells like rain, although no precipitation has fallen yet.

They may also be surprised to discover that Oskar Hahn is dead! Whether the adventurers informed the authorities or not Grandmaster Fouché felt the need to take precautions. He had Romy Hauser, a Thulian, intercept Hahn after his interrogation and compel him to commit suicide by threatening his family.

This event has already made the news and young Hungarians hawk one-page special editions informing the public that an Austrian attempted to assassinate his own Emperor and was willing to kill Czechs to do it! It's all anyone is talking about at Pest Station.

### Oskar Hahn's Suicide Note

*To those that have discovered my mortal shell,*

*This affair has gone on long enough. It has already claimed the life of my good friend Montesquieu and the Austrian authorities have quite possibly deduced my role. I fail to see how our plan to spark a revolution will result in anything but more bloodshed, hurting the very people I intended to help! I was fully ready to die for my cause, secure in the knowledge that my family would be better off in a constitutional Austria, but I cannot do this in good conscience any longer. All I would assuredly do is secure my place amongst the Pale Court!*

*To anyone reading this, I confess that this action to assassinate the Emperor is of my and Montesquieu's making alone. We had the knowledge to turn the church organs into weapons using Maleficium. I pray in the name of the Heavenly Host that this note is discovered in time, before the instrument is turned on and lays waste to Pest!*

*Please tell my family that I care for them most deeply.*

*Regretfully,*

*Oskar Hahn*

Adventurers making inquiries easily learn, with an appropriate Average Presence + Social Skill roll, the following information:

- Oskar Hahn's Human corpse was discovered dead in his hotel room late this morning after someone heard a gunshot. He'd apparently drained a bottle of schnapps first. The weapon used was his own derringier, which he carried for protection.
- Bakonyi Lazlo, the director and conductor of the opera, has been vetted by the Praetorian Guard and found to be innocent of the conspiracy. He was, in fact, quite shaken by the notion that he was to be killed in the theatre explosion.

- The calliopes were discovered as well and did have their antennae positioned towards the theatre. A telegraph has been sent to Urmacher Engine Company and the Praetorian Guard is currently investigating the company. It's going to be a political matter, as Rosine Urmacher is a member of the Guild.
- Small blue diamonds were recovered from the organ and the calliopes, but no large blue diamond was found. The Praetor believes it is hidden somewhere in Pest and that it's only a matter of time before it is recovered. Austrian authorities are combing Pest as they speak.
- Bakonyi has been tasked with modifying the music before the concert in case there are any lingering Bardic undertones.

## Scene 2 – A Celebratory Dinner

The Emperor is hosting a dinner before the concert and, with the news that Oskar Hahn's plot is thwarted there is a renewed sense of hope and celebration. The Emperor has more confidence in the Unity Concert securing his position as King of Hungary. He is especially gratified in the work of his Praetorian Guard and, if known, the actions of his 'British' allies.



The adventurers are invited to this dinner whether their role is known or not, as they are attached to Countess Lyonesse. Dinner starts promptly at 5 pm, with a social hour before the main course. Everything should be finished by 6:30 pm and the parade through Pest is due to begin at 7 pm.

Amongst those attending are Deak Ferenc and Human Kossuth Lajos, two Hungarian national leaders. Kossuth in particular is a polarising choice, as his exile was lifted specifically to strengthen the bond between Hungary and Austria and he is a 'guest' of Austria; his freedom is limited to Buda Castle and ostensibly secured by the British government. Deak is a more moderate voice and the Emperor is considering making him Viceroy of Hungary. Deak plans to attend the opera with the Emperor.

### Emperor Franz Karl

Emperor Franz Karl is taking a big gamble here. Against the advice of Prime Minister Metterich, Franz Karl has decided to use his position as King of Hungary to placate the more nationalistic elements of the Hungarian people and appeal to unity in the face of Russian aggression. Franz Karl believes that, should he fail, it would be very easy for Russia to foment rebellion throughout the Slavic parts of the Austrian Empire and leave the rest to Prussia.



The Emperor is relieved that Oskar Hahn was discovered and, against the Praetor's advice, still wishes to attend the concert in Hungary as a symbolic gesture. He has full confidence that the Pest-Buda police and the Praetorian Guard have a great enough presence in the city to ferret out any more 'anarchists.'

### Empress Sophie

While the Emperor would like to take credit for acting against the Prime Minister's wishes it is actually his wife's influence that has moved him. She understands the need to keep Austria strong and, in the face of growing Prussian and Russian power, a strong nation that blends the two cultures serves that interest. She hates Russia more than Prussia, as she feels the Tsarina did not adequately protect her son Maximilian.



Sophie is Human but has Dwarf blood in her veins, enabling her to maintain a youthful appearance. She has little love for von Haynau, whom she considers ruthless and an impediment to placating Hungarian fears. She is a Clairvoyant and her *Glimpses* have prompted her to forge a new bond with Hungary while warning her of the dangers.

### Field Marshal Lieutenant Julius Jacob von Haynau

General von Haynau is Franz Karl's top military officer in Hungary and commander of the fearsome Citadella, which amongst its armaments includes two aetheric cannons and a wing of Wyvern Riders (who ride prized Kurgan Wyverns, gifts from the Tsarina). Von Haynau has a deserved reputation for ruthlessness; during the Hungarian Uprising in 1848-1849 he marched into the city and hanged most of the leaders; Kossuth escaped his wrath and the tension between the two is palpable.

Von Haynau believes it is imprudent for the Emperor to enter Pest tonight, especially in light of Hahn's plan (it infuriates von Haynau to no end that Hahn was Austrian

and not Hungarian). Still, as the Emperor appears to have his mind made up von Haynau plans to watch the procession from the Citadella with his forces at the ready. Should there be any problems (and the Thulians are certainly plotting it) he won't hesitate to bombard Pest; in such a case he's advised Austrian forces in Pest to secure the Emperor and keep him away from the heart of the city.



### Guildmaster Deak Ferenc

Deak Ferenc is the head of the Pest Guild. He is a Karakon and a supporter of Hungarian nationalism, although he is a moderate and is willing to have Hungary remain under the Austrian Empire so long as Hungarian interests are secured. Deak's role in these negotiations, besides being Franz Karl's choice for Viceroy, is to rein in Kossuth's more radical positions and temper his supporters. Fortunately Deak is an able statesman and Kossuth's exile has enabled Deak to cultivate many more influential Hungarians.

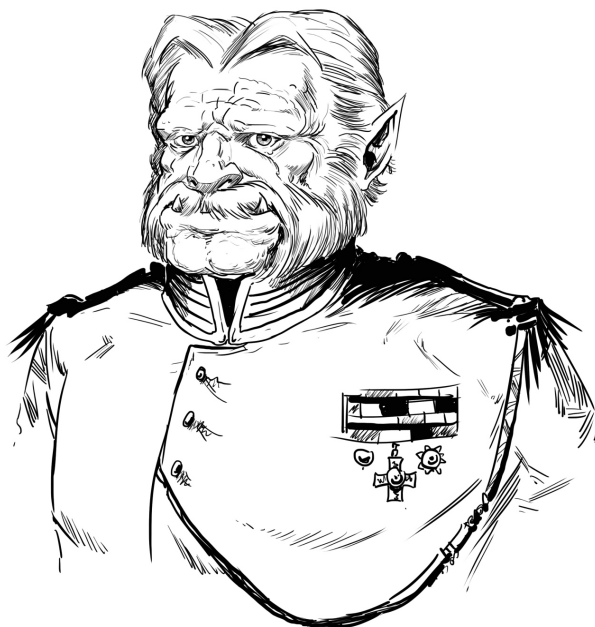
Deak ribs the Praetor a little bit over 'who tugs his leash.' While ostensibly under the Emperor, Austrian hermeticists know that the Praetorian Guard takes more orders from the Vienna Guild than the Imperial Office. While Grand Hermeticist Fouché is considered to be the leading contender for the office of Supreme Hermeticist, Deak has heard rumours that the outgoing Supreme Hermeticist may choose someone else to succeed her.

### Praetor Ranulf Baum

The Orc leader of the Praetorian Guard feels a bit embarrassed. It's not because he isn't a capable commander



– he must certainly is – but it is because he doesn't feel worthy of the accolades being heaped on him. As Deak suspects, Baum receives regular reports from Fouché and it was Guild intelligence that really rooted out the threat and Baum's 'investigation' was really a 'paint-by-numbers' operation.



Still, Baum does his best to be presentable at the party, although he tends to quietly lurk in the background. Unfortunately, his treatment as 'hero of the hour' and his handsome visage ensures that he's continually pulled into conversations. Baum is extremely careful about engaging women; he knows that any perceived flirting never goes well for Orcs, even ones as highly placed as he.

### Kossuth Lajos

Kossuth Lajos is a revolutionary politician who was Regent-President of Hungary during the Springtime of the Peoples. Forced to flee when the Russians invaded and helped Austria reclaim Hungary, Kossuth has spent most of his time in exile advocating for a free Hungary. Emperor Franz Karl knows that Kossuth has many supporters; he hopes that the olive branch in allowing Kossuth to take place in the Unity Concert, however small and controlled, will help appease that base.

The Emperor couldn't be more wrong. Kossuth is as radical as ever, although he is careful not to offend the Emperor. He'd learned through his sources that the Hungarian rebellion was to be sparked by a grand symbolic gesture: the assassination of Franz Karl. With the apparent end of the plot and the fact that an Austrian was behind it, much

of Kossuth's swagger is deflated. He feels that Grandmaster Deak and other Hungarian leaders will now accept whatever scraps the Emperor throws them.

### Countess Lyonesse

If the threat is truly over then Countess Lyonesse is relieved; she can now do the job to which she's been tasked. Unfortunately she suspects that all is not what it seems and any adventurers who approach her confirm her suspicions. If the adventurers don't think to investigate on their own the Countess suggests that they check the theatre themselves and ensure that Bakonyi Lazlo or anyone else involved isn't still up to something.



### Scene 3 – Pestian Legwork

The adventurers likely have little time to waste, especially if they've spent most of the day in Vienna. Still, asking around about revolutionary activities or Oskar Hahn could, with an appropriate Difficult (3 black dice) Presence + Streetwise roll, net the following information:

- There are many Hungarian groups gathered to see the procession; some are revolutionary, but most are simply expressing national pride. Several groups, backed by street musicians, sing the Szózat, an anthem that has a familiar musical composition backing it: it is the same music as the French revolutionary anthem *Liberty is our Right!* that fuelled the attack on Napoleon.
- Oskar Hahn donated the church organ to the National Theatre specifically for this performance of *Regina*.

- Posters calling for Hungarian national unity have a woman on them that looks suspiciously like Citizen Liberty although dressed in traditional Hungarian garb.
- Oskar Hahn and Bakonyi Lazlo spent a lot of time talking to Hungarian social clubs and touring the main avenues. His arrest confuses them, as he told them he'd be playing *Szózat* on the calliopes as the Emperor rode to and from the theatre. As the Hungarian King, the song asks for a blessing on him as well!
- Szabo Elek helped Hungary overthrow Ottoman rule. He disapproved of Hapsburg rule and secluded himself in a castle. His association with the Pressburg Guild dwindled over the 18th century and by the dawn of the 19th it was assumed that he had died.
- In spite of Szabo's seclusion, the Carpathian Mountains and surrounding regions are a hive of undead. He was discovered by a group of undead hunters and, although he dispatched them, they'd managed to send a message to the Guild. Vienna Guildmaster Fouché led an investigation and discovered Szabo's Litchedom. Szabo was destroyed and his castle appropriated by the Austrian government.

Should the adventurers investigate the events surrounding Oskar Hahn's death by speaking with people at his hotel, they can discover the following with Average Presence + Charm rolls:

- While no one was seen entering or leaving Oskar Hahn's room, he did sneak in a paramour. A couple of guests at the hotel returned from a local pub to see an undressed woman with long, curly hair clearly silhouetted against the window.
- A servant at the hotel was cleaning at night when he heard a knock. Herr Hahn opened the door, but no one was there. He stepped out into the hallway and asked the servant if he'd seen anyone. The servant hadn't. Hahn then returned to his room and locked the door. Half an hour later, Herr Hahn emerged, gave the servant a note and asked him to telegraph it at the earliest opportunity.
- A guest in an adjoining room heard the two whispering and Hahn hissing 'don't threaten my family!' before being hushed down (the timing coincides with the servant's recollection of doors opening). The adjoining guest assumed that the woman was a prostitute and Hahn didn't wish to pay her rate, so she threatened to reveal their affair. (After the events in Paris, Fouché sent Romy Hauser to 'alter the plan.' She snuck in and out of his room using the *Invisibilis (Invisibility)* spell (which required her nudity - she found it convenient to be spotted as a prostitute in the window).
- Only if the adventurer gets a good success (3 successes): In addition to being a Litche and steeped in Maleficium, Szabo was a worshipper of Chernobog. This caused tension between the guilds, as Pest Guildmaster Deak felt that Szabo's library, which contained many tomes taken from the Pressburg Guild, were transferred instead to the Vienna Guild at Guildmaster Fouché's insistence. Deak's pleas to reclaim at least some of the books during the Guildhouse's 1854 move to Pest were denied.

## Scene 4 - A Distracting Opera

*Regina* is being performed at the National Theatre on Kerepasi Street. As with the rest of the royal route the street is roped off and a purple carpet is waiting to be unrolled - no one wants to chance rolling it out early given the questionable weather. The façade is immaculate as workers polish every nook and corner.

Inside is another matter. The orchestra is practicing a few compositions as an animated Pigman in a dress coat furiously waves his baton and shouts corrections, sweat dripping from his fleece-like hair. Occasionally he stops to scribble new notes on pages of music; it's obvious that he doesn't feel that the orchestra is anywhere near ready to perform. The actors standing onstage seem to agree, as anyone who starts singing with the music is cut off after a few scenes.

The harried conductor is Bakonyi Lazlo. With the opera house banned from using the new organ and Bakonyi ordered to fix the music, he has quickly organised a larger orchestra and is trying to rework the music in time for the performance. With that hour rapidly approaching, he has little time for investigators interrupting him with questions he's already answered.

While time is of the essence, adventurers splitting the legwork or finding themselves stuck in Pest-Buda may decide to investigate the circumstances surrounding Szabo Elek's Litchedom and death. The easiest way to go about this is to contact the police, specifically the Praetorian Guard, although a visit to the Pest Guild may also prove fruitful. The following information may be gathered with an appropriate social roll (taking into account who the adventurer is questioning and how knowledgeable the source would be - the default is an Average Wits + Lore roll).



Adventurers can make a successful Difficult (3 black dice) Presence + Social Skill roll against Bakonyi's SC. If they succeed they can learn the following from him:

- Bakonyi studied in Vienna and was a member of Bronowski's Night Choir. He was not, however, part of Hahn's breakaway group as he'd already returned to Pest before it was formed. Bakonyi is more nationalist than revolutionary – he simply wants Hungary to stand as an equal partner with Austria. He certainly doesn't condone any assassination.
- Bakonyi thought that the Urmacher organ and the proscenium would have a Bardic effect to rouse national passions. There's nothing illegal about it and he'd hoped only to steel Pestian resolve to demand equality. He was certain that Rosine Urmacher was doing the same in Prague, until he learned of events in Paris.
- Bakonyi notes with wry wit that if Hahn wasn't dead he'd kill him. Hahn was insistent that the opera be performed a particular way and drove Bakonyi insane to ensure every movement and every note happened exactly as written. When Bakonyi complained that Hahn should conduct it, he said he had to devote his full attention to the organ.
- Hahn is responsible for the new composition of the *Szózat*, which he has incorporated into the new version of *Regina*. He's also shared it with the various social clubs, ensuring that his is the version being performed on the streets of Pest.

- Hahn had the organ brought in from Urmacher in Prague. He also had calliopes and fireworks brought in as well. The calliopes were designed to keep the music piping along with the Emperor's procession and the fireworks are going to be fired from boats in the Danube.
- The last time Bakonyi saw Hahn was last night; he received word of the suicide this morning when the theatre was raided by the Praetorian Guard.

#### Bakonyi Lazlo - Pigman Conductor

Physical: 4      Initiative: 4  
 Mental: 6      Health: 6  
 Social: 6      Quintessence: 12  
 Armour Value: 0  
 Special Traits: None.  
 Complications: None.  
 Damage: Punch (3).

#### Scene 5 - Waylaid!

Armed with information from Bakonyi, the adventurers are likely in a race against time at this point. Unfortunately, the Thulians have decided that they've investigated enough. A Thulian, Romy Hauser, casts *Redcap Evoco (Summon Redcap)* to torment and kill the adventurers.





Three redcaps 'appear' (they are invisible) as soon as the adventurers step out of the theatre and immediately attack the adventurers. The invisible redcaps are a difficult challenge for most adventurers, especially if they've no way of detecting them. Thus, this is a perfect time for Russian Vila Rasia Sezjova to reveal herself and aid the adventurers, as she has the see the Supernatural magnetic ability. It's also important to note that crowds have gathered in the streets. Should the adventurers run into the crowds then it gets more difficult (3-6 black dice) for the redcaps to strike them.

Frau Hauser cast the spell from the back of a carriage headed south of the city. It only takes an Average Wits + Perception roll to spot her, as she wants to be seen. If the adventurers manage to survive the redcap assault then she wants them to follow her away from the procession. Should the adventurers pursue her then she has hired some ruffians (see *Victoriana Core Rulebook* p. 289) to help her dispose of them. Hauser carries a *Menwel (Stone Sight)* stone with her so she can take orders from Fouché directly – she won't reveal his name except as 'the Gatekeeper.'



#### Romy Hauser – Human Thulian

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 9      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 9      *Quintessence:* 24  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin).  
*Special Traits:* Entropy 1, Demonology (*Fleeting Messenger*, *Summon Redcap*), Thaumaturgy (*Flight of the Wyvern*, *Instant Beauty*, *Invisibility*, *Steely Skin*).  
*Complications:* Zealot (Thulian).  
*Damage:* Eldritch turret revolver (8).

#### Redcap

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 4  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 0      *Quintessence:* 12  
*Armour Value:* 0  
*Special Traits:* Entropy 3, Backstabber, Contortionist, Invisible.  
*Complications:* Sadistic.  
*Damage:* Large Knife (6).

### Summon Redcap (Redcap Evoco)

*Cost:* 4  
*Difficulty:* 0  
*Ritual Length:* 1 hr  
*Ritual Needs:* One knife and a small cap soaked in blood. This ritual enables the demonologist to summon a redcap from the Labyrinth. The impish creature manifests as an invisible creature, taking the knife and cap (which also become invisible). The 'contract' thus taken, the redcap can be commanded to attack a victim or group of victims, which it does until it is dead or 15 minutes expire.

When visible, redcaps look like wicked imps about 2 feet tall and wearing bloody caps. When they draw blood on their blades they wipe the blade across their hats as a free action. Redcaps can't fly, but they can jump vertically up to 6 feet, enabling them to strike any part of a sapient victim.

While invisible assassins should theoretically be immediately lethal, redcaps like to prolong the agony. They slash normally at first, hoping to goad their victims into running while they slash them apart. It never occurs to a redcap to simply go for the jugular first.

### Scene 6 – The Spark of Revolution!

In this scene the Thulian scheme in Pest is fully hatched. A submersible sits beneath the surface of the Danube under the Pest side of the Chain Bridge with one of the big blue diamonds inside. It is soaking up the quintessence generated by the crowd. Once the Emperor's carriage reaches the centre of the bridge the submersible surfaces and unleashes an aetheric cannon blast in order to level the bridge and hopefully kill the Emperor. The submersible then turns its attention to the Citadella, hitting it once or twice to prompt General von Haynau to attack Pest in response.

The Emperor's carriage leaves Buda Castle promptly at 7pm with the Emperor, his wife, the Praetor and a lady's maid, inside. Eight horse guards escort the carriage as it makes its way to the Chain Bridge. The calliopes were to provide music, but in their absence several street magicians have been tapped to play the *Szózat* as the crowd sings along.

With great fanfare the Emperor arrives at the National Theatre around 7:40 pm. The Emperor is introduced and a few speeches are made about the loyalty of Hungary to her King and then everyone settles down for the opera. In spite of Bakonyi's fussing it goes off without a hitch; only adventurers with musical backgrounds wince at the occasional wrong note.

All goes according to plan and the Emperor, his wife, the Praetor and a lady's maid enter the carriage at 9:30pm to return to the castle (at this point, cunning adventurers may suggest swapping carriages or otherwise using a decoy - if so, let them!). With darkness over the city the carriage is pulled more quickly through the streets this time, but the crowd is just as enthusiastic, singing the entire way.

Six small boats containing the fireworks float out in the river. Depending on the timing it may be possible for the adventurers to board one of the boats and search it for blue diamonds or other weapons, but they are exactly what they appear to be: boats launching fireworks. What isn't as apparent is that they are a distraction to enable the submersible to see the bridge as it fires as well as to keep eyes away from the water.

Adventurers watching the water or investigating the boats as the carriage approaches the bridge may make a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll to notice the tell-tale ripples of something rising from the water beneath the bridge. The fireworks begin as the carriage touches the bridge, lighting up the Danube to the delight of all onlookers. Unfortunately, it is not to last. As the carriage reaches the centre of the bridge, the submersible, if not stopped, fires upon it with the intent of incinerating the carriage and bringing down the bridge.

At this point, the Empress' clairvoyance warns her of the imminent danger. Whether she warns everyone in the carriage in time is up to the Gamesmaster; it could have little effect, she could save some lives or everyone might get out of the carriage in time and are now clutching at teetering pieces of the falling bridge.

In any case the submersible moves out from below the bridge and fires on the Citadella. With the destruction of

the bridge, the possible assassination of the Emperor and a magical attack, General von Haynau orders the cannons to fire on Pest. While this is technically suppressive fire to enable his units to get to the bridge, the General is not being delicate - cannonballs rip into the crowds along the river.

With pandemonium erupting, Hungarians scatter everywhere as revolutionary voices cry out at the betrayal. Unfortunately for the Emperor, if he survived, he's likely on the Hungarian side of the bridge, which means the frenzied crowd is more likely to tear him apart than help him. The adventurers could simply keep their hands full just protecting the royal couple's lives until help can arrive. The Praetor and any surviving guards also help by forming a line between them and the royal couple.

There are a few Austrian river gunboats that are currently pointing their guns at Pest. If they can be swayed to pursue the submersible instead then they do so - unfortunately the submersible is still armed with its aetheric cannon.

How the adventurers resolve this chapter is up to them. Assuming the Emperor survives he can stop the shelling with a command. Of course, the Emperor and his wife could be dangling from a breaking bridge, requiring an adventurer make a Difficult (3 black dice) or Very Difficult (6 black dice) Dexterity + Climbing roll to rescue him (this roll can also be used for swimming if the adventurer has to fish the Emperor from the water). Additional complications include being shot at or pelted by angry Hungarians blaming the Emperor for the attack.

If the Emperor is killed, then the night becomes a question of survival for the adventurers. They may stop the submersible, but General von Haynau's actions have stoked the desire for independence. The bombardment continues through the night and the adventurers may have to fight their way back to the relative safety of the Citadella or claim diplomatic immunity and hope the angry Hungarians respect it.

Should an adventurer get on top of the submersible she can open the hatch from the outside. This immediately prompts an attack by one of the Prussian mercenaries inside. There are five mercenaries in total aboard the craft, as well as the pilot. If Romy Hauser was not dealt with earlier then she is here as well, offering magical support.

The blue diamond sits in the centre of the ship, supported by sigil encrusted columns from the floor and ceiling. It can be destroyed, but it has an AV 10 from the crackling energy and 12 SP. If this is done the blue diamond explodes for

12 dice damage to anyone inside the submersible (and also likely scuttles it). Adventurers with magnetic abilities who get close to the blue diamond get brief flashes of Prague and Geneva before it burns out (if the adventurers are unfamiliar with those cities then they get the general sense of north and south; one city prominently displays a bridge that, when described, matches the Charles Bridge, the other is a city by a mountain lake..



If interrogated, the Prussian mercenaries admit to being hired by Romy Hauser. For her part, Hauser merely huffs that events have been pushed into motion that can't be stopped. As a lower-ranking Thulian, Hauser doesn't know the whole plan (or even who Fouché is, in spite of getting orders from him), but she knows that the Thulian Order and its allies have infiltrated both the Guild and the Austrian government.

#### Urmacher Submersible

Handling: 0, Movement: 70mph, Scale: medium, Health: 20, Armour: 6, Crew: 4, Passengers: 8, Range: 2 hrs, Traits: Guild steam boiler (no smokestack), Armament: Aetheric Cannon (20, area).

#### Prussian Dwarf Mercenaries

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 2  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 5      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 3 (lined jacket).  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Life Preserver (6), Pepperbox Pistol (8).

#### Austrian Gunboat

Handling: 2, Movement: 10mph, Scale: Huge, Health: 25, Armour: 6, Crew: 10, Passengers: 40, Range: 1 Month, Traits: none, Armament: 2 pivot-mounted rifled guns (8; 250 yd range), forward mounted howitzer (15; 500 yd range).

#### Naval Beastfolk Crewman

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 3  
*Mental:* 3      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 3      *Quintessence:* 6  
*Armour Value:* 2 (soldier's uniform).  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Sword (10), pepperbox pistol (8), rifle (12).



## Intermission

If the adventurers were able to save the Emperor and end the fighting with minimal casualties, the Emperor is eternally grateful. General von Haynau is arrested and will be tried for his actions against Hungary, an act that appeases most of the Hungarian leadership. The Emperor appoints Deak as the new Viceroy. In addition, Countess Lyonesse convinces the Emperor that his organisations are compromised and until everyone can be vetted it might be a good idea to rely on British (or French) assistance for now. Given the adventurers' role in saving his life and protecting his empire, the Emperor agrees.

Unfortunately, a fast trip out of Pest-Buda is impossible as panicked Hungarians, fearful of Austrian reinforcements when the bombing started, have ripped up the rails outside of the city. They can be replaced quickly enough, but only in the light of day.

If the adventurers failed to save the Emperor (or the Emperor is incapacitated long enough to fan flames), then Buda and Pest become a war zone. A makeshift Hungarian force besieges the Citadella as the fortress continues to bombard the Hungarian areas of the city. Hungarian soldiers flock to the city from all over Hungary over the next few days. The fortress is powerful, but eventually the ammunition will run out. In the meantime, the Hungarians ask Prussia and Russia to recognise their independence. Prussia acts first, marching into Hungary in support of the new government. In the meantime, Prince Franz Josef is recalled from Venice to take the throne and negotiate an end to the crisis.

In this case, Countess Lyonesse claims her diplomatic status and acts as a mediator. In return, she asks that the adventurers be allowed to lease Pest-Buda. Countess Lyonesse proves a skilled negotiator and gets the adventurers on the first morning train to Prague after the tracks are repaired.

In any event, the adventurers are likely to find their way to Prague the next morning, taking them to **Chapter IV: Prager Bridge**.



## ~ CHAPTER IV ~ PRAGUER BRIDGE

At some point the adventurers are going to want to confront Rosine Urmacher, the builder of the machines used in the assassination. She has two facilities, one in Prague and one in Dresden, both connected via private rail. Currently Urmacher is keeping her gem aboard a train carriage so that it can be easily and quickly transported; she prefers to remain in Prague to enable the gem to soak up the energies of the rebelling German Praguers.



### Scene 1 - A Sorcerer's Return?

Adventurers arriving in Prague by train enter via Praha Station, which is in the New Town area of Prague. As befitting a city in the centre of Europe the adventurers are besieged by a variety of languages and accents at the station; Czech, German, Italian and Yiddish are well-represented, while European travellers and the local nobility favour French when speaking amongst themselves. Adventurers travelling by aerostat land on the aerodrome just south of the Lesser Quarter; the languages here are almost predominantly French and German.



There is a swirling storm above the city with grey skies and blankets of hard, cold rain. Presuming that there was at least *some* success in Pest-Buda, news has already travelled to Prague and the Czechs are organising protests and marches calling for more sovereignty or outright independence (how much this leans one way or the other depends on whether Franz Karl survived).

Adventurers pulling into Praha Station can hear the singing of *Svoboda je naše právo!* ("Liberty is our Right!") to the familiar French tune. Signs depicting Citizen Liberty are also being waved. German passengers are openly nervous, especially if the Emperor was killed. At least one of them looks out beyond Prague Castle and wonders how long it will be before Prussian troops march through Saxony to save them.

Adventurers making Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception rolls hear something being passed around the crowd. It's in Czech, but the adventure listening can make out a recurring phrase; a good success (3 successes) enables her to remember it. If the adventurer can actually speak Czech, or repeat it to someone who can, the phrase is "Armáda Hanuš se blíží!", or "Hanus' Army is coming!"

Any Prager can tell the adventurers the story of Jitka Hanus. She was an early 15th century petty conjurer who ran afoul of the Holy Roman Empire and the Aluminat and was burned as a necromancer. Czech legend holds that she is merely asleep along with other 'martyred' Czechs beneath Mount Blanik, which lies about 40 miles south-

east, and when the need is greatest to protect the Czech people she will rise up on a horse of fire and steel to crush the invaders. Obviously the Germans would qualify and the way the crowd is reacting it sounds like they believe a literal return is imminent.

Where the adventurers wish to go in the city is up to them. The Urmacher Factories would probably be the first choice; these lay at the outskirts of New Town to the south-east. The Prague Guild is also another option, it sits on the Old Town Square, ironically where Jitka Hanus was burned at the stake. Regardless of where the adventurers wish to go, however, they are about to be surprised – see **Scene 2 - Ambush!**

### Scene 2 - Ambush!

Rosine Urmacher has eyes on the railway station and aerodrome thanks to intelligence from Grand Hermeticist Fouché. Once the adventurers are identified (presuming they don't disguise themselves; in such a case an appropriate Wits + Perception roll is warranted), Urmacher's plan springs into action.

Three automata are positioned in alleys in the street in front of the station (if the adventurers arrived by aerodrome, then this attack waits until they cross the Charles Bridge). These automata require instructions, so Urmacher's agent, Dogman Jan Kubiak, runs from automaton to automaton whispering orders. In the first round, Kubiak has only gotten to the first two automata – one on each side of the





street – that open fire on the carriage or whatever other means of transportation that the adventurers are using. Horses are ruthlessly cut down first.

Adventurers making a Difficult (3 black dice) Wits + Perception roll see Kubiak whisper to the third automaton further up the street before ripping off the cloak disguising its armaments (as automata are not uncommon in Prague, merely standing on the street wouldn't cause a stir – mounted weapons would). The first two automata attack immediately while the third walks towards them.

At the beginning of the second round, adventurers making an Average Wits + Perception roll notice something strange. While most Praguers except for Kubiak scatter and clear the street, a middle-aged (in his 80s) Dwarf dressed in the typical garb of a practicing Yehudi approaches the third automaton. He pulls a small ram's horn from beneath his coat and blows it. The automaton freezes in its tracks. Kubiak is startled and fires at the Yehudi, but the small man slips away into a nearby alley as Kubiak's bullet bounces off the shoulder of the immobilised automaton.

Unfortunately, the other two automata are still operational and remain so until the adventurers have dealt with them (if the adventurers are clearly outmatched then the ram's horn is loud enough to take out one or even both of the remaining automata). Jan Kubiak remains and shoots at the adventurers as long as both automata are standing, but if one falls he tries to escape. Should Kubiak be captured he spits that 'the Army is coming' and that the 'Germans will no longer control Prague!' He doesn't deny that he works for Urmacher but teases that it's too late, the Army of Liberty is on the march.

Trying to find the Yehudi is a bit more of a problem, as he is gone. Adventurers with appropriate magical or tracking skills may attempt to track him down – it's at least a Very Difficult (6 black dice) task. Even if they do follow him, the adventurers are still likely to lose him as he takes a hansom back to his home. If the adventurers are persistent enough they can catch up to him and start the conversation early, simply adapt the relevant parts of **Scene 4: Yehudi Assistance**.

Othewise, asking around with an Easy (+3 to dice pool) Presence + Streetwise roll informs the adventurers that their description matches Rabbi Obediah Spinoza, a resident of the Yehudi Quarter north of Old Town. Adventurers familiar with the Pale Knights should recognise the name; a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Lore roll will also make this connection.

#### Assassin Automaton

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 4  
*Mental:* 2      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 0      *Quintessence:* 0  
*Armour Value:* 6 (plated body).  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* Drone (has no independent thoughts).  
*Damage:* Punch (6 dice), Pepperbox Arm (8 dice).

#### Jan Kubiak – Dogman Lackey

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 6      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 3      *Quintessence:* 12  
*Armour Value:* 1 (greatcoat).  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* Cowardly.  
*Damage:* Brass Knuckles (5), Colt 1849 pocket pistol (6).

#### Rabbi Obediah Spinoza – Dwarf Pale Knight

*Physical:* 12      *Initiative:* 10  
*Mental:* 15      *Health:* 18  
*Social:* 16      *Quintessence:* 42  
*Armour Value:* 3 (lined jacket)  
*Special Traits:* Extended Lifespan, Goeticist, Sigil Scribe (Enochian: all)\*, Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Blade, Aetheric Bolt, Ectoplasmic Bonds, Scholar's Guard, Second Sight, Steely Skin*).  
*Complications:* Honourable, Responsibilities.  
*Damage:* Punch (5), Walking cane (6).

\*If you are using the *Liber Magica* then replace Enochian with Numerology and Yehudi Script.



## Aetheric Blade (Aer Gladius)

*Cost:* 2

*Difficulty:* 3

*Range:* Touch

*Duration:* Rounds

This operation creates a four foot long blade of green energy that emanates from the hermeticist's hand. It may be wielded like a sword cane or similar weapon, using Dexterity + Blunt Weapons or Swordplay to hit opponents. The blade does 6 dice of lethal damage, but upon hitting an opponent or being hit herself the hermeticist must make a Resolve + Concentration roll at the appropriate difficulty or the spell ends immediately. Aetheric blades may only be parried by other aetheric blades, aetheric sticks, or similar magic, but they may be dodged normally.

### Scene 3 – Prague Legwork

Urmacher's army takes three and a half hours to march from the factory, although she's already shipped some of the automata to her outlying Prague factories. Thus, the adventurers have a short window with which to operate, a situation they should be familiar with by now. Still, the adventurers may wish to do a bit of legwork in Prague, talking to the police (if they trust them) or the Guild. With the Emperor either dead or at least attacked the Prague garrison is out in force and patrolling the city as well as the perimeter. It is because of this that Urmacher isn't transporting her army via railroad. Trying to get the police or army to investigate anything out at Mount Blanik is out of the question; they simply can't waste resources with a possible Prussian invasion from without or a Czech insurrection from within.

Nor does the Prague Guild assist. Hareman Guildmaster Rudolf Eisenbach is no Thulian, but he is pro-German. If the Austrian government can't protect the Germans in Prague then he doesn't mind someone else from the Confederation stepping in to do so. He does confirm that Urmacher is an artificer and a Thulian (if the Emperor ordered the rounding up of Thulians then he notes that Fouché informed him that he would personally take care of her. As far as Eisenbach is concerned that was the end of the matter).

Adventurers touring the Urmacher Factories on the outskirts of town or merely enquiring about Urmacher through Streetwise rolls uncover the following:

- The Urmacher Factories are largely Czech run. With the announcement that an army is coming they've abandoned their posts and are singing and cheering; a calliope plays in front of the factories (see below).
- Urmacher is involved in all kinds of clockwork machinery. There was a controversy a few months back that she stole her automata designs from the Yehudi-run Prague Mechanicals and Automata Company. Prague Mechanicals filed a claim but the court ruled in Urmacher's favour.
- One of the railways leaving the Urmacher Factories heads south towards Mount Blanik.

In addition to the usual legwork, the adventurers may notice something else, even in passing, with an Average Wits + Perception roll. In amongst the growing Czech crowds shouting for liberty are five calliopes. These are identical in design to those in **Chapter 1** and they serve the same function (see that staff for details). They are directing quintessence towards Mount Blanik.

### Scene 4 – Yehudi Assistance

Given the success Rabbi Spinoza had in stopping an automaton and the fact that Urmacher likely has an automata army marching towards Prague, the adventurers may wish to speak with him. He can be found either his home in the Yehudi Quarter or at the Yehudi Town Hall, which is adjacent to the Old-New Synagogue and just a short walk from his residence. Should the adventurers go to his residence, they find that the rabbi lives in a modest home overlooking the river. The rabbi lives alone – his wife, Gittel, died a few years ago. His home is tended to by an automaton that the Rabbi has dubbed 'Samson.' It is this fashionably dressed automaton that answers the door with a patient and pleasing voice when the adventurers call, switching languages if asked.

Samson leads the adventurers into the rabbi's sparsely decorated parlour. Amongst his few treasures are daguerreotypes of his four children and nine grandchildren sitting on the mantel above the fireplace and a portrait of his wife in her prime hanging on the wall. He also has an old rapier adorning the wall as well, its battered and chipped blade was obviously used in battle. A small library sits here as well, including the Yehudi Books of Order and several other religious and magical texts.

The adventurers aren't in there long before Rabbi Spinoza enters. He is a kindly old Dwarf who, thanks to his

subspecies, looks positively frail and ancient. He carefully takes a seat and says that he was expecting them. He also admits that he was a Pale Knight, although those days are long past. He then invites the adventurers to ask any questions they may have.

Rabbi Spinoza offers the following information:

- Prior to becoming a Pale Knight, he was a M'garesh shediyim (exorcist), protecting Yehudi communities from preternatural threats, specifically demons and undead. He joined the Pale Knights when he realised the extent of Chernobog's influence and that it would take a concerted effort to break the abomination's power.
  - After the Thirty Years' War he retired from fighting and became a rabbi in Vienna, eventually moving to Prague once Vienna became hostile to his people. He has continued his magical studies and, while meditating, he has felt the stirrings of Chernobog.
  - If told about Porthau he is saddened; Spinoza considered Porthau a good friend. He asks the adventurers to join him in a drink celebrating Porthau. He also notes that, if Chernobog came for Porthau in Paris during a Thulian plot, then a similar attack here will probably enable Chernobog to get to him. Spinoza is actually resigned to his fate; he's lived a long, fruitful life and death does not scare him. He is, however, worried that his actions in 1848 may be for naught.
  - Chernobog had grown too powerful by the 17th century. The abomination was more than just an archon; its quintessence had become embedded in the very aetheric fabric that held the living world together. To destroy Chernobog would be to destroy the world. Contrary to what the world believes the Pale Knights did not destroy Chernobog; they merely trapped it inside a pocket dimension.
  - Geneva was chosen because of its convergence of telluric lines. Contrary to popular belief, the blue diamond held within the Aetherium is not Chernobog's prison. The entrance to the pocket dimension is actually beneath Lake Geneva; the aetheric web trapping it is aided by the acoustics of the surrounding mountains. The Aetherium's blue diamond is merely the lock and through it the Guild can siphon some of Chernobog's power.
  - If the adventurers think to ask, Spinoza notes that it is possible to 'change locks,' but the holder of a new blue diamond must be very knowledgeable about the Aetherium's diamond. There are less than a handful of magicians that have enough access to the Aetherium diamond to do that (yes, Fouché is one). The new diamond would also need to soak up a lot of quintessence that was specifically attuned to Chernobog.
  - Should Chernobog be released, all is not lost. The mountains surrounding the portion of the lake that contains Chernobog's prison have been laced with blue diamonds – they cannot be moved without the Guild's knowledge. These diamonds have been set along potent telluric lines and have been infused with the ritual's power over the centuries. Should Chernobog get free, the mountain lacing should contain it, at least for a short while. Hopefully it should be long enough for someone to recapture it once more.
  - If asked about the ritual, Spinoza laughs. "Why do you think the Aluminat was so keen on standardising the Codex? The ritual is embedded within the Aluminat faithful, of which most people on this continent profess, have been reciting and feeding the prison for centuries. You may know them as the Twelve Commandments. The Twelfth Commandment in particular, when recited while touching one of the four blue diamonds, releases its charged quintessence."
  - If asked about the shofar, Spinoza says that it is a gift from Isaac Silberstein of Prague Mechanicals. The shofar has the ability to shut down any automaton of Prague Mechanical design.
  - Still, if Chernobog is too strong, this may not be enough. Thus, Spinoza agrees that if one of the Thulian diamonds is here, it's in the worlds' best interest to destroy it. If Urmacher is guarding it with an army, however, the adventurers stand little chance. Fortunately, Spinoza knows where to find help.
- With that, Rabbi Spinoza asks the adventurers to accompany him to the Yehudi Town Hall, where rabbis and other Yehudi leaders, including Isaac Silberstein, the current president of Prague Mechanicals, have already gathered to discuss what to do about the coming conflict.
- If the adventurers have not met Rabbi Spinoza and go to the Yehudi Town Hall on their own, they find that a couple of Bene David students guard the door, warning any who would enter that the meeting must not be disturbed. Adventurers can use whatever social skills they deem necessary to gain access; if they make enough of a nuisance

one of the students goes inside to inform the council. As long as the adventurers are respectful, Rabbi Spinoza soon appears and vouches for them, regardless of whether they've officially met yet.

Rabbi Spinoza leads the discussion. He informs the adventurers that they know Urmacher's army is on the march but the Bene David is debating on how to proceed. The Yehudis have no desire to fall under Prussian rule, as the Prussians are generally intolerant of the Bene David, but they are uncertain whether a Czech-run Bohemia would be any better. Certainly Prague Mechanicals, the most profitable of all Yehudi businesses, would find its assets seized by Urmacher should that come to pass, but the Yehudis are just as certain that Urmacher would find a way to blame the automata army and any fallout, on the Bene David. With knowledge from the adventurers about Chernobog's imminent release, the council agrees that something must be done.

If the council is asked about the horn, Herr Silberstein chuckles and says that it is their "secret weapon." As a Yehudi company, Prague Mechanicals knew that they'd be blamed if their automata went rogue. Thus, each Prague Mechanical is 'programmed' with an automatic shutdown. The ram's horn, or shofar, has Hebrew sigils inscribed on it so that, when blown, it activates the signal to shut down any Prague Mechanical that can clearly hear it. As Urmacher copied the design, she unwittingly copied the automatic shutdown feature as well. If she truly is leading an automata army, a few Yehudi with shofars could shut it down completely.

Rabbi Klara Friedman, an old, blind Gnome, cuts in and warns Silberstein not to be too sure of himself. She may be blind but with her magnetic connection to the Divine she sees more clearly. While it is true that the shofars could halt the army, the power behind it could easily override the shutdown. In order to truly defeat the army, the power behind them must be dealt with first. She points her stick at the adventurers (in spite of not being able to see them) and says that they know exactly what they need to find (a blue diamond).

Rabbi Spinoza smiles and says that their prayers have been answered. The Heavenly Host has brought the adventurers to them. The Bene David can outfit them with the tools they need to face Urmacher's Army, but they don't need to be personally involved more than is absolutely necessary.

Herr Silberstein heartily agrees. He tells the adventurers that they can take whatever they need from Prague Mechanicals to aid them in their mission. Presuming the adventurers

agree, the council agrees there is no time to waste. They give each of the adventurers a small shofar (effective on any Prague or Urmacher automata within 10 yards) and then Silberstein takes them on a tour of the Prague Mechanicals warehouse.

Before they go, Rabbi Friedman offers some parting advice. An angel has whispered to her that Urmacher is prideful in her army and overly confident that they can crush anything they come across. They are marching slowly and deliberately, when they could have been here within an hour. She is content to lead from behind; that may be her undoing.

Prague Mechanicals has several Samson Steam Soldier harnesses. These are still being tested for the Austrian army and are functionally equivalent to Aldershot Steam Soldiers (see the *Victoriana Core Rulebook*, p. 281) with a mounted Gatling gun (15) and a giant club (10). The Samson also has 10 Strength. The adventurer need not have a Piloting (harness) skill, as the enchantments inside the harness enable the wearer to operate as if she were actually moving.

In spite of its apparent usefulness, however, Silberstein warns that it's prone to overheating. Every round it is used in combat the adventurer has to make a Difficult (3 black dice) Fortitude + Athletics roll. On a foul failure the harness overheats and cannot move for a number of rounds equal to the number of black dice successes.

Also, the Samson harness relies on a similar matrix as the automata, which means that they too will shut down if the shofar is blown in their presence. Fortunately, a code word reignites the harness; the wearer need only utter the Yiddish word "chaim" ("life") as a free action to reactivate it.

In addition to the Samsons, Silberstein can also loan the adventurers an autogyro, winged harnesses, or a specially modified steam velocipede designed to move along railway tracks. He can also program a few automata, but he warns the adventurers that they will shut off if they hear the shofar as well. He wishes them the best of luck and prays that the Heavenly Host smiles upon them.

## Scene 5 – The March of the Automata

Rabbi Friedman is correct: Rosine Urmacher is utterly confident in her new army. A thousand automata march in lockstep, each fielding a harmonica rifle (use the typical statistics for automata). She also has 6 enclosed steam carriages (use typical statistics but upgrade to AV 3 and add



a Mitrailleuse). Finally, she has 4 officers in panzersoldat armour (use typical statistics for Aldershot Steam Soldier but reduce AV to 3 and add Adams revolving rifle). Rosine Urmacher herself wears feminine-sculpted panzersoldat armour that is built into a centaur harness, making her a rough steam-driven approximation of Jitka Hanus (and enabling her to move twice as fast as a typical Aldershot Steam Soldier). True to form her armour is equipped with a Vulcan carbine.

Rabbi Friedman was correct a second time as well. Urmacher is at the back of her army, escorted only by the 4 panzersoldats. Cunning adventurers should have little problem sniping her or lobbing explosives from behind if they took advantage of the railway – Urmacher is marching her army away from the railway so they won't see the adventurers pass them.

The Gamesmaster should work with the players to set up the ambush, applying skill rolls and modifiers as appropriate. As the panzersoldats are similar in design to the Samson harness they are also affected by the shofars and require the same amount of time to be reactivated; only Urmacher is fully protected, as she carries the blue diamond with her (a great tactic would be to sneak in close and disrupt the panzersoldats so that better-armed adventurers can disable them). Once the adventurers attack, however, Urmacher quickly organises a defence and they will find themselves fighting more than the steam soldiers.

The blue diamond is mounted in the 'saddle' of her centaur harness. It can be targeted, but it has AV 10 from the

crackling energy and SP 10 (it sits in a less stable structure than the one in the aerostat). Should the blue diamond take full damage it explodes inflicting 12 dice of damage to everyone in a 5 yard radius, likely injuring Urmacher in the process.

Presuming she isn't thwarted, Urmacher's plan is to march around Prague and attack the castle and other Austrian fortified positions. When this is accomplished she plans to organise a new, independent Bohemian government and ask Prussia for recognition. Of course, while all of this playing out she's continuing to feed Chernobog. She has to be stopped. If Urmacher is captured or killed and the adventurers search the body they discover that she is wearing a ring with the Thulian symbol emblazoned on it.

Adventurers with magnetic abilities who get close to the blue diamond gets a brief flash of Lake Geneva before it burns out; whether the adventurers recognise it as Geneva is irrelevant, as the Tsarina touches down at Prague's aerodrome.

If Rosine Urmacher was captured alive she can be interrogated. All that she offers for now can be summed up thusly:

*"Do what you will, you are too late! Perhaps you've prevented Prussia from taking control, but you've done nothing to stop Chernobog's release! He is coming and he will force you to see our need for unity! The Nergaleen are coming and if we aren't ready our world will burn!"*



If pressed, Urmacher confirms that the Nergaleen are the servants of the Great Archon Nergal. Nergal cleansed the world once and took most of its magic; his servants shall return and wipe the world clean if they aren't stopped. The Gatekeeper claims that this will happen soon, possibly months or even weeks from now, which is why the Thulians had to act. If asked about the Gatekeeper, Urmacher merely chuckles and says "the Butcher once fought us; now he is leading us!"

Without the full sobriquet of 'the Butcher of Lyon,' the adventurers have little to go on to figure out it is Fouché. Still, Gamesmasters can allow for a Very Difficult (6 Black Dice) Wits + General Knowledge roll, with Cryptography as a complimentary skill, given that they know Fouché is highly placed in Austria and the Guild and was known as the Butcher of Lyon during the French Revolution. In any case, they discover this fact too late; Fouché is already beyond Austria's reach and he has too many allies in the Guild to stop him.



### Rosine Urmacher - Human Revolutionary Artificer

Physical: 3

Initiative: 7

Mental: 12

Health: 8

Social: 6

Quintessence: 30

Armour Value: 6 (reinforced coveralls).

Special Traits: Schwertberger's Cap, Thaumaturgy (Animate, Ectoplasmic Hand, Firespark, Gaslight, Power of Steam, Repair), Vienna Glove.

Complications: Zealot (Thulian).

Damage: Rocket Pistol (12).

## The Cavalry

This is a very dangerous chapter and the adventurers may get in over their heads. In such cases the adventurers may spend a Scripting Die (the Gamesmaster can allow them to pool Fate points) for the cavalry to arrive. The cavalry appears in the form of Austrian cavalry and infantry that ride out and engage the army while wyvern riders drop grenades. Even the Bene David help, some blow shofars while others don Samson harnesses. In the end, after a pitched battle, Urmacher is defeated.

## A Full-On Skirmish

Rabbi Friedman's advice should prompt the adventurers to use the railway tracks (or the autogyro) to get behind the army and attack Urmacher from behind. If a particular group is more combat-heavy then there is nothing wrong with making this a full-on skirmish (essentially bringing in *the Cavalry* early - see the sidebar, opposite).

The automata could be broken into groups according to the mob rules with a shofar only able to affect one group at a time. The power of Chernobog reactivates them after 1D rounds to attack again until the blue diamond is destroyed. Once Urmacher realises what is happening, she sends her 6 steam carriages forward while she and the other 4 panzersoldats protect the iron horse. Of course, if this going to be a full-on battle then the adventurers should have allies. Prague Mechanicals could field a few Samson units that fight alongside Austrian infantry and cavalry. They're probably still outnumbered, but a few amplified shofar blasts should temporarily immobilise Urmacher's front line units and give the Austrians a fighting chance.

## Intermission

Presuming the adventurers succeed they'll have little time to relax; they either need to get to Pest or Geneva based on where they went first after Vienna. It's up to the Gamesmaster whether the Czechs are still inspired enough to keep the revolution going or quiet down if the automata army is defeated. Whether Bohemia falls or remains strong is unimportant in the grand scheme; Chernobog got what he wanted.

## The Fate of Obediah Spinoza

During the march on Prague the brewing Czech revolution generates enough quintessence for Chernobog to reach through and mortally wound Rabbi Spinoza just as it had to Porthau. Whether this actually occurs is up to the Gamesmaster. Spinoza is likely to aid the adventurers, either travelling with them or joining the other Bene David that are accompanying Austrian forces. Presuming that the battle generates at least some revolutionary support then Chernobog will have what it needs. The adventurers defeat Urmacher only to hear that Spinoza has collapsed, offering one final piece of advice on his dying lips: “Princess Nadja is coming; you’ll need her to...” Unfortunately he never gets to finish his sentence, but the message is clear. If the Gamesmaster desires, Spinoza can survive this chapter. If Urmacher’s plan gets nipped in the bud quickly enough, then the lack of a Czech uprising denies Chernobog an opportunity for revenge. Also, as a powerful magician, it’s possible that Spinoza was able to insulate himself from the attack, enabling him to join the adventurers in Chapter V. Upon Princess Nadja’s arrival Spinoza discerns her true identity; he encourages the adventurers to join her while keeping his insight to himself. He allows the Tsarina to reveal the truth on her terms.

If the adventurers have succeeded well enough the Austrian army (and perhaps the adventurers) storms the Urmacher Factory near Mount Blanik and, after a pitched battle with a second wave of automata, ends their production and destroys the facilities. While an automata factory is useful, the Austrian government simply can’t trust any machines they produce. Prague Mechanicals returns to its former place as chief automaton supplier in Bohemia.

If the adventurers fail, the Czech revolution rages on. Urmacher fans the flames, hoping to destroy enough Austrian defences to force Prussia’s hand; she concentrates on the shofar-bearing Bene David, realising that her automata in reserve can overcome the piercing of her initial forces. How quickly Prussia responds depends upon whether Emperor Franz Karl is dead (or if new Emperor Franz Josef is not yet in full control), but eventually Prussian troops cross the border to protect the German population. This only agitates the Czechs more and plunges Bohemia into a bloody civil war that threatens to expand into a greater Austria-Prussian War.

In any case, the adventurers need to get to Geneva (or Pest-Buda, if they came to Prague first). If they are ready to go to Geneva move to **Chapter V: Genevan Finale**. Otherwise, the adventurers will want to meet Countess Lyonesse in Pest-Buda in **Chapter III: Pestian Cresendo**.



## ~ CHAPTER V ~ GENEVAN FINALE



Regardless of the path that the adventurers take, all roads lead to Geneva. The adventurers have uncovered enough of the Thulian plan to realise that Chernobog is about to be released and that there is little the Consortium can do to



prevent it. Fortunately the adventurers have an unexpected ally at their service: the Tsarina. She was present the last time Chernobog was contained and she knows how to return him to his prison. Rabbi Obediah Spinoza, assuming he survived the attack on Prague, may also be on hand to help.

### Warning the Consortium

Grand Hermeticist Fouché runs interference if the adventurers report that the Thulians are behind the assassinations; he even helpfully rounds up known Thulians. Unfortunately, not all Thulians are so easily identified and Fouché has embedded many within the Aetherium. Most attempts to get around Fouché, should they suspect him to be part of the plot, are intercepted by Thulian agents.

Still, the adventurers may find a way to get a message to the Supreme Hermeticist directly. Unfortunately, she's gotten frail in her old age and doesn't possess the mastery of magic she once did. Should she move directly against Fouché then the Thulians attack and the Geneva Guild is in a state of civil war as the adventurers arrive; they are in no condition to help or move against Fouché in his mountain fortress. An emissary of the Supreme Hermeticist says as much with a magnetic projection.

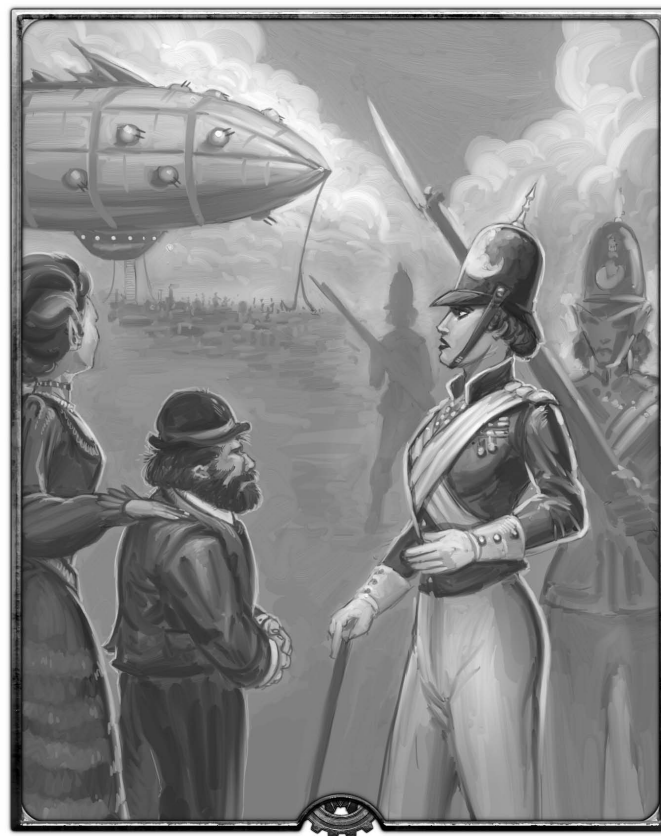
### Scene 1 – From Russia with Concern

No matter which city they are in the adventurers are at some point going to head to Geneva. If Rasia Sezjova is with them then she receives a magnetic request from the Tsarina to meet her at the closest aerodrome with the adventurers. If Rasia is dead or otherwise not with them then Rabbi Obediah Spinoza tells them (even if it is his dying declaration) that Princess Nadja is coming and they should meet her. Should Spinoza have died before seeing the adventurers then a Yehudi courier gives them his last message.

The *Lancer*, an aerostat with the Pan-Asiatic Spice Delivery Service (see *Faces in the Smoke, Volume Two – Shadows and Steel*) touches down at the aerodrome. The 'Human' Princess Nadja descends with her personal guard, four Eldren women bearing rifles and wearing sabres. The Princess wears her military dress uniform, which proves unnerving to those of a conservative bent (adventurers with the Proper Sensibilities complication are especially affected). She wears no hat but a simple gold band around

her head denotes her royal status. Perhaps most unsettling about her is her eyes, which have the cat-like pupils of an Eldren and a cold wisdom that belies her years (she also wears gloves to cover the fact that one of her hands is made of beautifully sculpted platinum).

Princess Nadja waits for no introductions. Whatever authorities are present scramble to put together a proper welcoming committee but she waves them off, leaving Ivan, the Karakon diplomat accompanying her, to iron out whatever diplomatic niceties are necessary. The Princess – the Tsarina, really – has much more on her mind. She looks at each adventurer in turn before speaking. When she does, she is brief and to the point.



"We all know why we are here. Please board. There is little time to waste."

With that, she spins on her heel and re-boards the aerostat, expecting the adventurers to follow. Presuming they do, the adventurers discover that the Princess has brought 50 soldiers aboard, along with other equipment covered in tarps. Princess Nadja introduces them to the aerostat's pilot, Anthony Haight. He is a dashing figure, albeit missing an eye, an ear and three fingers. Princess Nadja



notes that he is the best pilot in the company and this is their fastest aerostat. Haight welcomes them with a thick Scottish brogue and tells them it's going to be a 9 hour flight if he gives it everything he's got. The Princess tells him she expects no less.

Once they are in the air Nadja leads them to the chart room and asks them to take a seat. She answers any remaining questions the adventurers may have about Chernobog and what his release would mean for the world. Nadja fears this enough that she is willing to put aside their differences in the Crimea for the moment in order to defeat this threat.

Presuming that the adventurers agree to help, Nadja imparts the following:

- Nadja can sense the Key once she is close enough. If the adventurers happen to have any of the other Thulian blue diamonds and they are still active then the 'beam' between them is clearly seen. Adventurers with the *Magic Sense* magnetic ability would also see the power emanating from an active large blue diamond. Perhaps, if they are quick enough, Nadja and the adventurers can stop the Thulians before they free Chernobog.
- Nadja knows about the Thulian Order. She considers them a remnant of the Aluminat and the Holy Roman Empire, a group of privileged aristocrats that feel the world would be better run under them. She didn't think they had the power to control the Consortium, but perhaps she is mistaken.
- Yes, Nadja knows the ritual that the Pale Knights used. That is why she and Russia in general, is as much a threat to Chernobog as the adventurers. Any suggestion that she is a Knight Pale merely gets a sly smile and a "Let's just say I have a pedigree."
- Nadja confirms what Spinoza said about the mountain lacing. Either of them can tell the adventurers that four abbeys sit atop the mountain lacing and each houses a large blue diamond. These should push a sufficiently-weakened Chernobog back into his prison. The Thulians likely realise this as well and will have agents in place to remove the blue diamonds. To do so early would tip their hand, so the abbeys are still likely under Aluminat control - for the moment.
- Nadja does have a selection of weapons and armaments. She can outfit each adventurer with a lined soldier's coat (fit for either a man or woman) as well as Tula

rifles and a Russian version of the Cogswell.<sup>47</sup> She can also provide them with Eldritch pepperboxes, if desired. For melee weapons she has a selection of light military swords and knives.

After several hours the *Lancer* arrives in Geneva. As if in anticipation of what is about to take place the lake is completely covered by dark thunderclouds and a powerful lightning storm. Pounding rain batters the city, the lake and the surrounding region. No matter what time of day the *Lancer* arrives, it is dark and stormy. The Princess (and anyone else with the appropriate ability) senses the Key at D'Otrante Palace as soon as they arrive.

It is up to the adventurers how they wish to proceed. Both Nadia and Spinoza suggest supporting the abbeys first, but Nadia warns that using more than a handful of troops at each leaves little for the assault on what is likely a heavily-armed force surrounding the key. Also, a Russian and a Yehudi, in spite of their pedigree, are unlikely to sway the abbots in charge of each abbey.

Should the adventurers wish to put Russian support in the abbeys, they shall have to quietly negotiate with the abbots themselves. Given the situation this is a Very Difficult (6 black dice) social roll, best left to adventurers skilled in the arts of influence. Should the adventurers fail to persuade the Abbot or Abbess, then they are barred from leaving a force and the Abbot or Abbess sends riders to town to get protection from Geneva (any such riders are unfortunately intercepted by the waiting Thulian troops).

Adventurers that fail at diplomacy may choose to secure it by force. Each abbey contains only five priests (including the Abbot or Abbess), making it a rather easy target to conquer. This also invites the risk of tipping off the waiting commandos; if they observe anything out of the ordinary they attack.

In any event the blue diamonds set into the altars of the various abbeys are only a cubic foot, although they need to be removed from their stone altars. The Thulian commandos brought hammers and chisels with them to do just that.

It's also possible that the adventurers may wish to attack the Thulian forces waiting to storm the abbeys. This, of course, risks tipping their hand to Fouché, but it does have the benefit of eliminating opposition before they can steal the blue diamonds. Given the mountainous terrain and the raging storm it takes a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Perception roll to spot the Thulians; fortunately Nadja can make the aerostat transparent at will, making the aerostat

a hazy outline that requires an Incredibly Difficult (9 black dice) roll to spot.

The Thulians aren't expecting much resistance from praying priests; there are only three Thulian commandos per abbey, along with two hunting dogs (the Gamesmaster should feel free to adjust this to keep it a challenge for the adventurers).

#### **Thulian Commando - Dwarf Hermeticist**

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 9      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 24  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin).  
*Special Traits:* Entropy 1, Sigil Scribe (Ceph - +2 damage),  
 Thaumaturgy (Aetheric Blade, Aetheric Bolt, Ectoplasmic  
 Bonds, Flight of the Wyvern, Invisibility, Steely Skin).  
*Complications:* Zealot (Thulian).  
*Damage:* Aetheric Blade (8), Aetheric Bolt (10).

#### **Cloistered Monk - Beastfolk Priest**

*Physical:* 3      *Initiative:* 5  
*Mental:* 8      *Health:* 6  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 12  
*Armour Value:* 0.  
*Special Traits:* Order 2.  
*Complications:* Zealot (Aluminat).  
*Damage:* Club (4).

#### **Russian Soldier - Human Elite**

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 6      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 4      *Quintessence:* 12  
*Armour Value:* 5 (lined soldier's coat)  
*Special Traits:* None.  
*Complications:* None.  
*Damage:* Sabre (10), Tula Rifle (12)

#### **Lancer - Cargo Aerostat**

*Handling:* -2, *Movement:* 60mph, *Scale:* Huge, *Health:* 30,  
*Armour:* 4 (gondola only), *Crew:* 12, *Passengers:* 50 (not  
 comfortably), *Range:* 2 days, *Traits:* firetrap, lightweight,  
*Armament:* 2 pivot rifles (12).

## **Scene 2 - Storming the Palace**

Regardless of whether the adventurers decide to deal with the abbeys first, eventually they are going to want to try and stop the ceremony taking place around the Thulian blue diamond, or 'key.' This ceremony is taking place at Fouché's country home, which is a rather grand mountainside palace built along the southern shore of Lake Geneva; it is difficult to get to by road which is exactly why the Grand Hermeticist chose it. The palace seems more fortress than home, with a large ten-foot wall surrounding it. The palace itself is heavily guarded with mercenary troops that are loyal to Prussia.

## **Breaking out the Battlemats and Floorplans**

While this is a rousing, climactic finale taking place in several locations, there are no floorplans of abbeys, Fouché's palace or other 'combat sets.' This is intentional; by allowing combat to take place in the Theatre of the Mind, the Gamesmaster and the players have carte blanche to improvise details as needed. So long as each location provides a thrilling conflict, there's no need to get bogged down in drawing maps or discerning exact locations. On a more personal note, leaving such details sparse enables the Gamesmaster to adjust the challenges according to how the adventurers are progressing.

That said, Gamesmasters who want to add a bit more of a challenge can sketch out the appropriate locations in advance. The abbeys are small churches perched on mountainsides, while Fouché's home is a grand walled palace. While the abbey has only a limited number of rooms, positioning can become very important, as one wrong move could send a combatant rolling down the mountain and the pounding rain makes it difficult to make ranged attacks.

In the case of the palace the Gamesmaster can extend the scene by placing the Key in a more secure location. Given that it is powered by and manipulates aetheric energy, the Key doesn't need to be in an easily accessible position; Fouché chose its current location simply because he can see Geneva and the lake from here and there is room for Thulians to gather in order to feed it with quintessence. Fouché could just as easily have forgone the ambiance and chosen a large room in the basement or on the ground floor instead.

In any event it is the Gamesmaster's campaign. If she feels that her adventurers are strong enough for a greater challenge than she can provide it, otherwise, facing off against a few commandos as well as Fouché and his inner guardians are more than adequate and the rest can be left to the Russians.

Princess Nadia steps out on the promenade and closes her eyes, summoning her Peregrine energies as she removes the glove from her right hand (which is still flesh) and grips the railing. The entire aerostat turns transparent, leaving only a hazy outline from the constantly battering rain. She then asks Haight to drop close enough to the palace to let her soldiers out. She actually wants them to be seen; if Fouché believes an attack is coming from the outside, he is more likely to commit his forces to the walls and leave the centre undefended.

Once the troops are unloaded Princess Nadja orders Haight to swing out over the lake. She offers the adventurers several flying carpets they can use to infiltrate the highest floor of the palace, if they need them – that is where anyone who can sense it realises the Key is housed. She's had the carpets and the adventurers' clothing enchanted with Cloak of Shadows as well. They need to be careful, as it is still possible for them to be spotted, but these should enable the adventurers to enter the Key room undetected (note – while the rain would normally decrease the Hide & Sneak bonus, the guards will be distracted by the attacking Russians so any such penalty is countered).

The uppermost floor of the palace is largely and surprisingly undefended; given the weather conditions Fouché isn't expecting an aerial assault. He also realises that Chernobog's release is imminent and his forces only need to hold the Russians off long enough for the prison to crack open. Thus, there is no one left in the room except for Fouché and a couple of automata, gifts from Urmacher (unless the adventurers have tipped their hand while dealing with the abbey, in which case three or four Thulians accompany Fouché).

The windows are open but they are covered in glass panes – they have to be shattered to enter. The room is also specially *Warded* to enable the automata to activate as soon as anyone enters and doesn't use the proper password ("Thulia," if it matters).

The room is bare except for a six-foot sculpture of Citizen Liberty standing in the centre, holding a large blue diamond above her head. The diamond is practically bursting with raw quintessence. A large elaborate circle is painted on the floor, ostensibly to be used by hermeticists filling the gem in a ceremony. The walls of the room are painted to resemble Lake Geneva, with the windows 'completing the picture' by incorporating the actual Geneva into the picture. Various mountains along the walls are marked; these are likely the spots with the embedded crystals that Princess Nadja alluded to.

Prior to doing anything with the statue, the adventurers are attacked by the automata and Fouché. Fouché is a powerful hermeticist but he has fed much of his quintessence into the Key; he is almost spent when the adventurers arrive. He counts on the automata, which spring into action as soon as the adventurers enter the room, to hold them back while he desperately pleads for them to stand down. He knows that the Key is almost ready and rants at them while the automata attack:

*"You don't understand! None of you do! Neither does the Consortium, which is why all of this is necessary! THEY are coming, don't you see? THEY have been here before and almost destroyed us once. Unless we band together, THEY will destroy us all! And THEY are coming soon!"*

Should the adventurers ask who 'they' are, Fouché replies "the Servants of Nergal, the Nergaleen." Adventurers making an Average Wits + Theology roll recognise Nergal as a Pale archon. A good success (3 successes) enables an adventurer to recall that Nergal was a Sumerian god, often equated with the Greek Ares or Roman Mars. As if to drive the point home, Fouché points to a large red star (actually a planet, although much larger than it would be in reality) painted over the Alpine sky, sitting off in the distance like an angry red eye.

Fouché continues to rant about how they want to destroy sapient-kind and suck the quintessence from the world as he presses his attack. An adventurer making an Easy (+3 to dice roll) Wits + Science (psychology) roll diagnoses Fouché as quite mad; the Grand Hermeticist sees his plan collapsing and he is growing ever more desperate to preserve it at all costs. If the battle is going badly for him he spends an action summoning reinforcements; a Thulian or two arrive within a round to join the fray.

Adventurers that try to attack the Key find that it is protected by its own aetheric shield which provides AV 12 protection. The statue itself has 30 SP but the diamond itself is almost impervious to damage. An adventurer making an Average Dexterity + Craft (Jeweller) roll can hit the right spot with a hammer and chisel to shatter the diamond, but this releases 15 dice worth of explosive damage.

There is one sure way to stop the Key from transmitting and that is to remove it from the room. Adventurers with *Magic Sense* or casting *Second Sight* can tell that the mural on the room is its focus and by removing it the sigils etched on the gem are depowered. The gem is rather heavy and is considered STR 6 in terms of lifting it.



Regardless, the Key glows brightly within 3 rounds of the adventurers' arrival and Fouché (presuming he is still functioning) laughs that it is too late; Chernobog is free! Ecstatic, Fouché calls upon his freed archon to help him smite the adventurers and return the world to entropic glory. Instead, Chernobog uses the connection in Fouché's staff to drain his quintessence and Health, completely. Fouché collapses as a dried out husk (if the adventurers have already defeated him and removed the staff then this doesn't happen). The Key too is drained, leaving a burned-out mineral.

#### Grand Hermeticist Fouché - Desperate Eldren Sorcerer

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 10  
*Mental:* 12      *Health:* 14  
*Social:* 9      *Quintessence:* 42  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin).  
*Special Traits:* Clairvoyance (*Aura Reading, Glimpse, Psychometry*), Demonology (all), Necromancy (all), Thaumaturgy (all).  
*Complications:* Paranoia.  
*Damage:* Eldritch Staff (8/11), Aetheric Bolt (8).

#### Guardian Automaton

*Physical:* 9      *Initiative:* 4  
*Mental:* 2      *Health:* 10  
*Social:* 0      *Quintessence:* 0  
*Armour Value:* 6 (plated body)  
*Special Traits:* Can sense and attack invisible foes.  
*Complications:* Drone (has no independent thoughts).  
*Damage:* Punch (6 dice), Sword Arm (10 dice), Volley Gun (8 dice).

#### Thulian - Human Hermeticist

*Physical:* 6      *Initiative:* 6  
*Mental:* 9      *Health:* 8  
*Social:* 6      *Quintessence:* 24  
*Armour Value:* 6 (Steely Skin).  
*Special Traits:* Entropy 1, Thaumaturgy (*Aetheric Bolt, Flight of the Wyvern, Steely Skin*), Twisted Hazel Wand (all spells do an additional die of damage).  
*Complications:* Zealot (Thulian).  
*Damage:* Aetheric Bolt (9).

### Scene 3 - The Wrath of Chernobog

Unfortunately, the Thulian plot was too well-crafted for Chernobog's rise to be thwarted so easily. Its swelling power enables it to tear free of the pocket dimension. The abomination manifests as a 30-foot tall replica of Citizen Liberty with visages and silhouettes of many Old Gods writhing through it, as if trying to break out. Some of them actually do, swarming the giant archon like bees. Chernobog roars with a thousand voices and slightly breaks apart as the dark shards of the Old Gods re-weave themselves into a new pattern, an Ogre-shaped armoured warrior. Its first act is to blast the Aetherium into flames, reducing many powerful hermeticists to ash if they weren't warned.

As the Aetherium burns, Chernobog screams with a thousand voices again as its body splits apart into a thousand wispy apparitions of archons, all pressing against the weakened aetheric barrier surrounding the lake. Chernobog almost succeeds, but the wispy archons scream in unison and return to their composite form, which now



resembles a black-armoured Eldren woman with a horned helmet and blazing red eyes. It carries a flaming double-bladed sword staff that it uses to ram the invisible aetheric field that is just barely managing to contain him. Angrily it looks around, as it can feel the presence of one (or two) of the Pale Knights responsible for its imprisonment.

Any remaining Thulian commandos storm the abbeys at this time, weakening the aetheric barrier with each removed blue diamond. With all four blue diamonds in place, Chernobog is contained within the lake for an hour. Removing one diamond drops that to 20 minutes, two diamonds to 5 minutes, and one diamond to 10 rounds.

Should the commandos storm the abbeys both Nadja and Spinoza note that the blue diamonds within them need to be restored in order to trap Chernobog again. In addition, the blue diamond from the now-burning Aetherium also needs to be retrieved in order to re-imprison the abomination. The only way to imprison it is to chant the Twelfth Commandment over and over while taking the blue diamond into the heart of Chernobog.

Once the adventurers get back aboard the *Lancer* they note that Nadia and Spinoza both double over in pain from Chernobog's magnetic attack on them. A dying Spinoza collapses to the floor as Nadja hisses through gritted teeth:

"Thanks to Citizen Liberty, Chernobog is more powerful than ever! I don't think the ritual can recapture it unless some of that power can be siphoned off! Fortunately, the prayers of the proletariat are nothing compared to the trials and tribulations of the Russian people!" She pulls off her left glove to reveal her – the Tsarina's – platinum hand as she slowly, unsteadily, stands, her body enveloped in sparkling blue energy. Outside, Chernobog's legion of voices howl "Justina!"

"Yes, you monster, I have returned," Nadja spits as her entire body becomes an aetheric cannon, launching a wave of energy against it. The legion of voices howl and Chernobog looks a bit smaller. It stabs its sword into the stream of quintessence and a flash of light erupts from Nadja. When it subsides, a weakened and dying Nadja collapses to the floor.

"Chernobog is – stronger," she rasps, "but I've weakened it enough to be – recaptured. It's – it's up to you now. Complete the – ritual – and drive – the great blue diamond – into its heart." With that she collapses, wheezing and barely alive. No amount of healing can help her now; it's already too late for Spinoza.

Haight waits for the adventurer's instruction and pilots the Lancer accordingly. If any of the abbeys had their blue diamonds removed then Chernobog can act against the adventurers. It unsteadily points at the aerostat and its fingers dissolve into Erinyes (two for each adventurer). They swoop towards the aerostat while screaming vengeance!

Erinyes are demonic creatures that look like scale-covered sapients with wicked teeth and snakes for hair. In place of arms they have lizard-like wings and their feet end in wickedly sharp talons. They are tasked with stopping the adventurers at any cost, whether that is to bury their talons into adventurer flesh or to shred the balloon holding the aerostat aloft.



### Erinyes

*Physical:* 9

*Initiative:* 4

*Mental:* 3

*Health:* 10

*Social:* 0

*Quintessence:* 6

*Armour Value:* 2 (scaly skin).

*Special Traits:* Flight.

*Complications:* None.

*Damage:* Talon (7 dice), Bite (4 dice + poison\*; only when grappling).

\*Potency 7, Fortitude success: Nausea, -1 Strength, -1

Dexterity, Fortitude failure: -2 Strength, -2 Dexterity, -2

Health pips/potency/half hour.

Once all four blue diamonds are restored Chernobog is momentarily trapped, giving the adventurers time to retrieve the large blue diamond from the burning wreckage

of the Aetherium. It takes a Very Difficult (6 black dice) Wits + Search roll to find it and the adventurers may have to get creative in how they hoist it aboard (the flying carpets may prove useful here, as well as water). Chernobog screams the entire time, but takes no action. It is only when the blue diamond is aboard the Lancer and making a final run that Chernobog summons every bit of energy to stop them.

### Genevan Reinforcements

Whether or not Chernobog managed to destroy most of the seasoned hermeticists within the Aetherium there are still many magicians within the city that could help the adventurers if they need it. There are also several fire-resistant automata that could be persuaded to help retrieve the blue diamond. Allow the adventurers to be clever and adjudicate social rolls accordingly. There aren't any real modifiers – any benefit derived from “we need to stop it or it will destroy the world” is counterbalanced by the awesome and frightening presence of the abomination.

In addition to living support Geneva is home to an aerodrome that currently houses several aerostats and other flying machines. These may be pressed into service if the *Lancer* has taken too much damage. Also, if the adventurers do manage to acquire hermetic support one or more of them may know the spell *Helium Bubble* (see *Marvels of Science and Steampunk*) which allows a balloon-damaged aerostat to descend slowly to the ground or water rather than crash and burn.

### Scene 4 – The Final Confrontation

Presuming the adventurers secure the four abbeys and get the main blue diamond aboard Haight can pilot the *Lancer* towards Chernobog. A weakened Nadja tells the adventurers to start chanting the Twelfth Commandment as they approach the abomination before collapsing to the floor and closing her eyes.

Chernobog makes one final attempt to stop them. He summons two wyverns (or one if there are less than four adventurers) to make a final desperate assault. These are no ordinary wyverns, however. They are aetherically charged ‘hounds’ of the Old Gods. They try to destroy the aerostat before it can get to Chernobog.

From the moment the wyverns attack it takes the aerostat 10 rounds to get to Chernobog. Once the prow of the aerostat

pierces Chernobog’s body the four abbeys blue diamonds fire beams of light directly into the blue diamond aboard the aerostat. The blue diamond shines with glowing sigils as Chernobog howls. A shimmering blue aetheric skin covers its body and contracts – ectoplasmic tentacles grab any ‘echoes’ that frantically detach from the composite body – pulling Chernobog back inside the diamond. Once it is imprisoned, the storm subsides and the water of the lake becomes placid.

Nadja – or the Tsarina, or Justina – opens her eyes and sits up. “It is done,” she says softly. “The world is safe once more, hopefully for more than a couple centuries this time. Thank you for your assistance.” (If appropriate she then turns to Spinoza’s body and says “sleep well, moy droog.”)

Of course, if the adventurers fail then they’ll be lucky to escape with their lives as a freed abomination dives into the telluric currents to wreak havoc across Europe...

### Aetherically Charged Wyverns

*Initiative:* 8

*Physical:* 12

*Mental:* 8

*Health:* 20

*Armour:* 9 (3 is scales, 6 is aetheric shielding)

*Damage:* Aetheric Breath (12), Bite (10), Claws (9), Tail Stinger (6+poison)



## Conclusions

Regardless of the adventurers' actions, the Continent has changed. France has a new government (either an Emperor or a new republic depending on how things shook out) and Austria may either be invigorated or vying for territory with an emboldened Prussia depending on whether events in Pest-Buda and Prague were mollified or turned out poorly.

In Geneva, the Consortium, or what's left of it, picks up the pieces. If the Supreme Hermeticist was killed, then the most senior surviving members round up the rest of the Thulians – each member not apparently part of the scheme is due to undergo a thorough interrogation.

If the adventurers failed to imprison Chernobog then the immediate result is that the entire world shifts 1 Cog towards Entropy. Its influence fuels the revolutionary movements in France and Austria, plunging Paris into anarchy and causing swathes of the Austrian Empire to secede before the Emperor (whoever that is now) can retake control. In the weeks and months ahead revolutionary fervour spreads throughout the Continent as new revolutionary leaders are emboldened by the increased power of petty conjurers now dedicated to Citizen Liberty. The world is crumbling toward Entropy, but it will take years of increasing anarchy and cogs ticking toward Entropy before that happens (and, when the Nergaleen finally do arrive, they may squeeze the world dry ahead of schedule!).

If the adventurers ultimately succeeded, Russia's involvement in stopping Chernobog becomes well known, at least amongst hermetic and governmental leaders. Weary of war (and especially if the prospect of an Emperor Napoleon looms), the Tsarina agrees to allow Austria to host a 'Second Congress of Vienna.' Russia is willing to grant independence to the Danubian Principalities and offers to demilitarise the Black Sea so long as the Ottoman Empire does the same. If Austria has fallen apart then Russia offers to stabilise the region toward whatever end the other Great Powers propose. Whether this Second Congress of Vienna succeeds or fails is up to the Gamesmaster – and the adventurers, perhaps.

In any event presuming the adventurers managed to accomplish something significant (saving Napoleon, saving Franz Karl or stopping Chernobog) then Countess Lyonesse puts in a good word for them. The adventurers are soon summoned by the Queen so she can bestow them membership into the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George as Knight Grand Cross or Dame Grand Cross for their service (this is a titled position – the adventurers get to add Sir or Dame as honorifics).

Unfortunately, these can only be privately presented before being locked away – the adventurers only truly receive them once they've been retired from the Star Chamber.

## The Rubber Band Snaps Back?

The damage the Thulians wish to cause Geneva is largely limited to the destruction of the Guild leadership, which of course was hardly a concern in our own world. Thus, the temporal damage is self-contained, as it won't affect global politics moving forward.

Events throughout this penny dreadful can affect the 'rubber band' of *VICTORIANA*'s history in a major way – it could foster the end of the Crimean War. With the Thulian plot, the weakening of Austria, the advance of Prussia and the threat of a re-invigorated French Empire (as well as a possible assist against Chernobog by the Tsarina herself) there's a golden opportunity for the Allies to get Russia to sit down and hammer out a war-ending treaty. Russia is willing to pull her forces out of the Danubian Principalities as long as she can be assured of their full independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Russia may even intervene on Austria's behalf to quell the rebellions, especially in Hungary. She'd likely exact the price of a regime change in Austria, but if she's intervening in the first place that likely isn't a problem. Alternatively, Russia may bring Hungary under its 'protection' and install a Hungarian monarch; this option is particularly attractive if Prussia annexes Bohemia.

Obviously, the end of the Crimean War can have a huge impact on a Gamesmaster's campaign and should be considered carefully. Obviously, if a campaign is primarily London-based then an end to the war provides little more than a headline, but if the Gamesmaster wants to use the Crimean War as part of future penny dreadfuls then she can't end it here. But allowing the rubber band to snap back and re-align the Concert is a perfect way to end the Continent-spanning adventure on a high note!

# APPENDIX: NEW SAPIENTS

The following are a list of sapients commonly found in parts of Europe. A notable exception is the Steppegoblin, which is really just a blonde-haired Eldren that has Planar Empathy with Mysticism (see Liber Magica). All of these new sapients are playable as adventurers but in Great Britain and many parts of the Continent such adventurers would likely have Distinctive Features and/or the Foreigner complications. Additionally, based on the type of campaign a Gamesmaster intends to run, Giants and Merfolk may prove difficult to incorporate.

## Giant

### *Homo Gigas*

Some say that Giants were the first inhabitants of Eurasia, before the other subspecies invaded from lands now lost beneath the waves during the Great Cataclysm. Others believe that Giants are magical experiments gone wrong, attempts to make a large servitor subspecies that failed to give them the necessary intelligence to go with their size. Whatever the case, Giants have spent most of post-cataclysmic history fighting and losing wars against the civilised subspecies. They were pushed back into the foothills and mountains as their clans dwindled away into smaller tribes and, eventually, small families.

By the Middle Ages Giants were no longer credible threats although professional Giant hunters still existed in Europe, especially amongst the Germanic states. Those few that remained learned to coexist with their neighbours, either by avoiding them or integrating themselves into society. While the smaller subspecies balked at Giants lumbering through towns and eating mass quantities of food, they enjoyed fielding Giants on the battlefield or using them for civil projects, such as dragging ships through shallow water or constructing tall buildings. Still, their slow-witted nature and large size makes it difficult for Giants to be fully accepted; most see them as Ogres that can't enter buildings or ride with their employers. Still in spite of the drawbacks, Giants can be very useful scouts or sentinels (due to their ability to see far distances and over some trees) as well as soldiers. Giants are usually about 20 feet tall, although some are known to be several feet higher.

**Clumsy:** *Your massive size makes it difficult to manoeuvre in places built for the civilised subspecies. At the Gamemaster's*

*discretion, your Difficulty Rating for Dexterity-based skills is increased by one or more due to the number of hindrances and obstacles placed in your way due to your massive form. You also may be barred from entering buildings, sewers, caves, or other passages that are simply too small or fragile to accommodate your massive form.*



**Huge:** *You are at least 20 feet tall. You gain +9 dice to damage in all melee attacks and you gain +6 health dice. However, you have 9 black dice on all Hide & Sneak rolls and anyone attacking you gains +3 dice to his roll to hit.*

**Iron Will:** *Your unwavering faith in the Aluminat grants you a +2 dice bonus on rolls to resist magic.*

## Harpy

### *Homo Sapiens Bestius*

While the Eldren complain that they are a dying subspecies the truth is that the Harpy has suffered an even worse decline. Harpies were once numerous throughout the world and held esteemed positions in the earliest civilisations.



Then, something happened. It's commonly thought that most Harpies were killed when these earliest civilisations fell, as they were aristocrats and warriors. Others believe a magical disease like the blue plague wiped them out. The most likely theory, however, is that Harpy genetics are even more fragile than the Eldren and over time they've bred themselves close to extinction.



Today, small Harpy colonies exist only in isolated locations, such as the Strofades in Greece or hidden away in Balkan or Italian mountain ranges. Most Harpies encountered outside these enclaves are loners, using their unique talents as builders or mercenaries. In fact, given their legendary reputation as mute warriors, the Harpy is the inspiration for the many eagle-styled banners of Europe.

In spite of their appearance Harpies are mammalian and a variety of Beastfolk. Some naturalists consider them a separate subspecies, *homo sapiens flax*, but this hasn't gained wide acceptance. Harpies do have feathers for hair and prominent beaks which makes communication with other sapient beings difficult. They also have wing-like arms that enable them to glide. This limits their effectiveness in battle and some Harpies compensate by attaching weapons to their legs and feet. Harpies are known as 'Haru' in Egypt and 'Garudi' throughout South Asia. East Asians call them 'Tengu.'

Harpies are considered Agile Beastfolk for purposes of statistical modifiers and may select an appropriate animal trait as normal for Beastfolk. Typical choices include Arboreal, Claws (or beak), Enhanced Sense (Sight) or Night Vision. In addition, all Harpies have the following traits:

**Gliding:** *While true flight may have been possible for your ancestors, you can only glide. This gains you no extra height save for your regular jumping height, but you lose only one yard of height for every ten yards you glide. Your gliding speed is equal to your leaping speed.*

**Mute:** *Your beak prohibits you from making all of the sounds necessary for common speech. You understand languages, but your communication is limited to cawing, gestures, or written communication. You tend to communicate via Sign Language. Harpies also have their own language, 'Harping,' which is difficult for other sapient beings to understand and impossible for them to speak. You need to take the appropriate skills to use Harping or Sign Language.*

## Karakon

### *Homo Sapiens Magicis*

Karaka are a regional subspecies that, like the Steppegoblin, seem to hail from Central Asia. Karaka are similar in height to gnomes but have wrinkly, leathery skin and oversized ears. Karaka are completely hairless and spindly, with arms and legs that seem too long for their torsos. They also have comparatively large hands and feet.

Karaka were more numerous in Classical times and there were several Karakon magicians, philosophers and priests in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Mesopotamia. Perhaps because of their prominence in elite circles, the Karaka were butchered by the Romans as their empire expanded in the east. Many believe this is why most Karaka don't accept the Aluminat faith. Instead, Karaka encountered in Europe tend to be Followers of the Word or Sons of David. Those few Karaka that settle in South or East Asia prefer Buddhism, although there are Karaka enclaves devoted to Avestanism in Persia and the Disciples of the Light in India.

After the Roman purge in the Eastern Mediterranean, many Karaka settled in Central Asia along the Silk Road. These Karaka have become adept traders, although they remain socially isolated from their neighbours as a means to ensure their survival. Karaka have a very arcane set of rituals that they follow, covering all aspects of their lives. Because of this, Karaka can send coded messages to each other, even within earshot of others, and be reasonably certain that no one would notice. While this makes Karaka very effective spies, a Karakon's first loyalty is to his extended family.



It is said that Karaka spies were responsible for King Geoffrey the Pale's seizure of the English crown in 1192. Fearing that their abilities might soon be used against him, Geoffrey had all Karaka banished from England and its territories in France with the Edict of 1193. The reputation of the Karaka continued to be weakened in Western Europe by their prominent depiction on the side of Nithami states during the Crusades. While the Edict was lifted in 1649, relatively few Karaka have settled in England in the 200 years since.



**Fragile Physique:** Due to their size, Karaka cannot ever enhance their Strength attribute in the same way some of the other subspecies can. Regardless of their Rank and attribute cap, their Strength attribute can never be higher than 3.

**Little Legs:** Karaka are a short subspecies and, as such, their legs are much shorter than those of the average Human (or Eldren or Beastman for that matter). When calculating movement speeds, their scores are halved (but rounded up).

**Quintessential Glow:** Karaka are better attuned to the flows of magic within themselves. All Karaka begin the game with the Aetheric Manipulator Talent at no cost, which doesn't count against their total number of talents.

**Night Vision:** The Karaka are night creatures and can see in all but absolute darkness. They gain the Talent Night Vision for free.

## Merfolk

### *Homo Sapiens Mare*

Even amongst the diversity of sapients Merfolk is a breed apart, combining mammalian traits with cetacean ones. Naturalists have struggled for centuries to classify their relationship with land-based sapiency, believing Merfolk to be the result of a curse, magical experiment, or even (most recently) an evolutionary ancestor or descendant. It has been suggested that Merfolk can interbreed with other sapients, but shy away from it due to the dangers of childbirth (as the mother doesn't know whether she carries land or sea-based children until they are born). That said there are numerous legends about Merfolk kidnapping land-based sapients or enticing them to jump out of their boats, both presumably for mating purposes.



Merfolk tend to be solitary creatures, rarely being found in groups larger than five. These small groups often inhabit small grottoes or solitary rocks out beyond the shore. A notable exception to this is in Venice, where the only known Merfolk city, Sirenia, exists beneath the City of Canals. Sirenian Merfolk are very sociable and intermingle freely with Venetians. There are also rumours of Merfolk cities deep beneath the oceans, but thus far none have been discovered.

The average Merman or Merwoman (the latter frequently being known as a 'mermaid,' presumably because they were often encountered alone) has the same breadth of subspecies as their land-based counterparts and individual Merfolk are usually called by their subspecies (e.g. 'Merbeastwoman' or 'Merhuldu'). The primary difference is their dolphin-like tail, which they have in place of legs. Despite popular depictions these tails are not scaled and retain a mammalian anatomy. The other main difference is gills, which sit behind the ears of Merfolk. These gills enable a Merwoman to breathe in water as well as land, but the anatomical changes make true speech difficult.

All Merfolk share the following traits. In addition, an individual Merperson has the subspecies trait of her land equivalent ('Little Legs' is treated as a Slower Swimmer).

**Amphibious:** Merfolk have both gills and lungs. They may breathe air and water interchangeably.

**Excellent Swimmers:** Merfolk have bodies adapted for swimming. They may Swim at their normal Movement Speed and 'fast swim' at the usual Run speed.

**Night Vision:** Merfolk are used to seeing in poor light and can see in all but absolute darkness. They gain the Talent Night Vision for free (if the land subspecies already has this trait then this provides no further benefit).

**Dehydration:** Merfolk are uncomfortable when out of the water for too long and can even die if away too long. Merfolk lose 1 Health pip every half hour they are not immersed in water. Once immersed, it takes 1 minute per lost Health pip to regain it.

**No Legs:** A Merfolk's tail is perfectly adapted for swimming, but it is a great hindrance when the Merfolk are on land. Movement rate is reduced by 3 when trying to 'walk' (or, more accurately, crawl).

**Partially Mute:** Whether due to nature or nurture (or more likely a combination of the two), Merfolk have trouble vocalising words when not in the water (Merfolk languages combine sign language with 'whalesong'). Merfolk take a 6 black dice language penalty when trying to vocalise more than a simple sentence (two-three words). Most Merfolk rely on sign language as a result when communicating with the surface world.

### SUBSPECIES ABILITIES TABLE\*

SUBSPECIES	SOCIAL CLASS			LIFESPAN*	COG	SPECIAL ABILITIES
	Upper	Middle	Lower			
Giant	No	No	Yes	50	Order 1	Clumsy, Huge, Iron Will
Karakon	No	Yes	Yes	200	Entropy 2	Fragile Physique, Little Legs, Quintessential Glow, Night Vision

### SUBSPECIES ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS TABLE\*

SUBSPECIES	ATTRIBUTE ADJUSTMENTS					
	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	FORTITUDE	PRESENCE	WITS	RESOLVE
Giant	+6	-2	+6	-4	-4	-2
Karakon	-3	None	None	+1	+1	+2

### SUBSPECIES ATTRIBUTE SCORES TABLE\*

SUBSPECIES	ATTRIBUTE ADJUSTMENTS					
	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	FORTITUDE	PRESENCE	WITS	RESOLVE
Giant	7 (9)	-1 (1)	7 (9)	-3 (-1)	-3 (-1)	-1 (1)
Karakon	-2 (0)	1 (3)	1 (3)	2 (4)	2 (4)	3 (5)

\*Merfolk use their land subspecies for purposes of these tables.

## ~ INDEX ~

<b>A</b>					
(When) Adventurers Go Astray	95	Breaking out the Battlemats and Floorplans	146	Scene 5 – The March of the Automata	140
Aerostat Crew – Beastfolk Mercenaries	113	Breeding Table	22	Intermission	142
Aetheric Blade (Aer Gladius)	138	Brussels	63	Chapter V: Genevan Finale	143
Aftershocks	69	Bucharest	36	Scene 1 – From Russia with Concern	144
Alpine Mysteries	84	<b>C</b>		Scene 2 – Storming the Palace	146
Alpinism	86	Calais	41	Scene 3 – The Wrath of Chernobog	148
(The Many Sects of the) Aluminat	54	Calling on the Cavalry	118	Scene 4 – The Final Confrontation	150
(The Russian) Aluminat	70	(The) Carbonari	54	Conclusions	151
Aluminat Triumphant: The Final Defeat of		(The Three) Cardinal Voces	101	Ciarpa	32
Chernobog	11	Carpathian Talons	34	Cloistered Monk – Beastfolk Priest	146
(Other) Ambassadors	102	(The) Cavalry	142	(A) Common Tongue	37
Amsterdam	62	(The) Caves of France	42	(New) Complication: Aetheric Withdrawal	88
(The) Anagtii	58	(President Jean-Baptiste) Cavaignac	100	(The) Concert in Flames	90
Andorran Blades	83	(El) Cazadore de Brujas – Wolfman Witch	100	Contents	3
Appendix: New Sapients	152	Hunter	80	Constantinople	66
Assassin Automaton	137	(A) Celestial Palindrome	56	Copenhagen	77
Athens	51	Centurion – Human Witch Hunter	118	Countess Lyonesse’s Diary, 1 January 1856	8
Austria at a Glance	23	(The) Chains of Order	12	Credits	2
(The) Austrian Empire	22	Chapter I: Parisian Overture	97	(The) Crumbling City that Never Was	40
Geography	23	Scene 1 – The Last Republican Ball	99	Currency	22
Government	24	Scene 2 – Murder Most Foul!	103	<b>D</b>	
Industry	26	Scene 3 – The Cathedral	104	Damascus Steel	66
Society	25	Scene 4 – Montesquieu’s Residence	105	(A) Dangerous City	104
Austrian Gunboat	134	Scene 5 – Paris Legwork	106	(Chief Inspector Georgette) Danton	100
<b>B</b>		Scene 6 – A Concerned Niece	108	(The) Danubian Principalities	32
Background: The Legacy of the		Scene 7 – The Chorus of Flame	109	Geography	33
Thirty Years’ War	91	Intermission	113	Government	33
Barcelona	82	Chapter II: Viennese Cadenza	116	Industry	35
Basque Country	82	Scene 1 – The Russian Gambit	117	Society	35
(Praetor Ranulf) Baum	128	Scene 2 – Viennese Legwork	119	(The) Daughters of Remus	59
Beastman Revolutionary	110	Scene 3 – The Hahn Residence	120	Delphi	52
(The) Beasts of Gévaudan	39	Scene 4 – The University	121	Demon of the Second Pale Circle	123
Berlin	47	Scene 5 – The House of Citizen Liberty	123	(A) Different Europe, but Much the Same	5
Bern	86	Intermission	124	(Hoffnung von) Dresden, Aerostat	113
Black Widow	46	Chapter III: Pestian Crescendo	125	<b>E</b>	
Blood on the <i>Streets of Shadow</i>	95	Scene 1 – A Threat Removed?	126	Eldritch Weapon	113
(The) Blue Fever	13	Scene 2 – A Celebratory Dinner	127	(The) Elephant in the City	16
Blue Heart Diamonds	51	Scene 3 – Pestian Legwork	129	(An) Encore Performance	124
Bologna	55	Scene 4 – A Distracting Opera	130	(The) Encyclopaedia Victoriana	8
(Napoleon) Bonaparte	99	Scene 5 – Waylaid!	131	Entropic Scientist: Leonardo da Vinci	10
Bonapartists	39	Scene 6 – The Spark of Revolution!	132	Erinyes	149
(The) Book of Justas	10	Intermission	135	<b>F</b>	
Bordeaux	41	Chapter IV: Prager Bridge	135	(The) Failed Spring and the New Hope	15
		Scene 1 – A Sorcerer’s Return?	135	(The) Failure of the Concert	16
		Scene 2 – Ambush!	136		
		Scene 3 – Prague Legwork	138		
		Scene 4 – Yehudi Assistance	138		

(The) Fate of Obediah Spinoza	143	Harpy	152	<b>L</b>	
(Guildmaster Deak) Ferenc	128	(Romy) Hauser - Human Thulian	132	(Kossuth) Lajos	129
Florence	55	(Field Marshal Lieutenant Julius Jacob		Lancer - Cargo Aerostat	146
(Grand Hermeticist Joseph) Fouché	100	von) Haynau	128	Languages	22
France at a Glance	37	(The) Hexenjäger	47	Larentians	59
Frankfurt am Main	48	(The) Hope of Rome	9	(The) Last Musketeer	101
(The) French Republic	36	Human Soldier	110	(Bakonyi) Lazlo - Pigman Conductor	131
Geography	37	<b>I</b>		Lindorm	75
Government	37	Introduction	5	Lisbon	69
Industry	39	(La) Inquisición Secreta	80	Living in the Shadow of the Ancien Regime	38
Society	38	(The) Italian States	52	L'Ordre de Villard	87
(A) Full-On Skirmish	142	Geography	53	(The) Low Countries	60
<b>G</b>		Government	53	Industry	62
(Simon) Garnet - Human Thulian	111	Industry	53	Geography	61
(The) Gaulish Pantheon	19	Society	54	Government	61
Geneva	86	Italy at a Glance	54	Society	62
Genevan Reinforcements	150	(The) Itinerary of the Coronation	53	(The) Low Countries at a Glance	61
(The) German Confederation	43	<b>J</b>	108	Lyon	41
Industry	45	Jäger Rifle		(Countess) Lyonesse	129
Geography	44	Janissaries	46	<b>M</b>	
Government	44	Jätte Mördare	65	Madrid	82
Society	45	Johann - Ogre Sentinel	77	Map of Europe	4
German Engineering	46	43	112	(The) Mark of Thulia	111
Germany at a Glance	43	<b>K</b>		(The) Mask of Tamit	60
Getting the Adventurers Involved	95	Kappa		Mechanical Men	87
Giant	152	Karakon	84	Merfolk	154
Goatman Witch Hunter	47	(Emperor Franz) Karl	153	Milan	28
Goliath Automaton	46	(The) Kingdom of Greece	127	(Absolutist) Monarchy	20
Gothic Horror	24	Industry	49	(Constitutional) Monarchy	20
Governmental System	20	Geography	51	(The) Morskoy Volk	71
Grand Duchess Josephine of Parma	99	Government	50	Moscow	73
Grand Hermeticist Fouché - Desperate		Society	50	Mount Olympus	52
Eldren Sorcerer	148	The Kingdom of Portugal	50	(The) Mountain of Order	64
(La) Grande Mademoiselle	101	Geography	67	Munich	49
Great Britain in the Scheme of Things	21	Government	67	Muspelheim	77
(The) Great Canal	44	Industry	67	Mythical Spain	79
(The) Great Idea	50	Society	69		
Greece at a Glance	49	(The) Kingdom of Spain	68	<b>N</b>	
Gryphon Cavalry	25	Geography	79	Naming Conventions	25
Guardian Automaton	148	Government	79	Naples	56
Guild Rings	85	Industry	80	(A) Napoleonic Hope?	17
<b>H</b>		Society	81	Naval Beastfolk Crewman	134
(Oskar) Hahn's Suicide Note	126	Koschei the Deathless	81	(Lorelei) Nieder - Eldren Vampire Diva	124
(The) Hague	62	(Jan) Kubiak - Dogman Lackey	73	(A) Note on Language	95
Hamburg	48		137	Nations at a Glance	20
(The) Harpies	51			(The) Navigator's Guild	62
				(The) Nordic Pantheon	18

<b>O</b>					
On Reconsideration of Eldren and Similar Subspecies					
(The) Ottoman Empire					
Geography					
Government					
Industry					
Society					
<b>P</b>					
Padua					
(The) Papiro Regio Mystery					
Paris					
Pest and Buda					
Pisa					
Prague					
Prague Mechanicals and Automata Company					
(Der) Prätorianergarde					
Prussian Dwarf Mercenaries					
<b>R</b>					
Redcap					
(Summon) Redcap (Redcap Evoco)					
Regina					
Religion					
Republic					
Researching Chernobog					
Researching the Pale Knights					
River Sharks of the Danube					
(The) Romani					
Rome					
Romania at a Glance					
Romulus and Remus					
(Wolfgang) Rucht - Orc Thulian					
(The) Rubber Band Snaps Back?	90, 102, 125, 151				
Ruffians - Beastman Brigands					
Russia at a Glance					
(The) Russian Empire					
Geography					
Government					
Industry					
		Society	72	(A Change in the) Thulian Plan	124
		Russian Roulette	116	(The) Thulian Plan	92
	13	Russian Soldier - Human Elite	146	(A) Timeline of Events	96
	63	Russian Wyverns	72	Toulouse	42
	63			Treeby Chain Gun	46
	64	<b>S</b>		(The) Trias	43
	65	(The) Saint and the Tsarina	14	Troll Marshes	68
	64	Saint Maxius	59	(The) True Art	81
		Saint Petersburg	73	(The) True Dark Age	8
		Saltimbanque - Rabbitman Acrobat	110	Turin	59
	57	Saltimbanque - Human Conjuror	110	Turkey at a Glance	63
	60	Scandinavia at a Glance	74		
	39	(The) Scandinavian Confederation	74	<b>U</b>	
	28	Geography	74	(Rosine) Urmacher - Human Revolutionary	
	57	Government	75	Artificer	142
	29	Industry	77	Urmacher Submersible	134
	30	Society	76	Using the Second Edition	6
	26	(The) Scrofa Semilanuta	28	Using this Book	5
	134	Serbia	36		
		(Rasia) Sezjova - Eldren Vila Agent	116	<b>V</b>	
		(The) Silencius and the Thulian Order	92	Venice	31
	132	Sirenia	31	Vereinsgewehr Percussion Rifle	46
	132	(The) Slavic Pantheon	19	Vienna	26
	94	(Empress) Sophie	128	Viennese Coffee Culture	27
	22	Spain at a Glance	79	(The) Vila	72
	22	(Rabbi Obediah) Spinoza - Dwarf Pale Knight	137	(Prince) Vlad III of Wallachia	34
	115	(The) Star Chamber	90	Vulcan's Forge	57
	114	(The) Swiss Confederation	83		
	33	Geography	84	<b>W</b>	
	35	Government	84	Warning the Consortium	144
	58	Industry	85	Welcoming Committee	98
	33	Society	85	When it all goes wrong	113
	58	Switzerland at a Glance	84	Witgen Eldritch Turret Revolver	46
	113			(Aetherically Charged) Wyverns	150
		<b>T</b>			
	98	(A) Tale of Two Muspelheims	78	<b>Y</b>	
	70	Telluric Currents	29	Yehudi Schism	48
	70	Thema - Human Witch Hunter	119	Your Own Private Ruritania	20
	70	Theocracy	22		
	71	Thulian - Human Hermeticist	148		
	72	Thulian Commando - Dwarf Hermeticist	146		

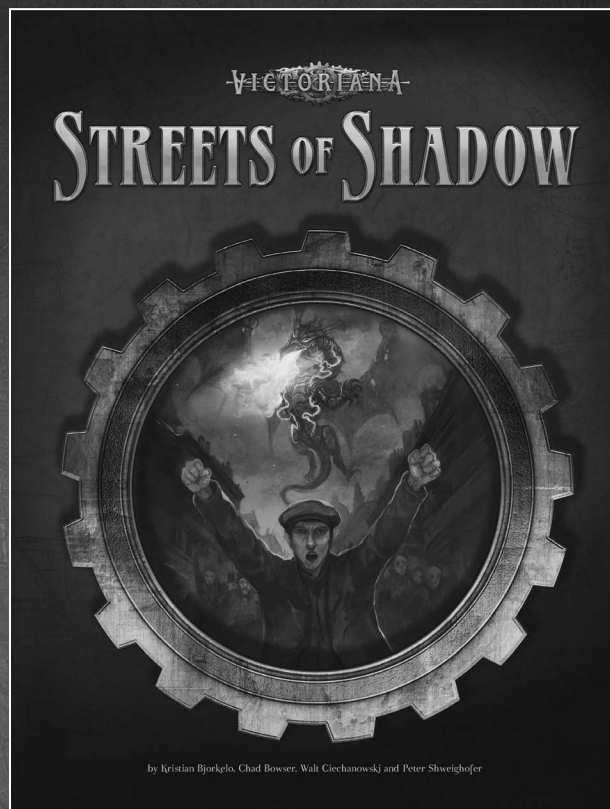


VICTORIANA

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