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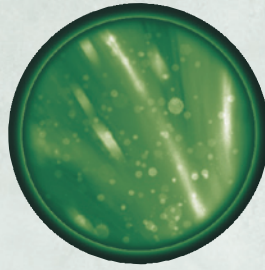
HELLFROST

•CITIES OF MAGIC•



•CITY BOOK 2•





CITY BOOK 2

CITIES OF MAGIC

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IMPERIAL CITY



● HISTORY ●

In days of yore, Imperial City was a truly massive metropolis, boasting a population of over 250,000 souls. Designed in concentric circles separated by high walls and canals, it was the center of Imperial power and the beating heart of a mighty trading nation.

The outermost, and largest, part of the city was known as the Silver Quarter, so called because it sat behind a wall covered with a veneer of pure silver. Within its walls lived the great majority of the population. Contained within this was the smaller Gold Quarter, the home of the middle-classes and named because its walls were coated in gold. The smallest area, at the very heart of the city, was the Palace Quarter, home to Emperors and the Empire's elite families. Beyond the city walls lay the Green Quarter, wherein lay the homes of the farmers who fed the immense population.

The city was designed in such a way that there was no swift route to the heart. Ships wishing to enter the city sailed up a canal from the sea (at what is now Port) and into the Silver Quarter. Those who wished to enter the Gold Quarter were forced to sail halfway around the city before they reached the entrance gates. The few mariners who needed to sail to the Palace Quarter were first required to sail halfway around the Gold Quarter. Along this mighty canal flowed trade goods from across the ever-expanding Empire.

From the Palace Quarter, laws were issued that affected much of the lower western Hearthlands, most of the central Hearthlands, and a small part of the eastern Low Winterlands. The lives of millions of people, many of whom had no idea where Imperial City lay, were dictated by the often insane and nearly always self-centered whims of the Anari Emperors.

Looking back, modern citizens believe the city was guilty of many sins—hubris, arrogance, cruelty, and vanity being just the tip of the iceberg. While what was to

come was horrific, many hold that it was ultimately a fate the city deserved.

On the second Monandaeg of Wulfmonan in the year -14, known locally as the Day of Blue Fire, a vast flight of Hellfrost dragons descended from the clouds, diving toward the unprepared population. Tactically, attacking Alantaris Isle made little sense so early in the conflict. The dragons could unleash destruction, but ground forces were still required to eradicate the survivors, and they were still advancing southward toward the Icebarrier. Strategically, though, it was a prime target—removing the head of the Anari Empire would cripple local forces and sow chaos.

A few hours after their arrival, the dragons departed, their assigned task complete. In their wake they left a city in ruins, its population reduced to a few thousand bewildered and shocked citizens, its immense walls piles of rubble that clogged the canals, its buildings naught but smoldering ruins.

Thanks to the combined firepower of the Convocation of Elementalists, only one part survived virtually unscathed—the Imperial Palace. This was little comfort for the Emperor, though, whose heart gave out as he watched his fleeing family torn apart by a Hellfrost dragon.

At first, the surviving nobles tried to assert their authority over the survivors, each striving to have himself crowned Emperor. The people, bolstered by refugees from other communities seeking refuge and shelter in a city they thought impregnable, openly rebelled. The noble families who survived the turmoil were stripped of their powers, their authority to be handed to a council of elected officials. The Empire was dead, but Imperial City would live on.

Crippled by a shortage of manpower, disease, starvation, and the loss of many natural resources to orcs, rebuilding took the best part of two centuries. It was decided that only the Palace Quarter would be rebuilt. The vast field of rubble that stretched around it for miles would be left as a monument to the fallen and a reminder of the folly of man and the anger of the gods.

RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Imperial City.

* **Attitude to Wealth:** The citizens of Imperial City enjoy their luxuries. While they are of a mindset that such things should be earned through hard work rather than acquired through shortcuts, they are not beyond public displays of wealth—such activity shows that one is a hard worker. Outside of work, citizens wear good quality clothes and as much jewelry as they can afford.

Characters wearing tailored clothing in Imperial City receive a +2 Charisma modifier in place of the usual +1 bonus, but only when dealing with lower- and middle-class citizens.

Eventually, with the new city in place and the outlying communities growing larger and more productive, the citizens began to look beyond the confines of their island—not, as in the past, as conquerors, but as traders. With its economy still fragile and no trading partners to speak of, the decision was taken to leave the canals as they were. Instead, a new settlement (Port) was erected on the coast and a road carved through to Imperial City.

Few modern inhabitants would dare claim that Imperial City is anything but a pale shadow of its former glory, but few care. Once the home of the Emperors, Imperial City is now the home of a free and determined people.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

While the citizens of Imperial City consider themselves equal members of society, they are divided into social classes by wealth, influence, and occupation, as laid out in the *Hellfrost Atlas*.

Unless one is part of a direct chain of command, such as a councilor ordering a subordinate within his office to perform a task, it is considered impolite at best and offensive at worst to start giving orders or expecting better treatment based purely on social status. A lowly laborer may live in a hovel, earn a pittance, and barely know his letters, but a rich, educated merchant with friends in high places holds no authority over him (unless he is his employer, of course).

That said, there are certain people whom most citizens would obey without much question. Among them are the arkhwisards and the city councilors. In other cases a polite request, coupled with a small gratuity to show thanks, is often enough to get something done.

With no true nobles, social status is, of course, very fluid. A bad deal may see a wealthy merchant reduced to the status of a peasant, while an apprentice craftsman can, through hard work, rise to become a respected master of his craft. As the people of Imperial City say, “The only person who holds you back from success is

yourself.” Of course, most people born to peasant stock remain peasants all their life, but there is always the chance, and hope, of social promotion.

For many visitors, especially those who come from feudal societies where inferiors know their place and superiors expect to be shown deference, this can be something of a culture shock.

Rather than using terms such as “my lord” or “peasant” when referring to others, the accepted title when addressing others, regardless of their social status, is simply “citizen.”

GOVERNMENT

As well as governing Alantaris Isle, the Council of Citizens is responsible for overseeing the smooth running of Imperial City.

ELECTIONS

Not every citizen is legally entitled to stand for election. First, a candidate must be a recognized adult citizen of Alantaris Isle. In general, this requires one to be resident for three consecutive years, to have duly paid all taxes, and have no criminal record.

Given that councilors are expected to live in Imperial City, most all have been natives of the capital. Additionally, being a councilor comes with only a small stipend, enough to ensure a very frugal existence. To that end, most candidates come from the upper classes. Gender, age, and race are no barriers to standing for office, though local prejudices may thwart one being elected.

No mage of any sort may ever stand for public office, though the four senior arkhwisards of the Convocation have automatic seats out of respect for their order’s help in the past. Clerics are under no such proscription, and indeed they are often popular candidates for certain roles because of their narrow focus.

The position of Chairman has additional restrictions. He may not be a cleric or mage, nor may he belong to any other organization. This, in theory, ensures that his mind is fixed firmly on the needs of the citizens and not third-party interests.

For the purposes of elections, the Council is divided into four Quarters. Each year, one of the Quarters is disbanded and new elections held. The last elections, held in early 499 IR, were for the Ertha Quarter. Thus, those next year will be for the Fyr Quarter. Any free citizen of adult age is entitled to cast a vote during the election.

Of the 17 seats open for election, 13 are for major seats and four for minor seats. Despite being equal in terms of voting power, councilors holding a position in charge of a bureaucratic office receive the title High Councilor to denote their additional responsibility. Such persons may be addressed by the general title or the specific title of their office. Those without a specific office are known simply as Councilor.

MEETINGS

The Council meets a minimum of three times a week. Matters concerning the island are discussed on Heafod-daeg and issues regarding governing the city on Healf-daeg. More often than not, the four ruling members of the Convocation, who have automatic seats, do not bother to attend meetings convened to discuss city affairs unless they wish to address the Council on some matter or their presence has been requested. In the latter instance, they are honor-bound to attend (or at least send a proxy).

On Endedaeg, the public is permitted to attend and voice concerns directly to the Council. Citizens who wish to address the Council directly must register with the Clerc the week before they wish to speak and give the specific nature of their one question. This gives the councilors time to discuss the topic and prepare a response, if such is required.

By law, a minimum of nine elected councilors must be present for any vote to be legal. In addition, the Chairman must be present and every Quarter must have at least one member in attendance. Many citizens pay a close eye on who attends regular meetings. Councilors, who fail to fulfill their civic duty, excluding the arkh-wisards, may face public haranguing and will certainly have a hard time being reelected.

MEMBERS

Listed below are the titles, names, gender, race, and age of each councilor as of 499 IR. They are listed alphabetically by the appropriate Quarter, rather than by order of importance.

Chairman (no Quarter): Maintaining order of the Council, overseeing Council meetings, ensuring matters are fairly debated; *Incumbent:* Clarissa ap-Foilan (female, Anari, 50)

EIR QUARTER

By tradition, Eir Quarter councilors are concerned with matters of law enforcement and the judiciary. Although the elections are open and fair, the cult of Hothar has long dominated these seats.

Arkhwisard: Urit Biscali (male, Anari, 57)

Coroner: Civil law; *Incumbent:* Scale of Justice Hanesine ap-Aalard (female, Anari, 45)

Mareschal: Commander of the city garrison; *Incumbent:* Burcan ap-Huon (male, Anari, 38)

Shirereeve: Criminal law; *Incumbent:* Scale of Justice Pepin ap-Pepin (male, Anari, 60)

Councilor without office: *Incumbent:* Freddo (male, engro, 51)

ERTHA QUARTER

The Ertha Quarter has long been made up of councilors responsible primarily for the city infrastructure. They

have little authority outside the walls of Imperial City, though they may be approached by other communities for advice.

Arkhwisard: Galwinith Treelimb (female, hearth elf, 319)

Fyrman: Fire prevention and response; *Incumbent:* Axeille ap-Sauson (male, Anari, 66)

Sewiereman: Sewer and road maintenance; *Incumbent:* Anseir ap-Namus (female, Anari, 64)

Wallman: City wall maintenance; *Incumbent:* Eye of the Vigilant Danain Broadback (male, Anari, 47)

Councilor without office: *Incumbent:* Poette ap-Nicholas (female, Anari, 55)

FYR QUARTER

The councilors of the Fyr Quarter have powers that encompass the island as a whole.

Arkhwisard: Davina ap-Meredith (female, Anari, 62)

Clerc: Maintaining the records; *Incumbent:* Heloise Ink-Fingers (female, Anari, 71)

Conestable: Training of militia across the island; *Incumbent:* Sergeant of Spears Eadric Inesunu (male, Saxa, 30) (see **Geirvaldr** in *Matters of Faith*)

Treasurer: The mint, state treasury, and city treasury; *Incumbent:* Thosa ap-Hardouin (male, Anari, 38)

Councilor without office: *Incumbent:* Oeric Wihtvigsunu (male, Saxa, 26)

WAETER QUARTER

"Money comes and money goes," as the old adage tells us. With that in mind, the Waeter Quarter holds responsibility for matters governing trade and taxation.

Arkhwisard: Marmaduke Bentwhistle (male, engro, 52)

Taxer: Assessment and collection of taxes; *Incumbent:* Gobert ap-Elie (male, Anari, 63)

Tradaman: Foreign trade; *Incumbent:* Profiteer Lynn ap-Guinemant (female, Anari, 34)

Marchatman: The market and disputes between merchants; *Incumbent:* Corenus ap-Landri (male, Anari, 43)

Councilor without office: *Incumbent:* Isabelle ap-Gontier (female, Anari, 70)

LAW AND ORDER

Imperial City does not have a separate police force. Instead, maintaining law and order on a daily basis falls to the City Guard. Although the captain of the guard has daily authority over the entire guard and is responsible for assigning duties and the like, he answers to a civilian—the Mareschal.

Within the city, policing falls to one company of light infantry and one company of heavy infantry, each commanded by a company sergeant. The Mareschal also has the responsibility for ensuring the lifeline road to Port remains secure. To that end, a light cavalry company constantly patrols its length.

For the purposes of patrols, the day is divided into

three shifts—First (0600-1400), Second (1400-2000), and Third (2000-0600). During First and Second Shift, there are 30 soldiers from each company on patrol. At night, this increases to 40 soldiers per company. Depending on the mood in the city, patrols vary in size from squads of five soldiers to double-squads of ten soldiers.

Although not assigned to policing duties on a regular basis, the infantry can call upon the city's archers and artilleryists to bolster their strength in the event of a mass civil disturbance. In truly dire situations, the Council can recall other military companies, temporarily assigning them to police duties.

THE COURTS

While it respects the gods, Imperial City is a democracy. The cult of Hothar may dominate the Council when it comes to legal matters, but the courts are deemed to be a civil institution sworn to uphold equal justice to all, regardless of wealth or influence. No one is above the law. Heahwisards who commit a breach of Convocation law are duly judged by their peers, but those who commit a civil or criminal crime, as determined by city ordinance, must face a public trial.

All crimes are tried before a panel of four councilors. Leading them is either the Coroner or the Shirereeve, as appropriate. The Clerc is responsible for recording the events of the trial. The court is in session every Sunnan-daeg. Imperial City has no lawyers—court hearings are a matter of presenting witnesses and evidence, after which time the judges make their decision. A majority verdict is required to secure a conviction.

The Codex of the Peoples' Law, written after the destruction of the Empire, details crimes and punishments. No judge may alter the sentences described in that volume, though each entry allows him to impose a range of sentences based on the severity of the crime. More often than not, the mood of the people helps determine the punishment handed down.

Most crimes are punished with fines, confiscation of goods, public flogging, or a mixture of all three. In the case of fines, the guilty party may pay it off immediately or agree a payment schedule with the court. Failure to maintain payments is itself a civil crime. In such cases, the fine is increased and goods to that value are confiscated and sold at public auction.

Although they suffered as virtual slaves under the heel of the Emperors, state slavery is an acceptable punishment. Although forced to work for the state, criminals retain rights. They cannot be beaten, for instance, and must receive adequate food and water. Instead of sentencing individuals to a fixed period of time, criminals must work of a set amount of money. This is based on the nature of their work, but is typically that of a common laborer. Those who work hard may thus finish their sentence earlier than lazy individuals.

The death penalty, while open to judges for some crimes, is rarely imposed except in cases where councilors have been found guilty of corruption. When it is handed

down, the victim is hauled into the Rubble. There, he is forced to lay on his back and a wooden board is placed across his chest. Heavy stones are added until the victim is crushed to death. In most cases, the death penalty is commuted to eternal banishment, the original sentence to be carried out if the guilty party is found on Alantaris Isle at any point in the future.

THIEVES' GUILD

Imperial City has just a single thieves' guild—the Rubble Rats. The guildmaster has five lieutenants, each of whom controls part of the city's underworld. Simple burglary and protection rackets are the main sources of income, but the guild has a profitable if sporadic sideline in relics. Most of its finds are sold to members of the Convocation. Their biggest customer, though the guild is unaware of his identity, is Urit Biscali.

In a bid to curb crime against its members and property, both the Council and Convocation pays the guild a stipend to leave them alone. This is obviously not public knowledge.

EDUCATION

All children on Alantaris Isle aged between five and 12 are entitled to free education in Imperial City. Whether or not children attend is a matter for their parents—there are no boarding facilities, and the cost of rooms at an inn put accommodation beyond the reach of many from the provinces. Most natives of Imperial City only permit their children to study until the age of ten, after which they are expected to help earn their keep.

Teaching pupils rudimentary knowledge falls not to the cult of Hoenir, but to the Convocation. Although there is a specialized group of instructors, all elementalists are expected to devote time to helping educate the next generation. Mages native to Alantaris Isle deal with younger children, while those with more advanced knowledge, or knowledge of other lands, may serve as private tutors to rich families.

Although students attending the public school pay nothing toward their education, private tuition is chargeable. If the tutor is an elemental, the mage keeps 50% of the payment, with the rest going into Convocation coffers. The cult of Hoenir also provides tutoring services. Again, these are not free, though at least the cleric is entitled to retain 90% of his fee. A small portion of city taxes also goes into the public education system.

Advanced education outside of specific religious or arcane fields is handled by the cult of Hoenir. In partnership with the city, they teach any student prepared to spend two years in school rather than learning a trade or finding a job. Although free, and regardless of the future opportunities a good education brings, most families cannot afford to have their offspring sitting in classes when they could be earning a wage.

RELIGION

Imperial City's favored deities differ to that of Alantaris Isle in general.

Heading up the city's patron gods is Hothar. Having endured much hardship under the tyranny of the hereditary emperors, the people are now staunch supporters of justice for all. While few citizens take Hothar as patron, all offer him some form of worship. The cult enjoys the support of the people and is extremely vocal—if the Council isn't acting in the citizens' best interests, the cult of Hothar are quick to let them know.

Thunor, once worshipped in droves during the height of the Empire, has fallen from grace. In those dark days he was regarded as a savior, a means of releasing the people from slavery. Now that has been achieved, the city dwellers desire justice and order, but only so long as they continue to have a say in such matters.

The cult of Maera, while heavily supported by the Convocation, has few devoted worshippers among the common people. Prayers are offered in praise for the support shown the city by the Convocation during the dark days of the Blizzard War, but few citizens attend her temple with any regularity.

The four elemental gods—Ertha, Kenaz, Neorthe, and Thunor—are worshipped separately from Maera. Local belief, however, tells that they are her children.

Although Port is the trading center of Alantaris Isle, the cult of Var has reestablished itself as a relatively major player. Its influence is most felt on the Council with regard matters of trade. Under the cult's guidance, Alantaris Isle, and by default Imperial City, has prospered.

Every other deity, both benevolent and malevolent, has at least a handful of worshippers. Healers and herbalists continue to honor Eira; craftsmen working with metal or gems give praise to Ertha or Kenaz; the army offers sacrifices to Tiw; and thieves ask Nauthiz to guide their hand toward shiny objects.

Despite its large population, Imperial City has attracted only scant attention from the cult of Vali. His pestilential side is by far the strongest, for a city of this size boasts vast numbers of rats and cramped conditions make it an ideal breeding ground for disease. His corruption aspect, though, has had little success. Recalling the decadent days of imperial excess, Imperial City's citizens tend toward frugality over excess, and hard work has replaced the lust for easy wealth.

FESTIVALS

Hard work is one of the backbones of Imperial City's rise from the ashes. While every citizen is legally entitled to celebrate the high holy days of his patron deity, most attend work for at least half a day before turning their attention to the heavens. In terms of city-wide holidays, when much of the industry and shops are closed for business, there are just two.

OPTIONAL RULE: MONEY & EDUCATION

In general, Knowledge skills represent an understanding of a specific topic, but often with a wide range. For instance, Knowledge (Law) provides an understanding of all laws across Rassilon, as well as how different legal systems function. Unfortunately, Knowledge skills, unless required for an Edge, are often ignored in favor of skills such as Fighting, Healing, and Notice.

In game terms, many Knowledge skills can be explained away through lore picked up on the streets, listening to stories, an apprenticeship, advanced training through an organization, and even life experiences (not every Novice character is a young adult). For children born to money, advanced education is also something that can be purchased across much of Rassilon.

During character generation only, a character may spend 100 gs to purchase one die in a Knowledge skill (and only a Knowledge skill) that is equal to or lower than his Smarts. A die that would increase a Knowledge skill above his Smarts costs 250 gs. For instance, if Sven (Smarts d6) wanted to learn Knowledge (Religion) d4, he would pay 100 gs. Were his skill already at d6 through the use expenditure of skill points, an increase to d8 would cost him 250 gs.

In order to prevent a Noble or Rich character from purchasing dozens of Knowledge skills at d4, we suggest that each additional die doubles the previous cost. For instance, a second die would cost 200 gs (or 500 gs), while a third would be 400 gs (or 1,000 gs).

In some ways, the system is open to abuse. For instance, every heahwisard must be a Noble, which means he also has the Rich Edge automatically. Any heahwisard worth his salt spends a little money on Knowledge (Arcana) and probably Knowledge (Alchemy). These skills are useful in a variety of Edges, which gives the heahwisard an advantage over his peers. On the other side of the same coin, that is actually very realistic—heahwisards are born to wealth and their parents can afford the best tutors, especially in matters of magical education.

Whether the Gamemaster allows this rule as written or restricts it certain Knowledge skills (or even disallows it out of hand), is his choice—only the individual GM knows how this rule will be used or abused by his group.

Election Day is held on the third Sunnandaeg of Weremonan. Although voting is simply a matter of attending the nearest voting station and making a mark next to one's name in a register, citizens spend the day debating and socializing with friends, betting on the outcome of the election, and getting into minor scuffles with those

who choose to support a different candidate. Voting is open from dusk until dawn. As the night wears on, the locals, usually the worse for drink, gather in open spaces to hear the results of the election. The City Guard is on high alert this day, especially as the results are announced—more than one riot has broken out over the choice of councilors elected to office.

While the inhabitants of Imperial City would prefer to forget the catastrophic events of the Blizzard War, it is burned into their collective psyche. Each second Monandæg of Wulfmonan, the city grinds to a halt as citizens remember the destruction and suffering, and the death of their ancestors.

During the evening, the mood lightens as citizens remember that while it involved tremendous loss of life, the destruction of Imperial City freed them from the yolk of imperial tyranny. Effigies of the emperors of old are paraded through the streets to jeers and boos before being tossed onto bonfires.

In recent times, agitators and rabble-rousers unhappy with the decisions of the Council of Citizens have used the emotions of the crowds to stir up trouble. More often than not their influence leads to only minor problems, but every now and then their words strike a cord, leading to (usually) short-lived civil unrest.

MILITARY

Imperial City's garrison is drawn from the islands' military. While they might better serve elsewhere on the island, the Council of Citizens has decreed that the capital must be protected at all times. To that end, a force comprising one company of light infantry, one of heavy infantry, one of archers, one of artillerists, and one of light cavalry is stationed here.

On paper, the companies remain under the command of their respective captains. In practice, they answer to the captain of the city guard. He in turn is subordinate to the Mareschal. In order to prevent any captain getting too close to his troops, or the troops from getting ideas beyond their station, both are rotated every season.

Within Imperial City, the military serves in two separate roles—defense and policing. Defense, at least on a peacetime basis, falls to the archers and artillerists. Policing the streets and maintaining law and order is the duty of the infantry. The light cavalry is charged with patrolling the road between Imperial City and Port. Although there is little trouble, the road is an essential lifeline.

MILITIA

In addition to its five companies, Imperial City maintains a militia. On paper, the city is divided into four wards with imaginary lines extending from the Temple of the Four. Each ward is required to supply 100 men (or women) to assist in city defense in times of need.

For the most part, the militia is under the command

of the Conestable, the councilor responsible for their training. Should they be summoned to fight in defense of their homes, authority reverts to the Mareschal as head of the City Guard, with the Conestable acting as his commander in the field.

PRIVATE FORCES

City law does not prohibit individuals from hiring armed guards for the purposes of protecting persons, possessions, or property. While the Council has little to worry about with regard a citizen hiring enough muscle to overthrow the City Guard, there is a risk that one might employ sufficient guards to intimidate voters during elections. To that end, no individual or business, with the exception of temples, is permitted to have more than 20 private security staff on the payroll.

TRADE & TRIBUTE

Port may be the major harbor for goods entering or leaving Alantaris Isle, but Imperial City, as the center of civil power and the largest population center, is still the economic heart.

Of Alantaris Isle's major exports, only alchemical devices are actually manufactured in Imperial City. Some timber passes through, but only on its way to Port. Conversely, much of the nation's imports end up in the hands of the city's citizens and craftsmen.

This imbalance of exports against imports does not mean that the city runs at a trade deficit or has no exports worth noting. First, the entry in the *Gazetteer* lists only major exports, not every commodity that might be found for sale in bulk. Second, "exports" means exactly that—goods intended for sale at foreign markets. Many craftsmen produce goods that are sold locally through the market or shops, thus boosting the local economy, or are sold only to merchants whose wagons crisscross the island nation.

Given the island has no exports of manufactured goods, alchemical devices being the exception, it stands to reason that there is not an army of craftsmen devoted to one specific craft. As a major city with a high population, visitors can find all manner of craftsmen in Imperial City, just not in sufficient numbers to produce a large surplus of goods.

TAXES

With the exception of tolls, all taxes across Alantaris Isle are determined by the Council of Citizens. Natives and visitors to Imperial City can expect to pay the following taxes.

Duty: 2% of the value of goods being exported, 3% of the value of goods being imported. This tax applies to Alantaris Isle as a whole and are collected either at Port or the gates of Imperial City. Once the due tax is paid, merchants receive a receipt issued by the Clerc.

Hearth Tax: 1 ss per fireplace in the home (paid yearly).

Poll Tax: Every adult who wants to vote must pay 1 ss when they turn up at a voting station.

Property Tax: Citizens are not punished for working hard and earning a decent wage. Instead, they are charged 5% of the value of their property (paid yearly). A census is carried out every 10 years and the current value of property recorded on a central register.

The tax was originally intended to ensure that the limited space available within the Palace Quarter was not taken up by big houses with few occupants. It has proven very popular with the lower classes, whose dwellings are usually the smallest. Indeed, many families live in one or two rooms in a block of houses.

Tolls: 1 ss per person, 2 ss per mount or beast of burden, and 5 ss per cart per person traveling between Port and Imperial City. This helps maintain the vital road.

Wall Tax: 1 ss per household. This helps to fund the army and navy, and maintain Imperial City's fortifications (paid yearly).

MARKETS

Aside from the Rubble Market (see #9), Imperial City hosts markets only on the first Marketdaeg of each month except during Werremonan, when markets are held weekly. In place of the usual weekly market, citizens rely on shops for their daily needs. As a rule of thumb, businesses are open from dawn until dusk except when a religious high holy day causes the premises to shut.

ARCHITECTURE

Even on Alantaris Isle, citizens who have never visited the capital imagine wide avenues bordered by opulent palatial homes constructed of the finest stone. Once upon a time this was vaguely true, but Imperial City is often a big disappointment to those setting eyes on it for the first time, especially those who know it only through tales dating back to the imperial age.

Hemmed in by the Rubble, many buildings are nestled against each other to save space, resulting in long rows of houses broken only by tiny alleys. While there is plentiful stone lying around outside the city, wood is now the building material of choice. Aside from the main palace and a few other structures of great antiquity, such as the temple of Maera and the old baths, buildings are made from cut planks and topped steep, shingled roofs.

Even warehouses and granaries are partially built from wood—the lower level, roughly three feet high, is made of stone to safeguard against vermin and flooding. The upper part is then made of thick wood for security.

Even with the myth of stone structures dispelled, visitors still expect to see the grandest buildings adorned with extensive porticos supported by towering and ornately carved stone pillars. Even at the height of imperial power,

the Anari favored functional structures over elaborate ones. About the only nod toward architectural grandeur is the extensive use of archways rather than squared doorframes, a practice still continued to this day.

THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Imperial City base their working day on the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth. Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

Month	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Snaermonan	0719	1648	9h 29m
Frostmonan	0708	1717	10h 9m
Eostremonan	0636	1749	11h 13m
Plohmonan	0555	1816	12h 21m
Sowanmonan	0512	1844	13h 32m
Werremonan	0442	1910	14h 28m
Scerranmonan	0433	1928	14h 55m
Hegmonan	0446	1925	14h 39m
Haerfestmonan	0510	1859	13h 49m
Falmonan	0536	1818	12h 42m
Huntianmonan	0601	1733	11h 32m
Fogmonan	0631	1656	10h 25m
Wulfmonan	0701	1637	9h 36m

MAJOR LOCALES

While not a major center of industry, Imperial City is one of the largest settlements in Rassilon. In addition to the locales detailed below, all the major crafts are represented. Although it may require a Streetwise roll to glean the address of a particular business, the characters should have little difficulty finding a craftsman or ship.

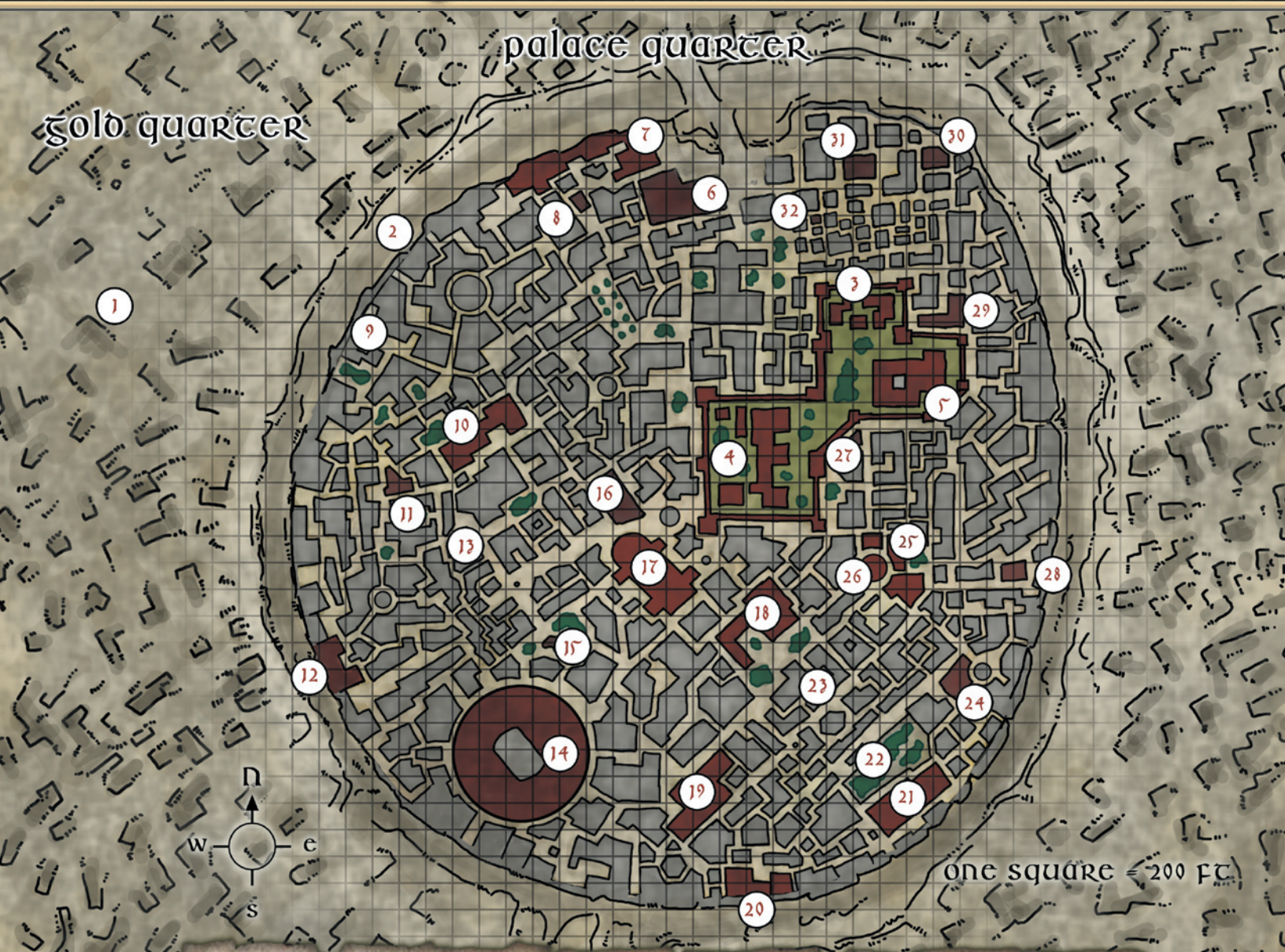
Attracting visitors from the outlying communities and foreign lands, inns and taverns are plentiful. The quality of furnishings, entertainment, and service varies immensely from downright disgusting to luxurious.

OUTSIDE THE CITY

1. THE RUBBLE

Step foot over the rubble-filled canal, which serves as the nearest thing the city has to an intact city wall, and one enters a chaotic sprawl of masonry and rubble. Although it has been picked over for centuries, the debris continues to attract tomb raiders and adventurers by the score, each convinced they will find a cellar packed full of ancient treasures. Perhaps some ancient cache does survive, but the Rubble stretches for two miles in every direction and in places is dozens of feet deep. Even with spells, the odds of finding anything of true value are remote.

Many monsters, perhaps the descendants of creatures



the imperial city

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. the rubble | 17. temple of the four |
| 2. the wall of old | 18. the arkhwisard's rest |
| 3. citizens' palace | 19. the ghost & tankard |
| 4. imperial palace | 20. helping hands |
| 5. imperial palace library | 21. the hall of banners |
| 6. military garrison | 22. allotments |
| 7. the dagger | 23. arcane alley |
| 8. misfits' barracks | 24. school |
| 9. the rubble market | 25. temple of eira |
| 10. the dragon's rest inn | 26. public baths |
| 11. the humped horse | 27. shrine to hochar |
| 12. the wall | 28. imperial banquet hall |
| 13. norn alley | 29. trade mission: aspiria |
| 14. the theater | 30. trade mission: chalcis |
| 15. the tooth | 31. trade mission: the magocracy |
| 16. temple of all faiths | 32. the full belly |

released from the theater or imperial menagerie during the Blizzard War, inhabit the dense ruins, posing a threat to locals and visitors alike.

2. THE CITY WALLS OF OLD

Countless stories tell of how the Anari emperors were so rich they constructed walls of silver and gold (solid in some legends, just plated in others) around their capital city. Even today, five centuries after the Blizzard War, people scavenge in the Rubble in the hope of finding a sliver of precious metal.

That no one has struck it rich is not surprising, for the stories of silver and gold walls are later inventions intended to cement the reputation of the emperors as truly decadent. The actual walls were built of limestone and yellow sandstone, monumental in size and decorated with vast murals, but just ordinary stone nonetheless.

INSIDE THE CITY

Unlike some other cities, Imperial City has no officially defined districts outside of the walled grounds of the palace. The nearest one gets are the militia wards, but they exist only in the minds of the Council, not in the daily lives of the inhabitants.

Before the Blizzard War, the Imperial Palace was surrounded by an outer wall that encompassed the Temple of the Four, the Arkhwisard's Rest, and the baths. The wall, already badly damaged, was finally torn down during the reconstruction of the city. Although what remains of the Imperial Palace is deemed to be just another part of the city and thus open to the public day and night, sentries guard the gates as a matter of course. Their role is more ceremonial than anything else, a reminder that the city is protected. Not that the average citizen needs a reminder—the last bastion should the city come under attack, the walls are manned by archers and artilleryists.

3. CITIZENS' PALACE

Once nothing more than a stable block (albeit one that could house 200 horses) of the Imperial Palace, the building is today home to the ruling council. The walls are original. Carved from marble blocks, they are a reminder to all visitors that the great wealth of the emperors could not protect them from the forces of darkness.

The council chamber is spartan, with only the marble walls betraying an excess of wealth. The lack of rich furnishings is a deliberate move, intended to show that the councilors are not tempted by the trappings of office. Even the great seal of Hothar, which is embedded in the floor, is made of wood.

The other buildings within the cluster of structures devoted to civic duties house the city armory, mint, and treasury, offices for the various departments essential to maintaining the city, and such like. The Chairman has a private suite of apartments in which to live and conduct business. Courts are held in the main council chamber.

4. IMPERIAL PALACE

Once home to the arrogant Anari emperors, the main structure of the Imperial Palace is now the headquarters of the Convocation of Elementalists. Concealed beyond the thick walls are offices and dormitories, laboratories and storerooms, classrooms and meeting rooms.

While the grounds of the former Imperial Palace are open to the public day and night, the palace proper is considered private. Only a small part is accessible to the public, though there are few visitors these days.

5. IMPERIAL PALACE LIBRARY

The greatest library in Rassilon resides within the former palace of the Anari emperors. It is now considered part of the Convocation of Elementalists.

Although it contains many specialist treatises on magic, it is open to the public between dawn and dusk every day except on high holy days of Hoenir and Maera. It contains a shrine to Hoenir in all his aspects, and to Maera, patron of the Convocation.

Often crowded (roll 2d6 x 10 for the number of patrons), it appears unguarded. Four of the patrons are actually elementalists, one from each school, and two are paladins of Hoenir. While they appear to be browsing books just like the true patrons, they are secretly monitoring activity within the library.

Rumors abound that the Convocation maintains a secret archive, inaccessible to the public. While this is treated with scoffs and derisory comments by the mages, it is true. Admission is restricted to senior clerics of Maera, the Norns, and Scaetha, and arkhwisards. Player character clerics must be disciples of the relevant deities, have the Noble Edge to represent their status, or be granted an equivalent rank to high priest in play to gain access. Of course, they must learn the secret archive even exists first.

Admission: Open to all at the rate of 5 gs per hour.

Specialties: The Anari, the Convocation, arcana, the cult of Maera, demons*, the Demongate Wars*, elementalism (* found only in the secret archive).

Investigation Rolls: +2 general, +4 for specialties. The library is well organized and the librarians are adept at finding books in record time. Investigation rolls here take only 1d4 hours.

6. MILITARY GARRISON

One of the largest detached buildings in Imperial City, the garrison houses all five companies of the City Guard. Although considered a single force under one captain, the various companies have different training regimes and specialties. There is also a certain amount of company rivalry—most it is friendly banter, but it spills over into brawls on occasion.

Inside, the two-story garrison is divided into five separate areas, each with its own barracks, mess hall, kitchen, laundry, workshops, armory, stores, offices, and the like. The cavalry's designated area also has a stable

and a veterinary. Certain facilities, such as the hospital and apothecary, are communal. Beneath the garrison is a small jail where prisoners awaiting trial are held.

7. THE DAGGER

The area northwest of the garrison is dominated by taverns and gambling halls, all competing for the soldiers' wages. The row of establishments, of which the Dagger is one small part, is known locally as Soldiers' Paradise. Aside from scuffles involving the soldiers, the area, while decidedly lower-class in tone, is relatively crime free due to the number of off-duty guards wandering around. It is also avoided by many locals.

Only an idiot starts a fight in this tavern, for it is the favorite haunt of the City Guard. Ironically, it is also a front for the thieves' guild. One of the empty tun casks (holds 256 gallons) in the basement is false—a trapdoor in the back of the cask leads through the wall to the main guild headquarters.

The tavern takes its name from an unusual game played using a throwing dagger. A large wheel is divided into colored segments, with each segment worth varying points based on its width. The wheel is mounted horizontally and spun. Each contestant has three throws. Whoever scores highest, wins the stake.

In game terms, participants simply make three Throwing rolls and add up the totals. This is their final score for the round. A typical game is best of five rounds.

8. MISFITS BARRACKS

Considered a necessary evil, the Misfits are nonetheless deemed a disruptive influence on the lives of regular soldiers. To that end, they have a separate barracks.

Given the dangerous and unpredictable nature of their work, the Misfits were granted a free hand in the sort of facilities they required to fulfill their obligations. In addition to the regular features one would expect, there is also a large drinking hall complete with gaming tables. Ladies of poor reputation also frequent the establishment after dusk.

By law, no ordinary soldier may enter the barracks unless delivering orders. This applies equally to the City Guard companies serving as constables. This is not to say the Misfits are a gang of criminals (though some are, of course). They tolerate fist fights and the like among members as a means of blowing off steam and settling disputes, but are quick to police more serious affrays.

Unbeknownst to the more honest members, there is a secret room beneath the building (reachable only by the sewers and a secret stairwell) where the thieves' guild hides its plunder. In return, the guild donates a small percentage of its profits to the company.

9. THE RUBBLE MARKET

The traders who operate in this shanty market cater to the poor and the curious. Their wares are scavenged

from the Rubble and the sewers. Most of it is worthless junk, but occasionally an item of true value (mainly historical, but sometimes financial) appears on a stall. The Convocation makes regular sweeps, confiscating anything magical. They don't always get to the items first, though—the Reliquary has several agents in the capital.

Having spent daylight hours scouring the Rubble, traders can be found here most evenings, hawking their goods by candlelight. On Marketdaeg, the market is open from dawn until midnight.

No trader has a license to sell wares. However, given that most are on the breadline, if not below it, the Council turns a blind eye. Adventurers looking to sell goods here have a +2 bonus to Streetwise rolls but receive less coin—just 15% with a success and 30% with a raise.

10. THE DRAGON'S REST INN

One of the more famous inns in Imperial City, the Dragon's Rest is named for the huge dragon wing bone sticking up from the floor. According to legend, an elementalist severed a Hellfrost dragon's wing during the attack on the city. The story goes on that the beast crashed into the nearby wall, demolishing a sizeable portion. Some citizens claim the dragon bone is actually from a whale.

Over the years, the innkeeper, Jehan ap-Gontier, has allowed famous heroes (80+ Glory) to carve their names on the wing bone to commemorate their visit. Jehan has brewed his own ale, which he proudly calls Dragon's Blood. It isn't particularly good, and is more commonly known by another name referring to a warm liquid produced by most creatures with full bladders.

11. THE HUMPED HORSE

This unusual watering hole sells only coffee, an expensive import from Al-Shirkuh. It is owned and run by Jamal ibn Mustafa. A junior member of a mercantile expedition, he never intended to emigrate from the Free Emirate States. Unfortunately, his ship sailed without him, leaving him stranded with just a bag of coffee beans.

Three years later, Jamal runs a popular and prosperous business, has married an Anari, and considers himself a citizen of Alantaris Isle. The name of the coffeehouse comes from its sign, which depicts a camel, a creature very few natives of the isle have ever seen.

12. THE WALL

One of many taverns in the bustling city, the Wall is actually hollowed out from the ruins of a section of the Palace Quarter's outer wall.

The owner, Ulfwyne Fivepints, a female Saxa who can carry five foaming mugs of ale in each hand, is actually a Reliquis, a field agent of the Reliquary. She keeps an eye on the Convocation, many of whose members drink here, and listens for rumors of relics uncovered in the many ruins across the island. When such tales reach her

ears she leaves the Wall in the hands of her staff and disappears, often for weeks on end. Her disappearances have not gone unnoticed and questions are now being asked in high circles.

13. NORN ALLEY

The residents of Imperial City are not preoccupied with fate, but the memory of the Blizzard War is strong and folk like to know what perils may be lurking around life's corners. Norn Alley is a local nickname—the street is properly named Water Street.

Along its length is a small shrine to the Norns, a larger one to Hoárri (minor goddess of divination), and dozens of fortune-tellers. For a few silver scields, one can learn one's fate through the runes, cards, bumps on one's head, the lines on one's palm, the movement of the stars, patterns formed by dripping wax, animal entrails, and interpretation of dreams.

While several of the fortune-tellers are clerics of Hoárri, none are clerics of the Norns—the cult of fate does not sell information concerning the future to any one who walks in off the street. Most of the fortune-tellers lack any true powers of divination. The cult of Hoárri tolerates their existence with a wry smile—if it is a person's fate to consult a fraud, then who are they to argue.

14. THE THEATER

Dominating the southwest corner of the city is the open-air 5,000-seat theater. In days of yore, the emperors would hold bloody gladiatorial events within the terraced stone bowl, pitting armed slaves against each other or wild beasts for the amusement of the masses.

Times have changed, and while the theater still rings out with cheers and jeers, it is now for plays and concerts, and public addresses made by the Council. From dawn until dusk on appropriate Marketdaegs, the floor of the theater becomes the site of the main market.

Entertainment in some variety is available here most days and evenings. Prices range from 1 ss (for most seats) to 10 gs (for a private box). Civic functions are usually free, though citizens must still pay if they wish to reserve a box. The quality of the entertainment varies from caterwauling locals to visiting skalds whose words can stir the emotions of the vast crowd.

15. THE TOOTH

Lying close to the theater is a colossal, conical stone. It stands over 50 feet tall, and a third again is buried in the ground. Locals claim it fell from the sky during the Blizzard War. They named it the Tooth because of its similarities to a dragon's tooth.

For 1 silver scield, visitors are allowed to stand within 12" of the stone, where the temperature is always warm. At night, the Council allows the city's homeless to sleep here for free. The vagrants don't much like outsiders, but they hear much and, for a few silver scields, are willing

to repeat it verbatim. Streetwise rolls made here to learn local gossip receive a +2 bonus.

The cult of Kenaz and specialist fire elementalists of the Convocation have spent centuries investigating the Tooth. There is no evidence it is magical in nature and thus there is no obvious explanation for why it radiates heat. More perplexing, every tale told about the Blizzard War and destruction of Imperial City agrees that only Hellfrost dragons were present over the city. That they are not creatures known for emitting heat makes it unlikely the Tooth came from one of their breed.

16. TEMPLE OF ALL FAITHS

All the gods receive some sort of worship, but Imperial City boasts only three temples—one to Maera and her offspring, the four elemental gods, one to Eira, and one shared by every other deity.

Internally, the temple (whose name is a misnomer) is a single grand hall, its entirety devoted solely to worship without any of the other trappings associated with many cults, such as workshops. Statues of the benevolent gods stand in tall niches. One niche is devoted to the malignant deities—Dargar, Hela, Niht, Thrym, and Vali. No one openly venerates these deities as patron, but the citizens are not foolish enough to ignore the wicked gods, lest they turn their attention to Imperial City. The statues of these gods are smaller and cruder in form, and are kept hidden behind a black curtain at all times.

The religious calendar is crowded, with deities sometimes sharing holy and high holy days. High holy days always take precedent over holy days. When multiple days share high holy days, who is assigned the temple as their place of worship is determined by random lot. While the various high priests grumble at this method, the Council has ruled that the decision is in the hands of the Norns and what passes is what is meant to pass. On high holy days, the appropriate statue is carefully dragged to the northwest end of the hall to serve as the focus for veneration.

The temple sees steady trade around the clock, for its doors are always open. Priests come here daily to pray before the statue of their god, while laity come and go as they have time to ask favors or give thanks. Security is maintained by paladins of all the faiths. A complex rota ensures a small number of guards of different faiths are present day and night.

17. TEMPLE OF THE FOUR

Named for the four elements, rather than the Convocation's ruling body, the temple of Maera was once part of the Imperial Palace. It is open to the public from dawn until dusk, though it is closed to non-followers on holy and high holy days while services are being conducted.

The cult is currently bereft of a high priest following the death of the previous incumbent two years ago. A corpulent man with a known love of buttery pastries, he died of heart failure. At the instant of his death, clerics

tending the grand altar noticed spidery writing forming on the surface. The words spelled out a message, “The one who cannot touch shall rule.”

While scholars began studying the writing and trying to deduce their meaning, the clerics elected a new high priest. His ascension ceremony was promptly halted when the priest charged with anointing him was stricken dumb. Six more attempts, each with a different high priest elect, met with the same fate. The clerics are now convinced that the message is from Maera, and that the next high priest must meet the cryptic criteria. Some are beginning to whisper that the next leader of the temple must be a ghost, a thought that brings with it fear and confusion. Others are looking toward Fluvant of the Ghost and Tankard (see #19), even though he is not a cleric of Maera.

GMs are free to interpret the message as they see fit. It is intended, however, to refer to a cleric of Maera who has the Magic Forbiddance Hindrance, a very unusual occurrence—but something a player is likely to dream up as an interesting concept.

18. THE ARKHWISARD'S REST

The finest tavern in Imperial City, the Arkhwisard's Rest caters solely for arkhwisards and their guests.

Despite the magical firepower the patrons wield, security is tight. The doormen, all of whom have strong wills to resist magical influence and bribery attempts, carry a list of all the arkhwisards currently within the Convocation. Those they do not recognize by sight have their names checked against the list. No name, no entry, no exception.

Non-arkhwisards are permitted entry only by direct invitation of an arkhwisard and must sign both in and out. This rule applies even to the high and mighty of Imperial City. Many promising magisters and trusted servants actually have letters of introduction, allowing them entry at any time (the tavern operates 24 hours a day, eight days a week). Regardless of one's status, no weapons, not even daggers, or armor are permitted beyond the threshold.

Richly appointed at great expense, the interior is divided into small booths, across which velvet curtains can be drawn to ensure privacy, and separate private rooms, which can be hired for a reasonable fee. A roaring hearth warmly lights the main hall, and each booth has a separate oil lamp for when the curtains are drawn. There is also a well-stocked library. Although it holds a few arcane reference tomes, most books are related to other topics, such as history, law, and travel.

Locals maintain the tavern is the true heart of Convocation politics. In veiled booths, the powerful mages make secret deals with peers and outsiders alike. While there is an element of truth to this, much of the conversation is rather mundane. Despite its reputation, the tavern is merely a cozy retreat to enjoy good food, strong drink, and polite company for powerful mages who wish to avoid the constant questions of their inferiors and the pressures of life within the organization.

19. THE GHOST AND TANKARD

This busy tavern gets its name from a most unusual activity—drinks and plates are not delivered by servers, but float across the room seemingly of their own accord. Regulars claim the tavern is haunted by a helpful ghost, though they know the story is bunkum (the cult of Scaetha, ever ones to spoil a party, launched an investigation).

The proprietor, Fluvant Nailbiter, has no hands. A retired soldier who lost his hands in battle, he claims a hermit taught him how to wield the power of his mind. Fluvant can use *telekinesis*, but he is no mage. Etched into his bald pate, which he covers with a hat whenever in public, is a complex pattern of silver threads.

Fluvant doesn't know it, but he is a Puppeteer experiment. His memories of being a soldier are false implants, and the threads are psionic circuitry that allows him to cast *telekinesis*. Somehow he escaped from the laboratory where he was being held before his programming was complete. The Puppeteers are keen to find him before his real memories resurface or his secret is revealed to the public. Unfortunately for them, he was created in the Freelands. They have no idea he has managed to reach Alantaris Isle.

20. HELPING HANDS

Arcane Hands are trained only in the Magocracy, but they are often sent out into the world to work with clerics and other mages in order to learn their particular casting styles. Founded just three years ago, Helping Hands is a joint venture run by five Arcane Hands. Not only do they hire themselves out as bodyguards, they help visiting Hands in search of work find suitable employers. In return, they take 10% of their wages as commission.

21. THE HALL OF BANNERS

Eylúðr, minor god of heralds, has no dedicated temples, but that was not always the case. In the glory days of the empire, the imperial court sent heralds far and wide to deliver messages of friendship and threats of war. Over time, the temple amassed a great number of banners—gifts from those who bowed willingly before the emperor and trophies brought back from battlefields by the victorious armies. Hung in the temple, they were used to instruct novice heralds.

Although the temple survived the destruction of the city, the survivors had little need of Eylúðr's cult and it quickly fell out of favor. It was widely believed the banners had been burned as fuel during the hard times, but a decade ago they were unearthed in a basement of the Imperial Palace.

Purchased for a token sum by Flore ap-Guiborc, a retired herald of the Council of Citizens, the banners were put on display. For 1 ss, visitors can gaze upon the moth-eaten standards of the former allies and enemies of Alantaris Isle. They are of little use to modern heralds, for the youngest of them is over 500 years old and the realms they once represented are naught but memories.

22. ALLOTMENTS

The citizens of Imperial City rarely grow hungry, but there is little cultivated land close to the settlement. In order to provide citizens with a small amount of fresh seasonal vegetables, the Council transformed the emperor's former menagerie into allotments. There are 200 separate allotments, each covering just under 1,200 square feet. The land is not enough to support an entire diet, but it is enough to supplement it.

Citizens who wish to work a plot pay 26 gs a year. Given their popularity, there is a long waiting list. When the registered plot holder dies or gives up his rights, it passes to the next person on the list. No household may have more than one name on the list at any given time.

The cult of Eostre Plantmother, which while popular in rural areas has little presence in the city, offers to pray for bountiful crops for as little as 1 ss per month. More elaborate rituals cost increasingly more.

23. ARCANE ALLEY

A nickname given to Earth Street, whose shops cater almost exclusively to the needs of the Convocation and the cult of Maera. A few of the more notable shops are described below.

Alchemical Apparatus: While this shop does not sell alchemical devices, it does sell the equipment necessary to create them. Members of the Convocation and cult of Maera can purchase an alchemist's trunk for 225 gs. It also sells ingredients for creating alchemical wares, though it has a standing agreement with Scribes and Scrolls (see below) not to offer ingredients for creating scrolls. Ingredients cost Convocation members and clerics of Maera 40 gs per Rank instead of the usual 50 gs.

Alchemical ingredients should be noted down on character sheets simply as "Alchemical Ingredients" and then the amount of gold shields they are *worth*. This way the hero need only cross off 50 gs worth for each Rank of device he is creating. Even though players might spend less money on each Rank's worth of ingredients, they should still note them down as being worth 50 gs per Rank. This will save any confusion when it comes to using them at a later date.

Cover to Cover: Books are rare things in Rassilon, and bookstores more so. One of the few to be found on the continent, Cover to Cover buys and sells any form of written material, providing it has a value or might be of interest to a regular client.

The store hosts an auction on the first Marketdaeg of each month, where tomes of lore and tomes of elemental learning acquired during the preceding month are sold to the highest bidder. Tomes of learning other than those concerned with elementalism are never auctioned—they are sold at the standard price listed in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*.

If a player wishes to bid, there should *always* be a rival bidder. To calculate the rival's highest bid roll 2d6 and multiple the result by 50 gs for lesser tomes of lore,

150 gs for greater tomes of lore, or 250 gs for tomes of elemental learning, and add it to half the tome's usual cost (the starting bid). The full bid must be paid before the book is handed over.

The Ermine Emporium: Whereas adventuring elementalists favor tough clothes or armor, those living and working in Imperial City like to dress to impress. The Ermine Emporium is the unofficial tailor to the arkh-wisards, which in turns means many members of the Convocation choose to shop here.

While it specializes in tailored clothing, formal and normal clothing is available for those with smaller budgets. Most citizens agree that it is the Emporium's skilled tailors who set the fashion for the coming year.

Scribes and Scrolls: Catering to the needs of studious elementalists, this shop sells parchment, scroll cases, and writing equipment. It also offers a range of specialist inks and others ingredients for the creation of alchemical scrolls. Members of the Convocation or cult of Maera are charged 30 gs per Rank instead of the usual 50 gs.

24. SCHOOL

The city's only school is large enough to house all the city's children aged between five and 12. Given that local attendance is never total, this leaves ample room for youngsters from beyond the city boundary. Even counting their numbers, classes are rarely overcrowded.

The cult of Hoenir, which provides advanced tuition from the same building, has repeatedly petitioned the Council to hand over all citizens' education to them. In return for being able to construct a dedicated temple and turn part of the building into dormitories, it promises to retain free education. So far it has met with no success, thanks in no small part to the machinations and political levy of the Convocation.

The current high priestess, Gray Sage Hansine Gray-Hair, has a plan—come the next election, clerics will be standing for election for all four council posts. Should the cult succeed in its plans, it will stand a better chance of persuading the other councilors to grant the permission it seeks, thus expanding its influence.

25. TEMPLE OF EIRA

The cult of Eira played a vital role in the months and years after the destruction of Imperial City, tending to the wounded and preventing outbreaks of disease. As a reward, it was granted permission to construct a temple in the new city.

The temple comprises four buildings. The smallest is the actual focus of religious worship—Eira is popular, but she has few devoted worshippers. The walls are hunt with the robes of clerics who died in service to the temple. Most are stained only with the grime of age and smoke from candles and braziers, but some bear the tears and bloodstains of clerics who served with the military.

The middle building is home to the clerics who serve the goddess, and contains all the facilities they need to

live. The cult has 14 priests and 10 paladins. They are assisted by ten members of the laity.

Leading them is Merciful Daughter Cecilia ap-Bernier, known to her underlings as the White Mother. Somewhat paranoid, Cecilia sees plots by the cult of Vali everywhere. Unfortunately, she has cried wolf once too often, and her warnings now carry very little weight with the Council, or indeed many of her subordinates.

The largest building is the city's hospital and apothecary. Medical services are not free, but the cult makes only a modest profit. Herbal remedies cost 35 gs and *healing* potions just 75 gs. The cult does not sell to the general public unless they are in immediate need, however. That is, adventurers wounded in the city can purchase cheaper *healing* potions here, but the party cannot stock up in preparation for future injuries.

The fourth building is the public baths (see below).

As well as an allotment plot (see #22) issued to the temple in perpetuity, the clerics maintain a small plot of land for growing common herbal plants at the rear of the temple. More exotic plants are kept only in dried form, being grown or harvested elsewhere on the island.

26. PUBLIC BATHS

Formerly the private bathhouse of the emperors, the baths are today considered part of the temple of Eira. That said, the round building is maintained by the council from tax revenues and is open to the public for just 1 ss per visit.

The baths, although made of stone, are typical of saunas across the continent, though on a much grander scale. Much of the original ornamentation has been destroyed or stolen, but enough remains to awe common citizens. At least one bannik resides here. Fortunately, the fey is on good terms with the cult of Eira, and takes any grievances to them rather than enacting revenge itself.

The star attraction is a barber from Al-Shirkuh. Although not ordained, Farouk ibn-Fazir is a follower of Marqod, the native goddess of healing. He is also a skilled masseur, able to soothe the physical pains of daily life with deft hands. Knowing that his services are in great demand, the cult of Eira charges 5 ss per treatment.

27. SHRINE TO HOTHAR

Aside from his presence in the Temple of All Faiths, Hothar has a dedicated shrine close to one of the entrances to the Imperial Palace. Here, citizens may speak out against the Council without fear of reprisal, though sedition and slandering individuals are still strictly prohibited. The only other rule is that the speaker must have one hand placed on the shrine. This simple law limited the number of potential rabble-rousers speaking at any one time.

The shrine sees most activity in the months leading up to elections. Paid agitators and demagogues try to persuade the crowd to vote for their employer, promising all manner of changes he will bring about to make their

lives better and decrying the record of the incumbent office holders and political rivals.

Paladins of the cult of Eira frequent the crowd under orders from the high priestess, their ears ever vigilant for talk that might come from the mouths of Vali's fell worshippers.

28. THE IMPERIAL BANQUET HALL

Although they publicly decry the excesses of the emperors, citizens with sufficient wealth are quite prepared to enjoy something of their lifestyle. Here patrons can relax on couches while being fed delicacies such as bird's tongues, mollusks, honey-dipped dormice, exotic fruits and vegetables from Al-Shirkuh, and tiny cubes of heavily spiced meats by scantily dressed men and women playing the role of slaves. Only the finest Aspirian wines are served here. Mock gladiatorial combat and erotic dancing add to the mood of decadence.

The prices are as extravagant as the food and entertainment. A cheap meal (three small dishes) costs 10 gs and an expensive meal (a veritable banquet of many delights) upward of 75 gs.

Far beyond the means of most citizens, the restaurant is the preserve of the wealthy. This makes it an ideal place for adventurers (formal clothing is a strict requirement for entry) to meet influential citizens. Many councilors attend at least once a week, though they enter in disguise—decadence and public office are not popular bedfellows with the masses.

TRADE MISSIONS

Foreign trade is essential to Alantaris Isle's economy. Port may be the major delivery point, but it is the Council that sets trading quotas. Thus, Imperial City has become the home for foreign merchants looking to strike lucrative deals. In a bid to prevent rival merchant houses from damaging their local economy, both Aspiria and the Magocracy have established official trade missions managed by appointed representatives.

The merchants have one role—to secure the most profitable trade deals for their nation. The missions are not considered to be official embassies, and thus remain Imperial City property. That said, officials are granted certain exemptions, such as paying no property tax on the buildings, which are loaned them by the Council.

29. TRADE MISSION: ASPIRIA

Aspiria's main import is wine. Huge quantities of cheap wine, designed for everyday consumption by the general populace, are coupled with much smaller shipments of rare and expensive wines for those with deep pockets and refined palates.

With King Halgroth V more interested in parties than economics, he was persuaded to sell the position of trade commissioner to the highest bidder as a money making scheme. Given the importance of wine to the nobles of

the Southern Marches, it was little surprise that Countess Envita ap-Ancelyn of Parisi came out the winner.

She has appointed her nephew, Landri ap-Mamert as senior commissioner. The final sum offered for the post was too high for the countess' coffers alone, so she accepted "donations" from neighboring families. In return, they each were offered a chance to appoint a mission representative, their rank and influence varying with the size of their donation. Every vineyard of note put in something to secure a voice in Imperial City.

Landri is relatively young (just 25 years old), but he has a shrewd head for business and an excellent knowledge of wine. Little surprise given that he is a priest of Var raised by a family with sizeable vineyards.

30. TRADE MISSION: CHALCIS

Chalcis keeps the markets and workshops supplied with metal ore and jewelry. With plans afoot on Alantaris Isle to drive back the orcs and reopen local mines closed since the end of the empire, and with Chalcis suffering a sharp drop in productivity, Duke Howel worries that its dominance of the metal trade may soon be at an end.

His official representative, Baron Dragan ap-Rabel, has verbal instructions to "do what is required" to maintain the export route. Whether the duke meant his words to be taken literally or not, Baron Dragan has taken it upon himself to sabotage attempts to reopen the mines, thus delaying Chalcis' (probably inevitable) loss of revenue for a little longer.

Through paid informants in the army and council departments, he learned which mines were due to be cleansed of orcs by the military and then reopened. That information was duly passed on to the relevant orc tribe, who dealt with the situation appropriately.

Dragan is under growing pressure from the Council of Citizens to speak out in favor of canceling his nation's trade agreements with Angmark and accepting more exports of Alantaris Isle's fish and whale oil. Unwilling to put his head on the block, he continually delays making any such announcement.

31. TRADE MISSION: MAGOCRACY

The Magocracy imports very little from Alantaris Isle for sale in its own markets—it has plentiful forests, produces alchemical devices, and grows sufficient crops to feed its population. Due to the dispute with Angmark over its taxation policies, though, Port Helgen has become the starting point for goods intended for the markets of the Freelands and eastern Low Winterlands.

Within the Magocracy, every province is responsible for forging its own trade agreements. Instead of being a unified mission trying to secure the best deal for the nation as a whole, the Magocracy's mission is a hotbed of scheming rivals all trying to get the upper hand in matters of trade. Unfortunately, Alantaris Isles' merchants are interested only in delivering good to Port Helgen, rather than entering into complex binding trade agreements.

The most important figure is Mage-Knight Dagwaldix Hergenald of the Third Sphere, a recent honors graduate of the School of Diplomacy (see *Arcane Lore*) with an existing network of connections among the merchants of Alantaris Isle. With trade to his home city a matter of formality, he has plentiful spare time. Dagwaldix spends much of this fostering dissent between his Magocratic competitors and growing fat on the delights of the Imperial Banquet Hall.

32. THE FULL BELLY

Owned and operated by an engro family, this business supplies dried rations. Instead of set consumables, customers can customize their meals from a wide list of hard bread, cured fish and meat, smoked cheese, and pickled vegetables. The portions are small but extremely tasty and very filling. A week's pack costs 12 gs, but weighs only 3 pounds. The shop has become very popular with merchants, who stock up on supplies before riding their wagons out to the island's remote communities, and members of the Misfits, who have plenty of spare gold.

BENEATH THE CITY

TUNNELS

Running beneath the city is a warren of tunnels, many wide enough to accommodate two handcarts side by side. Large sections have collapsed, but enough remain that someone who knows the route can cross the entire city without setting foot above ground.

The existence of the tunnels, many of which connect to the basements of shops and the grander houses, is well-known in the city. The stories regarding them are almost as numerous as the tunnels themselves. The most popular one is that they were installed by thieves, allowing them to rob any premises at will and then disappear like ghosts into the labyrinth. Other tales say they were constructed so the citizens could hide in them in time of invasion, are a transit system that could accommodate barges, were used by the emperor's guards to arrest citizens in the dead of night without altering other traitors, or are the remnants of some ancient civilization and were simply reused when Imperial City was founded.

The truth is far less fanciful. The reason the tunnels run between the shops and basements of the rich is because they allowed servants to go to and fro without being seen above ground. Much of their travel was for legal reasons, such as picking up the shopping, but occasionally they carried subversive messages between conspirators.

Because most of the exits are now bricked up and clearing the tunnels would cost too much, no one bothers to patrol them. The thieves' guild has set up its headquarters down here, installing their guildhouse behind a secret door designed to look like a bricked up archway. They are currently researching a way to bypass bricked up doors without having to tear them down and rebuild them, or spend a fortune on alchemical devices.

KINGSHALL



HISTORY

Before the devastation of the Blizzard War and subsequent founding of the Magocracy, Kingshall was an Anari communications hub, a place where messengers could change horses and where *voice on the wind* messages were received and relayed onward. Although the War itself little bothered the settlement, the aftermath had a major effect. As the Empire imploded military commanders set themselves up as regional warlords or abandoned their posts altogether. Disease and famine, boosted by refugees from war-torn areas, ravaged the land.

Kingshall remained forgotten while the heahwisards were setting up their new social order—there were more pressing matters than governing one tiny fortified village. Only when the land was under their dominance and society working toward rebuilding did the heahwisards' collective eyes turn toward it.

Although a tiny settlement whose inhabitants eked a subsistence living from agriculture, Kingshall was chosen as the site for the first Mage-King's palace because of its roughly central location and because it sat on an existing road network.

In honor of Maera, the village was expanded and reshaped to resemble the symbol for infinity. Unhindered by the Siphoning, the heahwisards transformed the settlement into their capital almost overnight, employing a small army of elementals to do the heavy work.

Five centuries have passed, and while buildings have been knocked down and new ones raised, Kingshall has remained largely unchanged. Its walls have not expanded, it still serves the same purpose, and its population has remained small.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Although its population barely qualifies it as a small town, its status as the capital means that within the

Magocracy (and this supplement), Kingshall is always referred to as a city. The city is part of no province—it is, and has always been, the king's hall, his royal palace, the center of political power within the Magocracy always but independent of any noble house.

As to what people mean when they say "royal palace," that depends on where one is from. To those living in foreign lands, the royal palace is the entirety of Kingshall. Within the Magocracy, it refers only to High Hall, the largest area and where most heahwisards visit. Inside the walls of Kingshall, though, the royal palace refers only to one specific building—the tower housing the Mage-King's personal rooms.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

The Magocracy may only recognize three distinct social classes—heahwisards, honor nobles, and peasants—but that does not mean the masses are considered equal. Even the haughtiest heahwisard deals with a rich merchant differently to a common laborer. He may even lower himself to conversing with the merchant directly, rather than through an intermediary.

While the heahwisards label everyone beneath them as a peasant, the peasants of Kingshall have different social standing based on their position in society rather than their relative wealth. Merchants, while wealthy, are not considered as important as craftsmen who toil for the Mage-King's benefit. Peasants who work in the king's kitchen hold a higher station in the eyes of their peers than those who run a tavern, simply because they are deemed to be closer to the king's person. Naturally, those whose duties require them to actually speak to the Mage-King's senior courtiers on a regular basis hold the highest status, no matter their function. More importantly, every denizen of Kingshall considers himself higher placed than those who serve the other ranks of nobility elsewhere in the Magocracy.

This complex social order has little impact on game play—those considered lower down the ladder are merely more polite to those they consider to be of higher station. At the end of the day, though, all commoners must bow before the heahwisards.

The majority of Kingshall's population may be lowly peasants, but they are subjects of the Mage-King, not a particular house. As such, visiting heahwisards, regardless of rank, are not permitted to abuse them—to do so is to insult the Mage-King.

GOVERNMENT

Kingshall is the Mage-King's private domain. The Council Elect convenes here, but it has absolutely no authority over how the Mage-King runs his home. Some Mage-Kings have been hands-on rulers, involving themselves in matters of daily governance. Some have been distant, leaving control to appointed subordinates. Some have been cruel tyrants, while others have been exceedingly generous.

The current Mage-King, like most of his predecessors, only rarely interferes in the running of his domain—so long as things are running smoothly, he can leave the little details to be handled by his courtiers and advisors. Ultimately responsible to the king, these servants nonetheless wield a great deal of personal power and are permitted leeway in how they interpret their orders (so long as what they do is good for the crown, of course).

Whether or not courtiers are heahwisards depends on the whim of the incumbent king. Some have elected to be surrounded only by fellow magicians. Others have appointed commoners simply to watch as heahwisards of high rank are forced to treat them as equals.

Few citizens ever deal directly with the Mage-King, or indeed any of his senior courtiers. Instead, they deal with an underling, such as a reeve (elected by the people and responsible for one type of industry within Kingshall). The reeves in turn answer to the seneschal, who deals with the chancellor, who has access to the Mage-King. Not that many disputes ever reach the royal palace—most are handled by the seneschal without any input from a higher authority.

The following are noted individuals serving the court, either with responsibility for the daily governing of Kingshall or individuals whose paths player characters might cross during their visit to court. Except for Chancellor Praetris, who hails from House Darovia (and is described in the *Hellfrost Atlas*), no heahwisard courtier's noble house has been listed. This allows the GM to assign their house to fit the needs of his campaign.

Chancellor: Head of the king's household, the chancellor is the most senior courtier. He alone decides who is permitted to address the Mage-King. He is also the intermediary between the king and the rest of the court. *Incumbent:* Mage-Baron Praetris Saronax, of the Third Sphere (male, Anari, 61).

RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Kingshall.

* **High Quality Goods:** Goods manufactured in Kingshall are always of high quality. As such, they cost 25% more than normal.

* **No Weapons:** Only guards on duty, paladins of Maera, arcane hands in employment and accompanying their masters, Thieftakers on duty, and heahwisards and their entourage traveling to their estates may carry weapons other than daggers.

* **Selling Goods:** Only resident merchants with a valid license may ply their trade in Kingshall. This means that player characters can only find a black market outlet for any booty. Due to the difficulty of finding a buyer, the Streetwise roll to unload booty is made at –2.

Castellan: Commander-in-chief of the Mage-King's personal army and the defense of Kingshall, although he has no authority over the king's personal bodyguard company. *Incumbent:* Mage-Knight Gessix of the Fourth Sphere (male, Anari, 48)

Constable: Subordinate to the castellan, the constable is responsible for law and order in Kingshall. As such, they are in command of the four companies of heavy infantry assigned to protect the city. *Incumbent:* Mage-Baroness Olennia of the Third Sphere (female, Anari, 44)

Lord-Porter: In most noble households the porter is responsible for greeting guests and ensuring they are comfortable. In Kingshall, the Lord-Porter acts as an intermediary between the heahwisards' estates and other court officials. Adolphus VII has deliberately selected a non-heahwisard to fulfill this duty, knowing it will grate with the nobles to be respectful to a commoner. *Incumbent:* Novellia ap-Alexis (female, Anari, 35)

Provost: The senior judge. All trials are held in his presence. *Incumbent:* Mage-Baron Maccalus of the Third Sphere (male, Anari, 42)

Seneschal: Answerable to the castellan, the seneschal is responsible for overseeing Kingshall as a settlement. In that regard he is the highest authority most citizens every address. Since he must deal with the people with some degree of understanding of their needs and yet interact with the royal court regularly, the incumbent is almost always an honor noble. *Incumbent:* Count Tancred ap-Isore of Kingshall (male, Anari, 50)

LAW AND ORDER

Acting as both the city defenders and police within Kingshall are four companies of heavy infantry. They serve under the auspices of the constable.

Two companies are assigned to man the walls, protect the gates, and patrol the streets during the day (the Day Watch) and two at night (the Night Watch). Of these, only

60 actually walk the streets at any one time—forty are assigned to High Hall and 20 to Low Hall. In the event of unrest, reinforcements can be summoned from the nearest towers. Patrols are always in five-man squads.

As nobles, heahwisards are given many privileges, but breaking the law in the king's home is not one of them. Most would never dream of doing such a thing, at least not openly, but alcohol and magic can be a dangerous mix. In order to ensure that young heahwisards do not step out of line or think themselves above the law, patrols are always accompanied by a priest of Maera. Should a magic-wielding suspect prove troublesome, the soldiers can summon paladins of Maera.

Kingshall may be a busy little town, but it is first and foremost a royal residence. Save for guards on duty, paladins of Maera, Arcane Hands in employment and accompanying their masters, Thieftakers on duty, and heahwisards and their entourage traveling to their estates, no weapons beyond a dagger are permitted to be carried in Kingshall without the written permission of the Seneschal. The punishment for breaking the law is the loss of both hands.

Other visitors carrying weapons must deposit them at the city gate by which they enter. In return, they are given an engraved token as a receipt. Each night, weapons collected in this manner are transported to the barracks for storage. In order to reclaim his weapons, a visitor must present the token to the armory and state what gate he will be leaving by and at what time, whereupon his weapons will be waiting for him. No matter who the visitor is, failure to produce a token means his weapons remain locked away.

Needless to say, the thieves' guild does good business stealing tokens, claiming the weapons, and selling them on the black market. There is also a healthy sideline in selling tokens back to those they were stolen from. In such cases, the fee is equivalent to 50% of the value of the weapons (which the guild learns through bribes to people working in the armory). Shipments of armaments destined for other markets cannot be transported through the city, nor stored in its warehouses.

THE COURTS

When accused of committing crimes in their own domain, heahwisards may be tried by their feudal superior or even the Council Elect. In Kingshall, all cases are heard by the provost, the Mage-King's appointed judge.

Heahwisards suspected of a criminal offense are confined to their house estate until the date of the trial. They may not leave the boundary of their estate without permission from the provost. Ordinary citizens have no such luxury—they are dragged to the city's dank jail to await their time in court.

Crime rates are low in Kingshall, but the provost sits daily—justice must not only be seen to be done, it must be seen to act swiftly. It is also extremely harsh.

While flogging and heavy fines suffice for minor crimes, even moderate ones risk forfeiture of all wealth and ban-

ishment from Kingshall. The death penalty is permitted and, while not frequently employed, it is rarely held back when the crime warrants such punishment. Execution is always by magic.

Although appointed from a noble house, the provost is expected to remain neutral in his dealings with criminals. Failure to do so risks arrest for corruption by the recently formed Grand Order of Mage-Inquisitors (see *Hellfrost Atlas*).

EDUCATION

There are no facilities in Kingshall offering rudimentary education to any tier of society. Since even those heahwisards who work here in the service of the Mage-King come from a noble House, their children receive a basic education in their home province rather than in the capital. For the peasants, which in this case includes honor nobles, education comes only at the feet of family members or, if one has sufficient wealth, from a private tutor. Lucky children, such as the offspring of clerics, may receive some basic instruction through other members of their faith.

This is not to say that Kingshall has no educational establishments at all, of course. The city is home to the prestigious Academy of Heahwisardry, the College of Advanced Magical Study, and the Duelists' College, all of which are detailed later. The former is open only to the offspring of Mage-Counts or higher, while the latter two are advanced educational facilities for heahwisards of any social rank or magical aptitude (within certain limits), usually third or lower children, whose chosen path is something other than politics.

RELIGION

As the official state religion, worship of Maera is also the royal religion. This is not to say the other gods have been abandoned. Craftsmen still worship Ertha and Kenaz, healers pray to Eira, merchants honor Var, and clerics are permitted to live and work here. The only real difference to other settlements is that no provision is made for their places of worship on a large scale, nor are any of their holidays considered public holidays. Citizens may participate in such festivals as they see fit, but must do so on their own time.

Due to this attitude, none of the cults outside that of Maera wields any political or economic power of note. Even Hothar, champion of law and justice, and a favorite in centers of political power, boasts only a minor cult following with little influence.

With only a handful of worshippers available to them, most cults have not bothered with a temple. Only the cult of Var, which always profits from trade, has opened one, and even then it is a modest affair designed to profit

from the needs of visiting merchants rather than the spiritual affairs of locals.

Kingshall may have only a small permanent population, but it has nevertheless attracted the attention of the cults of Hela and Vali, as well as a small sect of demonists.

Cultists of Hela, who call themselves the Servants of the Tattered Shroud, are a recent arrival, having infiltrated the city only when stewardship of the cemeteries was removed from the cult of Scaetha. At present, their activity is very limited and confined solely to the catacombs.

The cult of Vali's corruption aspect does a good trade here—as the political capital of the Magocracy, there are many high-powered residents and visitors for it to twist. For all its insidiousness, the cult is not immune to corruption itself—at least one member is a Puppeteer, gently shaping the future of the Magocracy to suit his or her masters' complex schemes.

Few scholars doubt that power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. While labelling every heahwisard as arrogant and decadent would be an injustice, it certainly sums up the majority. With plentiful time and money, some have turned to more sinister means of passing the time and sating their appetites. Lurking beneath the veil of respectability is a small sect of heahwisards who have turned to demon-worshipping. More specifically, they are followers of Yalkeena, the Dark Temptress (see *Matters of Faith*).

Behind the walls of their noble estates, the debauched, and arguably bored, heahwisards engage in all manner of sexual depravity. Some of their victims are paid for their time, but most are victims of the sadistic and perverted cultists and destined for death as a sacrifice.

The cult of Vali knows nothing of the demonic sect. Where it to learn of their existence, it would undoubtedly consider them a fair target for its attentions. After all, its members are all heahwisards or people in important positions, and it is very unlikely they would want knowledge of their sordid behavior entering the public domain. As the cult well knows from long experience, men with dark secrets to hide make ideal playthings.

FESTIVALS

All festivals to Maera are considered high holy days. In deference to her, the inhabitants do not receive Raestdaeg and Sangdaeg as holidays. Instead, every Monandaeg afternoon is a public holiday. Given that virtually everyone in the city works for the Mage-King in some fashion, few workers actually receive time off. Those forced to work are actually paid a small bonus in compensation.

Kingshall is a small town and very little of the surrounding land falls under its authority. Indeed, under ancient law the Mage-King rules only an area of land with a radius equal the distance an arrow fired from the main gate in High Hall flies. Measurement is carried out only once, at the start of a new king's reign. This day is known as the King's Reach and is a public holiday.

The choice of archer is determined by the Mage-King. Since distance is all that matters, the archer need not be

a marksman. The distance the arrow flies is popularly heralded as a sign of how the Mage-King will rule. A deliberately pathetic shot, say one of just 20 yards, means the king will not hamper the Council Elect or produce many royal decrees (which cannot be vetoed). Conversely, an epic shot means the Mage-King intends to rule as he sees fit and hang the Council Elect.

The distance is otherwise largely irrelevant, since there are no communities within bowshot of the walls. All it really does is limit the extent to which the city guard can pursue criminals without asking permission from the appropriate neighboring House.

MILITARY

The Mage-King's personal army, made up of troops supplied by the noble Houses, comprises seven companies of heavy infantry (four of which are veterans) and two companies of heavy infantry (two of which are veterans). Of these, five companies are stationed in Kingshall.

There are four companies of infantry, two of which are hardened veterans. As well as providing protection for the city, they serve as police. Day and night, each of the 16 towers around the perimeter wall is manned by five soldiers. As well as walking the wall, they serve as reinforcements for their comrades on police duty. The four gates each have a guard of 15 soldiers. The infantry companies are rotated each year with those stationed elsewhere in the Magocracy.

In the very unlikely event that Kingshall is threatened by an outside agency, the noble Houses are required to help protect the capital.

Whether serving on the walls or as police, the soldiers have little free time. This is deliberate—the last thing anyone wants in a small town are hundreds of bored soldiers looking to let off steam.

Protecting the royal palace and the Mage-King is a company of fanatically loyal veteran heavy cavalry—the Hands of Versilax. Unlike the regular soldiers, their barracks are within the royal palace. The stables occupy a nearby building. Although detailed in the *Hellfrost Atlas*, the company only serves in Kingshall and is thus repeated here for completeness.

HAND OF VERSILAX

Officially designated the Shield of Kingshall and informally as the Peacocks for their bright blue tabards and feathered helms, the Hand of Versilax is the Mage-King's premier heavy cavalry company. They also serve as his personal guard. Founded a mere 28 years ago by Adolphus V, both Adolphus VI and VII broke with tradition by not disbanding the unit and forming a bodyguard of men they hand picked.

Their commander, who has been captain since the company's foundation and thus served under three Mage-Kings, is a scion of House Eastheath, though he forsook

his birthright to become a Knight Hrafn. Although legally a child in the eyes of the Magocratic nobility, nothing in law prevents him from holding his post. All attempts to remove him from office through political means have failed, the Mage-King having vetoed all motions. His continued presence so close to the Mage-King is a constant thorn in his former family's side.

Captain: Versilax No-Staff, Anari Knight Hrafn.

Type: Veteran heavy cavalry.

Company Edge: Arcane Resistance (every member has this Edge).

PRIVATE FORCES

As Kingshall is the Mage-King's personal domain, there is little need for private guards. The sole exceptions are the traders of the Magic Market, who have special dispensation to hire Thieftakers of the cult of Var; the temple of Maera, which maintains a force of paladins; and Arcane Hands, found here in service to a magician or in search of employment. Only Hands in active employment are permitted to carry weapons, however.

TRADE & TRIBUTE

Kingshall is not a conventional settlement. Every craftsman who works here does so primarily to keep the Mage-King in goods and services (both essential and luxuries). That said, the people have basic needs that must be met and Kingshall owns no agricultural land. To that end, it must import goods.

Depending on their trade, craftsmen beholden to the Mage-King are given a daily, weekly, or monthly quota of goods they must furnish the palace. These goods are not donated freely—as employees of the Mage-King, they receive a modest wage for their labors. Typically, those with weekly or monthly demands must work six or seven long days a week to deliver them. For the other one or two days they may work on goods to sold to fellow citizens or visitors. A craftsman who fails to meet his quota may be fined or even stripped of his appointment and expelled from the city.

Since the Mage-King requires finite supplies, there is typically only one or two (maybe three at a push) of each craftsman present. This in turn means that Kingshall, while it exports goods, does so in very small quantities. That said, goods manufactured in the city are permitted to carry a royal stamp as a sign of their quality. Such goods are in high demand by heahwisards. As a result, goods made in the city cost 25% more than normal.

Craftsmen are given as much raw material as they need to fulfill their quotas for free—since they work for the king, he supplies the raw goods. Any shortfalls, such as caused by manufacturing errors, must be met from the craftsman pockets, though. Similarly, those who want to sell goods to private citizens must purchase additional raw materials from the city.

Additionally, no one can simply move to Kingshall and open a business. Individuals wishing to open a business of any sort must apply for permission, a process often helped by a donation to the relevant reeve or member of court. Even then, there is no guarantee one will end up producing goods expressly for the Mage-King—his courtiers and household staff use lower quality wares.

Thanks to its geographic position, Kingshall, while not importing vast quantities of finished goods and only modest quantities of raw materials, has become a popular stopover for merchants. Instead, of having to travel to the final market, traders are permitted to store goods in the city warehouses to await collection. Some merchants have regular buyers, while others speculate by bringing goods to offer at auction.

Note that in the first sentence we used “primarily” when referring to craftsmen. Some traders and craftsmen, such as Half Moon Kennels and the stalls at the Magic Market, operate a business but are not in the direct employ of the Mage-King. Such establishments still operate at the Mage-King's whim and must have a license.

TAXES

Taxation in Kingshall is extremely low. Much of the Mage-King's income comes from coin and goods demanded in taxes from the noble Houses, and most every citizen is actually an employee of the Mage-King, receiving a wage in return for work rendered. As a result, the Mage-King can, if he so chooses, tax his serfs a token amount. The last three Mage-Kings have been particularly generous, so much so that many citizens wonder whether their master hasn't forgotten they exist (not that anyone is complaining). The nobles have been less fortunate, however.

The city is also unusual in that it does not have any import or export duties. Instead, all goods brought here for sale to merchants from other locales must be sold to city merchants. Thus, merchants visiting to purchase goods must also buy from the city. City merchants pay and charge fair amounts, but the turnover is sufficient to greatly boost the coffers.

At present, only the following taxes apply to the denizens of Kingshall:

Business License: Business not in the direct employ of the Mage-King, such as many taverns and the establishments mentioned above, require a license to operate. The cost varies from a few hundred gold scields to many thousands, depending on the profitability of the business and the items it sells. With the noted exception of the temple of Maera, this also includes services provided by cults other than spiritual services. For instance, the cult of Var requires a business license in order to hire out Thieftakers.

Licenses are issued by the seneschal and may, at his discretion, contain other clauses. For instance, alchemical devices can only be sold in the Magic Market.

Business Tax: Businesses that serve the Mage-King directly do not require a business license—they have a

royal charter allowing them to operate. Although permitted to sell items directly to the public (so long as they meet their royal quotas), these businesses must pay tax on their profits. The current tax rate is 50%.

The rate is high, but since most goods sell for more to outsiders, 50% of something is still better than 50% of nothing. The downside is working long hours needed to produce excess goods.

Gate Tax: Anyone passing into or out of the city must pay 1 gs (people and mounts). Laden wagons pay 10 gs. This money helps maintain the walls and roads.

Tithes: Regardless of faith, every citizen must give 10% of their wages to the cult of Maera. People are free to give to other cults as they see fit, but must do so as an additional tax burden.

MARKETS

Kingshall boasts only a single market, located in Low Hall. Save for Monandaeg, when alchemical devices can be found for sale, the stalls cater for the basic needs of the common citizens. There is little variation in the types of goods (including food) available, but since all imports are bought and sold by the city, prices are kept artificially low. It is rare to see important dignitaries shopping here—they send their servants, instead.

High quality goods are rarely found for sale in the market—customers of all social classes visit shops and workshops to make such purchases.

ARCHITECTURE

In other cities within the Magocracy, buildings reflect the cultural origins of the owner. In Kingshall, the architecture is what has become known as High Magocratic. Except in rare instances, every building is constructed from stone and has a tile roof. Timber is used only for interior walls in smaller buildings, and even it is always plastered over.

Major buildings, while rarely built on a monumental scale, have elaborate frontages. Many are inlaid with gold and silver tracings of arcane runes or are dotted with precious gems, an overt display of the Mage-King's vast wealth. Many of the core buildings, most notably the royal palace, were constructed by elementals. Although their walls are thin, they are remarkably sturdy, and capable of supporting far more weight than ordinary walls of similar thickness.

Although they have no right of ownership, being tithed workers, peasants enjoy large, comfortable houses in comparison to their peers in other Magocratic cities. Most are two story affairs, either with a workshop or shop downstairs and living quarters upstairs, or with the family divided over two floors.

Although they rarely see many visitors of high social class, the peasants spend their money on ensuring their homes are befitting of a royal palace. This is less about

HIGH QUALITY GOODS

As a guideline, better quality carries no additional game mechanics for many items—a bowl may look nicer, but it functions as well as a cheaper receptacle. In some instances, though, the GM may wish to apply additional minor benefits. For instance, weapons may have one or two points of additional Toughness, a rope can support 325 pounds instead of 300, and such like. Such bonuses should be small and, except in very rare cases, never provide a bonus to die rolls.

one-upmanship with their peers elsewhere and more about living up to the ideals of being a citizen of Kingshall. The peasants may still be peasants, but they bask in the reflected glory of the Mage-King.

THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Kingshall set their daily routine based around the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth. Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

Month	Sunrise	Sunset	Daylight
Snaermonan	0716	1651	9h 35m
Frostmonan	0706	1719	10h 13m
Eostremonan	0635	1750	11h 15m
Plohmonan	0555	1816	12h 21m
Sowanmonan	0514	1842	13h 28m
Werremonan	0445	1907	14h 32m
Scerranmonan	0436	1924	14h 48m
Hegmonan	0449	1922	14h 33m
Haerfestmonan	0512	1857	13h 45m
Falmonan	0536	1817	12h 41m
Huntianmonan	0601	1734	11h 33m
Fogmonan	0629	1658	10h 29m
Wulfmonan	0658	1640	9h 42m

MAJOR LOCALES

Kingshall is really two settlements in one (three if you treat the royal palace proper as a separate area due to it being an area few ever tread).

The smaller section, Low Hall, has the larger population and is home to virtually all of the city's industrial and economic establishments. High Hall is the reserve of the rich and powerful, although a few lower class citizens are permitted to reside or operate a business here.

Although small compared to other major cities in the Magocracy, and tiny compared to places like Drakeport, there is much to interest casual visitors, especially those with an interest in the arcane arts.



kingshall

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. city gates | 12. embassy of angarion | 22. the gilded sword |
| 2. royal palace | 13. embassy of coglund | 24. the sigil |
| 3. master oak | 14. embassy of vestmark | 25. the magic market |
| 4. academy of heahwisardy | 15. the five spheres | 26. low house of the dead |
| 5. duellists' college | 16. mage-inquisition | 27. the weary wizard |
| 6. the arena | 17. the four lanterns | 28. transit warehouses |
| 7. park of statues | 18. house estates | 29. vitaliana's parchmenters |
| 8. high house of the dead | 19. the garrison | 30. arcane bits |
| 9. the grand temple | 20. royal library | 31. egbutius the blind |
| 10. college of advanced study | 21. the fountain of gold | |
| 11. embassy of alantaris isle | 22. half moon kennels | |

OUTSIDE THE CITY

1. CITY GATES & WALLS

As previously noted, Kingshall is the Mage-King's residence. Security is tight and, despite being at the junction of four trade roads, it is not an open city where visitors may come and go at their leisure.

The walls, while barely 15 feet thick, stand 50 feet high and are as tough as any found protecting a major castle. Like many of the buildings, these were constructed by elementals and imbued with some of their magical essence. A popular rumor claims that elementals were bound into the very stone. Should the city come under attack, these could be released to aid in the defense. Despite several minor sieges led by heahwisards intent on overthrowing the Mage-Kings, no elementals have yet made an appearance.

The city has four gates—three exterior and one interior. The reinforced wooden gates, each of which measures 10' wide and 30' high, sit within heavily fortified gatehouses flanked by two towers.

Royal Gate, located in the south, provides direct access to High Hall. Merchant caravans and casual visitors are not permitted to enter by this means. As such, it is primarily used by visiting heahwisards and court officials who have a need to leave Kingshall.

Foreigners Gate stands in southeast Low Hall. The trade road splits into two not far from the city, its southern arm heading to Tharkness and the northern eventually passing through Eastheath into the world beyond. Thus, it is the route by which most outsiders arrive at the city.

Mage Gate, in the west of Low Hall, takes its name from the trade road (the Mage Road), which winds northward around the Mage Hills.

King's Gate separates High Hall from Low Hall. Despite being an internal gate, it is as strongly fortified as any granting access to the wider city.

The city gates are opened an hour before dawn and closed an hour after dusk. On Monandaeg, King's Gate remains open for one hour after the dueling finishes to allow those living in Low Hall time to get home. Heahwisards and those under their authority are permitted passage through a postern gate set beside each of the city gates when the main gates are closed.

HIGH HALL

High Hall, home to the Mage-King and the council chamber of the Council Elect, is the center of politics in the Magocracy. The largest district, it is also the least populated, at least in terms of residents who live here. Many of the buildings are devoted entirely to civic or state functions. For instance, one building contains nothing but records of Kingshall's financial transactions dating back to the foundation of the Magocracy half a millenium, while another holds dossiers on every soldier that has ever served in the Mage-King's army. Finding anything of interest in the

pile of crates and chests would take months of diligent searching. There are some establishments devoted to the entertainment of visitors, however.

Prices in High Hall are much higher than in Low Hall. A cheap meal costs 5 gs, little more than soup and bread with a hunk of cheese, and an expensive meal upward of 50 gs. That said, the food and drink are of excellent quality, as are other forms of entertainment.

Entry into High Hall, whether through Royal Gate or King's Gate, is unrestricted during the day—there is simply too much traffic for the guards to question everybody. Spot checks for weapons and other contraband are conducted periodically, although few guards have the nerve to demand a heahwisard submit to a pat down.

Once the gates are closed, only those with a legitimate need to be in High Hall may wander the streets. Citizens in this position, whether a visiting Mage-Prince or a lowly servant running an errand, are issued with an engraved disc—bronze for peasants, silver for honor nobles and important courtiers, and gold for heahwisards—stating their name and position. Failure to produce a disc at the guard's request leaves one subject to immediate arrest, regardless of social class.

2. THE ROYAL PALACE

When locals speak of the royal palace, they refer to the spire of marble and glass that stretches 100 feet into the sky. This grand structure, raised by elementals in a single night, houses the Mage-King's private chambers. Few are ever granted permission to enter this area—even many of the Mage-King's most important advisors deal with him only in his throne room. The two exceptions to this rule are Chancellor Praetris and Captain Versilax No-Staff, both of whom have unlimited access to their lord and master.

The wings either side are home to kitchens, store-rooms, and the rooms of household servants always on call to serve. Beyond this is a northern wing that serves as the barracks of the Mage-King's personal bodyguard. The most northerly building, closest to the Academy of Heahwisardry, is where the Council Elect gathers.

As one would expect, areas designed to be seen by visitors are opulent in the extreme—no expense has been spared on their decoration by successive Mage-Kings out to impress both their subordinates and foreign visitors.

3. THE MASTER OAK

In a courtyard in the palace grounds grows an old, gnarled oak. Folklore states that the seed was planted by Maera and that the master staves were carved from its branches. This is a myth—the founders of the Magocracy already had their staves—but belief is a powerful tool. Over the centuries, the tree has become a focus for heahwisard rituals, transforming it into a sacred place. While even the Mage-Princes come here on occasion to see if they are worthy of a blessing, none of the last three Mage-Kings have even stepped into the courtyard.

Some heahwisards come here to meditate in the hope the spirit of the tree, or that of one of the founders, will confer some secret knowledge or help solve a problem. Many stories exist concerning mages who gained wisdom in this manner, but critics (typically those who never benefitted) argue that any meditation can produce similar results.

Each House possessing a master staff is required to send four Arcane Hands to act as the tree's guardians. They have standing orders to use lethal force against anyone who tries to harm the tree.

The clerics of Maera who tend the tree are worried, for the Master Oak appears to be dying. Blight affects the leaves and fungus is eating at the bark. Ministrations by the cult of Eostre Plantmother have failed to cure either affliction.

Spirit Name: Staff-Blesser.

Ambience: The courtyard is a tranquil place. Heroes with Berserk cannot enter a rage here, and Bloodthirsty curs find they have no wish to take lives unnecessarily.

Deity: Maera.

Senses: Notice d6.

Communication: The spirit does not communicate to anyone. Heahwisards know whether they have been blessed or cursed because the tip of their staff turns silver (minor blessing), rainbow-hued (major blessing), or black (curse) for the duration of the boon or bane. Any covering placed over the tip burns away, making it impossible to conceal the marking.

Sacrifice: A heahwisard may offer sacrifice only on the anniversary of his Staff Day ritual. First, he must pour an alchemical potion (any type will do) on the roots of the tree. Second, he must loudly announce his title, full name, and sphere. Third, he must touch the tip of his staff to the trunk.

Powers: Staff-Blesser cares nothing for titles or spheres. When judging supplicants, she looks in their souls. Thus, any heahwisard who offers sacrifice has the same chance of being receiving a blessing. When proper sacrifice has been made, the GM should draw a card from the action deck.

A deuce means the mage has been found wanting. He receives -1 penalty to Heahwisardry rolls for the next three months (96 days). If it is a Jack through Ace, he is found worthy and receives a minor blessing. He gains +1 to his Heahwisardry roll for the same period. On a Joker, the blessing is a major one. The heahwisard increases his Wild Die by one die type (or gains a d6 if an Extra), but only for Heahwisardry rolls. Other cards mean the spirit confers no blessing or curse on the mage.

4. ACADEMY OF HEAHWISARDRY

More commonly known simply as the Academy (as if there were only one building in the world with that name), the school provides advanced education for the scions of the highest-ranking noble families. Only those whose parents hold the title Mage-Count or higher may study here.

Money cannot buy admission, nor does natural aptitude with magic lessen the entry requirements. This naturally means the school has very few students at any one time. This brings with it two main benefits. First, the student receives more personal training. Second, it gives him boasting rights among his fellow heahwisards.

Students are permitted to attend only at the age of ten, by which time they should have a basic education in literacy, local law and heraldry, and the cult of Maera.

Those who attend its majestic halls are trained to be masters of magic and men. Within its opulent dining hall, busts of alumni who went on to become Mage-King stare down with sightless eyes and stern features at the latest intake of students. Since it is most often first born children who are sent here, those likely to inherit higher titles later in life, the study of heraldry and law concerning foreign lands form an important part of the core curriculum, as does stewardship.

Heahwisards place great importance on noble titles and magical prowess in that order. While the Academy can do nothing about the former, it ensures students are equipped with the latter. As well as practical applications, such as mastering spells, it ensures they have a good grounding in the theory of the arcane arts.

Governing the school falls to Mage-Count Catianus of the Fifth Sphere. An uncle of Duke Eastheath on his mother's side, he has held the position for the past 13 years, having previously served as the dean's deputy for nigh on 30 years. He is a master magician and a Machiavellian politician of the highest order. No one doubts his loyalty to the cause of instructing the next generation of high-ranking nobles nor his practical mastery of the Academy's motto—"Power is everything."

While greatly respected, Catianus has few true friends. It might have something to do with the way he looks at people—a look that gives the impression he is plotting their imminent demise. He is also an expert at saying much but revealing very little, while acquiring a lot of information from those with whom he is conversing.

See *Arcane Lore* for game mechanics relating to the Academy.

5. DUELISTS' COLLEGE

A year after Mage-King Adolphus V sanctioned and codified mage dueling, he promptly announced the foundation of an academy devoted to the art. Students are typically scions down the pecking order, those with little or no hope of securing lofty titles.

The school trains students in the basic principles of mage dueling—how to defend and attack—as well as mental and physical strength. The nuances of dueling are something a heahwisard must master for himself.

Since there are rules allowing mages to appoint champions in their place, this is the role for which most students train. Students take to the Arena (see #6) on Monandaegs as part of their training. Here they hope to win public acclaim, which promotes their house, and more importantly, catch the eye of potential patrons.

Those who cannot find employment as duelists are well prepared for life as adventurers.

For obvious reasons, instances of the Siphoning are higher among students than those of other schools. While students do not study the subject to any great degree, the school provides sizeable donations to the College of Advanced Magical Study to investigate the phenomenon.

The current dean is Mage-Count Isatis of the Fourth Sphere, a scion of House Bremen. He has run the college for just three years, having assumed the post when the incumbent died suddenly in his sleep. An adventurer in his youth, Isatis has used magic in actual combat as well as in duels of honor. He is also regarded as a master of staff combat, having graduated with honors from the Staff College in Wyse.

Isatis has no interest in politics or currying favor with his superiors—his sole aim is to teach heahwisards how to defeat their enemies through the use of magic. He is a harsh taskmaster, punishing students who fail to meet his standards with liberal uses of a particularly potent finessed *stun* spell (Arcane, Selective).

See *Arcane Lore* for game mechanics relating to the College and information on the Staff College.

6. THE ARENA

Mage duels are held in the 1,000-seat amphitheater every Monandaeg. Seats vary in price from 2 ss to 20 gs. The price, and quality, of the refreshments is similarly varied. Most of the duels are between students still learning their art. What the audience hopes to witness is a true duel—a battle of honor between rivals. The winner of such a bout not only satisfies his honor, but a good show can earn him public adulation.

On other days, the amphitheater hosts plays, storytellers, and musicians. Tickets are half the price above, but even this does little to draw a crowd. Many stories exist of storytellers who traveled here in the hope of making their name and attracting a noble sponsor, only for them to play to an audience of one (and he was deaf, according to the most common punchline).

A near-empty arena does mean it is difficult to be overheard, making it an ideal venue to conduct business one wishes to keep secret.

7. PARK OF STATUES

Surrounded on three sides by a vast mausoleum, this small part is dotted with marble busts depicting former Mage-Kings. Constructed using now-forgotten spells, the older busts are animated and are capable of speaking a number of pre-programmed lines to visitors. The most recent bust of this kind is 136 years old.

Many years ago, a rumor began that the talking busts could reveal the location of hidden treasure. The story, so it is said, tells of a drunken heahwisard who staggered into the park late one night and touched the heads in specific places, whereupon he heard a riddle. Alas, the heahwisard could remember nothing of the riddle come

the morning. Wiser and older heads claim the story is nothing but an urban myth, dreamt up by peasants to distract heahwisards from more important duties, but this does not stop younger mages from fondling the busts in the hopes of unlocking the message again.

8. HIGH HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Owning very land beyond the city walls, and with space inside at a premium, Kingshall's dead are interred in one of two mausoleums. While deceased Mage-Kings may be buried either in their home province or in crypts beneath the royal palace, senior courtiers and the occasional peasant who served loyally and truthfully are buried here. The two-story building ran out of space long ago. To solve the problems, builders dug into the earth, excavating a network of corridors and chambers beneath the streets.

Until 30 years ago, the dead were watched over by the cult of Scaetha. The Mage-King then ruled that Maera would not permit her honored servants to rise as undead. To that end, he ordered the cult out of the city save for one cleric, who lives nearby and is permitted to conduct funeral rites, but only outside the mausoleum.

As befits their status, the dead are interred with rich grave goods, making the catacombs a prime target for thieves. Despite this, the city guard refuses to patrol the halls of the dead, claiming to have heard strange noises in the otherwise silent chambers.

9. THE GRAND TEMPLE

Dedicated to Maera, the temple is built on a monumental scale. Like many of her temples, it is circular in shape, representing the moon. The temple is broadly divided into three rings.

The outer ring is the largest and is as far as most laity may proceed. The laity enters through the huge doors into the public worship area, known as the Outer Temple. Its curved walls are adorned with tiered seating. By tradition, the lower one's title, the lower tier one must occupy. Also in the outer ring are workshops, storehouses, kitchens, servants' quarters, meeting rooms, and the public library.

The middle ring is reserved for the clergy, though laity may enter under escort with permission. As well as living quarters, there are private prayer rooms, meditation rooms, alchemical laboratories, and a well-guarded vault containing a selection of relics and forbidden books. Irrespective of social rank, access to the vault is at the whim of the high priest and it is an honor rarely granted. Those granted such privilege are always under the watchful gaze of a pair of keen-eyed paladins.

The inner ring, more correctly known as the Inner Temple, is the main focus of worship. Here, beneath a glass roof magically enchanted to show the night sky during the day but becoming crystal clear once the moon rises, clerics conduct the secret rituals that honor Maera, goddess of magic and divination.

Concealed beneath the temple are a network of crypts, where the remains of clerics are interred.

The temple supports 300 laity (around a third of whom live here), 100 priests, and 30 paladins. The high priest traditionally holds the honor title Prince of Kingshall, being bestowed the rank by the incumbent Mage-King on the cleric's elevation to the post. The current titleholder is Pertacus ap-Bellefor.

Pertacus has served in the role for 19 years. He never liked Mage-King Adolphus VI, and he doesn't like his successor, though he has always taken great pains to hide his feelings—the Mage-King may have no direct authority over the cult, but he can make life very difficult for a wayward high priest. Pertacus isn't exactly sure what it is about the current monarch he finds repulsive—all he knows is there is something "odd" about him, as there was about Adolphus VI, and that being in the Mage-King's presence makes his skin crawl.

10. COLLEGE OF ADVANCED MAGICAL STUDY

Most heahwisards are encouraged to crave political power and govern parcels of land for the betterment of their house. Some, though, wish to master a deeper understanding of the greater mysteries either in lieu of or before turning their attention to more worldly matters. Located in the Grand Temple, the college caters for just such souls.

The syllabus covers nothing concerning the practical application of magic, instead focusing purely on the theoretical at an advanced level. Pupils learn about the nature of the elemental realms and the Abyss, research the alchemical properties of plants and minerals, study arcane runes and other forms of magic, try to understand the nature and workings of the Siphoning, and learn about the entire pantheon of gods.

The incumbent dean, the head of the college, is Mage-Baron Albanix of the Fifth Sphere. Now in his late 80s, the elderly scion of House Haldri has served in the position for 46 years. An honors graduate of both the Academy and the College of Advanced Magical Study, Albanix is fascinated by all matters of magic. Years of study have taught him much, but left him with a large number of questions (such as why can magic not animate the dead, why can mortals not bind the threads of magic into permanent relics, and what is the nature of the elemental realms?)

When his duties and advanced age permit, he spends one evening a week dining with Arkhwisard Ignatius, the ambassador from Alantaris Isle (see #11). The ambassador may technically be a commoner in Magocratic society, but he is a learned man with some interesting ideas on the nature of magical energy and the elderly dean has never been for one titles or ceremony.

Albanix has led a long and productive life, but he is not yet ready to depart this world for the one beyond. He has accumulated a body of necromantic lore both from

Rassilon and Al-Shirkuh, through which he hopes to find a means to extend his life.

See *Arcane Lore* for game mechanics relating to the College.

11. EMBASSY OF ALANTARIS ISLE

While its merchants sell their wares at Port Helgen, Alantaris Isle has no formal trade agreements with the Magocracy—Port Helgen is simply the closest mainland port with routes to the central Hearthlands. As a result, the Council of Citizens has little interest in operating an embassy, although it has allowed a trade mission from the Magocracy in Imperial City.

The Convocation of Elementalists, however, is very keen to study the inner workings of the Magocracy and gain access to the Royal Library. To that end, it has agreed to assign an ambassador on behalf of the Council. Every member of the embassy staff is an elementalists and several hold the title of arcanologist (see *Arcane Lore*).

The current ambassador, Arkhwisard Ignatius ap-Quinault, finds dealing with heahwisards extremely frustrating. Despite being a powerful mage and an official representative of the Convocation, the heahwisards continue to look down their noses at him. Fortunately, the non-heahwisard courtiers with whom he has regular dealings show him the respect due his position and arcane title.

12. EMBASSY OF ANGARION

Despite asking that an embassy be constructed, the Shining King has never sent an ambassador to Kingshall. The grand wooden structure is utterly deserted. Thieves have never bothered looting it, for it is unfurnished. On occasion, hearth elves journeying to the enclave in Auldwood have arrived at Kingshall bearing official letters allowing them to use the embassy building as a refuge.

The current tensions between the two realms have led to rumors the elves have created a magical sanctuary inside, through which agents and assassins can enter Kingshall undetected should war break out. Several heahwisards have petitioned the Council Elect to have the embassy torn down, but they have never garnered enough support.

13. EMBASSY OF COGLELUND

As with all titles in Coglelund, that of ambassador can be bought. The price is astronomical (50,000 gs for a five-year term), but a shrewd ambassador can quickly recoup his outlay and make a profit. The embassy is responsible for awarding trade contracts with Coglelund, and a bribe goes a long way to ensuring a noble house receives a lucrative contract. Equally, merchants in Coglelund who want the Magocracy's trade to flow through their warehouses must bribe the ambassador.

The current ambassador is Merchant Baron Huidemar ap-Eustache. A dandy of the highest order (it said he nev-

er wears the same garment twice), he sold everything he owned to secure the position of ambassador. Two years into his term and he is already seeing a healthy return on his investment—Huidemar may appear a fop, but his head for business shames many clerics of Var.

14. EMBASSY OF VESTMARK

Vestmark has maintained an embassy in Kingshall since the end of the Saxa uprising, primarily to oversee trade. Since the rise of Orcmark trade has all but died.

The previous ambassador was recalled to fight on the frontline. In his place the king sent Hauld Horsa Edgert-sunu, a man well past his prime. Horsa spends his time trying to drum up military support for the war against the orcs. Alas, the heahwisards see the conflict as an internal problem and, so far, have declined the invitation to embroil themselves in the bloody struggle.

Horsa's pleas have not entirely fallen on deaf ears. Several young heahwisards with little hope of inheriting titles with any real authority have agreed to serve in Vestmark as mercenaries in the hope of securing a captaincy in the army once their tour is finished. Few have any understanding of both the monotony and butchery that comes with serving on an active battlefield.

15. THE FIVE SPHERES

The various Houses, great and small, are political and economic rivals, but they are not sworn enemies. When heahwisards in Kingshall wish to socialize and discuss matters of magic, rather than scheme and plot, they invariably end up in the Five Spheres.

Filling a six-story stone tower, the tavern takes its name because of its admittance rule. Rather than placing any relevance on social rank (which older heahwisards prefer), patrons are categorized by their sphere. Those of the First Sphere may use the ground floor facilities only, Second Sphere mages the second floor, and so on. There is no exception to the rule—heahwisards may always drink on a lower floor, but never on a higher floor than their sphere permits.

Since many high-ranking nobles have either a low sphere or little desire to socialize with lower ranks, they tend to avoid the establishment. Much of the clientele is thus made up of younger mages, those with little hope of achieving high title and who focus on becoming powerful practitioners of magic rather than politicians.

Non-heahwisards, even other spellcasters, may drink and dine in the newly built annex, but only if they are in the employ of or vouched for by a heahwisard patron. This rule can be waived for two types of person. Clerics of Maera, with whom heahwisards often confer, and scholars specializing in Knowledge (Alchemy or Arcana) may be guests of a heahwisard patron. In this case, they are permitted to drink on his floor.

The annex serves only cheap meals and drinks, though the quality is good. In the tower, one may purchase average or expensive refreshments.

No spellcasting is permitted inside the tower nor are Maintained spells cast outside allowed, though heahwisards are not required to give up their staves—everyone knows the rules, and there are plenty of retired Arcane Hands working as bouncers to help enforce the rule should anyone suffer a lapse of memory.

16. MAGE-INQUISITION

Founded by Mage-King Adolphus V in 483 IR, the Grand Order of Mage-Inquisitors, to use its full title, is responsible for policing heahwisards. The nobles despise the organization for two reasons. First, its members are all commoners. Second, its existence overthrows centuries of noble privilege.

Branches exist in every province, but Kingshall is the Mage-Inquisition's headquarters. Inside a reinforced building, inquisitors work diligently to gather and collate evidence sent in by agents across the Magocracy. There is also a small shrine to Hothar, god of justice.

The organization is run by the Lord High Mage-Inquisitor. His (or her) identity is a closely-guarded secret known only to the Mage-King and his immediate subordinates, the Grand Mage-Inquisitors, each of whom oversees activities in a given province. Investigations in Kingshall, which counts as a unique province for this purpose, are handled by Grand Mage-Inquisitor Adeline ap-Begon, a highly skilled investigator. She is also a priestess of Sanngetall, minor god of truth (see *Matters of Faith*).

17. THE FOUR LANTERNS

This tavern takes its name from the row of lanterns that hang over the main door. On nights of the new moon, none of the lanterns are lit. One is lit during the quarter moon, two for half moon, three during the gibbous moon, and all four during the full moon. The lanterns are always lit from left to right, mimicking the current waxing or waning phase of the moon in the night sky.

Inside, the lighting is kept low, casting deep shadows in the corners, while a thin haze of fragrant incense designed to relax patrons drifts through the drinking hall. Attached to the ceiling is a huge, round, wooden disc, painted with the constellations. Each season, the wheel is duly rotated to show the night sky as it would appear to someone standing outside.

Located close to the Grand Temple, the tavern primarily caters for clerics of Maera looking to escape the temple for a few hours or who want to converse with heahwisards and arcane scholars outside of the Five Spheres. While many sit with their heads in the proverbial clouds discussing complex arcane matters, not every conversation is on so lofty a subject—clerics of Maera are people too, and they meet here to engage in gossip. Such is the tavern's popularity that clergy commonly refer to it as "the annex."

There is little risk of troublesome heahwisards causing much harm here—every cleric of Maera knows *dispel* and her paladins are summoned to eject troublemakers.

18. HOUSE ESTATES

Each of the great houses maintains property in the capital, their current status reflected in how close the building is located to the Mage-King's palace. The estates exist only at the Mage-King's pleasure. They are not sanctuaries in which criminals can avoid arrest, nor are they treated with the same rights as foreign embassies—they are simply places where visiting officials and permanent appointees to the royal court stay when in town.

No House is permitted to station soldiers in Kingshall, but Arcane Hands are allowed as estate guardians. Many of the servants who maintain the estates are more than capable combatants.

19. THE GARRISON

Kingshall doesn't have a city watch. Policing and manning the walls falls to four heavy infantry companies—two veteran and two regular—garrisoned in High Hall. Unless the city is on alert, two companies are on duty at any one time—one mans the walls and gates, while the other patrols the streets.

The Garrison comprises four halls, each enough to sleep 100 men, officers' housing, the city armory, the city jail, training areas, and a parade ground.

20. ROYAL LIBRARY

The Royal Library is an impressive collection of books and scrolls dating back to the founding of the Magocracy. It is second only to the fabled library of the Citadel in terms of works on arcane matters, a fact that grates with the Convocation of Elementalists.

As well as the public library, to which anyone can in theory be granted permission, there is a restricted section. Only the Mage-King, Mage-Princes, and guests invited by these individuals may access the hidden lore.

The chief librarian, who holds the title Master of Lore, is always a heahwisard. He or she is appointed by the Mage-King and serves as long as he retains the king's favor. The incumbent is Mage-Baron Vibennius of the First Sphere, an incompetent magician but a learned scholar with a mind and wit as sharp as a razor. He can also be cantankerous, especially if he has gone too long without a puff on his pipe.

Assisting him are a dozen clerics of Maera and Hoenir and 20 junior heahwisards. Ten paladins of Maera (sent here from the Grand Temple's contingent), five paladins of Hoenir (permitted to carry weapons only in the library), and ten members of the Mage-King's personal guard provide security.

The smaller building north of the main library houses the living quarters of the paladins of Hoenir and junior heahwisards, a small shrine to the god of knowledge, and the restricted books.

Admission: Heahwisards and clerics of Maera. Others may apply in writing to the chief librarian for access. A reply is received within 1d4 months if living outside the Magocracy or 1d4+1 weeks if the would-be patron

is residing within the realm. The latter applies even to residents of Kingshall.

Rules: No weapons or spellcasting are permitted within the Royal Library. Patrons wishing a *speak language* spell may pay one of the clerics of Hoenir (costs 10 gs per casting).

Specialties: Alchemy, arcane matters, heahwisardry, the Magocracy.

Investigation Rolls: +2 general, +4 for specialties.

21. THE FOUNTAIN OF GOLD

When it comes to money, heahwisards fall into two broad camps—misers who deny themselves luxuries and spend every silver scield wisely, and those who spend coin like it is going out of fashion. The Fountain of Gold caters solely for the latter, and it does a roaring trade.

Run by Josiane ap-Serin, the Fountain of Gold is a high-stakes gambling house. Patrons can bet against the house or against each other in a variety of card, dice, and wheel of fortune games. The minimum stake on any game is 100 gs, an amount that ensures the peasants stay far away. It is a place where one can make or lose a fortune in a single night, and there are plentiful stories about heahwisards who achieved one or the other.

Josiane accepts letters of credit from gamblers whose luck runs out, but all debts must be paid before the end of the next month. Those who "forget" are swiftly reported to the authorities for non-payment of debts. In days of yore, such threats meant nothing to heahwisards, especially those who visited Kingshall only rarely. Since the advent of the Mage-Inquisition, though, nobles are very quick to settle their debts without any fuss.

Although she is not a cleric, Josiane is a cultist of Vali. Patrons down on their luck may be offered other ways to pay off their debts, such as small, seemingly innocuous favors. Somehow her victims always end up deeper in her debt. Despite being a corruptor, her games are not rigged—the laws of probability ensure that the games are in favor of the house.

LOW HALL

Low Hall, while pleasant enough a district, is distinctly middle- and lower-class. While High Hall is the domain of politics and scheming, Low Hall is the city's industrial and economic center, the place where things are made, bought, and sold.

The citizens work hard and they like to play hard. There are several taverns and a few inns where they can drink, eat, and listen to storytellers late into the night. The price of meals is as listed in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*. The quality is fair to good.

22. HALF MOON KENNELS

Suitably trained, moon dogs make ideal guardians and pets for heahwisards with a healthy sense of paranoia and full coffers. Given their supposed origin, it is no sur-

prise clerics of Maera prefer them as companions over normal canines.

The Kennels, as it is more popularly known, is owned by Mainet ap-Varocher. He breeds, rears, and trains moon dogs for wealthy clients. The cult of Maera has long given up trying to outlaw the trade—the heahwisards are strongly in favor of its continuance and Mainet has never mistreated his animals. Indeed, should Mainet learn of cruelty toward one of his beasts, its owner is permanently banned from owning another.

A typical specimen sells for 5,000 gs, an extraordinary sum for an average citizen of Kingshall, but easily affordable by mage-nobles with a steady source of income. As well as common moon dogs, he has several pedigree lines for sale. Prices below are in addition to the basic cost of a moon dog. These options can be combined.

Keen Senses: the dog has Notice d12 and Tracking d10 (+1,500 gs); *Savage:* the dog has the Frenzy Edge (+2,000 gs); *True Pedigree:* the dog is a Wild Card (multiply the total cost by three); *Vicious:* the dog has Fighting d8 and its bite does Str+d8 (+2,500 gs).

23. THE GILDED SWORD

Kingshall was never intended to be a center of mercantile activity, but its location and status has made it a popular stop for merchants. While it may sound like an inn or tavern, the Gilded Sword is actually a temple of Var and local hiring hall for the Iron Guild.

The combination of faith and protection did not come about by accident. The resident high priest, Profiteer Donicus ap-Evrard, bought an Iron Guild franchise as a means of expanding his business empire and increasing his profits. As Kingshall is the capital, and because plentiful caravans pass through the gates, the cleric was granted the rank of Gauntlet-General.

24. THE SIGIL

A shabby tavern in a rough neighborhood of Low Hall, the Sigil is the headquarters of Kingshall's sole thieves' guild, the Rainbow Knives. Although they operate from Low Wall, the thieves ply most of their trade in High Hall, with a specific focus on the noble's estates. Access after dark is no problem—while the heahwisards are safely ensconced behind the King's Gate, the sewers pass unobstructed under both parts of the city.

Stealing from any wizard brings with it certain inherent risks, but heahwisards are a paranoid bunch and spend small fortunes on magical and mundane protective measures. Only the most skilled thieves are awarded the opportunity to plunder High Hall, and even they must rely on alchemical devices to give them a sporting chance.

25. THE MAGIC MARKET

Heahwisards are as capable of creating alchemical devices as any type of mage, but few with high social rank bother—such work is seen as a distraction from more

important things, such as politics, and work suitable only for lesser practitioners of the arcane. While some nobles have an alchemist on their staff, at least in their main estates, those in Kingshall who require only the occasional device visit the Magic Market.

While the mage nobles refer to it as a separate entity, it is in reality one row of stalls in the Low Hall marketplace. It only operates on Monandaeg, though—the rest of the week the stalls are used by other traders. Each stall is rented by a licensed mage or cleric.

Arcane traders wishing to operate a stall must pay 2,500 gs to the Mage-King. This grants them the same space in the market for life. In the event they go out of business, retire, die, or otherwise cease trading, ownership of the stall reverts back to the Mage-King. The buying or selling of alchemical devices through any other channel is a serious crime. Even the cult of Maera must trade here, though its stall belongs to the temple rather than any individual cleric. Unless the cult ceases to be, its presence in the Magic Market is guaranteed until the end of time.

The local temple of Var does good trade hiring out Thieftakers on Monandaeg—alchemical devices are high value, low bulk items, and a common target for professional thieves and opportunists.

26. LOW HOUSE OF THE DEAD

A far less grand building than its counterpart in High Hall, the Low House and its sprawling maze of tunnels and crypts is where Kingshall peasants are buried. Space is far more limited and burials of whole bodies are extremely rare. Instead, corpses are stripped of their flesh (usually by leaving them outside the city gates for scavengers to pick clean) with only the bones buried in small niches.

27. THE WEARY WIZARD

While heahwisards look down their noses at other types of mage, peasants are inclined to treat anyone wielding supernatural powers with respect, if only out of fear of being turned into something unnatural.

Magical visitors (includes clerics) are welcomed at the Weary Wizard, an inn in Low Hall. Its sign depicts a red-faced wizard leaning heavily on a staff, while a large sign on the door proclaims "Wizards and Clerics Only!"

The proprietor, Mabile Three-Trays, owns a domesticated moon dog, Garm (Saxa for "Rag"). Always found lying just inside the door, the toothless old hound sniffs everyone who enters. If it barks, it means the patron has an Arcane Background and is thus due a warm welcome. If it growls, the customer is turned away. Mabile doesn't hand out exceptions, and those who think to argue are quickly reminded that every patron present knows the arcane arts.

28. TRANSIT WAREHOUSES

Goods intended for markets further afield are stored here awaiting collection. (Goods for the palace are stored

in warehouses in High Hall.) This includes the limited exports of Kingshall as well as bulk goods brought to the city by other merchants. Although supposedly protected by the city guard, Thieftakers are hired whenever a high-value cargo is delivered here.

Despite stringent security, reinforced doors with complex locks, and no windows, the thieves' guild does a steady business in robbing the warehouse, at least when the Thieftakers are not present. Gauntlet-General Donicus of the Iron Guild, who is also the local high priest of Var, has offered the services of Iron Guild mercenaries to the seneschal, but thus far he has been politely turned down. This has led some to question whether the seneschal is receiving bribes from the thieves' guild. Others wonder if Donicus is looking to expand his business empire by working alongside the thieves.

29. VITALIANA'S PARCHMENTERS

Heahwisards are notoriously fussy and exacting. In their vernacular, parchment is made from the skin of cows, goats, or sheep, while vellum refers solely to calfskin. Vellum may be better quality, and thus more desirable, but few heahwisards turn down the chance to buy parchment from Vitaliana ap-Dagwald, official supplier to the Mage-King.

The inheritor of a secret technique, her parchment is the superior of any vellum. The finest grade parchment costs 10 gs a sheet, but is greatly desired by alchemists—using a sheet in the creation of a scroll gives +1 to the Knowledge (Alchemy) roll. Using the parchment is an additional cost to the usual 50 gs per spell Rank.

Jealousy is an ugly thing, but the opportunity to become the primary supplier of any type of good to the Mage-King and his court leads many to adopt underhand tactics. Other parchmenters in Kingshall are spreading rumors that Vitaliana's source is not calfskin, but something far more unwholesome. Such rumors rarely find fertile ground, but whenever Vitaliana is questioned about the source of the skin she becomes very defensive and agitated.

30. ARCANE BITS

Although alchemical devices can only legally be purchased at the Magic Market, there is no law preventing the sale of alchemical ingredients.

Run by Felise ap-Renier, this small shop, located down a backstreet, sells high quality and exotic ingredients for all manner of alchemical devices. Inks, spices, herbal juices, ground gems, powdered monster parts or dried blood—you name it and Felise sells it (or can get it if she doesn't have it in stock).

Felise is the chief supplier to the Mage-King's personal alchemist, but sells to the public as a sideline. The cost of ingredients is not cheap. Although they only count as 50 gs worth when creating alchemical devices, her ingredients cost 100 gs per batch. However, such is their potency that they grant a +1 bonus to the Knowledge (Alchemy) roll when creating alchemical devices. Only one dose of

her materials can be used in the construction of a single device, though. The bonus stacks with similar modifiers, such as using Vitaliana's parchment (see #29).

The enterprising Anari has a second sideline—she is a Reliquis, a field agent of the Reliquary. Heahwisards are notoriously arrogant by nature, and the Reliquary has long strived to keep even the most minor relic out of their power-mad clutches. She has a standing arrangement with Kingshall's thieves' guild, backed by regular payments from the Citadel, that ensures any relics they “discover” end up in her hands.

31. EGBUTIUS THE BLIND

A retired priest of Maera, Egbutius was a gifted seer. He lacked any control over his visions, which came whenever he suffered a seizure, but his recall and clarity was first rate. As he grew older, so he was robbed of his normal vision by cataracts. At the same time, his seizures came less often but with greater intensity. Alas, the loss of his eyes also seemed to affect his second sight, for instead of crystal clear interpretations he began speaking in riddles. Eventually forced to retire on the grounds of ill health, the Mage-King granted him a house in Low Hall in which to spend his final days.

Egbutius last vision, which came only a month ago, has many people scared. Collapsing in the street, he began raving about “death beneath 12 stars.” Given that the crown of the Mage-King is adorned with a dozen gems, many wonder whether he has foretold the monarch's imminent demise.

BENEATH THE STREETS

As well as the occasional thief, the catacombs of the High House of the Dead are home to three clerics of Hela. As well as robbing the dead (which the thieves greatly resent), they are making use of the raw materials to raise a veritable army of the dead. Progress is slow but steady, with over 50 skeletons already bound to their eternal service. The clerics have taken advantage of tunnels excavated by generations of thieves, and now have access to both the crypts of the temple of Maera and the Low House of the Dead.

Neither the thieves' guild nor the cult of Hela has much interest in plundering the Low House—there is little wealth for the former and the disarticulated bones make for very poor undead servants, assuming they can be animated in the first place. Few citizens ever bother to visit their ancestors' remains, though, and parts of the catacombs have not had living souls pass through in many years, save for the thieves who store stolen goods here, that is.

Kingshall's sewers form a labyrinth of tunnels. Save for the main branches, they are too narrow for people to squeeze down. The sewers extend out far beyond the city, eventually bubbling up in the surrounding forest. Aside from rats, one is most likely to encounter a thief going to or from a job.

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