

BIS TORQUATA

A Fabula for *FVLMINATA* in Four Scenes

Written by Jason E. Roberts and Michael S. Miller

Illustrated by Eric Lofgren

Bis Torquata or “Twice Adorned with the Torc” is suitable for beginning to intermediate personae. While it is designed to be a sequel to the events in *The Pepper Merchant* (see pp. 182-191 in the core *FVLMINATA* rulebook), *Bis Torquata* can be played as a stand-alone adventure or easily adapted into your ongoing campaign. During the course of the fabula, the personae will be exposed to various aspects of the Imperium and Roman society including the legions, auxiliary cavalry, the province of Hispania Tarraconensis, *veneficae*, chariot racing, gold mining and the overall Roman military strategy, especially the concept of divide and conquer.

While the title of the fabula refers to the largest auxiliary cavalry unit stationed in Hispania Tarraconensis, many of the plot elements and

personae in this fabula are based on two sources: the true story of the rebellion of Sertorius in 674 AUC (80 BC) and the Japanese film *Jigokumon*. Sertorius, an Equestrian military officer and onetime mercenary leader in Mauretania, took command of Hispania by invitation of the Lusitani and anti-Sullan Roman exiles. Successive military defeats lost him the confidence of his followers and he was finally assassinated. *Jigokumon* or “Gate of Hell” is set in 12th century Japan and tells the story of a samurai, Moritoh, who falls in love with a married woman. If (or once) you have seen the film, you will notice certain similarities with *Bis Torquata*, such as escorting a carriage from a burning fortress, the betrayal of a brother and a staged horse race.



© 1985 A. Bereznay

TARRACONENSIS

The events of Bis Torquata transpire in the northwest region of the Imperial province of Hispania Tarraconensis, specifically in the vicinity of the legionary fortress at Legio (Leon). Tarraconensis is one of the most prosperous provinces of the Imperium. The northwest corner, that is the region north of the Durus (Douro) River, is important to the Imperial mining industry, producing excellent quantities of iron, copper, gold and silver, primary reasons why Rome originally sought to conquer the province. It took over 200 years for Rome to conquer the entire Hispanian peninsula. To this day, its natives are considered formidable warriors (the shape of the gladius is a Hispanian invention).

While most of Tarraconensis is rich, urban and Romanized, the northwest is a stark contrast; there are few populous cities and tribal organization perseveres along with native cultures and languages. Hispania also retains a reputation for insurrection: the most recalcitrant tribes have been known to engage in intense outbreaks of rebellion followed by long periods of seething discontent.

All of Hispania is guarded by 10,500 troops – one legion (5,500), one cavalry wing (1,000) and eight auxiliary cohorts (500 each). Like most Roman legions, the VII Legion Gemina has a long and proud history. In 820 AUC (AD 68), Galba formed the VII Legion Hispana from local Hispanian citizens, where it acquired its original nickname “Galbiana”. It participated in the civil wars of 821 AUC (AD 69), following Galba to Rome and then to Carnuntum in the province of Pannonia. After

Galba’s death, the legion wisely sided with Vespasian. In 822 AUC (AD 70), after it suffered serious losses at the battle of Cremona, it merged with the remaining members of the rebellious I Legion Germanica, hence the name “Twin” [*Gemina*]. For courage in the ensuing Germanian campaigns, the legion gained its current nickname “Lucky” [*Felix*]. In 826 AUC (AD 74), the VII Legion Gemina was posted at its permanent base in Legio in Hispania Tarraconensis.

Since Tarraconensis’ only boundaries are the sea, the VII Gemina’s mission statement has remained constant for close to two hundred years: control the native Hispanians, protect the precious metal mines northwest of Legio and, in the event that Mauri or Numidian nomads make trouble in the Mauretanian provinces, halt and crush the invaders. The soldiers of the VII Gemina have repelled raiding armies three times, most recently in 964 AUC (AD 212). In 994 AUC (AD 242), the legion successfully pacified rebel Hispanians with a brilliant siege of the city of Scallabis.

Legio is the site of the legion’s permanent fort [*hiberna*], a 50-acre compound surrounded by fortifications. Vexillations guard each of the precious metal mines to the north with a garrison. The Pistrix *decuria* is special though – its purpose is to act as advance scouts, spies and commandos.

Between Asturica Augusta and Legio, is a 12-acre encampment garrisoned by a 1,000 strong [*milliaria*] cavalry wing called the *ala Hispanorum Asturum bis torquata*. The cavalry is recruited from the Astures, one of the Celtic tribes native to this region of Tarraconensis. Hispanians produce many excellent horsemen, as the horse figures prominently in traditional Hispanian culture and was worshipped in ancient times. The history of

fine Hispanian cavalry in the military stretches back to the days of Hannibal. Hispania is rich in wild horses, prized for their beauty and speed; many horses for the circus are raised here.

Eight 500-strong auxiliary cohorts, the *I-VIII Cohortes Hispanorum Scutata*, guard the cities of Tarraconensis, such as Gigia, and the northern seacoast [*ora maritima*]. The auxiliary troops are mainly composed of non-citizens, and are therefore forbidden from using fulminata-based weaponry. They are generally armed with gladius, shield, spear and chain armor.

THE PLAYERS

[*Dramatis Personae*]

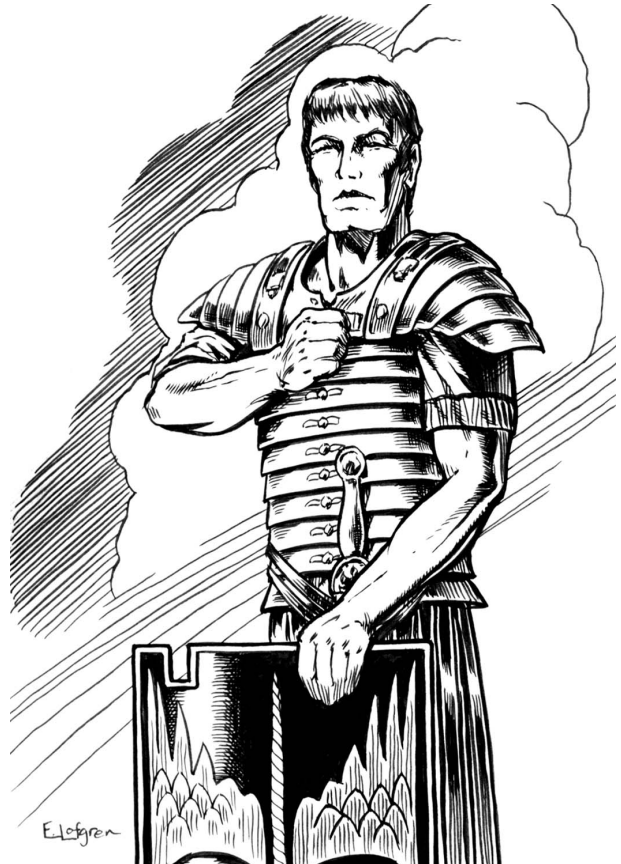
This fabula assumes that the party is comprised of six to eight members of the special Pistrix detachment [*decuria peregrina*] from the VII Legion Gemina. As a GameMaster, feel free to use your own personae. Six of the personae templates can be found in the core *FVLMINATA* rulebook:

Persona	Occupation	Page
Ferax	Deputy Centurion	184
Rufus	Chief Engineer	134
Valens	Weapons Officer	159
Epizelus	Field Surgeon	110
Ulpia	Intelligence Officer	34

An additional three members of the Pistrix detachment are Metellus, Gavrus and Florius; the templates for these personae are detailed in the next two pages.

GameMaster personae important to the fabula are Sertorius, the cavalry commander (see p. 10); Mariurrika, his lover and witch-priestess (see p. 9); and Azenari, a Vascones bandit leader (see p. 8).

Other personae play supporting roles in the fabula: Camilla Macrina, daughter of the military governor of Hispania Tarraconensis; Flavinia, a widow and fish merchant [*piscatorix*], sister of Bassus and Carus; L. Flavinus Bassus, centurion of the VII Gemina, brother of Carus and Flavinia; M. Flavinus Carus, assistant fish merchant in Gigia, brother of Bassus and Flavinia; and C. Liburnius Felix, Equestrian overseer of the largest gold mine in Tarraconensis.



METELLUS

Rank: Plebeian

Occupation: Standard Bearer [*Vexillarius*]

Attributes: I 9, A 11, P 11, V 11

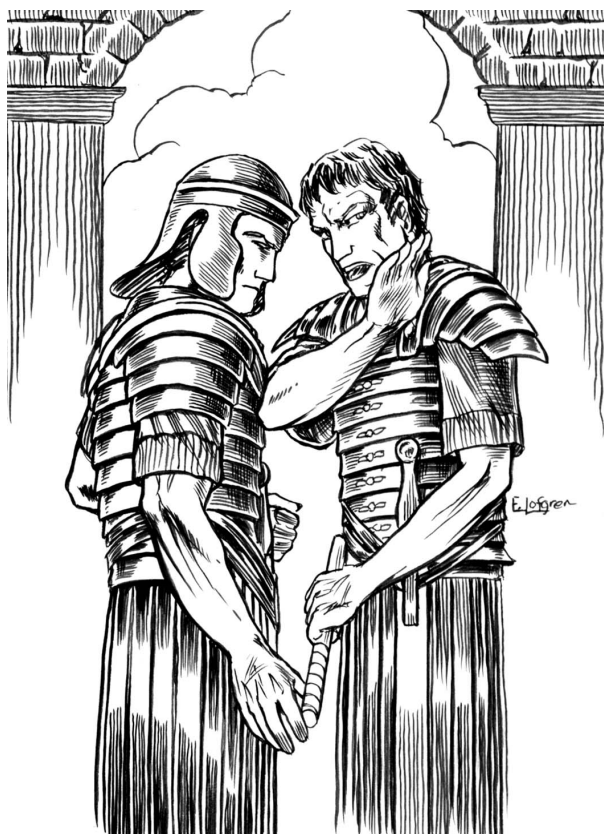
Humors: X2 (Fazed), S1 (Lively)

MP: 0, **WP:** 11/22, **HP:** 3

Patron: Iuppiter

Skills: *Chariot 6, *City 3, *Command 4, *Interrogate 3, Dagger 3, Gladius 5, Guard 3, Pilum 5, Customs (Plebeian) 2, Horse 3, Language (Greek) 2, Language (Latin) 3, Move (Jump) 2, Move (March) 2, Strategy 2, Tormentum 2

Background: Publius Milonius Metellus is the fifth generation of his family to serve in the legions. All have served loyally, having either retired at the end of their service, or giving their blood for the glory of Rome. Not only that, but each generation has achieved a greater renown than the one before it. Metellus is devoted to filling his place in this great chain of military tradition, and has set his sights on surpassing his father's rank of deputy centurion [optio]. His hard work in the VII Legion Gemina has already secured this promising young man a post as *vexillarius*, matching that of his grandfather. Confident that he is on the right track to fulfilling his destiny, Metellus has begun looking for a wife. Perhaps a nice, local girl to mother the next generation of legionaries...



GAVRUS

Rank: Plebeian

Occupation: Watchword Officer [*Tesserarius*]

Attributes: I 13, A 9, P 12, V 8

Humors: M 3 (Avaricious)

MP: 0, **WP:** 8/16, **HP:** 3

Patron: Venus

Skills: *Groom 2, *Harmony 6, *Seduce 3, Customs (Plebeian) 2, City 2, Diplomacy 3, Rhetoric 3, Gladius 2, Guard 2, Pilum 2, Move (Jump) 2, Move (Climb) 2, Trick 4, Philosophy 1, Scribe 4, Horse 2, Code 4, Language (Greek) 3, Language (Latin) 2

Background: A sickly child, Marcus Cornelius Gavrus compensated by developing a sharp mind and quick tongue. Growing up in a rough neighborhood of Sparta honed his ability to talk his way out of potentially violent situations. But even his glib turns of phrase could not secure Gavrus the money to become a trader. Showing no talent in following his father's career of blacksmithing, Gavrus joined the Legions. He has benefitted greatly from his training as a watchword officer, using his quick wits in the service of Rome. Gavrus knows he will never be a great enough warrior to go far in the military, but hopes that the colleges of magic might hold promise for him.



FLORIUS

Rank: Plebeian

Occupation: Gunner [*Tormentarius*]

Attributes: I 8, A 10, P 9, V 15

Humors: M2 (Gloomy), F1 (Indifferent)

MP: 0, **WP:** 14/28, **HP:** 3

Patron: Volcanus

Skills: *Machines 5, *Metals 6, *Tormentum 6, Customs (Plebeian) 3, Dice 4, Move (Jump) 2, Move (March) 3, Thief 2, City 2, Box 3, Gladius 2, Pilum 4, Guard 2, Wrestle 5, Language (Latin) 2

Background: Gaius Florius Tertius has always been the biggest and the strongest. His father was a gladiator who earned his freedom, but was later suspected of purposely losing several bouts to aid an Equestrian bettor. Though never formally accused, his reputation never recovered. Seeking a new life, he left Rome with his family and moved to Carthago Nova, where the arena is small, and could not pay much for a trainer of gladiators. Florius and his brothers grew up in grinding poverty. By the time Florius reached manhood, he had amassed a huge gambling debt. When his creditors pressured him to follow his father's path into the arena, he fled Hispania and joined the legions. A skilled gunner, Florius' huge frame enables him to handle the huge balls used in tormenta as easily as other personae toy with their pilum bullets.

PROLOGUE [*Prologus*]

The following passage should be read aloud to the personae. If the personae have not just completed *The Pepper Merchant*, some editing will be necessary.

It is February 1, 1000 AUC (AD 248). Your party, the valiant members of the special Pistrix detachment [*decuria peregrina*] of the VII Legion Gemina, have traveled from Rome to Tarraco by ship and then from Tarraco to Legio, the sight of your legion's permanent fortress [*hiberna*] in Hispania Tarraconensis. At Tarraco, you said farewell to Pertinax, the legionary tribune, and his wife Camilla. They thanked you again for your brave deeds in Ostia. They took a private coach – a much more luxurious form of travel than a double-time legionary march.

The coastal area of Tarraconensis was as hectic as you remembered, even for the short days of winter. However, as you entered the northern mountainous regions, you began to notice hostile glances and whispered curses from the local populace. As you reach the gates of the fort, even the legionaries are on edge. Old comrades in arms give you an occasional grunt, nod or a routine salute. Many grumble of having been swindled by usually honest locals. Others complain of local merchants who have been late in making vial deliveries.

Noting the strangeness, you report to your centurion, Flavinus Bassus. When you mention your observations he laughs at you, asking, "How can a drab winter in Tarraconensis possibly compare to the spectacles of Rome? The supply shortages are true, though. Many local merchants have been harassed by bandits, evidently of the Vascones tribe. That's what puzzles me. If these reports are accurate, why are the Vascones this far west? The Medullius and Vinsius mountains are the ancestral homes of the Astures and Cantabri. What could unite such disparate tribes? ... But you must be tired after such a long march. I suppose I don't need to put you back on watch duty right away." He chuckles.

"Your orders are to get a good night's sleep. I'll give you a full briefing on the bandit problem in the morning and you can tell me the news from Rome." As you head to your quarters, you fear that bandit threat might be worse than Bassus suggested. Many legionaries are cutting white bandages from their old clothes. Within minutes of reaching your quarters, you fall into a deep sleep.

If running this adventure in a setting where time is of the essence (like a convention), it is best to cut directly to Scene One. If session time is not a factor, the players can learn a bit about what has been going on in Tarraconensis in their absence, such as the fact that a number of local merchants have been late with their deliveries of supplies to the legion, blaming bandit activity. Note that the legionaries cutting bandages are the rebels (they're preparing their white armbands). They know that

the revolt is tonight and will try to downplay the importance of the strangeness to lull the players into a false sense of security. In fact, the players at this point may incorrectly assume that the adventure will truly begin with tomorrow's briefing on the local bandit problem.

SCENE ONE – FIRE IN THE FORT [*Incendium*]

Scene Goals

- ♦ To introduce the players to the primary obstacle: a united native uprising with Roman sympathizers
- ♦ To provide the players with a concrete goal: escorting Camilla to safety in Gigia
- ♦ To allow the players to take small steps toward overcoming the primary obstacle: destroying the legion's fulminata; battling the cavalry and native warriors
- ♦ To lead the players to the next scene: exposing Flavinus Carus as a traitor and the capture of the personae

Event One: Rebellion

After settling down to sleep, the personae awaken to the familiar sounds of warfare - pilum shots and metal ringing on metal. The smoke and the heat from the raging fire will be immediately sensed. The personae will also hear galloping horses and the screams of soldiers as they die from gladius and pilum wounds. When they emerge from their barracks, they will realize that most of the fort is ablaze – in fact the entire southern end is engulfed, leaving only the north gate free from the inferno. Legionaries are fighting legionaries. One side has white scarves tied around their sword-arms. The auxiliary cavalry (obviously away from their own encampment) wear white scarves. Also among the attacking force are members of at least four different local tribes who are supposedly blood-enemies of each other.

Flavinus Bassus, his face stained by blood and smoke, rushes over to the personae. He is not wearing a white scarf.

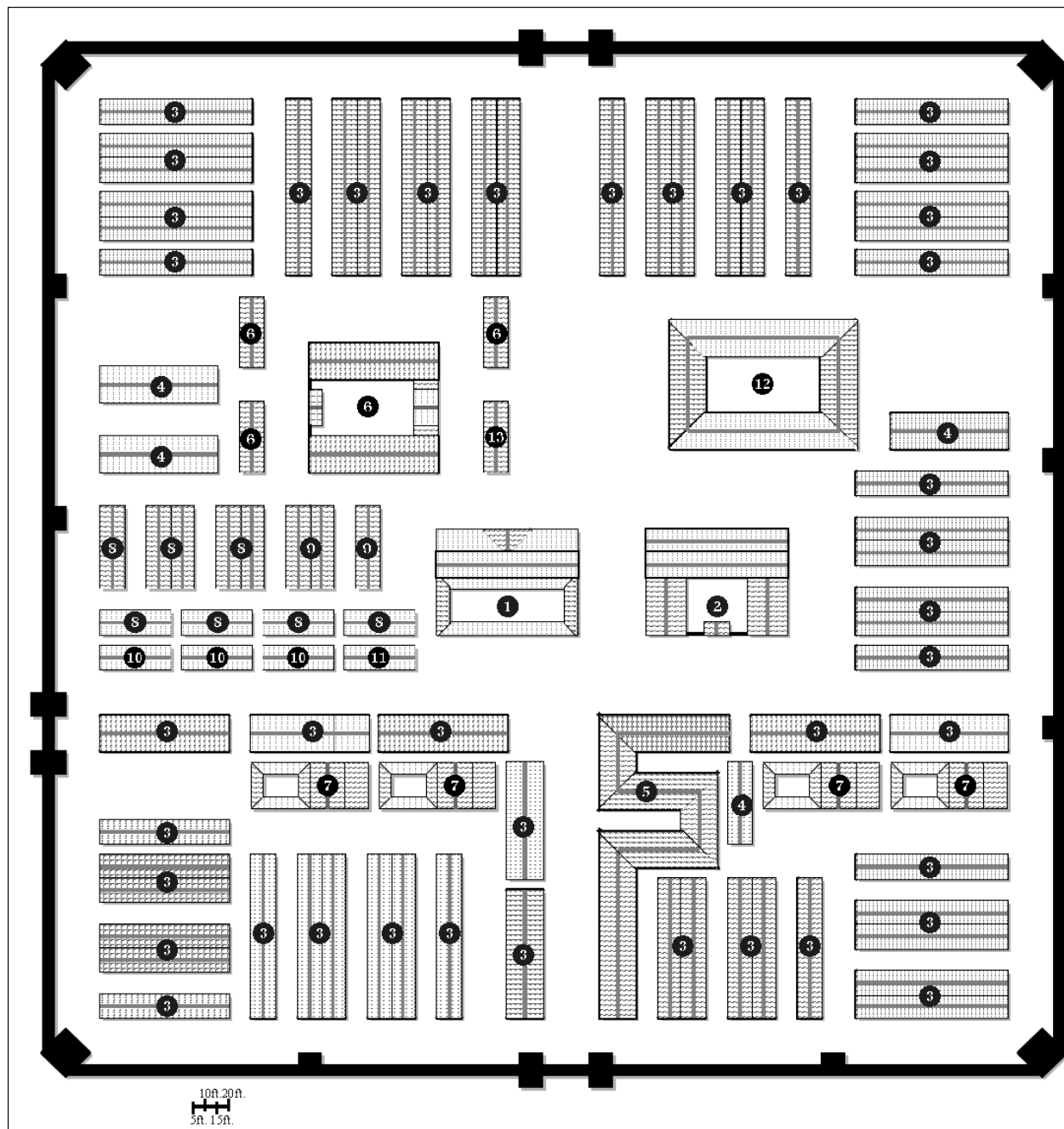
"Ferox, it's Sertorius, the cavalry commander. He's mutinied, leading the local Hispanians in an attack on the fort. He has significant support among the legion as well. That's how they knew the watchwords. They're heading for the armory and the fulminata, they know

that they won't last long without an ample supply. Valens, the rest of the fulminatus officers are on our side or dead. Thank the gods for that at least. That's not the worst of it. Pertinax is dead; stabbed in his own bed. We rescued the lady Macrina, but she needs to be escorted to a safe place away from here until we can bundle her off to her father. My sister Flavinia will take you to her home in Gigia on the coast. She should be able to hide you and the lady there while we plan our next move. I will destroy the stores of fulminata."

An elaborately decorated carriage [*reda*] with a legionary driver pulls over. Inside are a weeping

Camilla, covered in blood, and a frightened Flavinia. An examination of Camilla will show that she is unhurt. Flavinia, as the key supplier of the legion's fish needs, was in the camp overnight having just made her monthly delivery of salted fish and her own special blend of fish sauce [*garum*].

The legionary driver will join Bassus as he heads off to the armory [*volcanula*]; as they leave, he adds "Don't worry about the VII's eagle. It's in 'a safe place'".





After Bassus leaves and the legionaries are prepared to head for the north gate, a cavalry squadron [*turma*] armed with sabers [*spathae*] and scale armor [*lorica squamata*] will purposely wheel their horses to intercept and attack the personae:

Decurion

Attributes: I 10, A 11, P 10, V 11

Skills: Command 3, Gladius 4, Horse 5

3-5 Cavalrymen

Attributes: I 9, A 11, P 10, V 12

Skills: Gladius 3, Horse 4

The players may insist on splitting up so that they can destroy the fulminata supply and escort the women to safety. If that is the case, the demolitions group will face the cavalry squadron with Bassus and the other legionary outside the armory. The group in the carriage may proceed immediately to *Event Three*.

Event Two: Duty

After defeating the cavalry squadron and before leaving the encampment, the personae will see that Bassus has killed many men outside the *volcanula*, but is shot in the back while fetching an oil lamp to ignite the powder. Now it's in the players' hands how to avenge their centurion and stop the rebels from obtaining the fulminata:

3-5 Auxiliary Infantrymen

Attributes: I 8, A 13, P 9, V 11

Skills: Gladius 4, Spear 5

Remind the personae that the fulminata casks are not only numerous, but they are heavy and will slow them down. More rebels will attack until the personae are overwhelmed or blow up the armory. Anyone within 30 yards of the explosion will take Dmg: P4 from nails and splinters. If the combat at the armory takes too long, skip to *Event Four* immediately.

Event Three: Ambush

After destroying the fulminata stores (ideally), the personae will most likely proceed at breakneck speed towards the north gate of the fort. Before they reach the gate, rebel legionaries hiding on the rooftops with pila will ambush the personae:

4 Legionaries

Attributes: I 9, A 12, P 8, V 13

Skills: Gladius 4, Pilum 4

This presents a difficult combat situation for the persona: how to take out the rooftop snipers while protecting the noncombatants in the coach for pilum fire will rip straight through. The legionaries will attempt to withdraw if the battle begins to turn against them; they are prepared to handle a few combat-weary stragglers, not a veteran legionary vexillation. If the personae are captured here, proceed to **Scene Two**.



AZENARI

Rank: Foreigner

Occupation: Bandit Leader [*Latro*]

Attributes: I 10, A 13, P 5, V 14

Humors: X2 (Violent)

MP: 0, **WP:** 14/28, **HP:** 3

Patron: Diana

Skills: *Forest 5, *Snare 6, *Spear 4, *Track 5, Box 4, Command 3, Customs (Tribal) 4, Dagger 4, Farm 2, Gladius 4, Horse 4, Language (Latin) 1, Language (Vascones) 4, Move (Climb) 3, Move (Jump) 3, Myth 3

Background: Azenari or "The Fox" was a Vascones tribal chieftain and lover of Mariurrika, but now is Sertorius' right-hand man. He looks forward to governing with an iron fist in the new kingdom of Iturmendi. He is doubly anxious to prove his might against weak, effeminate, Roman legionaries.

Event Four: Betrayal

Once all the personae have exited the fort and regrouped, read the following passage:

After a hellish night of riding through the hostile countryside, the screams of your fallen comrades still echoing in your ears, dawn finds you at the outskirts of Gigia. Your hopes that this might have been a localized uprising wither as you see rows of new banners flying from nearly every building in sight. They all bear the symbol of the white doe, common to the mythology of all the local tribes, and often used as a rallying point against Rome. Unsure of how many armed rebels might be wandering the streets, you wisely hide your blood-smeared armor and slink through the shortening shadows to Flavinia's *domus*. When you arrive, a white banner flutters above the door.

When they arrive, Flavinia's younger brother Carus will welcome them in hurriedly. He will react stoically to news about his brother's death. He will claim that he is flying the banner of the white doe to avoid being singled out as a Roman loyalist – he will scoff at any attempt to take the banners down, citing a danger to life and property. Carus will order his slaves to prepare food and wine. The players will have time to do perform Medicine and Chirurgy as needed. When the personae have settled down and have begun to make new plans, Carus will spring the trap – Sertorius' lieutenant Azenari and a contingent of thirty Hispanian warriors will surround the house and the personae. Carus will revel in the new state of affairs, bragging about his appointment as chief administrator of Gigia in the new kingdom of Iturmendi. He will defile the memory of his brother and laugh at the foolishness of his sister – "Now the Flavinus family will achieve true glory." Azenari will promise not to harm Camilla if the personae surrender peacefully and hand over their weapons. If they do surrender, he will call them weaklings. As they are being taken away, Azenari curses at one of his thugs, calling him a "stupid Astures cur", a clue to the intertribal rivalries that still exist despite the unity encouraged under the leadership of Sertorius.

Despite the overwhelming odds against them, players always hate to surrender. If the personae begin a fight, play out the combat and eventually all will be reduced to unconsciousness or death. If pressed for time, start the combat and slowly introduce the fact that the food and wine Carus gave them was drugged. It knocks everyone out within a couple of turns.

SCENE TWO – PRISONERS OF SERTORIUS [*Captivi*]

Scene Goals

- ♦ To expose the players to the heart of the primary obstacle: the cavalry commander Sertorius and his witch-lover, Mariurrika.
- ♦ To show the players the potential weaknesses of the primary obstacle: Sertorius' madness and the existence of intertribal rivalries

Event One: Revels

As the personae near the auxiliary cavalry camp, they will observe that the cavalry is engaged in the *Hippika Gymnasia*, a set of cavalry sports intended to show off expert riding and mounted combat skills. Next to the training field, a crude circus has been constructed out of piled rocks. The *spina* is decorated with the crucified forms of several centurions—including Flavinius Bassus. A makeshift royal box has been set up with a new standard of white doe fluttering in the cold breeze. Behind it are the severed heads of legionaries mounted on posts, with their gladii slung underneath. Sitting in the stands is the Vascones witch priestess, Mariurrika. To her left are *decuriones* of local Roman towns, Vascones and Astures nobility bedecked in finery – including the traitor Flavinius Carus. To her right are bound and gagged citizens, looking tortured – including the overseer of the Imperial gold mine, Liburnius.

Mariurrika, protected by Azenari and other guards, will purposely walk over to gloat over the captured personae:

"Behold, the once mighty Romans, brought down by the excesses of your rotten society. One of your own has betrayed you and he is mine now, body and spirit...nothing can turn him from me, just as nothing can return Iturmendi to Rome's foul hands. The lady's blood shall make a pleasing sacrifice to Mari, a fitting beginning to a glorious future without the presence of corrupt Rome."

Pointing to a player who hasn't had much to do, she notes, "You're a fine specimen, aren't you? If you're good, I'll make you our camp's catamite or perhaps the stake dummy for *spatha* practice!"



MARIURIKKA

Rank: Foreigner

Occupation: Witch Priestess of Mari [*Sorgina*]

Attributes: I 12, A 10, P 6, V 14

Humors: S 2 (Lusty), X 1 (Confident)

MP: 14, **WP:** 14/28, **HP:** 3

Patron: Ceres

Skills: *Forage 4, *Pharmakon 6, Command 3, Dagger 3, Forest 4, Groom 4, Harmony 5, Language (Latin) 3, Language (Vascones) 3, Magic 6, Metals 3, Myth 3, Philter 6, Seduce 6

Spells: Call of the Basajaun (O), Erensuge's Breath (O), Spirit of Intxitxu (+1)

Background: Mariurrika is a witch priestess [*sorgina*] of Mari, the earth and sky goddess of the Vascones. Like her goddess, she is tall, exotic and beautiful. She runs a golden comb through her black lustrous hair, a habit she acquired when she noticed that it incited lust in men. She has recently won over the heart of the Roman cavalry commander, Sertorius. Mariurrika hopes that through his charisma and her potent magics the Hispanian rebellion will be inclusive of all local tribes and, in the end, successful. *This persona was built using 60 skill points to reflect her experience.*



SERTORIUS

Rank: Equestrian

Occupation: Cavalry Commander
[*Praefectus Alae*]

Attributes: I 10 (11), A 13 (14), P 7 (8), V 12 (13)

Humors: S2 (Lusty) X1 (Unfocused)

MP: 0, **WP:** 12/24, **HP:** 3

Patron: Diana

Skills: *Bow 4, *Forest 5, *Spear 5, *Track 5, Chariot 4, Command 6, Customs (Patrician) 3, Gladius 5, Horse 6, Knowledge (Hispania) 4, Language (Astures) 3, Language (Greek) 2, Language (Latin) 4, Language (Vascones) 2, Move (Jump) 3, Move (March) 3, Pilum 4, Rhetoric 8, Strategy 3

Background: Quintus Sertorius Pulcher is the commander of the cavalry wing called the *ala Hispanorum Asturum bis torquata*. A vision of a white doe has prompted him to rebel against Roman rule, gaining widespread support among the native population because of his bravery and skill in exploiting local religious beliefs. He has formed the independent Kingdom of Iturmendi with a counter-senate consisting of tribal chiefs and local Romanized Hispanian leaders. Sertorius, addled by drugs supplied by his lover Mariurrika, believes he has divine support. *This persona was built using 75 skill points to reflect his experience.*

Event Two: Enmity

Have the personae roll against raw *Intelligentia* (Difficulty: +2). Read the following passage to those who succeed:

Watching the cavalry demonstration are representatives of the various tribes. These are not the warriors, but women, the young, the injured and the old. Every so often, one group will drift a bit too close to another, and a shouting match begins. Occasionally, it escalates into old men pushing one another. Inevitably, one of the legionaries with a white armband rushes over to settle matters. He speaks forcefully, pointing to the banners of the white doe and to Sertorius. The tribal people bow reverently toward Sertorius and withdraw to their own sections of the camp, still casting glances of contempt at one another.

Event Three: Madness

Sertorius will ride his horse before the players, whip off his sports helmet, quaff the contents of a small vial and gaze longingly into the eyes of Mariurrika. Pumped full of his vitality drug, he is nervous, but sharp. His statement will be delivered quickly and intensely, but the message is clearly insane:

"It was a vision from the gods - a white doe - that showed me my destiny. Hispanian independence - the new kingdom of Iturmendi for the long suffering inhabitants of northern Hispania - the Gallaeci, the Astures, the Vaccae, the Cantabri, the Aravaci, the Berones, the Varduli and of course the Vascones. Soon my message of independence will resonate throughout the whole province and we shall rise up and force Rome to recognize our will and power. The Imperium is a sick ship, with ripped sails, broken masts and a leaking hull. Do the musty old senators worry about us? I've been to Rome. I've seen its magnificence. But while Rome prospers and wallows in decadence, spending our blood money, who cares about the people of this province? I do and I always will. The Imperium squeezes us and forces us to trample their native cultures. They are like the raw metal from these rich mines, the might of Imperium wants nothing more than to stamp them into Roman coins, each alike, each with the beatific, wise face of the Emperor. Come, friends. There is no need to shuffle along with the doomed. Join our divine cause."

The fact that Sertorius is a madman will discourage most personae from joining the rebellion. If they accept (or lie and claim loyalty), Sertorius will probably believe them, but will have the vision in **Scene Three** all the same.

SCENE THREE – THE CHARIOT RACE

[*Missus*]

Scene Goals

- ♦ To allow the players to act against the primary obstacle: defeat or kill Sertorius and Mariurrika
- ♦ To allow the players to further undermine the primary obstacle: sowing dissention among the rival tribes

Event One: Vision

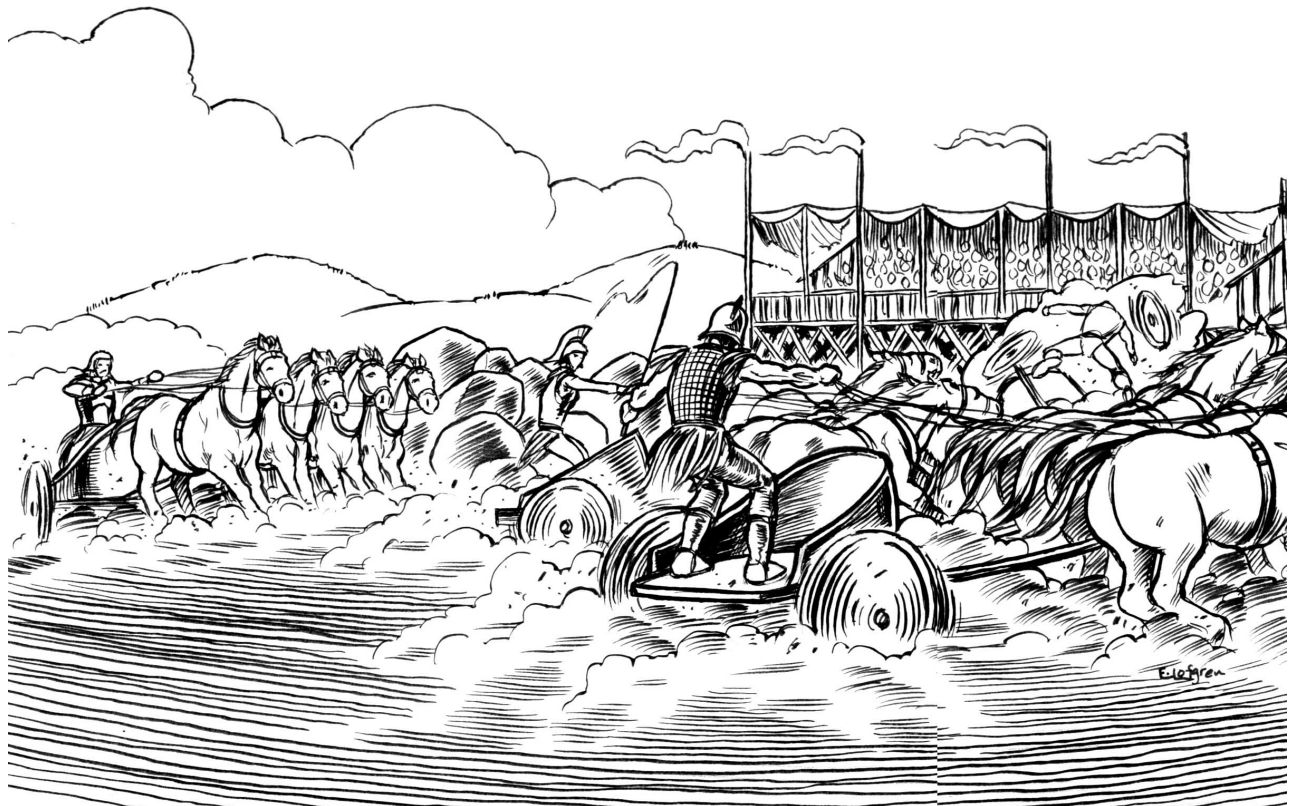
Sertorius will disregard the decision made by the personae. Whether the personae reject or accept Sertorius' offer, Mariurrika will convince her lover that Camilla must die because her Roman blood is too pure: "The whore of Rome must be cleansed from the land. Rome's own fire shall burn her taint from the pristine hills of Iturmendi."

Sertorius' insanity is full-fledged; he takes a long draught from his potion and stares into the mountains for several seconds while all present go

silent. He speaks, alternating between a monotone and manic raving:

"I have seen another vision. The great goddess Mari gliding over the mountaintops in her chariot, four fiery steeds guiding her to the realm of the goddess of the sun, Ekhi. Mari has shown me how to settle these matters here on earth. You and I are both stained by the traces of Roman blood in our veins. She demands a contest to know which of us is to be cleansed. We shall have a chariot race! The two turning posts shall be fashioned in the likeness of the Medullius and Vindius mountains. I and one of my officers shall compete against two of you. The winner will rule the kingdom. If I win, all is the same. If you win, you will fully realize the great destiny the gods have in store for you; I have no doubt you will lead my people into freedom."

Immediately, Mariurrika and Azenari will both object. Azenari will beg to be allowed to torture the brave legionaries before the other Roman loyalists, anticipating that their screams for mercy might move the stubborn to accept their new rulers. Mariurrika will promise to make the Romans' blood into a new philter that will make Sertorius invincible. Sertorius will stand firm that he will see this through as his vision has commanded.



Event Two: Struggle

Sertorius' men will begin to clear the makeshift circus of debris, mark out the chalk finish line [*linea alba*], and yoke cavalry horses to flimsy two-horse chariots [*bigae*]. Sertorius chooses one of his decurions (I: 10, A: 11, P: 10, V: 11; Chariot 3, Dagger 3, Gladius 4, Horse 6) as his teammate.

The players should choose the two personae who will have the highest (A + Chariot) Attribute + Skill combination. If the personae do not have the Chariot skill, the Horse skill may be used instead, but a Difficulty -3 will apply.

Sertorius will claim the chariot yoked to his prize steed, "Beautiful" [*Calimorphus*] as the left trace

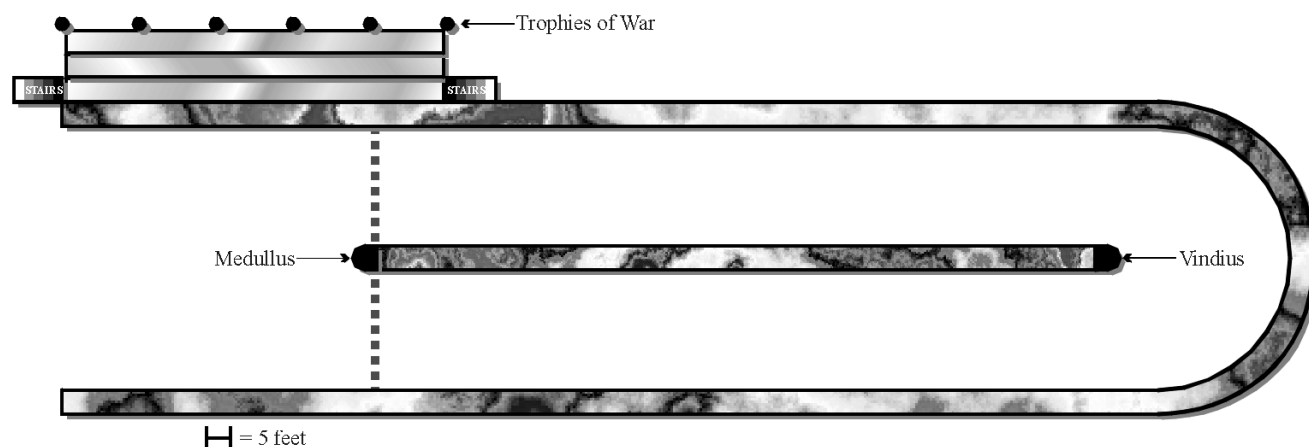
horse (Racing Attribute 13). He will then offer a choice among the remaining three chariots. While all of the chariots are more or less the same, the horses are not, and therefore have different Racing Attributes):

Team 2 – Racing Attribute 11

Team 3 – Racing Attribute 9

Team 4 – Racing Attribute 10

Personae who succeed on a (I + Horse) will be able to tell the qualitative difference among the three teams.



At this point, the GameMaster should run a standard chariot race (see p. 125 in the core *FVLMINATA* rulebook) starting with the drawing of starting positions. While Sertorius will not cheat in any way, Mariurrika will use her magic to confound the personae in the chariot race, especially with the spell Spirit of Intxitxu (e.g. toppling the crucifixes in the *spina* into the path of oncoming chariots or pushing the chariots themselves).

Given the relative inexperience of the racing teams and the planned sabotage by Mariurrika, the race will most likely not last seven laps. Crashes in the turns are almost a foregone conclusion.

Event Three: Chaos

During the race, the personae who are not racing will be seated bound in the stands with Azenari guarding them. The personae's captured weapons (including pila) and those of fallen Romans are hung on the posts with their heads.

The captive players should be able to taunt the brutish Azenari into releasing them (I + Trick), cut their ropes on a splinter of wood (A + Dagger or A + Snare) or break them with raw Vis (Difficulty -2). An altercation with Azenari will initiate a general brawl in the stands. Otherwise, the GM should

make it clear to the personae when a dramatic event occurs on the circus track that the spectators are completely caught up with the action. Attempts to sneak away (A + Stealth) or jump and run (V + Move (Jump)) may succeed. The various tribal representatives will attempt to stop the characters, unless they have been or soon set upon one another (P + Rhetoric or I + Trick). If Sertorius is killed or severely injured during the race, the fragile confederation of Hispanian tribes will fall apart; the banners of the white doe will fall into the mud symbolizing that Iturmendi is no more.

SCENE FOUR – THE GOLD MINE [*Fodina Aureae*]

Scene Goals

- ♦ To allow the players to achieve a new concrete goal: rescue Camilla from the gold mine before it explodes
- ♦ To allow the players to further undermine the primary obstacle: securing the gold deposits and the fulminata supply from the rebels

Event One: Warning

Following the race, Liburnius, the overseer of the gold mine will free himself and rush over to the legionaries:

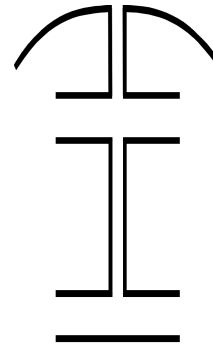
“Legionaries. I know where Lady Camilla is. Sertorius must have chained Camilla inside the shafts of my gold mine in the Medullius mountains. A 'safe place' is the code word used by military leaders to designate the mines. If that is true, you must hurry to the mines.

The Imperial Treasury has become impatient with the diminishing yields of my mines. My slave miners are close to tapping every visible glittering vein. We know there is more gold, but inaccessible to us. Engineers from Rome have been secretly planning to destroy the mountain to get to new veins of gold. We have slowly been amassing a special blend of fulminata called *Ostes* or “The Thruster”, named after a type of earthquake that registers only one violent shock. With last week's shipment, we acquired enough to destroy the hills themselves, giving us access to untold new veins of riches. We have been placing the charges all week. Knowing Sertorius, he would have needed this gold to finance his new kingdom. Let's hope that a Astures or Vascones patrol hasn't lit the fuses yet. No one would survive such a blast.”

Guarding the road to the mine (nearly a mile from it) are both Astures and Vascones patrols, arguing over who will guard this road. News of Sertorius' death will initially turn them against the players, but this can rather easily (P + Rhetoric or I + Trick) diverted into aggression against each other.

The entrance to the mine is at the top of a hill; the personae may use the platform and winch to lower themselves into the mine. The GM may opt to give the players more time to solve the dilemma if the personae attempt to shimmy down the ropes (A + Move (Climb)) instead. A persona who fails the climbing Action roll will take B4 damage from the fall will upset the fulminata fuse (see *Event Three*).

A vertical shaft leads down hundreds of feet, expanding into two levels or horizontal galleries as shown in the following diagram:



Again, the personae may opt to split up with one group rescuing Camilla (Event Two) and the other tackling the explosives (Event Three) and the other team

Event Two: Rescue

On the upper gallery, mostly tapped out, Sertorius' men have jammed a metal grate in the tunnel, trapping Camilla inside. The grate is wedged in very solidly. Any attempt to dislodge it will require a Vis feat with a Difficulty of -2. The level of success is also important. The group needs a cumulative total of 7 on the Special Effect Multiplier Table. This means one persona who rolls a Vultures can succeed, or if six personae work together rolling Senios. Successes may accumulate over multiple game turns.

Event Three: Dilemma

On the lower level, the shafts have been packed with casks of *Ostes* fulminata. In the center, directly under the shaft, a fulminata fuse has been lit. The fuse is a rectangular spiral trough made of fired clay, one inch wide and four inches high, filled with an inch-deep layer of fulminata. The design is meant to allow ample time to get away from the blast and to prevent any sparks from prematurely igniting the powder. The personae will only be able to lower the platform within one foot of touching the fuse. The diagram on the following page is a top-down look at the fuse on the lower level.

Each asterisk represents the location of the fulminata spark; the fuse, starting with the position marked by the largest asterisk, progresses one space clockwise until it reaches the fulminata stores behind the boulders. Thus, the players will normally have 14 turns to solve the dilemma. The gray square indicates the location and size of the platform in the shaft.

Extinguishing the fuse is a problem: the cheap clay is brittle and the flame itself burns very hot

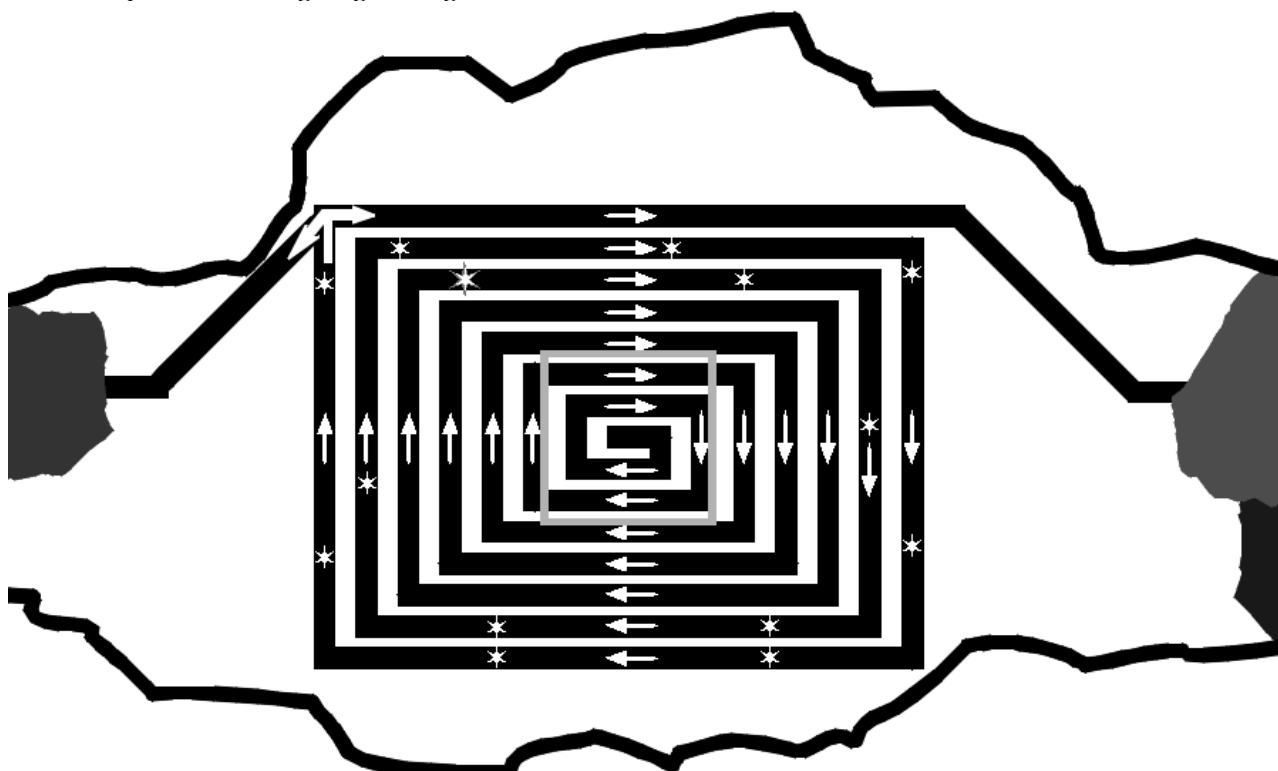
(Dmg: 2 using the Special Effect Multiplier). If a weapon, foot or falling object upsets the trough, fulminata will spill and sparks will fly in a random direction, possibly advancing the burning fuse. Perhaps the best option is wetting the fulminata at a strategic location or devising a way to modify the fuse (I + Metals or Machines). It is left as an exercise for the players to solve the conundrum in a creative way that enhances the fabula.

Event Four: Victory

After the personae rescue Camilla, she tells them that she spied something large and gold in one of

the mining baskets as she was forced into the mine (this is the *aquila* or eagle standard referenced by Bassus in beginning). With its eagle restored, the VII Gemina stands a better chance of avoiding dissolution. Perhaps the brave acts of the legionaries will convince the Emperor to reform the legion with loyal troops.

Each persona should receive 1 free skill point and one point in either Chariot, Horse, Knowledge (Hispania), Machines or Metals.



APPENDIX: SORGINA MAGIC

Mariurrika has not only learned some of the ancient spells of the Vascones tribe, but she has a rare gift for mixing potions. Mariurrika has two signature philters. *Sardonius* is a special preparation of the root extract of the deadly buttercup. It is a quick-acting poison that causes a contraction of the lower jaw, forcing a smile on the poisoned victim, followed by death spasms. Vascones warriors keep a small vial on their person in the event of capture (sort of a Hispanian "cyanide pill"). The aim is to horrify the enemy with an eager willingness to die for what they believe. If a persona is not swallowing willingly,

sardonius is a base Dmg: 8 poison. Roll on the Effect Table using the Special Effect Modifier to determine the amount of Wound Points sustained. *Belila* ("New Moon" in the Vascones tongue) is a vitality drug that enhances a persona's four Attributes ratings by one point each. Each dose lasts three to four hours. The side effect is that it randomly disrupts Humor ratings. Every time a new dose is quaffed, roll one talus for each Humor to determine the excess:

Tali Roll	Excess
1	+1
3	+3
4	+2
6	0

Remember that an excess of Flegmaticus will cancel out an excess of Cholericus and vice versa. The same is true for Melancholicus and Sanguinicus. Recalculate the Temperaments for a persona to determine his or her new behavioral patterns. If the Humors balance, it does not confer any Humor point bonus.

The following spells are native to the Vascones people and part of their ancient heritage. For game play, a *sorgina* follows the *venefica* magic rules regarding the use of Vis and Pietas.

Attarabi's Blessing

Type: Fate **Power:** 3
Origin: Vascones **Complexity:** 3
Ritual: Pray to Attarabi, the benign son of the goddess Mari while placing your open palm on your (or the subject's) face.
Effect: The affected persona regains a spent Humor Point.

Call of the Basajaun

Type: Summon **Power:** 4
Origin: Vascones **Complexity:** 6
Ritual: When near a forest of ancient trees, kneel on freshly uncovered earth, cover your head with matted leaves and twigs. Lean back and cry out

BASAJAUN as if you were a wolf howling at the moon for a lost mate.

Effect: Summons a Basajaun (I: 6, A: 12, P: 8, V: 15), an uncommonly strong shaggy being who worked the land before the arrival of man. The Basajaun smells like rotting logs and is infested with fungus, worms and bugs. It is very good at feats of raw Vis. If commanded to fight, they brawl clumsily with a Box skill rating of 2.

Erensuge's Breath

Type: Bind **Power:** 2
Origin: Vascones **Complexity:** 2
Ritual: Eat leopard's bane and fresh mint wrapped in a snakeskin. State your suggestion into the face of the subject, aspirating heavily.
Effect: The sweet breath of the *sorgina* will addle the subject's senses so that he or she follows the suggested action on the next game turn.

Flower of the Sun [Ekhi Lorea]

Type: Transform **Power:** 2
Origin: Vascones **Complexity:** 4
Ritual: Spread a special mixture of laurel, ash leaves and dried thistle heads around the perimeter of a building. Light the barrier and the mystic flames will protect all those inside from evil spirits.



Effect: Any creature not born of the earth is prevented from entering the structure for six game turns.

Lamia

Type: Bind

Power: 2

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: 3

Ritual: Comb hair with a golden implement and gaze at the subject with wide unblinking eyes. Begin speaking and your subject will be convinced of your opinions.

Effect: Bewitches the subject of the spell for five game turns as if the *sorgina* had a temporary Rhetoric skill rating of 10.

Light of the Dead

Type: Transform

Power: 2

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: 4

Ritual: Raise both palms to the moon and call upon Ilargia, goddess of the moon and queen of the dead.

Effect: Creates a zone of darkness in the surrounding area for five game turns. All personae in the area suffer a -2 penalty to all actions requiring sight.

Mother Earth [Lur]

Type: Bind

Power: 2

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: 4

Ritual: Stir spring water with a hazel rod. Call upon Lur, goddess of the earth and source of energy for all that is alive.

Effect: Cures wound points for one individual as if the *sorgina* had a temporary Pharmakon skill rating of 10.

Spirit of Intxitxu

Type: Summon

Power: 3

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: 5

Ritual: Pray to Intxitxu, the great invisible being who built the ancient stone circles in Hispania. Point to the object you wish moved and close your eyes. The spirit will do as you command and disappear.

Effect: The *sorgina* summons an unseen spirit [*daimon*] that will move or topple any one large object, such as a *domus*, an obelisk or elephant. The spirit will ignore anything man-sized or smaller.

Spirit of Irelu

Type: Summon

Power: 4

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: -

Ritual: Draw circle around the desired area with a piece of flint. Sprinkle barley near the center of the circle. At the appropriate time, pound fists on the

ground to wake earth-shaking Irelu, the underground spirit that seizes the unaware.

Effect: Opens up the earth within the scribed circle, accompanied by a horrible wailing sound similar to a tempest. All objects in the circle take crushing damage (Dmg: B4) using the Special Effect Modifier.

Ward of Beigorri

Type: Transform

Power: 1

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: 3

Ritual: Draw the symbol of Beigorri, the red bull who guards the house of Mari, in the air before you. Whisper his secret name three times and you will be protected.

Effect: All forms of Damage are reduced by an additional two points.

Wolf [Otso]

Type: Transform

Power: 4

Origin: Vascones

Complexity: -

Ritual: Prepare a wolf's paw charm stuffed with lupine and powdered moonstone. Hang the charm around your neck and pray to Ilargia, queen of the moon.

Effect: Allows the *sorgina* to shape change into a wolf (I: *, A: 14, P: *, V: 13) for one full day, with the ability to attack with one Bite 3 (Dmg: E3) and two Claws 3 (Dmg: E2). The transformation from human to wolf (or the reverse) takes three game turns.

* The *sorgina* retains her Intelligentia and Pietas.