

Ars Magica

Living Lore



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Living Lore

C R E D I T S

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DIGITAL EDITION VERSION 1.0

Living Lore

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Welcome to *Living Lore*, a collection of mythic people, places, and treasures for your *Ars Magica* game. Each entry in this book adapts a genuine medieval legend for use in the game, and the collection provides a wide range of legendary events, brought to life for your saga. From the sands of Arabia to the magical islands of the western ocean, *Living Lore* covers the whole of Mythic Europe.

Some of the legends are short encounters, ready to be dropped into a session whenever you want the players to encounter something a bit different. Others are locations which could form the basis of a story or two. Still others could form the core of whole saga threads. You should look upon this book as a collection of tools to help you add the feel of medieval myth to your saga, and with that in mind you should not hesitate to adapt each legend to better fit your troupe.

Many of the myths that inspired these adaptations were tied to a particular location in Europe, but there is no need for your use of the legends to be. The land of Hop could be hidden in the Mediterranean as easily as in the western ocean, and treasures from Arabia could have been brought to Hibernia in the distant past. On the other hand, these legends might be a good way to motivate your characters to journey to distant parts, and see more of Mythic Europe than their own covenant.

Similarly, major characters in the legends could be replaced by player characters, or other characters close to the covenant. The names of saints can be changed to better fit your saga's history, Arion turned into a celtic bard, and al-Sharmadal replaced by a Roman magician.

So, read on and let your saga bring the legends to life.



Chapter 2

Places of Enchantment

The Legend of Beowulf's Barrow

by Matt Ryan

Beowulf is the protagonist of the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, which describes the deeds of the sixth century warrior, including his death and burial. Beowulf's people built a funeral monument to remember their king. The burial mound survived into the thirteenth century; the poem did not. It was rediscovered in the early 18th century. The lost-and-then-found aspect of this legend provides a perfect opportunity for the player characters to explore a site that is famous to modern readers and unheard of to the medieval population.

Beowulf was a King of the Geats, a Scandinavian tribe who lived on the southern tip of Sweden during the fifth and sixth centuries. Before becoming king, the heroic warrior defeated the monstrous ogre, Grendel, an evil beast that had been killing the men of a nearby Danish monarch. Beowulf was rewarded with many gifts, but the greatest was the fame that he received after killing the fiend. Beowulf eventually became king of his people. He was a kind and strong ruler who kept the Geats' enemies at bay: the cunning Frisians, the ruth-

less Swedes, and the bloodthirsty Franks. For half a century the lands of the Geats remained peaceful and prosperous.

After fifty years, one of Beowulf's retainers discovered a sleeping dragon hidden in a barrow called Earnaness ("Eagle's Headland"). The man stole a golden cup from the dragon's hoard, waking the dragon and provoking its wrath. The great winged serpent destroyed the nearby farms with its fiery breath. Beowulf was determined to slay the dragon. With thirteen of his companions, Beowulf traveled the jagged coast to Earnaness, the dragon's barrow. Reminiscent of his fight with Grendel many years before, Beowulf entered the battle alone. His loyal retainers stood back, overlooking their liege.

Unafraid, Beowulf fought the dragon. But as strong as the king of the Geats was, the venomous serpent was stronger. Beowulf called to his retainers for aid, but they fled, frightened of the foul monster. Only Wiglaf, the youngest of the companions, dared to remain and assist his king. With the young warrior's aid, Beowulf wounded the dragon, but not before the beast bit the king's neck with its fatal bite. The warriors incorrectly believed the beast was dead, and its fate is detailed in the Acidius legend.

Pointing to the headlands called "Hroneness" ("Cape of the Whales"), Beowulf selected that site for his burial mound before dying. Wiglaf assembled the





Geats and told them of their king's death and his funerary wishes. The mourning Geats built a great pyre for their dead king, piling it high with gifts of treasure, weapons, and armor. They then set it ablaze and cremated their king. The smoke from the pyre rose straight up to heaven.

After the cremation, the Geats built a tall barrow out of piled stones at Hroneness. This rocky pile, called Beowulf's Barrow, would also act as a coastal marker for sailors. The Geats built a strong stone wall around the barrow, and another funeral ceremony began. Twelve of the noblest Geat thanes rode round the barrow, while an old woman pulled her hair and wailed in grief. At the ceremony's culmination, Wiglaf placed a curse on the tomb protecting it from thieves. After Beowulf's passing, the enemies of the Geats descended on the tribe, annihilating the

tribe. All that is left of the famous king and his people is this burial mound, "Beowulf's Barrow."

Adaptation

Beowulf's Barrow is at Hroneness, a slender cape located on the western shore of Sweden across the ocean from Denmark. This isolated location makes the site relatively inaccessible. Player characters interested in exploring the barrow must either sail through the temperamental straits of the Baltic Sea or descend from the northern Scandinavian steppes. Drab fog drapes the cape with tattered clouds of ashen gray. The weathered grave monument sits at the end of a bony finger of rock, which pokes out into the brackish ocean. The tumultuous sea crashes against it, washing over



Twelve Ghostly Thanes

The ghosts are the lingering spirits of the twelve thanes who failed Beowulf when he fought the dragon. They were trapped in spirit form as a result of Wiglaf's curse, and charged to protect the final resting-place of the king. For hundreds of years these twelve have been haunting the barrow, ever watchful and patient.

When in material form, the ghosts look like ghostly-faced copies of sixth century Geatish warriors. They wear iron chain hauberk armor, carry a large, round shield with their left hand, and have a longsword held in their right. They sit astride shaggy ponies, which adds both to their mobility in combat and a +3 melee bonus to any melee rolls against unhorsed opponents (mounted vs. unmounted). While materialized they are subject to weapons, but the ghosts cannot be slain; loss of all their Body levels merely forces them to revert to their immaterial, ghostly nature. They may not re-assume material form until a day passes.

The ghosts are still a threat even after being reduced to their immaterial state. In their non-corporeal form they swirl around the intruders, appearing as man-sized, savage-faced patches of grey fog. They howl at the group, using their Night-Fear ability to terrorize them and frighten them off. Characters only need to make one Bravery check to stand up to the terrible spirits.

Since the bodies of the ghosts are not present, they can not be exorcised, but certain magical spells can permanently banish the ghosts. Removing Beowulf's ashes from the barrow will also cause the ghosts to fade out of existence within a month or so. They will have failed, again, to protect their king.

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

Spirit Might: 20

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Vengeful +3

Wpn/Atk	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+5	+4	+2	+6
Longsword & shield*	+8	+9	+13	+6	+8
Longsword & shield**	+6	+7	+11	+6	+6

* mounted

** unhorsed

Soak: +8

Fatigue levels: n/a

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Mist-form

Abilities: Brawling 4 (dodging), Ride 3 (attacking infantry), Shield & Weapon 5 (longsword & round shield), Speak Anglo-Saxon 4 (cursing in battle).

Powers:

Cloak of Humanity [Mu/Co, re: Au, Aq, level 40], 4 points: The ghosts can assume material form. In this state they look like Geatish warriors, riding horses, wearing chain armor and armed with a longsword, and a round, wooden shield. The ghosts have an eerie, ghostly cast to their facial features and their skin is a uniform pallid gray.

Night-Fear [Cr/Me level 20], 2 points: In their non-corporeal form, the ghosts use this power to scare off tomb robbers. Each use of this power affects one person. The targeted person must make a Bravery stress roll of 9+ or flee, moving as quickly away from the barrow as possible. Once a Bravery roll is successful, characters are immune from further Night-Fears.

Equipment: Ghostly chain mail hauberk, horse, longsword, and round shield.

Encumbrance: -2 (0 when mounted)

Vis: n/a





the pebbled coast and eating away at the barrow and its protective wall. The once-tall structure has been eroded to a smaller pile of worn rocks. The barrow is no longer useful as a coastal marker; in fact it will take a shrewd observer to even spot the clump of piled stones.

Once at the promontory characters may view the barrow more closely. The entire headland is infused with the essence of magic. In game terms, player characters will automatically enter a +1 magical regio. The high wall that the Geats built surrounding the grave mound is now merely a shadow of its former self. It lies in a broken circle around the barrow, torn open with several large gaps. Past the wall is the barrow itself. It is a few paces in diameter, sitting ten paces inside the encircling wall. Chilling winds whistle around the grave site, swirling around the lumpy contours of the broken wall and tumbled down mound. The weather is always cold and gloomy regardless of the time of day or the season of the year. The mound has been untouched by human hands for seven centuries. Those able to manage any sort of excavation, either mundane or magical, will find nothing under the rocky pile.

But there is something here. It is not found under the barrow, but over it. A magical regio exists, a separate location that rests “atop” the barrow. This second regio has a magical strength of +5. It overlies the barrow and its border follows the curve of the ancient wall. Refer to “Entering and Leaving Regiones” on page 245 of *ArM4*.

Those entering the regio see an entirely different barrow. It is perpetually night inside the magical region. Blades of lightning stab the sky and booming thunder envelops the player characters. Between the crashes of thunder, the distance dirge of a wailing woman can be heard. Thick fog rolls up from the sea, damp and clinging, saturating the characters’ clothes with a primeval chill. Hidden in the fog are the ghosts of the twelve thanes who circled the barrow centuries ago. They are not imme-

diately discernible, but characters possessing certain abilities, like Second Sight, may see them. Other magical means may also reveal the hiding ghosts.

Inside the regio, the edifices are magnificent. The wall, which now stands behind the player characters, is at least four yards high and has no exits. The ghosts use this to their advantage if the intruders decide to violate the barrow. Just like in the mundane world, the mound sits ten paces inside the enclosure. The barrow is six paces in diameter and nearly five yards tall, constructed of seemingly freshly stacked stones. Player characters making a careful search of the barrow will find a loose patch on one side of the mound. These stones can be removed to allow entry into the barrow. Inside lie the grave goods of the dead king. True to the legend, the barrow holds a great hoard of wealth, the assembled funeral gifts of the Geats. Gold necklaces, bright hauberks, shining weapons, and other wonders of craftsmanship line the walls. Glittering gold and precious gems litter the ground. Gold cups and plates perch on piles of gleaming coins. Thick gold armbands and jeweled rings are scattered about the interior. The hoard surrounds a stone chair, which sits in the center of the mound.

On top of the stone throne is a ceramic jar holding the ashes of the great Geat King. These ashes are a rich collection of raw vis. The vis can be of any type and should be detailed to most benefit the needs of a storyguide’s saga. Appropriate types of vis are Rego, for Beowulf’s kingly nature, Ignem, for his fiery burial, Corpus, since they are the ashes of a man, Vim, because of the heavy pagan nature of past magic, or Perdo, because of the dragon’s poison. The amount of vis ought to be based on the level of available vis in a group’s personal saga. This treasure is meant to be vast and awe-inspiring, so a good rule of thumb is to set the total amount of vis at 2 or 3 times the magi’s covenant’s annual collection of vis. Characters finding this cache ought to be

rich for a fair amount of time, but not indefinitely. It isn't a good idea to make this an annual source of vis, as repeated trips to Beowulf's barrow would diminish the significance of finding such a legendary site.

Entering the barrow activates Wiglaf's curse, causing the ghosts of the twelve thanes to materialize. Twelve pale and haggard-faced ghost warriors ride out of the mist, wearing mail and helmets and holding drawn swords. Though ghosts, these warriors assume a material form, and the damage inflicted from their sharp swords is terribly real. They wait in the yard between the wall and the barrow for the tomb raiders to exit the mound, hoping to catch them unaware and encumbered with plunder. Uninterested in any sort of parley or surrender, the ghosts viciously attack the group. They continue fighting until they lose their material forms, after which they continue to harass the intruders with their ghostly night-fear ability. The insert contains statistical information for the ghosts, as well as guidelines for using them in the combat.

Story Hooks

The story of Beowulf fell out of vogue when the Norman invaders subjugated the Anglo-Saxon courts of England in 1066. Once this transformation occurred, old Anglo-Saxon stories ceased being told and French stories became popular. Besides the disappearance of the story, the Geats, too, had been destroyed in the sixth century. It is unlikely that any tale of Beowulf, in the form of popular entertainment, would circulate to the characters' covenant. The two most sensible story ideas occur either through specified research or because of an accident.

The research hook depends upon a magus or companion who likes to spend his time browsing through ancient texts. All one needs are a place that would retain obscure texts. Several locations on the

British Islands are appropriate; Irish monasteries are known for hanging on to all sorts of manuscripts, as are monastic communities in Scotland, Wales, and many of the smaller islands. Someone leafing through the texts at an old monastery might come across a battered copy of the Beowulf poem. Ecclesiastics are not the only people in Mythic Europe who collect ancient texts; The Order of Hermes does as well. Tucked away in some of the grander libraries of the Order may lie a forgotten copy of the poem. A discoverer may be one of the player's characters, but it may also be a magus friendly to the players' covenant, who, for whatever reason, wishes to recover the treasure. A bibliophile magus may not be comfortable undertaking a dangerous mission and may seek out the player characters for help. Used in this way, Beowulf's Barrow would be the culmination of a long journey.

Rather than the focus of a tale, Beowulf's Barrow could also be used in an accidental manner. The Barrow is located on the shores of a rocky coast, beset by tumultuous and temperamental weather. An unforeseen storm could easily blow a ship sailing the North Sea off course. Players could find their characters shipwrecked on a barren coast with a strange promontory of rock drawing their attention. After a long and stormy night, player characters might wake in the morning with their vessel beached on a rocky shore. As the morning fog lifts, they might spy the barrow, sitting further out on the rocky spur.

Although the Beowulf legend has a specific location, storyguides do not need to rigorously adhere to it. The barrow could sit on any isolated coast, making this scenario more useful to troupes whose covenant does not lie near the Scandinavian countries. Adapting this for other locations would simply mean changing a few names. Beowulf need not have been a Geat; he could have been a Vandal, a Goth, or any tribe of old pagan people.

Storyguides may also combine this legend with the Acidus legend adaptation.





Characters looking for the dragon's barrow could mistakenly stumble upon the burial barrow, and vice versa. Both legends can be knotted together. Perhaps the only way to completely remove the ghosts is to destroy their king's destroyer: the dragon. Or, those same bibliophile researchers who discover the tomb at Hroneness will also discover Earnaness, and they may wish to investigate both sites. Considering that the characters may have a long journey to reach these barrows, a storyguide could create a lengthy story arc surrounding the old Anglo-Saxon legend.

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The Dragon of Beowulf

by Nathan Hook

Translated from Anglo-Saxon (through some scholars have referred to it as 'the oldest surviving work written in English'), *Beowulf* is an epic tale of his victories as a young warrior and eventual death. It dates from between the middle of the seventh and the late tenth centuries.

In his youth, Beowulf goes on an expedition and fights the man-eating monster Grendel, and goes on to become king. Fifty

years later, a dragon is awoken by thieves and terrorizes the land. The creature guarded the hoard left by 'the last survivor of a forgotten race.' Beowulf and one loyal companion face the creature in personal combat. Beowulf's sword breaks against it due to a flaw, but he delivers a fatal wound with his knife before slowly dying of the dragon's poison. The hoard contains countless treasures, including a glowing standard made entirely of gold.

Acidius, A thing of poison in dragon form, and the barrow of the fallen Eagle Standard

Nearly a thousand years ago, a Roman centurion placed the treasures of his legion in an even more ancient barrow for safe keeping. His legion had fallen to the barbarians who had poisoned a nearby water supply in the most dishonorable and cowardly way. The centurion hoped to keep the relics safe, and report back, but he too died of the poison he had already drunk. As he died, he called out to his gods to take vengeance upon the barbarians and to guard the relics until a Roman should return for them.

The barrow lay within a magical aura, and some great being of the realm of magic heard his dying call. Within a few years a great dragon whose fiery breath was poison to all life had made its home in the barrow, where it yet lurks, watching and waiting. The creature had answered the call for vengeance, and upon vengeance it feeds.

A few centuries ago, Beowulf came and fought the creature, and believed it slain. His blade and his heroism had driven the creature back, but he acted out of vengeance, and out of vengeance it survived to come again.

Acidius, A Dragon of Poison and Vengeance

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +4, Pre +4,
Com N/A, Str +8, Stm +9, Dex +1,
Qik 0

Magical Might: 60

Age: 836 years (at least)

Size +5

Personality traits: Vengeful +6, Guarding
+5, Cruel +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite	+8	+15	+12	+18
Breath	+13	+8*	N/A	**

* Only a Brawling defense is allowed —
this cannot be parried.

**See below.

Soak +30

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -1/-1,
-3/-3, -5/-5, Incapacitated

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3,
-5/-5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Breath of Molten Venom, CrIg & PeCo, 5 points. The dragon's fiery breath causes +15 damage to all targets in a circle of radius 10 paces, and any targets affected are also poisoned. Treat the effect as *The Wound That Weeps*, except that the penalties come from the poison rather than blood loss. A Chirurgy roll of 9+ will successfully bleed out the poison, but doing so causes a single further level of fatigue damage. If the creature is inside a confined space (e.g.. its home barrow) the breath deals +30 damage. The breath may also ignite flammable things (e.g.. houses, robes) that it touches. Characters in the middle of the blast cannot dodge completely. Instead, treat a successful dodge as throwing themselves to the floor, reducing the damage bonus by 10.

Sense the Rightful Heir, InMe, 1 point. Should someone claim to have come to take the treasure, the dragon will employ this to detect whether or not

their claim is true. See story hook below.

Feed from Vengeance, CrAn & CrVi, 0 points. Every time someone enters the area covered by the aura with vengeful intent or commits a notable vengeful act within it, the dragon gains one point of Might. If the act also involves poison it gains five Might. Of course, those who dwell in the aura are naturally vengeful, and so feed and sustain it. This creates an ongoing cycle of vengeance in the area, and is the source of the dragon's long life span. If the creature gains ten Might, the barrow's aura rises by one. If it gains twenty Might, the wider aura rises by one. Note that these acts of vengeance only count if chosen by free will. The creature may influence personality, but it does not compel.

Harmed by Forgiveness, PeAn & PeVi, 0 points. Every time someone enters the aura with a forgiving intent or commits a notable act of forgiveness within it, the dragon loses one point of Might. This can cause a drop in the level of the aura, at the same rate as the gain noted above. This 'power' is not under the dragon's control, triggering automatically and offering a way to defeat it. If it runs out of Might it dies, its body fading away. As above, only freely chosen acts count for this purpose, and magical attempts at control to achieve this do not help. The characters may best succeed by relying on the social skills of the companions. The creature is here because of actions taken by the hand of man, and it is best defeated by the hand of man.

Vis: 4 points of Animal Vis in each of its two horns. 16 points of Perdo Vis in its blood.





Acidius is a 'slick-skinned' creature, the length of six horses from nose to tail. Though capable of winged flight, it spends its days sleeping in the barrow. It is the color of darkest night with an evil glint in its eye coupled with the imperious noble bearing of a thing of Rome.

Acidius normally sleeps, guarding the treasure until the return of its rightful owner. However, should the barrow be disturbed and any of its artifacts taken, Acidius will fly out to terrorize the countryside in vengeful anger. Its breath is 'molten venom,' capable of burning villages and poisoning livestock and people.

The barrow itself is within a magical aura (level 6), as is the surrounding area (level 3). Those who dwell within it become slowly twisted and bitter. In game terms, those who spend a season here gain +1 in the personality trait Vengeful, up to

the level of the aura they are in. This aura level may change as noted below.

Inside the mound lie a number of artifacts. Some of these are the burial goods of the original builders, some the relics of the Roman legion. Of particular note is the glowing standard, sacred to the old Roman gods and crowned with the eagle of Jupiter holding a bundle of thunderbolts. When in the presence of battle, the standard subtly catches the light so as to look impressive (Relg 5). More importantly, it banishes fear from any body of men that carries it at the fore (PeMe 25). The standard may also attract the attention of the Roman 'gods' who reside in the realm of Magic (perhaps even including Hermes), to the extent that they hear any prayers said to them in its presence and may answer as their powers allow.

Many characters (and players) may well assume that this is an infernal creature.



The fact that it is not should serve as a reminder that not all 'evil' comes from the pit. Instead it is from the realm of magic, the same realm that the Magi themselves are tied to by the Gift. To inhumane Magi, it shows them a reflection of what they themselves are or may become. To kinder Magi, it reminds them that magic can be a dark force in the world. Magi who condemn the dragon as an ancient evil of great woe should remember that the common folk say the same things about them and their sodales. Ideas are larger, more pronounced and made manifest in the Magical realm, as this creature demonstrates. Characters may eventually understand that what they face is more a concept than a creature, and come to fight it accordingly.

Story Hooks

- The magi are looking for a site for a new covenant, and find a magical aura that at first seems suitable. However, as they begin construction tempers begin to flare and petty infighting among the workmen becomes commonplace. The magi also start scouting around for Vis sources, and come across an ancient barrow. Is the site still worth using, and can they prevent anyone from angering the slumbering dragon? Perhaps magi will be determined enough to promote vengeful actions so as to have a more powerful aura for their covenant.
- The magi hear of the old legends of Beowulf (perhaps even finding the text that survives into the modern day in our world), and of the hoard of treasure within the Barrow. It is said to include a magical Roman standard that glows with light, perhaps a relic from the Cult of Mercury. Of course, if they manage to slip in and remove it, the dragon will rise and wreak havoc on the entire region, burning down villages. The Quaestores are likely to look unfavorably upon such a result if they trace it back, since the destruction of mundane resources in the region will impact on other Covenants. On the other hand, the player magi could be working to investigate why a dragon is ravaging the countryside, and how they can put a stop to it.
- The Roman Centurion placed the relics there hoping that one day a Roman would return to claim them once more. The Order of Hermes can actually claim to be the rightful heir to old Roman glory, and perhaps one or more magi can trace their family trees (knowingly or otherwise) back to the Romans. One of the player magi could really be the true heir, come to reclaim his lost ancestral birthright. All he need do is have the courage to claim it from its guardian.
- One or more Seekers come across the references in the legend. Some may believe that the 'last survivor of a forgotten race' refers to an Old One, and/or that the dragon is itself the Old One in question. They therefore go to investigate. Through they are set to be disappointed, the treasure could contain some relics from the Cult of Mercury and so offer them another clue in their ongoing search for the Old Ones. However, the relics also depict certain rituals already discovered and keep secret by the Quaestores (see Houses of Hermes), who will no doubt prefer to maintain control of such things and keep them out of the hands of the rest of the Order. However it would be politically difficult for the Quaestores to simply come and claim them from the magi.
- The magi learn that the dragon has endured for centuries, and seek to study it to create or improve upon their longevity potions. After defeating it, they begin to experiment with its blood.





However, they learn in time the reason for its power, that it feeds upon the vengeance and by extension the suffering of others. Similarities to the Tremere experiments may come to mind, and suspicions of infernal taint may well be aroused. Though not actually infernal, the magi who use such potions find themselves gradually twisted, almost becoming spirits of vengeance themselves. Eventually one may even succeed, gaining immortality at the cost of humanity, warping into a dragon to guard the barrow. Perhaps even that will shed new light of the cycle of life and the nature of immortality. Perhaps Beowulf did actually slay the original creature and some later wizard took its place in this manner.

- Mysterious hints try to warn or help the magi during the above stories. These could be from the ghost of the last

Centurion, who waits without the peace of death until one can come to reclaim the relics and undo the dishonor of his legion's failure. On the other hand, it could be a demon in the guise of the ghost, trying to manipulate the magi into awakening the dragon through their greed for treasure or into promoting the feelings of anger in the area.

- The barrow was there long before the dragon took up residence. What older secrets lie within it? Perhaps an entrance to a regio lies inside the barrow, or perhaps those first interred there are not happy at the misuse of their final resting place. Perhaps the cycle of vengeance predates the Roman events and goes back even further, or perhaps the site was holy to a local magical deity who answered the Roman's call on a whim.

Hound of Artemis

The beasts of Arkea are larger and more fierce than their cousins found in the wider world. But the forest is also home to special creatures, chosen to accompany the goddess when she hunts. While these creatures are referred to as 'hounds', they include panthers, lions, and wolves. Regardless of exterior form, all share the same statistics. These creatures are highly intelligent and can communicate with the goddess and with others of their kind. As a note, anyone who slays one of these beasts and takes its vis is certain to incur the wrath of the goddess.

Characteristics: Int +0, Per +5, Pre +0, Com +0, Str +3, Sta +6, Dex +3, Qik +6

Magical Might: 8

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Cunning +4

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Claw/Bite +9 +7 +5 +12

Soak: +12

Fatigue: +5

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5 Incapacitated

Vis: 2 pawns Animal in teeth or claws.

Source

Beowulf: A new translation. Seamus Heaney, 1999, p. 70-74, 80-82, 84-89

The Grove of Artemis

by Keith Baker

In the eyes of the Byzantine church, there was little difference between the demons of Hell and the spirits of pagan traditions. In the life of St. Theodore of Sykeon, the saint once "heard tell of a certain place called Arkea" that it was impossible for anyone to go near it, especially at the midday hour, because it was rumored that Artemis, as men called her, dwelt there with many demons and did people harm

Artemis, Forgotten Goddess

The true nature of this being is something that the storyguide will have to decide. It may be that she really is Artemis — the remnant of a once-powerful goddess, now weakened by centuries of neglect. Or she might simply be a powerful magical being — an embodiment of the energy present in the woods, that has settled on the identity of Artemis as a convenient mask for interacting with mortals.

Whichever option is taken, she is an extremely powerful being who should not be dealt with lightly. She is aware of all that transpires within her forest during the hours of daylight. Mortals interest her only to the degree to which they provide her with entertainment or diversion, and if they provide no obvious entertainment she will come up with a way to make things more interesting — which is to say a hunt. She has a memory that spans centuries, and an infinite capacity for vengeance and vendettas; she will never forget a wrong or an insult that has been done to her, even if it was accidental. She is also extremely protective of the beasts of her forest. While she may choose to hunt them herself, anyone else who harms one of her creatures will face a heavy penalty.

When playing Artemis, it is important to convey her inhuman nature to those dealing with her. She appears as a lovely young Greek woman — the archetypal virgin huntress, with a silver bow and a simple tunic of pure white cloth. But her eyes hold too much knowledge for one so young, and seem to burn into the mind of anyone who meets her gaze. Her face and form are also almost too beautiful to look upon; her beauty seems to grow with each passing moment, searing itself into the mind of those who look at her until they finally turn away. Her voice is clear and piercing, and all who hear her talk will believe her to be speaking in the language they know best. She will instantly recognize magi or other supernatural

beings (characters with faerie blood, for example) for what they are; if anyone attempts to threaten her, she will take it as a challenge, and most likely set her hounds on the offender.

Finally, it should be noted that in spite of all her power, Artemis is trapped in the forest of Arkea. She cannot leave Arkea or influence events beyond its borders in any way. If someone were to revive her cult close by, it is possible that this would provide her with a conduit to affect the outside world — then again, it might not.

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +6, Pre +5, Com +3, Str +2, Sta +5, Dex +5, Qik +5

Magical Might: 75

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Proud +7, Vengeful +7, Easily Bored +2

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling (fists)	+11	+12	+11	+2
Silver Bow	+14	+17	+11	+20

Soak: +30 (Reduced to +10 vs. Blessed Weapons)

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Banished

Abilities: Animal Handling 8 (Healing), Athletics 8 (running), Awareness 8 (alertness), Brawling 6 (dodging), Bow 10, Hunt 10 (tracking), Magic Sensitivity 7 (Arkea), Sense Holiness and Unholiness 7 (Arkea), Stealth 8 (Natural Areas), Swim 6 (Arkea)

Powers:

Escape the Snare, ReCo 50, 5 points: Artemis may disincorporate at will, thus escaping a life-threatening situation. She can reform at a later time of her choosing, at which point she emerges from the pool in her grove, at the same body level and with the same Might she possessed when she escaped (minus the five points of Might used to escape). The presence of a holy relic or individual in her grove will prevent her from reforming.





Gift of the Wild, Cr/PeCo 40, 5 points: Through use of this ability, Artemis can heal or induce diseases commonly associated with wild beasts, such as rabies. She can also use this power to cure natural poisons.

The Immaculate Beast, MuAn 15, 3 points: As the spell of the same name.

Master of the Savage Heart, ReAn, 0 points: Natural animals will not harm Artemis unless she wills them to do so.

Mind of the Beast, MuMe 30, 3 points: As the spell of the same name.

Opening the Tome of the Animal's Mind, InAn 25, 0 points: As the spell of the same name.

Shape of the Hunted, MuCo 40, 5 points: This power allows Artemis to transform her target into any natural creature. She can also use this power on herself in order to assume an animal form. Unlike most Muto Corpus effects, the range of this ability is Eye, not Touch.

Shelter the Savage Soul, ReVi, 0 points: Artemis can apply half of her natural

magic resistance to all animals within two hundred feet.

Soothe Pains of the Beast, CrAn 20, 1 point: As the spell of the same name.

Soul of the Hunter, MuMe 25, 2 points/hour: While this power is in effect, the target receives a +2 bonus to her Athletics, Bow, Hunt, and Stealth skills. Artemis may not use this power on herself.

Vision of the Marauding Beast, InAn 25, 0 points: As the spell of the same name.

Weaknesses: As noted above, Artemis cannot stand to be in the presence of an individual with three or more faith points (the result of True Faith or relics); she will immediately use her *Escape the Snare* power to flee from the presence of such a being.

In order to restore her Magical Might, she must bathe in the waters of the Grove of Arkea for at least one hour.

Vis: The bow of Artemis cannot be used by a mortal being, but it will yield 15 pawns of Animál and 15 pawns of Perdo if it can be taken from Arkea.

even unto death." St. Theodore set off to cleanse this place of its evil, but "owing to Christ's protection" the spirit would not reveal herself and the saint ultimately returned home empty-handed. But what would happen to a visitor who was not shielded by the power of the Divine?

This location could serve a variety of purposes: mystical curiosity, arcane ally, or dangerous threat. It would make sense for Arkea to be found in the Latin Empire within an area where Artemis was originally worshipped, but the precise location can be adjusted to fit the needs of a saga.

The Demons of Arkea

Arkea is a small wooded regio in the lands of the Latin Empire. On the surface,

there is little remarkable about the area, nothing to draw attention to it either politically or economically. But if one is traveling through the region, one will hear stories at taverns and hostels. Fellow travelers may suggest alternate routes, speaking of dangers that lie within the woods. A minstrel has a song to sing, telling of a man driven mad by the spirit of Artemis and the demon horde in the woods of Arkea. If the matter is pursued, it is a common belief amongst the superstitious folk that live in the vicinity of the woods. It is said that the pagan spirit lurks in a grove deep within Arkea, attended by a troop of vicious demons, and that any who come upon her are driven mad, or even struck dead by the sight alone. Other stories say that Artemis and her hounds will hunt down those who enter the wood. Both stories agree that contrary to

the usual nature of the forces of darkness, in Arkea it is midday that is the most dangerous time; it is then that Artemis comes to bathe in the springs of Arkea, and then that her attending demons are most savage and apt to strike.

The forest itself is about eight miles from the nearest village. At a distance in daylight it seems like a beautiful, unspoiled place, filled with vivid colors. There are certainly no immediate signs of danger; no unholy auras or signs of decay. Instead the air is filled with the rich scent of flowers, and the calls of birds echo through the trees. However, those who are sensitive to such things may feel a powerful flow of mystical energy. The edges of the forest have a magical aura with a rating of 2, and this becomes stronger as one ventures deeper into the regio. The creatures of the wood have been altered slightly by this energy; they are not as otherworldly as the beasts of

Faerie, but they are larger and brighter in color than they should be; birds seem to watch explorers with an almost human sentience, and brilliantly colored spiders spin webs that seem to gleam like crystal.

The power of the area fluctuates based on the time of day; for a two hour period surrounding midday, all magical auras are one level higher. During the hours of darkness, the strengths of the auras drop by two. At this time the forest almost seems to be dead; the birds and beasts go into hiding and silence fills the air. With the magical aura value at zero, the gateway to the regio temporarily vanishes until morning and magic return.

The Grove of the Goddess

Most of those who enter Arkea are searching for the hidden grove that is said





Spirit of Madness

Artemis and her hounds are the most obvious threat within the forest of Arkea, but they are not the only danger. There is some truth to the legends of the “host of demons” that protect the goddess. These spirits may be attached to Artemis, or they may be a natural emanation of the forest itself. Their power is to amplify feelings and emotions until they threaten to drive a victim mad.

These spirits are largely immaterial; the high soak value is based on the lack of a body, as opposed to physical fortitude. The spirit cannot attack directly, and can only harm a target using magic. A spirit of madness appears as a vague shadow, the shape of which is a hint of the viewer’s own fears, impossible to look at directly. As with all of the threats of Arkea, these spirits are at their strongest during the day and disappear at night.

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

Magical Might: 10

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Conniving +3,
Calculating +2

Weapon/Attack: None

Soak: +15 (Considered to be zero against blessed weapons)

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Abilities: Stealth 7 (Shadowing)

Powers:

Fan the Flame of Suspicion, CrMe 15, 1 point: This creates feelings of paranoia and suspicion in the target, causing him to distrust those around him. Past misdeeds may be amplified, causing him to believe that his companions are leading him into a trap or otherwise plotting against him. A stress roll of 9+ using an appropriate Personality Trait can hold these suspicions in check, allowing the victim to continue to function normally, but even if he can control it he will still feel the distrust. R: Eye/Sight; D: Sun; T: Ind.

Mind of the Beast, MuMe 30, 2 points: As the spell of the same name

Panic of the Trembling Heart, CrMe 15, 1 point: As the spell of the same name.

Rising Ire, CrMe 15, 1 point: As the spell of the same name.

to be haunted by the spirit of the goddess. Some who enter during the day will be attacked by savage beasts or driven mad by invisible spirits without ever finding the grove. But if the traveler has mystical protection or simple luck on his side and avoids noontide, he may evade these dangers on the initial journey. The magical aura of the forest grows stronger as one moves towards the grove; a series of concentric rings range from a magical strength of two, to four, to six, to a value of seven within the grove itself. One well attuned to mystical energy can simply follow this flow of power; otherwise the Survival or Hunt abilities may allow a traveler to follow the path of the unnatural, tracing the trail of

flowers that become increasingly more exotic and beasts that seem to grow in size and shape.

The grove itself is a large clearing around a pool of water. There is no sign of a stream, but the water is astonishingly clear, glittering like liquid glass. The air is rich, the scents so strong that they are almost overwhelming. Brilliant red and purple flowers ring the clearing, of a type unseen outside the wood. Up above, the branches of the trees have stretched out to form an interwoven roof above the pool, through which the sunlight falls in glittering shards.

During the daylight hours, the spirit that calls herself Artemis can be found in

the clearing, sitting on the edge of the water or tending to the flowers. Her hounds and other animals mill about, vying for her attention, but there is no violence in the clearing unless she wills it. She spends the hours around midday swimming in the pool, and during this time her attendant spirits are free to roam the forest and do what they will. While this means she is often unattended at this time, mortals who come upon her while she is bathing are likely to bear the brunt of her wrath — she will strike without mercy or sympathy, and visitors will be lucky to escape with their lives.

As long they do not intrude upon her midday bath, it is possible for visitors to engage Artemis in conversation — they simply need to act swiftly to justify their presence and catch the interest of the spirit. They also need to be extremely cautious of their manners. Of course, if they overstay their welcome or become impudent she can be instantly roused to deadly anger — talking with a goddess is a dangerous business!

As powerful as she is, Artemis and her spirits fear the strength of the Divine above all things. If an individual who enters the woods possesses a True Faith score of three or above — either personally or due to the possession of relics — all creatures of the forest will avoid him. The grove will be empty when he arrives, and Artemis and her minions will not appear to him. This intrusion of the Divine will infuriate the mistress of the forest; if possible, she will seize any opportunity to strike at and humiliate those who accompany the holy power, should they return to the forest unprotected.

Adventure Seeds

Some may be drawn to the forest by simple curiosity; hearing the stories, they may wish to find the truth of them or to drive the spirit from the wood. But there are a number of other things that could bring a troupe to enter Arkea.

- Given the mystical power of the region, a covenant wants to establish a laboratory in the woods or near its edge; a group is sent to negotiate with the spirit.
- A magus is interested in finding a way to trap or imprison the so-called “goddess” in order to test his theories about her true nature.
- A scholar wishes to interview the spirit — if she truly is the being the pagan Greeks knew as Artemis, this scholar wishes to know more about the true nature of the Greek pantheon and the fate of the other gods. He comes bearing gifts and sacrifices to try to win her favor. This could prove to be quite dangerous; if the goddess is lying about her true nature, she will not wish to be caught in the lie. In addition to that, dealings with the spirit could be interpreted as a form of diabolism, even if she is not aligned with the forces of Hell.
- If a troupe is being pursued, they could be driven into Arkea without knowing its true nature.



Source

Dawes, Elizabeth (1948) *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) pages 97-98.

Mount Canagum

by Eric Kouris, translated by
Michaël de Verteuil

There is in Catalonia, in the diocese of Gerona, a high mountain named the Canagum. Its slopes are abrupt and quite difficult to climb. At the top lies a small



lake whose waters are of the deepest black, and its bottom is unfathomable. A small spot is covered by everlasting snow and ice; the sun never touches it and crystals abound there.

Word is that demons live here in a palace with closed doors, although no sensible person has ever seen either the demons or their dwelling place. If a stone or any heavy object is thrown into the lake, a storm breaks, as if the demons had been angered.

Gold and silver are abundant at the foot of the Canagum. Gold is found in a river while silver is mined from its heart.

The Grim, another mountain, stands seventeen miles away. Between these two peaks, winds are continuously fighting, a tangible proof of the presence of demons.

Now listen to what happened to Pierre de Cabinam, a peasant living near the Canagum.

One day while he was doing household chores, Pierre was irritated by the crying of his young daughter. In a fit of rage, he vowed her to the demons. The vow was certainly heard, for the girl disappeared.

Seven years later, an inhabitant of a hamlet near the Canagum, while traveling near the mountain, encountered a man running and complaining about the weight he had to carry. He claimed to be the demons' beast of burden. He had been living on the Canagum for seven years because he had been sworn to them. As proof, he noted that a girl, Pierre de Cabinam's daughter, was also living there. The demons had had enough of raising the girl and would give her away to her father should he climb the mountain to reclaim her.

After pondering whether he should keep quiet about this incredible story or to report it as he had been told to, the traveler decided to reveal everything about the girl's plight to her father. Once he arrived at the village, he found Pierre still lamenting the disappearance of his long lost daughter.

The traveler asked him the reason for his sorrows and then repeated the message

of the man who served as the demons' beast of burden, adding that it would be wise to go there and adjure the demons in Christ's name to give the girl back. Astonished, Pierre followed the messenger. He climbed the Canagum, ran around the lake and adjured the demons. At last, in a blast of wind, the girl appeared, tall, emaciated and with darkened skin, gazing vacantly into space. Her bones, nerves and skin barely held her together. She looked terrible, could speak no human language and was barely able to understand when spoken to.

Her father, stupefied at the sight of his new-found daughter and wondering if he should keep her to raise again, sought the advice of the bishop of Gerona. The bishop, concerned that his flock should benefit from this example, presented the girl to everyone. Describing the tale as it had taken place, he preached to his listeners never to swear what belonged to them to demons because "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He causes the fall of those who have been given to him and keeps them prisoner with no hope of release; those who are sworn to him he torments and afflicts for an assigned time.

Some time later, the man serving as a beast of burden for the demons was also released after his father had adjured the demons to free him. More mature than the girl when he was taken away, he was able to recount what was happening at the top of the Canagum. "Near the lake there is a vast palace in an underground cavern. At its entrance is a door beyond which darkness reigns; the demons gather there to celebrate once they have traveled the world, and report on their evil deeds to their masters. But no one enters the palace except the demons themselves and those who have become theirs under the yoke of eternal damnation; those who have been merely sworn to them remain on this side of the door."

Vis Economics

The quantity and effects of the vis available in the pond and the ice crystals depend on the nature of the saga. Here are three examples, but other combinations can be devised according to the needs of the storyguide.

Whatever the choices made, this vis is inherently infernal and cannot be “purified” in any way (short of a miracle).

Vis-rich saga; creeping corruption

In your saga vis is available in large quantities and the dumping of a thousand pawns or more “on the market” would not destabilize the economics of the Order. You can then choose, if you want to introduce demonic corruption, effects which will only appear gradually but that will have important repercussions in the long run.

The Perdo vis can be harvested at the rate of one pawn per measure (approximately ten liters or quarts, and yes, this means that several thousand pawns can be harvested). In addition, this source renews itself “naturally” over time. Each pawn of vis used adds a botch die (a magus using ten pawns would have to roll ten extra botch dice). Such botches invariably results in temporary Twilight with the number of pawns being subtracted from the magus’s roll for Twilight control. Furthermore, failure to control the Twilight leads to the acquisition of the –4 Plagued by Demons Flaw.

The Terram vis can also harvested in significant quantities; about 100 pawns are immediately available. A botch while using this vis (stress rolls are always required) produces the equivalent of a level 45 MuCo(Te) Hermetic petrification spell. The Penetration total is equal to ten times the number of pawns used. This effect can be resisted by a magus’s Parma Magica.

Potential danger, but easily countered in the medium term

The pond produces 30 pawns of Perdo vis, which is replenished at the rate of five pawns per year. A magus who botches while using it automatically enters temporary Twilight, and the number of pawns used is subtracted from the roll for Twilight control. Failure to control the Twilight leads to the acquisition of the –4 Plagued by Demons Flaw.

The ice contains 10 pawns of Terram and is replenished at the rate of two pawns per year. A botch involving the use of this vis (a stress roll is always required) produces the equivalent of a level 45 MuCo(Te) Hermetic petrification spell. The Penetration total is equal to ten times the number of pawns used. This effect can be resisted by a magus’s Parma Magica.

No corruption

If you do not wish the vis to be a source of corruption, the effects of using it should be felt immediately. In addition, the quantities available should be low to prevent a magus from using it as a weapon.

The pond contains 20 pawns of Perdo vis which can be harvested with the help of a level 15 MuVi spell. The pond can never contain more than 20 pawns and replenishes very slowly: one pawn per year. Use of this vis automatically sends a magus into temporary Twilight. Failure to control the Twilight leads to the acquisition of the –4 Plagued by Demons Flaw.

A dozen pawns of Terram vis can also be harvested, and replenishment occurs at the rate of one pawn per decade. A magus using this vis suffers the equivalent of a level 45 MuCo(Te) Hermetic petrification spell. This effect can be resisted by a magus’s Parma Magica, but the Penetration total is 75 no matter how much vis is used.





Adaptation

The summit of the Canagum is the site of a powerful infernal regio. Luckily, the highest level, with an aura of 9, is not accessible to mortals, short of being granted to the demons — certainly a most terrifying fate.

Mundane level

Access to the top of Mount Canagum is arduous. The slopes are steep and the miners who work the silver mines at its foot never climb them. A dark pool covers most of the summit. The wind is never able to disperse the clouds that cluster around the peak and keep the sun's rays at bay, and the lasting cold even prevents the snow from melting around the pond.

Those who walk around the pond against the path of the sun enter the first level of the regio.

Infernal level 3

This level is identical to the mundane one except for one detail: the large quantities of vis that can be gathered there. The pool is a source of Perdo vis, while the ice crystals that surround the pond contain Terram vis.

The quantity and the less desirable effects of the vis are largely dependent on the economics and nature of the saga, but in all cases a magus would be well advised not to use any. A few examples are suggested in the side bar.

A second circumambulation of the pond leads to access to the next higher level.

Infernal level 6

At this level, the demons keep as prisoners those who have been sworn to them. There are always a dozen or so who are con-



demned to suffer at the hands of their captors for the rash words of their loved ones.

In effect, someone can only find himself in this situation if he has been sworn to the demons by one close to him, and this only if it is done unintentionally. Vowing someone to the demons in the hope of getting rid of him is a very bad idea as the ill-wisher himself will suffer the intended fate.

In addition to those condemned, one also finds demons on this level of the regio. There are always a dozen or so. They always know what is happening at the lower level but rarely interfere. In particular, if that level entered is by a magus, they prefer to await developments, hoping that he will collect as much vis as he can (especially as they are but minor demons with Infernal Might of 20 or less, and are not up to challenging so powerful an adversary).

These demons are tasked with torturing those who have been delivered into their care, but under no circumstances can they win their souls. In fact, after seven years, the victims have to be returned to their loved ones. This rule governing oaths that are sworn inadvertently cannot be changed by a demon, no matter how powerful. This is why when someone enters the first level of the regio, the demons let one of their victims enter it to bear a message to the visitor, generally involving a demand that the loved one come to reclaim him.

Even if they cannot win these souls, the demons who work here are diligent in their duties hoping for a promotion in the infernal hierarchy which will permit them to wander the earth and corrupt mortals.

In the middle of the pool are two double doors. Whoever crosses this threshold (in either direction) accedes to the highest level of the regio (no roll needed). For a mortal, this involves a one-way trip! As the antechamber to Hell is not some giant waiting room, the doors are normally closed and open only when a demon chooses to enter or leave.

They cannot be forced, except by damned souls, who find themselves in the final level..

Infernal level 9

On this level all the demons from thereabouts come to relax between evil deeds. Here they find for their sport all the souls from the surrounding countryside actually granted to them (as opposed to those simply sworn to them). These include those who have sworn others to the demons with the intention of harming them, along with other damned souls who penetrate this far on their own. No mortal on this level can leave until Judgement Day, and no mortal can enter this level by any means, including magic, unless he is already damned. If a player character who is not an active diabolist tries to cross the regio boundary, he fails.



Story hooks

Story Hook 1

The characters are just passing through the area. They notice an unending storm between the two mountains and, intrigued, climb to the summit of Mount Canagum. Humility is in order if they plan to return safely to their covenant. But how will they react when one of the victims of the demons appears to ask them to carry a message to his family?

Story Hook 2

Alternatively, the demons, perceiving the importance of their visitors, do not send them one of their victims, but let their “guests” harvest as much vis as they can carry.



What happens next? Will the magi realize the danger this place represents for the Order? If this vis source were to fall into the hands of corrupt magi, vis being the principle form of currency within the Order, very serious harm could ensue.

But how to forbid access? Concerted action with House Guernicus would probably be in order.

Story Hook 3

The Canagum is close to the characters' covenant. They know the sulfurous reputation of the place and avoid it until the day a visitor comes to the covenant. He has a message for one of the grogs whose daughter disappeared a few years ago. The magi accompany their servant as far as the Canagum to recover his child, but what will they do with the child afterwards?

Story Hook 4

Alternatively, the magi learn that a nearby peasant is traveling to the Canagum to recover one of his children whom he had sworn to the demons several years earlier.

They seize this opportunity to visit the mountain top and check out the local legends that surround it. Possibly they are skeptical of its supposed infernal nature. Would demons ever free their victims? It hardly seems likely. Surely faeries trying to foist a "changeling" on mortals would be more probable. This hypothesis is all the more credible as the silver mines at the foot of the Canagum could suggest the presence of dwarfs.

Source

Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* III, 66
 Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor* (Oxford Medieval Texts), S. E. Banks and J. W.

Binns (Editors), Oxford University Press, 2002

Gervais de Tilbury, *Le livre des merveilles*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1992

A Sailor from Above: The Legend of the Sky-sea

by Matt Ryan

According to Gervase of Tilbury, one Sunday morning a respectable villager passed by the cemetery on his way to mass, and noticed a ship's anchor stuck fast to a gravestone. He also saw a taunt rope, stretching from the anchor and disappearing into the billowy clouds above. Startled, he called to his fellow villagers, who rushed into the cemetery. As the villagers watched, the rope line suddenly became slack, and was then sharply tugged taunt again. The crowd gasped in surprise at the line's activity, which continued rhythmically for several minutes. The villager exclaimed to his fellows that it seemed as if someone above was pulling the line, attempting to free the anchor. However, their efforts were fruitless, and the anchor remained wedged in the gravestone.

A man suddenly emerged from the clouds above and slid down the rope. He swiftly descended into the cemetery, landing at the gravestone. Although he was surrounded by a good sized crowd, he neither saw them nor heard their surprised shouts. He was dressed as a sailor, with tanned-skin and sun-bleached hair, and frantically began working to free the anchor. His



efforts broke the static tension of the crowd. Several men leapt forward, grabbed the sailor by his arms, and pushed him to the ground. The sailor became frightened and thrashed wildly trying to free himself, but he was overwhelmed. His struggles continued for a few seconds more and then stopped abruptly. With a huge, gulping inhalation, the sailor stopped moving completely. He died, appearing exactly as if he had drowned.

As the villagers stood bewildered, they could hear shouts coming from the billowy clouds above. The shouts were the sailors calling to each other, and the villagers quickly discerned that the sailors were asking each other what to do about their missing comrade. After waiting for an hour, with no sign of their comrade's return, the sailors cut the anchor line. The limp rope fell to the ground. The shouting diminished as the sailors departed. Gervase concluded his story, writing that the villagers buried the sailor in the cemetery with all the benefits of a full Christian burial. The anchor was removed from the gravestone and melted down. Its iron was recast as hinges for the door of the church, and "there they are still to be seen."

Adaptation

Founded on the statement in Genesis that the waters above had been separated from the waters below, popular belief held that there was an ocean halfway between heaven and earth. Noah's tale of the Flood reaffirmed this idea, and gave it a method to measure the distances separating the two. The Flood's waters were forty fathoms deep; that is, forty fathoms above the highest mountain peak of the earth. Heaven, the firmament, was then again forty fathoms above the Flood's high water mark. Thus, a magical sea hovered far above the population's heads. Certain ships could sail this mythical sky-sea, and certain condi-





tions could shift a ship from the mundane sea to the sky-sea.

The sky-sea itself has certain characteristics. It is magical regio with a +2 aura, but because of its position in the Christian cosmos, lying halfway between Heaven and Earth, Divine powers are not impaired by the regio's aura (ignore the "— aura" listing on the "Realms Interaction Table", **ArM4**, page 239). The sky-sea is subject to natural weather occurrences, but these effects are filtered through the magical atmosphere of the sea and their effects are slightly enhanced. During the day the sea is bright, sparkling and beautiful to behold. A breeze blows across the deck, which is both pleasant to the passengers and forceful enough to propel the sailing vessel along at top speed, if the ship's master wishes to travel that rapidly. At night the sea is usually calm, with an ambient light equivalent to a full moon bathing the sea with a silvery luminescence. But the sky-sea is also subject to storms, dreadful affairs with terrible winds, towering waves, and deafeningly loud thunder.

Sailing on the sky-sea isn't difficult, but sailing to it is extremely difficult. Ships may travel to and from the magical sky-sea by sailing through specific magical locations found on the mundane seas. These locations act as portals, instantly removing the ship from the natural sea and placing her on the azure-blue waves of the sea above. This change is so subtle and swift that only magical spells have a chance of observing the transition. Most of the watery portals that take ships to and from the sky-sea move around the ocean; few of these magical sites remain stationary. Finding one of these movable, random locations is, naturally, very difficult, but this is the only known way of entering the sky sea.

Few landmarks exist on the sky-sea; the usual mode of navigation is by observing the stars above. Sailors on the sky-sea may discover the location of magical portals which lead back to the mundane ocean. Unlike their counterparts in the mundane

realm, the magical portals on the sky-sea are stationary, meaning that knowledgeable sky-sea sailors can use these portals as magical shortcuts between earthly destinations. The distance between the regio's portals is often much shorter than the distance between their earthly counterpoints. Sailors can radically reduce a voyage's length by taking a detour through the sky-sea.

Sailing the sky-sea itself is rather straightforward, but it gets a bit more complicated when those occupying the sky-sea interact with those occupying the mundane realm below. The sky-sea operates differently from regular regiones, in which inhabitants of either side have the same chance of seeing those on the other side. Compared to this idea of a window, the sky-sea regio operates more like a one-way mirror. It is much easier for people in the mundane realm to see into the sky-sea realm, than it is for those in the sky-sea to view the mundane world. In the mundane realm, a viewer only needs to penetrate a +1 magical regio to see and interact with those sea-bound. Sky-sea travelers need to penetrate a +10 magical regio to see and interact with the mundane realm. Another major difference is that those on the mundane realm who manage to interact with the sky-sea regio may do so, but they may not enter the sky-sea itself. Thus, a man couldn't pass into the sky-sea regio from the bottom of its "ocean floor." An example will clarify this complicated situation.

In the legend, the villager managed to see into the sky-sea regio and witness the anchor and then later the sailor. He only needed to view into a +1 magical regio to do so. The sailor failed to notice a +10 magical regio, thus failing to see the villagers standing around him. Nor did he manage to shift out of the sea-sky regio when the villagers grabbed him. He believed he was holding his breath the whole time he was freeing the anchor. When the villagers prevented his return ascent, he drowned. The English villagers did not enter the sky-sea; the only way anyone can enter the sky-sea

is through one of the locations already existent on the mundane seas. Physical, inanimate objects are not subject to this regio disparity, making it much easier for items to pass back and forth between the realms.

Story Ideas

The most direct way of applying this adaptation to a saga would be to substitute player characters for the villager who first notices the stuck anchor. Play would continue from there, and if the players' characters were magi, then the resulting interaction with the sky-sea sailor would be different from the original tale. A high magnitude *Intéllego Vim* spell may allow the sailor to notice the players, who could then inquire about the sailor's mysterious position.

Those wishing to make the sky-sea a focus for their saga can introduce characters who are much more familiar with the sky-sea than the players' characters. A covenant of magi could be sailing the magical ocean. Rules for creating and using ships and ship covenants are fully detailed in the *Ars Magica* supplement, *Mythic Seas*. For example, *Inceptum divinum* — *The Divine Venture* — is a ship that houses a covenant of magi who understand navigating the sky-sea and are exploring it. The covenant's leader, Inclita of House Bonisagus, is a visionary Vim specialist who leads her six magi fellows and sixty some crewmembers over the sparkling waves of the sky-sea. Through her unique magical spells and research, she has managed to exploit the random access portals to and from the mundane sea, allowing *Inceptum divinum* to explore the sky-sea for the last three decades. The magi aboard have devised ways of creating vis from the ocean. They manufacture *Animál vis* from the barnacles scraped from the hull, and *Aquam vis* from the foam collected from the ship's wake

The magi of *Inceptum divinum* could contact the players' magi for a variety of rea-

sons. Perhaps a pirate ship has been sailing the sky-sea and has damaged *The Divine Venture*. Inclita asks the players for help, because all of her colleagues are research oriented magi, unable to deal with the physical threat of the pirates. Perhaps they have found a mysterious island on the sky-sea and need help exploring it. The sky-sea offers an entire magical ocean for storyguides to create fantastic islands for sailing magi to discover. An island of one-legged, one-armed people, an intelligent, speaking rock, or a terrible, swimming dragon could all lay in wait for intrepid explorers.

A much more subtle approach would be for an item, some valuable trinket or magical item, to fall overboard from a ship sailing the sky-sea. This item would fall to the earth, and it could penetrate through the sky-sea regio and land in the covenant. How would the players react to such a mysterious benefice from above? More so, how will they react when the owners manage to track down their lost item? This could be even more interesting if it was one of the magi of *Inceptum divinum* who lost the magic item.

Source

Thomas Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory: An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages*, (London: John Russell Smith, 1844), 27-29.

The Leap of Sappho

by Timothy Ferguson

Sappho, whose lyrical poetry was of such beauty that she was known through-





out the Hellenic world, was born into an influential family on the island of Lesbos. Little is known of her life, but on the assumption that her poetry, most of which is written in an autobiographical style, is accurate she was married, had a daughter, and burned for the love of other women. She may have lived for a time in Sicily, when the political situation on Lesbos turned against her family. She was the head of a group of women (thaisos) who worshipped Aphrodite, but what Sappho did for a living, and by extension what her group did, is unclear. Stories vary from a formal, orgiastic cult to the goddess, through a school of poetesses to a sort of gossip circle.

Sappho's biographers mention that the beauty of her poetry made her beautiful. Sappho, small and dark, may have suffered in comparison to her neighbors. Women

from Lesbos were thought to have the most beautiful hair in the Hellenic world. Sculptures of Sappho are usually gorgeous, like those of the goddess herself, but these are not accurate.

The most widespread story concerning Sappho was of her death. When she was near fifty she developed a desire for a young boatman called Phaon, possibly because Aphrodite had given him an ointment that made women fall in love with him. When he spurned her, she attempted a ritual called the Katapontismos, which was believed to wash away love. She did not survive.

Adaptation

The fatal ritual performed by Sappho involved jumping from the Cliffs of Leucas (Lefkatas) into the sea below. Although



these cliffs are two hundred feet high, this was usually not fatal, if far from safe. The priests of the nearby temple, to Apollo Leucatas (Leukates), performed the rite yearly. The Leucadian Leap was also used as a trial by ordeal. Prisoners, who had birds tied to them or who were coated in feathers to lessen the impact, were thrown from the cliffs and considered innocent if they surfaced alive. The ritual also knew occasional popularity with Roman tourists, who strapped wings to themselves before the leap, possibly in imitation of the priests of Apollo. According to folklore on Leucas (Lefkás), the point into which leapers fall is an entrance to Hades.

Lesbians, both male and female, were thought to have a knack for lyric poetry. It was believed that after the Thracian women slew Orpheus they threw his head and lyre into the river Hebrus. The head and instrument were carried out to sea then washed up on Lesbos. Orpheus's head continued to sing and teach mysteries, and people began to prefer the Oracle of Orpheus at Antissa to the Delphic Oracle. Apollo, not wanting to lose his primacy as the lord of oracles, commanded Orpheus's head to be silent. It was buried on Lesbos, and his lyre was placed among the stars. This explained the magnificence of Lesbos's poets.

Plot Hook 1

Arkibaldes, a Seeker using a magical submersible, tries for many years to find the entry to Hades beneath the Cliffs. Eventually he disappears and, although the sphere of magical glass he uses to plumb the depth is found, moored underwater, he is not within it. The quaesitores, or player characters, investigate and find that Arkibaldes threw himself from the cliffs on January the ninth, vanishing when he hit the water. Arkibaldes's filia, Kore, seeks to find her father, and will perform the leap,

but she needs aides, and they all, according to her, have to be skilled musicians.

All entrants to Hades (part of Arcadia) meet the shades claiming to be the ghosts of famous Greek figures, and sometimes those of the dead who did not receive Christian burial. They are given pithy and quotable advice. They may be sent on brief quests, or taken to see the tortured souls of those who performed the same sins that the characters have. Eventually one of the shades of the underworld will direct them to the part of Elysium where Arkibaldes is.

Sappho is often depicted with another Lesbian poet, named Alcaeus, whose style is similar, although his meter and subject matter differ. There's no strong proof Sappho and Alcaeus had a relationship, but they were members of the same class, and their families had a similar political persuasion. A later author, Horace, when describing Hades after almost being killed, says that these two spend eternity together performing poetry, although whether it is in collaboration or competition he does not mention. Their poems, which they recite to the dead, are so beautiful that they bring comfort even to those being tortured. The dead cluster around the poets in a deep throng; among them the characters will find Arkibaldes.

As they arrive, one of the shades of Hades tells Arkibaldes a year has passed in the world above, and he must return. The characters, hearing the poetry of the Lesbians, are likely enraptured, but after a year they too will be forced to return. Their descent to the underworld should act as a turning point in their lives, in a way negotiated with the storyguide. Each character might be able to cast off a bad habit or unwanted mental affliction (represented by a Flaw), or gain a new virtue like Free Expression or Higher Purpose.

As the characters are leaving, some of the shades will ask them to fulfill unfinished works in the world of the living. Since most of these figures have been dead so long, the very antiquity of the problems





is a challenge. All of the tasks can be completed, but the names of places have changed, cities have fallen, and items have been lost or carried away over the centuries.

Plot Hook 2

True Love is one of the most powerful mystical forces found in Mythic Europe. It seems to emanate from God, the source of all truth, and breaks Hermetic limits. Its downside is that if a character's loved one dies, the wound can be terribly painful. Although some lovers can feel the presence of their beloved near them, or even call up their ghosts, many True Lovers feel as if they are incomplete. The Leap removes this pain.

A character who successfully performs the Leap loses the feelings of pain and hopelessness associated with unrequited or lost love. A companion may seek this cure, or may offer to escort a non-player character to the leap. A nobleman whose daughter has become ensnared by a young man may pay the characters to kidnap his daughter and throw her off the cliff. He will, of course, be very disappointed if she dies. The

Leap is also said to be a remedy for the feelings of loneliness and loss that echo in a magus's spirit after the death of a familiar.

Source

Epistle (of Sappho to Phaon), attributed to Ovid.

The details of the leap appear in Strabo (Geography)

Horace describes Sappho in Hades in Ode II: 13

Durrell, L (1978) *The Greek Islands*, London: Faber and Faber.

The Stone of Storms

by Nathan Hook

A tale is told by Kynon son of Clydno to Arthur's Court at Caerleon upon Usk. It describes his explorations in 'distant lands' as he searches to find any who are greater than he in combat. In a certain valley he finds a strange black giant with one foot and one eye. Following the giant's directions, he finds a marble slab and causes a storm of hailstones by pouring water onto it, destroying all exposed men and beasts in the area. A Knight in black velvet on a black horse appears, bests Kynon in combat, and takes his horse.

Hearing the tale, Owain sets out, rescues a countess whom the black knight holds captive, and himself becomes the new guardian of the stone after marrying her. After three years, Arthur and his knights set out to find Owain. Kai throws water over the stone, and Owain as the black knight appears and bests Arthur's men before being recognized. All of them return for three months to Britain, through

Countess of the Fountain

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +1, Pre +4, Com +3, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 30

Size: +0

Virtues and Flaws: Vulnerability to Iron

Personality Traits: Gentle-mannered +3, Protective of Nature +3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling (fist)	-2	-2	-3	+1

Soak: +0

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers: Control Animal 16, Healing 10, Invisibility 12,

Abilities: Animal Handling (wild) 5, Animal Ken (wild) 5, Faerie Lore (nature) 3,

Vis: 3 Herbam in womb, 2 Mentem in heart

the Countess is in great pain while she is away from her castle.

Adaptation

Anyone exploring the appropriate area may stumble into this faerie regio. After turning right at crossroads in a forest, he comes to the guardian of the Regio in a large sheltered glade with a mound in the center. The guardian is a 'black man of great stature; at least as tall as two men', with 'but one foot and one eye in the middle of his forehead' and a 'club of [faerie] iron.' Around him a thousand wild animals graze, including 'serpents and dragons' (read as lesser wyrms, through some may call them dragons).

The black man is ill-favored and rough with outsiders, much as the forest itself can be. Anyone asking for directions will be told to 'take that path that leads towards the head of the glade.' Anyone doing this will find it leads up a 'wooded steep.' At the summit is a large valley. In the middle of this valley is a tall tree, 'whose branches are greener than the greenest pine-trees.'

Under the tree is a fountain next to a marble slab with a silver bowl attached to it by a silver chain. If anyone throws a bowlful of water upon the slab, there is a mighty peal of thunder and a shower of hailstones that cut through to the bone. After this, the sky becomes fair, and birds alight on the tree and sing a melody sweeter than any found in the mundane world.

In game terms, the area is covered by a level 3 faerie aura radiating out from the tree. If anyone pours water on the stone, hailstones fall causing +20 damage (modify this damage by cover; those with large shields should be relatively safe from the hail). These stones fall on everything and everyone in the Regio and the surrounding mundane countryside, although the black man and the wild animals are curiously unaffected.

If a bowlful of water is drawn from the fountain and carried away upon one of the

equinoxes or solstices (rather than poured on the stone), that water contains 2 pawns of Aquam vis.

This faerie area embodies at its core the wild and primal power of nature. The black man acts as its guardian, and the hailstones strike down man himself and those things made by his hand. Nature orientated characters (such as those with Feral Upbringing flaw or the Animal Ken virtue) may feel strangely at home here, through not entirely safe.

Elsewhere in the Regio is the faerie Countess of these lands. She was described in the legend as having 'yellow curling hair, and a frontlet of gold upon her head; and she was clad in a dress of yellow satin, and on her feet were shoes of variegated leather.' She embodies the other aspects of nature: natural beauty, natural grace and natural love. Wishing her lands to be safe, she will offer her hand in marriage to a worthy and noble man. This represents the possible role of man as a guardian and defender of nature from those that would harm it. However, anyone taking up this offer becomes the guardian of the fountain. The countess can



Black Man of the Forest

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

Faerie Might: 30

Size: +3

Personality Traits: Ill-mannered +3, Protective of Nature +3

Weapon/Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling (fist)	+4	+4	+3	+8
Club	+5	+8	+8	+13

Soak: +10

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Animal Handling (wild) 5, Animal Ken (wild) 5, Brawling 3, Faerie Lore (nature) 3, Single Weapon (club) 5

Vis: 3 Herbam in club, 2 Terram in eye

If the player characters try to fight the Black Man, the animals around him may join in the fight. A horde of creatures of all types rising to attack them should hammer home the awesome power of the natural world, and more than make up for any relative weakness on the part of the Black Man.



guide others into and out of the realm, and even leave it herself, although it causes her great pain, and she loses 10 Might per month until she returns home.

Story Hooks

- Whilst exploring the area around their new covenant, the magi come across the faerie regio and the stone. Although it can serve them as a vis source, it also poses a danger should others learn the secret and use its power to rain hailstone upon their covenant. Perhaps the magi should consider laying traps, illusions or other defenses to prevent others gaining access to it. Perhaps assigning a grog to watch over the site as the black knight once did may be a good idea, or they could find someone to dupe into accepting the Countess's offer. A life in a faerie realm with a sidhe bride may be quite an improvement for many people in Mythic Europe.
- A rival of the covenant, either another member of the Order or a hedge wizard, learns of the regio and seeks to use its power. However, his scheme is far greater than merely using it against the covenant. The covenant's rival believes (rightly or wrongly) that if the stone is moved, it will affect the area about which it is currently placed. He therefore intends to take it into the heart of a major city, or a gathering of a mundane army, and pour water upon it, devastating the populace. Bear in mind that the user can remain safe by using a shield to protect himself from the hail, or by employing a minion to pour the water for him. He has magic enough to help in moving the stone, and intends to fill the bowl with water and cover it with a skin to avoid it being spilt in transport. The magi learn of this plot (perhaps by finding the stone missing when they go to collect vis or by the



Countess turning up on their doorstep asking for help). The magi investigate and try to foil the plot, perhaps climaxing in a dramatic combat around the stone with both sides trying to avoid spilling or threatening to spill the water upon it.

- Magi should appreciate the simple magical principle upon which the stone operates. Like attracts like, and casting water upon the stone causes water in the form of hail to fall upon the earth. However, what would happen if other actions were taken upon the stone? Will cracking it cause earthquakes? Will dropping burning coals on it cause a rain of fire from the sky? Then again, perhaps it can be used to good effect. Perhaps spells cast upon it will affect a wide geographic area around the stone. Remember however that this faerie realm represents primal nature, and nature may not look kindly on those who meddle with it in such a manner. Attempts to promote growth to improve the local crops may spiral out of control, and meddling with the weather may make the climate even more unstable.

Source

The Mabinogion, translated by Lady Charlotte Guest, published by Voyager 2000, first published by Llandovery in 1838-46.

Hellequin's Hunt

by Adam Gauntlett

Orderic Vitalis wrote most of his *Historia ecclesiastica* of the Normans between 1123 and 1137. His source's brush with the *familia Herlechini* took place in

1091, at a time when Normandy suffered civil strife. Walchelin, the priest who encountered the horde, mistook it for the army of Robert of Belleme, a notorious warlike noble. Walchelin realized his error when he recognized dead neighbors in the throng. Eventually amongst the thousands of peasants, priests and knights Walchelin saw his brother Robert. Robert begged Walchelin to say prayers for Robert's soul, thereby ensuring Robert's release from Hellequin's horde.

The Hunt Revealed

The Hunt is a magical regio, but unlike most regiones it is not fixed to one place. It moves with Hellequin, who acts as the 'eye' of the mystical hurricane. Hellequin gathers ghosts, and these make up the Hunt. Walchelin compared them to an army, complete with baggage train and bearers. This army wanders the land, collecting more ghosts as more die and losing other spirits as they pass on to their reward.

Hellequin's dead died unfulfilled, and are tormented by the knowledge that they died too soon. Some have not completed a task that they set themselves to fulfill, while others committed sins that prevent them from attaining grace.

Many of them are Christian, and Walchelin reported that they were suffering horrible torments. The knights, for example, wore armor and carried weapons that were so hot that they burned. Walchelin claimed that this was God's punishment of sin. Some Bonisagus theorists are interested in the Hunt because of this connection with the divine, but their discoveries are not well known.

The Hunt is not made up solely of ghosts. Walchelin saw demons with the host, and Hermetic witnesses have also seen Dark Magi in Hellequin's horde.

Hellequin's dead approach the living when they can. This happens often on the road, at night, when the boundaries are at





their weakest. The ghosts plead for salvation, which will be achieved if mortals help them by their prayers and deeds.

Bonisagus Investigators and Criamon Mystics

Members of Houses Bonisagus and Criamon are very interested in the Hunt. The Bonisagus scholars believe that investigating Hellequin may lead to a new understanding of the Dominion. The Criamon are concerned that Hellequin may threaten the Cave of Twisting Shadows.

Bonisagus magi from several tribunals are fascinated by the appearance of spirits who ought to be within the Dominion. Several of them have investigated the Hunt, with limited success. Gui of Florence and Aziz ibn Qali are the foremost researchers.

Gui believes that only dead who have been buried improperly become ghosts. The apparent Christian Hunt members represent unfortunates who, although they ought to have the Dominion's protection, did not. The sacrament was not correctly carried out, and the spirits were forfeit. Gui has spent decades investigating the burial sacraments hoping to prove his theory.

Aziz thinks that the Hunt represents proof that burial alone, pious or otherwise, is not the route to the Divine. Aziz posits that if the Divine has the power to accept a spirit, it also has the power to reject one, which is how a supposedly sanctified burial can result in a ghost. Aziz has been studying Cathar burials in the hope of unlocking this secret. His argument is that the Cathar faith, being the target of a crusade, ought not to be able to bury dead effectively, and yet it does so.

Both Aziz and Gui cannot explain why, despite their best efforts, they have been

Occult Lore

Characters with the Occult Lore skill may roll on this table. Some knowledge is marked *Hermetic*. Hermetic knowledge is only available to those characters who have Order of Hermes Lore as well as Occult Lore. Characters who only have Order of Hermes Lore cannot roll on this table.

Result:

- 3+: The dead walk the roads at night. They sometimes approach the living.
- 6+: The army of the dead is led by a mysterious figure, a self-styled King, called Hellequin.
- 9+: The King of the Dead has many names, among them Harlequin, Herne the Huntsman, or Helething. Mystical Kings like Arthur of the Britons have also been identified with Hellequin. His origins are obscure, but old. The first known mention is in Tacitus' *Germania*.
- 9+ *Hermetic*: House Criamon is known to collect knowledge about Hellequin's Hunt, as are some Bonisagus magi.

12+: Thousands of ghosts travel with the Hunt. Peasants, clergy, and the nobility have all been seen in Hellequin's band. The Hunt's ghosts always ask the living for help. The ghosts sometimes become violent and injure the living if help is denied.

12+ *Hermetic*: *Undead and demonic forces travel* with the Hunt. Although Hellequin's Hunt does take ghosts, often it leaves behind more dangerous creatures. Vampires, ghouls and demons spring up in Hellequin's wake. More rarely, Angelic visitations have also occurred.

15+: Hellequin wears a powerful magical hood which can make its wearer invisible, carry him wherever he desires, and even grant him superhuman strength.

15+ *Hermetic*: Ningues, a Tyalus maga, is one of the few wizards on record to have encountered the Hunt more than once. She sought it out because she was trying to aid her parents, who was one of the Hunt. Ningues left a written record, copies of which are very rare.

The Ghosts

Although individual ghosts within the Hunt have individual characteristics, there are some things that are common to all of them.

Hunt members know that they are dead. They are not linked to the site of their death.

A Hunt member can touch and be touched. A ghost feels like a bag made of rotted flesh. There is nothing inside, and a ghost's form can be punctured. A ghost's possessions can be stolen and taken out of the Regio altogether. The ghost will try to prevent this, and its fellow Hunt members will aid it.

The Hunt can deal damage in combat. The ghosts of the knights and barons are armed for war, and even the touch of the unarmed dead can wound. Several mortals who encountered the Hunt came away with burns, the result of dead hands touching their flesh.

Members of the Hunt may beg the living for help, but may not interact with them in any other way unless the living acknowledge them. The ghosts may not attack the living or attempt to possess them unless the living person first attacks the ghosts in some way, or attempts to steal their belongings.

The members of the Hunt are being punished for their sins, and this takes on physical form. The punishment depends on the crime so a peasant who stole a mortar and pestle from her neighbor would have a hot mortar and pestle in her hands, which she could not drop.

Demons are interested in the Hunt as a source of amusement and because it is

feared by mortals. The demons think that if they torture the ghosts in front of witnesses the sight may shatter a mortal's belief in his own salvation. Few demons find the Hunt so fascinating that they will trail along in its wake forever, which is why they often appear in places where the Hunt has passed, looking for new amusement. Angels pursue the Hunt because the demons are there. Occasionally Heavenly forces will act as counterpoint to Hell's display of brute force. Infernalists use ghosts for many purposes, but usually as a means of gaining favor with demons. They mistakenly believe that the demons really do have a use for the Hunt's ghosts.

A ghost's clothes are a vital part of its identity. In life they toiled, prayed, or fought. In death, they wear the rough cloth, the holy robes, or the armor that was their birthright. Many of the dead wear tatters. This is because their grip on the world is fading, and so their link with their former lives is shredding. When that link is completely gone the Hunt member becomes mindless and leaves the Hunt. The essence of such creatures may be gathered for Infernal spells, but more often they become the animating force that creates ghouls, vampires and other walking undead.

Hunt members can be relieved of their burdens if mortals do as they ask. This can involve simple tasks like saying prayers, or more complex quests. A Hunt member who has been helped by mortals is more likely to go to Heaven than one who has not.



unable to summon a Hunt member. They claim that Hellequin prevents them.

The Criamon magi are concerned about Ningues' assertion that Hellequin intends to deliver his followers to the portals of the underworld. They realized that

their own *domus magna* might be one of these portals. An army of the dead complete with demons, Infernalists and possibly even angels could cause the *domus magna* serious problems. They would like to communicate with Hellequin and determine



Hellequin

Characteristics: Cun n/a, Per +3, Pre -5, Com -5, Str +4, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik +3

Magical Might: 50

Age: n/a

Size: 0

Confidence: 4

Personality Traits: Uncaring +5

Reputations: Diabolic 3, with Quaesitor magi; Ghostly Menace 2, with mortals.

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)+10	+8	+9	+10	+12	
Soak: +14					

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Abilities: Most of Hellequin's abilities affect the dead not the living. Since characters are usually alive these powers are not detailed here. Characters with flaws or virtues that involve ghosts, for example Ghostly Warder, might find that Hellequin's Hunt has changed them. A Warder might vanish, replaced by a mindless spirit that got separated from the rest of the Hunt. The storyguide should consult with the player concerned before making fundamental changes to a character.

Hellequin has been known to use the following:

Footfall of Ash PeMe 35, 3 Might, cause mortals with 20 paces to lose all hope and stop resisting or attacking Hellequin, Sta roll 14+ to resist.

Hellequin's Touch PeCo 20, 3 Might, which withers mortal flesh and does +15 damage. These powers are only used when someone tries to take Hellequin's cap.

Equipment: Hellequin's cap is the source of his power and the reason for his curse. Mortals cannot use it. If a mortal were to wear it, it would act as a PeMe effect of level 35, crushing all

personality and will. A mortal wearer would not be able to control the ghosts who make up the Hunt. They would be free to go and do whatever they wanted.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: Hellequin's cap is worth 15 pawns of Vim. Hellequin's ghost is worth a variable amount of vis, depending on who currently plays the part of Hellequin. Fieroth is worth 10 pawns of Mentem.

Hellequin is not immortal. Many souls have worn Hellequin's cap. Its current wearer is Fieroth, a former Criamon. Fieroth has no memory of his past, nor any real intelligence of his own. Fieroth, like all the previous Hellequin, is suffering under Hellequin's Curse.

Hellequin's Curse is that he is a spirit who guides other spirits to their resting place, but who cannot find peace himself. Eventually, the weight of Hellequin's burden is such that the ghost who carries it dissolves. At that time another ghost from among the dispossessed takes up Hellequin's task.

Hellequin's task is to guide spirits that are unable to reach Heaven to the portals that lead to the next world. The Old Ones created his cap as a means of guiding errant spirits to the Far Lands. Over the centuries the Divine has transformed this purpose. Now Hellequin serves as a court of last resort. Spirits who cannot get to Heaven because of their sins or because of their magical or Faerie essence would normally go to Hell, but Hellequin gathers their spirits and allows them to make a final plea for help. The living, through their prayers and deeds, can help these spirits find their way to salvation in spite of their sins.

Hellequin's cap is a caul. This masks his head and face. The caul can transform itself to look like any other kind of headgear, for example a horned mask, but it

always masks Hellequin's face. Hellequin is dressed as one of the dispossessed. Hellequin does not speak, and he may be mistaken for one of the mindless dead.

Hellequin has no interest in communicating with the living. He is passive and will not fight with anyone, but if he is attacked, the Hunt will aid him.

Fieroth, if he is brought to his senses, can tell Hermetic magi many secrets about the Hunt. He, like Absolom,

believed that only a dead Criamon could communicate with Hellequin. After Fieroth joined the Hunt he realized his error, since Hellequin would not speak to him, but by then it was too late. Fieroth wanted to tell other Criamon this and to warn them against future attempts. He was unable to do so, and became one of the dispossessed. Soon afterward, Fieroth took up Hellequin's burden.



his intentions, but they have been unable to do so. One idea proposed by a younger Criamon mystic, Absolom, is that instead of sending live magi to find the Hunt they send a dead one, as a ghostly magus might have better luck with the King of the Dead. The senior members of the House have not yet approved Absolom's plan.

Ningues, filia Justinia, House Tylalus

Ningues is the only magus ever to have encountered the Hunt more than once. House Guernicus tried to get Ningues to keep her researches secret, fearing infernal influence, but she made several copies of her laboratory texts and disseminated them throughout the Normandy Tribunal. Since Ningues' Hermetic line was already tainted (her parents' parents was one of the magi implicated in the Tylalus diabolic scandal), a tribunal convicted Ningues of Infernal dealings. Ningues disappeared after the subsequent Wizard's March, possibly slain.

Her text, *The Portals of the Dead*, is banned, but copies still exist. It is a summa on Mentem, with a score of 14 and a quality of 7. It is mainly concerned with ghosts, Hellequin's dead in particular, and includes two spells in its final pages: *Vision of the Haunting Spirit* and a level 25 version of *Lay to Rest the Haunting Spirit*. This last spell has a quirk, linked to Ningues' sigil, so that

whenever it is cast, snow falls in an area about twenty paces in diameter, centered on the caster.

Ningues thought that Hellequin was mindless, and while she did not believe that Hellequin could be killed, she felt that should this occur, the result would be devastating. The Hunt would fragment, and the ghosts would be free to cause untold damage in the mundane world.

Ningues noted that the Hunt was drawn to desolate areas, like Mount Etna. The Hunt made its way to caves deep in those places, and many then vanished. Ningues, drawing on Etna's reputation as a portal to Hell, theorized that there were similar portals scattered throughout Europe, and that Hellequin's role was to guide his Hunt to these entrances. While these portals may not necessarily lead to Hell, Ningues believed that they did facilitate the journey to some kind of afterlife. Hellequin himself did not vanish into the underworld, and Ningues thought that he was incapable of doing so.

The Nature of Sin

Spirits buried in piety may become ghosts subject to the laws of the Hunt because of their sins. Normally those who die in sin are condemned to hell, but if Hellequin catches these ghosts then they have a final chance to plead for forgiveness



and help from the living. Thus, the hunt is actually a manifestation of God's mercy.

Storyguides should note that although pious burial does not guarantee salvation it does at least protect a spirit from wizard's spells. Magic, no matter what motive the wizard may have, will not work on Hunt members who have been buried in piety.

As a guideline to determine which sins could keep a spirit from passing on, consider the following examples taken from *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*.

Everard appeared to his widow with wounds in his side. A small child, crying inconsolably, was with him. The ghost explained that he had committed adultery, and the wounds were the physical marks of that sin. The child was Everard's, and it had died without being baptized. Its presence added to Everard's suffering (p48-9).

A ghostly knight told his two brothers to return land that their father had stolen from the church. If they did not, they and their descendants would be damned (p46).

A dead youth appeared to a girl. The young man had borrowed a sword belt and had not returned it before he died in a brawl. The belt had become a belt of fire, and caused him great suffering until it was returned to its owner (p88).

A married woman gave her brother property deeds, which belonged to her husband. When she died, her brother evicted his brother-in-law and stole the property. The woman's ghost returned to beg her brother to undo the deed, saying that until he did she would be punished. When he refused she told him that while he lived she would be punished, but when he died he would take her place (p145-6).

Two servants argued over money, and one of them in a fit of anger uttered a curse. That day, before he could go to confession, he drowned. The curse was the only sin that he had committed since his last confession, but because of it he became a ghost and wore a leaden cape as a symbol of his punishment (p113-4).

Walchelin in his encounter with the Hunt spoke to two knights, William of Glos and his own brother Robert. William was being punished for usury. A mill had been offered as security for a loan, and William lent the money knowing that the debt could not be repaid. He then foreclosed and passed the mill on to his children. As a result he was forced to hold a burning millstone in his mouth. William asked Walchelin to carry a message to his heirs, telling them to return the mill. Robert was being punished for his eagerness to spill blood, but he said that Walchelin's prayers had already helped Robert by ridding him of his burning weapons. Robert also said that because Walchelin had tried to steal the property of the Hunt (Walchelin had tried to take a trophy as proof of his encounter), he would be forced to join the Hunt when he died. However, since Walchelin had also said Mass that same day, he would be spared much torment.

The Regio

At its peak, the regio has a rating of 7 but it only attains this strength under special circumstances on All Soul's Day, when the barriers between the quick and the dead are weakest. Usually the regio has a rating of 5.

Since it can manifest anywhere there is no terrain description. Hellequin only occupies the final two levels of the regio, (4 and 5, or 6 and 7), and may only be encountered there. The ghosts occupy all levels of the regio, although they may not always be seen. The regio moves with Hellequin, and Hellequin is constantly on the move. Water, even open sea, is no barrier. Hellequin has no interest in the living and will not pursue them, no matter what they may do.

At levels 1 and 2, the air is charged. Characters with Weather Sense may be fooled into thinking that a bad storm is coming. Characters attuned to nature and

animals will notice that animals react as if everything around them has a Magical Air, as per the flaw.

Level 3 is similar to 1 and 2, but the effect is much worse. Animals flee the area, the sky is stormy, and noises can be heard as though someone far away was shouting, but the sounds cannot be understood. Characters who are sensitive to the divine or diabolic see 'extra people' out of the corners of their eyes but as soon as they concentrate on these people they vanish. Relics glow with a bright light, and magical virtues, flaws and Twilight markings become blatant.

At level 4, in addition to all previous effects, the ghosts can be heard and understood. Many things are being said, but the common theme is "I want". "I want my sons to dig in the corner of the garden, where I hid my gold." "I want the land south of the river Nazaire and bounded by the forest of Arden to be given back to the heirs of Philip, my brother." "I want six candles to be lit for me at the shrine of Our Lady at St-John."

At levels 5 and beyond, the Hunt is visible and mortals may interact with it. At any given time there are hundreds of ghosts with the Hunt. On the open road, they are a crowd that stretches as far as the eye can see.

The Hunt stays in its three distinct castes. The first group, and the most numerous, is the peasants. They each hold something, or carry something. This thing is the reason why they are with the Hunt, and it hurts them to carry these objects. Although the peasants scream and wail, they do not drop what they carry, nor will they give it to another. The peasants will speak with anyone.

The second group is the priests. They wear robes and cassocks, and many of them carry bishop's crooks and wear cardinal's hats. These items function for the priests in the same way that the peasants' possessions do for them. The demons are most active amongst this group. The priests prefer to

speak to other priests, and hide their shame from other people.

The magi of the Hunt, though they may have lived as nobles or peasants, travel with the priests. They wear robes appropriate to their attitude in life, so a Flambeau would wear robes made entirely of flame. Magi prefer only to speak to magi, but they may also speak to covenant folk, particularly if they are from the magi's home covenants.

The next group is the nobility. They ride black horses and wear armor and carry war banners of the same color. They are as eager to fight as they are to talk. As before, the armor that they wear pains them. The nobles prefer only to speak to those of a similar social rank, and will be haughty if anyone of lesser rank tries to speak to them.

The final group is the dispossessed. These are the souls whose clothes have begun to shred as their hold on the mortal world weakens. These souls will speak to anyone, but because they have begun to decay their conversation is senseless.

The Hunt has two purposes. First, it travels to the portals that lead to the underworld. If the ghosts meet someone who is willing to help them by doing what they ask and completing their tasks for them, then their passage to the next world will be greatly eased. The Hunt's second task is to gather other ghosts, so that they may be taken to the portals.

Story Seeds

One of the covenant folk has died and joined the Hunt. The dead person had hidden away something extremely valuable for later use. Now his ghost wants the magi to recover what was stolen. He tells everyone he meets to carry a message to the covenant, asking the magi to find him.

A ghostly monk has managed to break away from the Hunt. This monk read necromantic books, and his forbidden knowledge has damned him. He's convinced that if he





can persuade a magus to give up wizardry he will be spared. Hellequin will eventually pursue the missing ghost.

Source

Schmitt, Jean-Claude *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (University of Chicago Press) pages 93-121, with particular reference to *The Account of Orderic Vitalis* pages 93-100.

The Fish of Four Colors

by Timothy Ferguson

A fisherman releases a jinni from a bottle and is rewarded by being taken to a lake in which dwell beautiful fish of four colors. The fisherman catches one fish of each color and, as instructed by the jinn, presents them to the sultan. Each time someone tries to fry these fish, a beautiful woman holding a wand walks through the wall and asks the fish if they are faithful. When they reply that they are, she tips them into the fire. The sultan is intrigued so he and his soldiers follow the fisherman to the lake, which is only half an hour's walk over the mountain that surveys the capital.

The sultan leaves his camp alone, late at night, and scouts the area, finding a palatial house. He enters and marvels at the richness and beauty of the building's interior. The sultan hears a moan, and following the sound finds a handsome, young man lying on a couch. He claims to be the King of the Black Islands, betrayed by his adulterous wife. She has turned his city into a lake, his people into fish, and his lower body into marble. Each day she whips him

and wraps his upper body in a hair-shirt, before going to feed her lover, whom the king maimed before his transformation.

The sultan kills, then impersonates, the lover. He tricks the sorceress into freeing the king and disenchanting his people. When the witch returns to celebrate her lover's restoration, the sultan kills her. The sultan returns home, amazed to discover that his capital is a year's journey away. The sultan has no son, so he adopts the king. The fisherman's daughters then marry the sultan and the king.

Adaptation

A fisherman offers the magi four beautiful salmon of exceptional size and unnatural hue. Although they do not contain vis, they are under the influence of an enchantment (MuCo(An)40). If this effect is dispelled they transform into human corpses.

If asked where he found the fish, the fisher tells the characters that he released a faerie from a cave and in gratitude the creature gave him directions to a lake that is filled with these beautiful fish. If taken to the cave, characters can discover that it has a mild Divine aura. An Area Lore check of 12+ indicates that this was probably the cell of an early hermit, who imprisoned a "demon" inside, after it had plagued farmers with poor weather.

When taken over a nearby mountain track by the fisher, the characters see a broad lake, in which rise four islands. An Area Lore roll of 3+ indicates that no lake should be found here. The lake swarms with fish in four colors: blue, red, white and yellow. The storyguide should decide whether this is a regio or if the mountain track the characters have followed is a faerie trod. Either way, the area has a Magical aura of 4.

If the characters investigate the area they find a palace made of black stone, clad in iron plates. The plates are enchanted to keep out spirits, as a level 20 ReVi effect.

Searching inside they are attacked by the Spirits of the Fountain, guardians left by the adulterous queen. After defeating these, they find the half-petrified king, who tells them the story of his wife's deception. He states that the lake was once a city, and the fish were once his subjects. The four colors correspond to their religions. If the characters attempt to dispel these effects they should be treated as Hermetic spells of the following levels: MuCo(Te)40 for the petrified king, MuCo(An)50 for the metamorphosed people and MuTe(Aq)60 for the transformed city. The adulterous queen is currently in a domed tower, visible from the palace, comforting her lover. The characters can either follow the stratagem of the Sultan, or assail the queen immediately. The Queen calls upon spirits bound into the tapestries on the walls of her lover's room if given the opportunity.

If the characters defeat the adulterous queen, but cannot reverse all of the enchantments, the king offers them a great reward if they can bring to him a mage capable of restoring his kingdom. The king reserves most of his treasure to pay his deliverer, but once his kingdom is restored he can offer riches, ownership of the adulterer's tower, and his wife's magical books if the senior mage has not demanded them as part of his price. If the characters are able to liberate the kingdom themselves, its ruler will gladly keep them as powerful allies, seeking to befriend them and marry them to the daughters of his nobles. Any attractive maga may become the object of the king's attentions. To keep the story circular, the fisherman is given a prominent place, possibly as treasurer of the kingdom.





The Queen's Lover

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

Age: 34

Size: 2

Confidence: 1, rises to 2 if healed

Virtues and Flaws: Gigantic +3*, Venus' Blessing +1, Mute -3, Disfigured (sores) -1, Outsider (Moor) -1,

*This character is eight feet tall.

Personality Traits: Lazy +3, Parasitic +2

Reputations: None

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling +4 +5 +0 +5 +5

Pole Arm +11 +10 +8 +14 +8

Soak: +5

Fatigue levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Abilities: Awareness 3 (valuables), Bargain 1 (markets)*, Brawling 3 (dodging), Carouse 5 (repeatedly),

Charm 1 (women)*, Folk Ken 5 (City of the Black Islands), Guile 2 (about women)*, Intrigue 3 (women)*, Longshaft Weapon 5 (pole arm), Ride 3 (distance), Speak Arabic 5*, Stealth 3 (trysts)

*While the queen's lover remains mute he cannot use these abilities. He can still understand spoken Arabic.

Equipment: Very little not stolen from the king.

The queen's lover is able to move and fight but he cannot speak (or sustain tumescence), because of an injury to his throat, where the king attempted to decapitate him. He is eight feet tall and has prominent muscles. His dark skin is covered in sores, so he wears only a loin-cloth. He rests most of the time, and is easily surprised if the characters carefully select their moment.

Massoud, The Enchanted King of the Black Islands

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

*after restoration

Age: 24

Afflictions: Paralysis and petrification (waist down)

Size: 0

Confidence: 1, rises to 2 if rescued, and 3 if kingdom is saved

Virtues and Flaws: Greater Noble (King), Cursed (Lower half transformed to stone)

Personality Traits: Trusting +3, Pious +1

Reputations: Easily fooled (his servants) +3, Just ruler (peasants) +2.

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling* +4 +1 +3 +2 +2

Shortbow* +4 +3 n/a +4 +3

Scimitar* +9 +5 +10 +6 +5

Soak: +1

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Artes Liberales 1 (geography), Animal Handling 1 (falconry), Athletics 1 (running), Bow 2 (game), Brawling 1 (knife-fighting), Carouse 1 (moderation), Charm 3 (nobles), Civil and Canon Law 3 (Black Islands), Etiquette 2 (holding court), Folk Ken 3 (City of the Black Islands), Hunt 1 (fishing), Intrigue -1 (wife), Leadership 2 (soldiers), Legend Lore 2 (Black Islands), Longshaft Weapon 1 (lance), Philosophiae 1 (natural), Ride 3 (while using bow), Single Weapon 4 (scimitar), Speak Arabic 5, Storytelling 1 (own story), Stealth 1 (city), Swim (long distances) 1, (Islamic) Theology 1 (sayings of the Prophet)

Equipment: Sumptuous home. Treasury suitable for a small city.

The Adulterous Queen

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

Age: 65, looks 23

Size: -1

Confidence: 4

Virtues and Flaws: Lesser noble (Queen)
+2, Curse of Venus -2, Slow Caster -2

Personality Traits: Loves Paramor +3,
Deceptive +2

Reputations: Adulteress 3, with servants

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawling (fist) -1 -3 -1 -2 -3

Soak: -1

Fatigue levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Alchemy 14 (spellcasting),
Animal Handling 1 (falconry), Artes
Liberales 3 (trivia), Athletics 2
(dance), Awareness 4 (enemies),
Carouse 2 (with lover), Charm 5
(men), Concentration 5 (spellcasting),
Disputatio (losing gracefully) 2,
Etiquette 4 (holding court), Folk Ken 3
(City of the Black Islands), Guile 5
(husband), Intrigue 5 (against hus-
band), Islamic Law 2 (regarding
magic), Legend Lore 3 (jinn), Magic
Sensitivity (transformations) 8,
Philosophiae (spellcasting) 14, Ride 1
(safety), Scribe Arabic 6, Speak Arabic
5 (nobility), Speak Persian (nobility)
5, Stealth 3 (at night), (Islamic)
Theology 1 (women of the Qu'ran).

Niranjs:

Aura of Ennobled Presence (MuIm 10)

Cloak of Black Feathers (variant — turns
into a swan) (MuCo 30)

Cloak of Colored Scales (turns victim into
fish) (MuCo(An) 35)

Coerce the Spirits of the Night (level 25)

Crystal Dart (MuTe 10)

Disguise of the New Visage (MuCo 15)

Hornet Fire (Mulg10)

Object of Increased Size (MuTe 10)

Petrification (MuCo(Te)40 — turns a
human, or part of a human, into
stone)

Prison of Flames (Mulg 15)

Recollection of Memories Never Quite Lived
(MuMe 25)

Summoning the Distant Image (InIm 25)

Wind of Mundane Silence (level 35)

Equipment:

Anklet: The queen's anklet is a magic
resistance charm. It acts as a perma-
nent ReVi 25 protective effect. The
protection does not, however, extend
to the queen's possessions or the
anklet itself.

Books: Contain her niranjs, and include
many excellent texts on Philosophiae
and Alchemy.

Ring of Deepest Sympathy: This item
allows the queen to ignore the usual
limitation which prevents raqi casting
ritual spells, but only in very rare cir-
cumstances. While wearing the ring
she can perform rituals, which require
weeks of preparation, upon the king.
His deep sympathetic connections to
the realm magnify the spell effects out
into the kingdom. The ring is of
unknown manufacture, and its func-
tion cannot be determined by
Hermetic laboratory research.

Sleeping potion and incense: The queen
can create a sleeping potion and its
antidote. The potion must be ingested
and acts as a 20th level PeCo spell. The
victim falls asleep until roused by the
queen's incense. The queen has a dozen
doses of each preparation.

Wand: The queen's wand opens locks and
allows her to step through walls. It
protects her from effects that inhibit
movement, including spells of less
than 30th level.

Encumbrance: 0

If you have *Blood and Sand*, the adul-
terous queen is a *raqi*, as described on page
76 of that book. If you do not have it, treat
her niranjs as ordinary Hermetic spells,
except that it always costs her a fatigue
level to cast one.





Spirits of the Fountain

Characteristics: Int 0, Per +2, Pre -1, Com n/a, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +2*

*All characteristics are for manifested spirits

Magic Might: 15

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Faithful to King +3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat
Brawling (hands) +7 +7 +2 +10* N/A

*Usually attempt to strangle

Soak: +0

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Powers:

Leech, PeAq10, 1 point: While strangling a character, the spirit can use this power to draw one fatigue level of moisture out of the character's body per round.

Manifest, 0 points: The servants of the fountain are ghosts, and in their natural state they are incorporeal. The binding they are under makes them solid when they make their first attack roll, and they remain solid until their opponents are dead, or they are destroyed. This power can only be used once per day.

Vis: 1 Mentem each, found in the bones in the bottom of the fountain

The spirits of the fountain look like naked, Arabic men who have recently drowned. They drip water as they move, and their jaws appear to be wired shut.

There is a sufficient number of spirits to challenge the player character group. The spirits can be freed either by shattering the skulls in the fountain, or by restoring the king and having him order them to rest. Simply killing the manifestation of the spirit does not destroy it, since it can remanifest after the next sunset. The Queen looks for water shed during a battle whenever she visits the palace, but does not call up the spirits of the fountain on each visit.

After the Queen enchanted the king, he sent his guards to kill her. The queen slew them and bound their ghosts into their skulls, which she placed at the bottom of the fountain in the palace courtyard. The servants of the fountain will not attack the queen, or anyone who says they come in her name. The spell anchoring the spirits to their skulls prevents them from using the possession power that most ghosts have.

It is the fanatical devotion of the servants to their king that prevents them from resting in peace. Although they hate the queen they are forced to serve her, because she provides food for the king. They do not allow trespassers into the royal enclosure because they know how vulnerable their master is. They are unable to speak with mortals, but if a magical method of communication is established they will allow characters who swear, by Allah, that they have come to rescue the king to enter the royal chambers.

Plot Hooks

This story can serve as the first in a saga, since it provides characters with an opportunity to earn the goodwill of a king, who can grant them the support necessary to establish and maintain a covenant. The queen's books can form the nucleus of a library. If this option is being used, she is a Hermetic theurgist and her books focus on

the arts of Rego and Vim. In this case the fisherman is told by the faerie to take his fish to a Tribunal meeting, and the characters decide to investigate while their masters socialize after the formal part of the gathering is concluded.

The character that releases the spirit might be a player character. In the original the fisherman pulls up a bottle in his net and, when he opens it, releases a jinni. In a saga without an Arabic flavor the trapped faerie

Spirits of the Tapestries

Female

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Pre +3, Com n/a, Str 0, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik +2

Magic Might: 15

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Faithful to queen +3

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Claws (hands) +8 +7 +2 +8

Soak: +4

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Powers:

Imitation of Life, 1 point: Although the tapestry women appear to be alive, they are actually ghosts that have taken solid form. Although they appear to bleed, the substance, if examined, is a cochineal-colored dye.

Vis: 1 Imáginem each, found in the skulls behind the tapestries.

Male

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com n/a, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex +1, Qik +0

Magic Might: 15

Size: +1

Personality Traits: Faithful to queen +3

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Claws (hands) +5 +10 +3 +10

Scimitar +7 +11 +9 +8

Soak: +5

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Imitation of Life, 0 points: Although the tapestry eunuchs appear to be alive, they are actually ghosts invested in artificial bodies. They cannot suffer fatigue. Although they appear to bleed, the substance, if examined, is a cochineal-colored dye.

Vis: 1 Imáginem each, found in the skulls behind the tapestries.

The Female Spirits of the Tapestries are the ladies in waiting from the king's harem. The king overheard them discussing how their mistress drugged the king each night before going off to her lover, so the queen blamed them for contributing to her lover's injury. The Male Spirits of the tapestries are eunuchs who tried to protect the handmaidens. The spirits look human, except to close inspection. Their eyes lack color, and in the case of the females, are surrounded by exaggerated rings of kohl.

The tapestry spirits are bound to their skulls, which are hidden behind the wall hangings of the room in which the Queen's lover lies. They will not attack the player characters unless instructed to do so by the Queen's lover or the queen herself. The male spirits use scimitars and the female spirits use their fingernails, extremely long and glass-sharp, as weapons. These spirits can be put to rest by destroying the skulls behind the tapestries, or by killing the queen. If their bodies are destroyed, the spirits can create new ones with the queen's assistance.



given in the adaptation can be used. In either case the creature, when released, threatens to kill its benefactor. It has been trapped so long that it has decided to kill first its deliverer, then any other humans it can find. The fisherman tricks the jinni into re-entering the bottle, saying that he will never believe such a gigantic being could shrink itself so as to fit through the bottle's neck. The fisherman

restoppers the bottle, but softens to the jinni's cries for mercy, and releases it again, after which it shows him the location of the lake.

Source

Dawood, N. J. (1973) *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*



Chapter 3 Characters and Treasures

Arion of Methymna

by Timothy Ferguson

Arion was the son of Poseidon and served as bard for Periander, the tyrant of Corinth. He was invited to participate in a song contest in Tarentum in Sicily, and took the opportunity of his absence from his patron's court to tour Italy and Sicily, making a great deal of money. He capped his tour with the festival in Tarentum, which he won. The sailors on the vessel returning Arion, and his wealth, to Corinth decided to kill him.

Arion offered the sailors his riches if they would spare his life, but they believed he would rescind the gift once returned to the court of Periander, and

gave him the choice of suicide or being thrown overboard. Arion promised to kill himself if the sailors would only permit him to play a final time. Pleased to have the chance to hear the premier musician of their generation, they agreed. Arion dressed himself in his costume, sang a beautiful song while accompanying himself on the lyre, and threw himself into the sea.

Arion's music had attracted a school of dolphins, one of which carried him back to Tarentum. He made his way to Corinth, still dressed in his costume, and presented himself to Periander, who had doubts about the bard's truthfulness.

The ship on which Arion had booked passage docked in port, and Periander summoned the sailors. He asked them where Arion was, and they replied that he had tarried in Tarentum to enjoy the hospitality of his admirers. As they said this, Arion walked into the room. Periander had the sailors executed and Arion's treasures returned to him. Arion gave a statute to a local temple, of a man with a lyre rising on the back of a dolphin.

The Skull of Phineis

The skull of Phineis is a treasure that storyguides can adapt to suit individual sagas. At its simplest, the skull may contain *Aquam vis*. It might grant powerful form and effect bonuses if enchanted, particularly if the effects enchanted into it related to the sea or music. It may hold some echo of Phineis's power, so that it attracts and tames sea creatures, or allows the owner to transform into a dolphin.

Adaptation

Myths aside, Arion is a figure known to Hermetic historians, as fragments of his *Hymns to Poseidon* are preserved in the Valnastium library. The *Hymns* are one of

the many books of worship to the ancient gods that Hermetic scholars wish they could complete. They know that a copy of the book survived into Hermetic time, since Trianoma's papers indicate she saw a complete copy in the care of Phineis, a powerful maga of the period.

Phineis is a significant figure from the Order's early history. Old when Trianoma began her project to unify the remnant strands of Mercurial practice, Phineis traveled to study with Bonisagus and contributed to the development of the art of Aquam. Phineis did not, however, live to see the formation of the Order, disappearing twenty years before the first Tribunal. Jerbiton, who had strong contacts in the east, had his followers search for her, but they did not recover her body or effects.

Certain Seekers, and some Bjornaer magi with aquatic shapes, search intermittently for the laboratory of Phineis. Trianoma's papers suggest that it was in an undersea cavern in which air has been trapped. The walls of the cavern were decorated with primitive magical drawings that precede the Empire. The laboratory survives, and the most valuable item in the cave system is Phineis's skull which, since the maga died in a laboratory accident, might be used to call up her ghost.

Plot Hooks

Plot Hook 1

Obscurata, a Seeker of House Verditius, has built a magical octopus of brass. The pilot and crew sit in a central bubble that is propelled by eight arms. The base of the central bubble is open to the outside, Rego Aquam keeping the water out. After several mishaps in the area near Verdi, Obscurata has been asked to test this device elsewhere. She would like to find the Grotto of Phineis, but since she is a Slow

Caster, she would like some crewmen aboard who can handle any unfortunate incidents. Obscurata has also created several miniature versions of the octopus, which fit over the head of a submerged person. She offers these as safety and excursion gear — they allow characters to breathe underwater, and protect the wearer from pressure and cold. Obscurata knows of several undersea sites with auras, but isn't sure which is Phineis's cave.

Plot Hook 2

A strange man in gray clothes, whose faerie nature is inconspicuous, has visited several covenants — usually those with Merinita magi as members — attempting to purchase magic items that collapse magical wards. If questioned by a knowledgeable magus, the man seems to be looking for something that will counteract the spell "Ward Against the Faeries of the Waters" but nothing else. He offers to pay in red coral, which is valuable for trade with mundanes, for fighting demons (through a form and effect bonus) and as a vis source.

The grotto in which Phineis's skull lies was seized from an earlier, inhuman group of Arion-worshippers. The Children of Delphine, a variant of conventional merfolk who have the lower parts of dolphins, claim Arion as their ancestor and the choir's grotto as their ritual territory. They are kept out of the grotto by a ward placed there by the choir. They want to collapse that ward, but not any of the other magical workings which might be useful either in their devotions or in the maintenance of their sacred site. They would prefer magi not become involved, since they might raid the sacred grotto, but with careful trust-building, a covenant might ally itself with these faeries.

Once the children have repossessed their ritual space, they begin to rapidly expand their territory. They subdue surrounding groups of faeries, seize strategic





The Ghost of Phineis and the Choir of Arion

If player characters can call up the spirit of Phineis, she will be driven to tutor someone in her magical tradition. She will barter the information she has available for access to a Gifted child she can teach or, failing that, teach her tradition's secrets to player characters whom she admires. Once someone has learned the secrets of the Choir, Phineis's spirit can find rest by casting *Twilight's Gift* on herself.

In a conventional saga, the Choir's legacy is useful to all magi. It includes a series of spells created by the storyguide that stress the form of Aquam and the control of undersea creatures and plants. It also includes a set of legends, designed by the storyguide, to provide plot hooks for undersea adventures.

A mystae built on her understanding would have the following attributes.

Symbol: A boy riding a dolphin. Other symbols include the constellation Delphinus and the cithara.

Motto: "By the tomb of the dolphin." Phineis believes the dolphin that saved Arion died because the citharode did not push it back into the sea. Periander and Arion entombed it, and forced the pirates who tried to kill Arion to swear on the tomb that the musician had chosen to settle in Tarentum. This makes the tomb of the dolphin a sacred place.

Patron: Arion worshipped many gods, like a good polytheist should, but was closest to Poseidon.

House affiliation: Up to the player characters.

Levels of initiation: Arion's cult was a school with a single master, with students who were either learning from their leader or acting as journeymen.

They gathered regularly to perform choral works from the *Hymns to Poseidon*. The leader never officially retires, but the duty of teaching new students, and with it the right to dictate policy under a figurehead choirmaster, can be won by a superior display of musical ability at a festival held in a cycle the player characters will determine. In the Hermetic era, it is possible that students beyond a certain level of skill will be permitted to form their own choirs.

Goals and practices: Determined by the new founders. Phineis's ghost would suggest creating a new abjuration to call up the daimon of Arion himself. If that can't be managed, then his sacred dolphin might be contactable. Phineis believes that the capstone virtue for her tradition has been lost, through the collapse of the choir into a single person in her master's time.

Virtues:

Special Circumstances (Sea) +1

Hermetic Theurgy +1. Members of the Choir of Arion use their Choir of Arion Lore score in all formulas requiring Hermetic Theurgy. The daimons described in *Hymns to Poseidon* are those that served the God of the Waters. Poseidon also created the horse, after which Arion was named.

Enchanting Music +2

Affinity with Aquam +3

Pahedros +2. The Pahedroi of this cult always take the shape of a dolphin or a horse.

Ways of the Sea +4

Preferred ordeals: Prohibition (harming dolphins or horses) -1, Cicatrix, Purging the Vessel (re-enacting the ride of Arion), Lycanthrope (dolphin or horse).

sites or resources, and kill any local monsters that seem likely to trouble them. Although they do not bother humans they consider respectful of their territory, they will harm others for accidental transgressions, like emptying waste from ships when over their settlements, or sailing over their settlements on Mondays, which are sacred.

Characters can become involved in the machinations of the Children of Delphine in a number of ways. One of the merfolk might attempt to charm a character. One of the merfolk may take human shape and attempt to enter the covenant's service, only to be exposed if they cannot arrange an invitation that allows the faerie to pass the Aegis. Unlike many other types of merfolk, the Children's offspring with humans do not have webbed fingers, so they might allow a Gifted child of their blood to be raised in the covenant, as a servant or apprentice.

A player character magus with Latent Mystical Abilities might discover that he is a merrow foundling. Merrow foundlings who are unaware of their nature begin to have dreams about drowning or being attacked by sea monsters in their teenage years. Each time they die in their dreams they gain an experience point in a Loyalty (Children) personality trait, up to a maximum level of three. This effect comes from within the foundling, so magical defenses like the Aegis are ineffective. Spells which affect the character's mind directly, or assistance from the Church, can stall the process indefinitely.

Delphian Merrow Blood is a +1 virtue. It provides +3 on all natural resistance rolls, if the character wishes to resist. The character has a +1 bonus on all aging rolls and loses 1 fatigue level per week, if she does not bathe in salt water during that week. The character has Common Sense in the aquatic environment. A character with a faerie parent should develop the Strong Faerie Blood virtue instead. See *Faeries Revised Edition* page 167 for details.

Source

Herodotus *The Histories*, Hyginus *The Fables*
 Modern version: Bullfinch, T. (1963) *Mythology*, London, Spring Books.

The Berwick Vampire

by James Maliszewski

In the northern part of Britain, at the mouth of the river Tweed is the town of Berwick, under the jurisdiction of the king of Scotland. In this town lived a very



Children of Delphine

Characteristics: Int: +1, Per: +4 (underwater), Str: +1, Stm: +3, Dex: +2, Qik: +3.

Faerie Might: 15

Size: 0

Personality traits: Suspicion (magi) +3, Brave +2

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Spear (trident) +11 +6 +9 +4 n/a

Net: +7 +10* +9 +0** n/a

Trident/Net pair +9 +8 +10 +5 n/a

* Add +3 to Atk when the Merfolk cast it from above the water.

**Victim becomes entangled in the net and a Dex roll of 9+ is needed to escape.

Soak: +3

Fatigue Levels: Tireless

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Area Lore 5 (home territory), Awareness 5 (sea monsters) 5, Craft (various) 6, Hunt (edible fish) 5, Legend Lore 2 (obscure merfolk ancestor religion), Single Weapon 3 (Spear), Two weapons 3 (Net and trident)

Powers:

Lure CrMe25, 3 points: The Children of Delphine can sing an enrapturing song that makes characters feel desire for them. This desire is treated as a personality trait of +3.

Vis: 1 point Imáginem, tongue



wealthy man, who seemingly lived an exemplary life, but who in fact was an unrepentant sinner. No one in Berwick realized this until after the man's death by plague, when his body was buried — but would not remain in its grave. Through the power of Satan, his undead body rose from its burial place at night and flew about, followed by a pack of baying hellhounds. In this manner, it preyed upon the people of Berwick for several days and its presence brought a plague to the town.

For fear of the monster, most citizens of Berwick remained indoors after dusk. Eventually, the merchants and great men of the town decided that something had to be done and began an investigation into how to deal with the creature and the pestilence it brought with it. They discovered that the monster had been heard to say that so long as its body remained unburned, Berwick would know no peace.

Eventually, the villagers agreed upon a plan to deal with the creature. They chose ten young men to find the grave of the wealthy man and to exhume his body. When they did so, they found the body to be largely uncorrupted despite its time in the earth. They then dismembered it and burned the body parts to ashes. The creature no longer troubled the town, but the plague it brought did not recede. Instead, it claimed half the population of Berwick and the villagers claimed they could hear the baying of hellhounds as they buried their dead.

The *Sanguisuga*

The Berwick Vampire (or *sanguisuga*, a Latin word meaning “bloodsucker”) is a testament to the power and subtlety of the infernal realm. The story begins several decades ago, when an English merchant named Henry de Nolis set up his business in Berwick for the first time. A well-traveled man with experience delivering goods to Outremer, Henry had decided to move



north and take advantage of Berwick's strategic position as a conduit of trade to Germany and Flanders.

Though an outsider, Henry made every effort to ingratiate himself with the local people. He was generous and devout, giving alms to the poor and stipends to the Church. Henry also cultivated a reputation as a serious and learned man, for he was always purchasing books from the Continent and engaging the priests in good-natured debate. More importantly, Henry's business activities brought much wealth to Berwick and contributed to its reputation as the "Alexandria of the North."

The sad truth is that Henry was not at all what he appeared to me. Perhaps once he was a good man, but that was many years ago, long before he came to Berwick. In the course of his travels to the Holy Land, he had given in to greed and corruption. The self-interest and violence he witnessed there among the so-called *militia Christi* fed his own cynicism and doubts. In brief, Henry mistakenly saw the hypocrisy of many crusaders as a sign of the hypocrisy of the Church and his faith died, allowing the Devil to enter his heart.

Thanks to diabolic assistance, Henry became a wealthy man. In return, demons commanded him to return to Britain and settle in Berwick, a town growing in importance and the source of much tension between the kings of England and Scotland. Though it is under the jurisdiction of the Scottish, the English covet it for themselves. The infernal realm hoped that, by moving there, Henry might lay the groundwork for Berwick's doom, as well as the ruin of its Christian people.

Henry's instructions were quite simple: do evil by doing good. A clever man, he opted for a two-pronged approach. In the short term, Henry's business so enriched the town that he hoped he might lead many of its people astray with a love of wealth. His gifts to the Church, for exam-

ple, were aimed at inducing devotional laxity and perhaps more. Likewise, his gifts to the poor had become so lavish that few other citizens thought to give alms anymore, believing Henry's largesse had made theirs superfluous. In the long term, Henry hoped to make Berwick so wealthy that the king of England could not help but notice. He planned to make the town such an attractive target that war would be not only inevitable but bloody and prolonged.

Unfortunately, not even the servants of the Devil are immune to the weaknesses of the flesh. While traveling elsewhere in Britain, Henry fell victim to a plague that was abroad in the land and died in his home in Berwick. So great was Henry's dedication to sin, however, that Satan could not overlook the possibility of his servant's continued usefulness even after death. Rather than leave his spirit to burn in hell, the Devil sent it back to earth to reanimate his dead body at night. To aid him in his diabolical mission, Satan sent a pack of hellhounds to assist Henry, now a wretched *sanguisuga* whose very presence inspires fear and spreads the very disease that claimed his own wretched life.

As the *sanguisuga*, Henry has brought terror to Berwick and is able to act on his basest urges, those that he had to conceal while still alive. Consequently, he singles out for attack those he especially hated in life — priests and other merchants — and anyone he perceived to have done him wrong. At the same time, Henry's true personality, which is arrogant and self-serving, reveals itself even more fully, which is why he frequently boasts that no one can destroy him until his body is burned. He does not believe anyone in Berwick has the courage to desecrate a grave and destroy his mortal remains. This arrogance is perhaps his greatest weakness and reveals the single most important piece of information for anyone who dares oppose him.





Sanguisuga

The *sanguisuga* is a unique type of vampire that owes its origin to particularly evil agents of the infernal realm who, upon their deaths, do not yet wish to be consigned to hell for all eternity. Instead, they somehow convince their diabolical master to grant them an undead existence on earth, where they further the Devil's plans by spreading terror and disease. A *sanguisuga* can only be destroyed by finding its burial place, exhuming its body, and then burning it to ashes. Despite its name, this creature does not require human blood in order to survive. Its penchant for drinking blood is simply another way in which it inspires fear in mortals. The *sanguisuga* looks like a rotting corpse and travels by floating several inches above the ground. Being a servant of Satan, its feet can never again touch the earth, except during daylight hours when the creature lies dormant within its grave.

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

Infernal Might: 35

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Arrogant +3, Self-serving +2, Cruel +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Claws	+3	+6	+6	+6
Bite	+3	+5	+5	+6*

*Targets who suffer bite damage suffer additional damage as if affected by *The Wound that Weeps* (PeCo 15).

Soak: +5 (+10 against puncture damage)

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Disease, PeCo 25, 12 points: Anyone entering an area through which the *sanguisuga* has passed in the last 12 hours must make a stress roll + Stamina of 5+ or contract a wasting disease that kills within one week. Even if the roll is successful, the victim loses one Body level and rolls for one year of aging. Once infected, the victim can spread this disease to anyone who comes in contact with him.

Flight, ReAu 20, 2 points: Allows the creature to fly at a speed of up to 20 miles per hour, or hover as necessary. If the *sanguisuga* is forced to touch the ground by any means between sunset and dawn, it is rendered dormant just as if it were slumbering during the daytime. The creature cannot again take flight until the next dusk.

Fear, ReMe 15, 1 point: Frightens a person who sees the *sanguisuga*. He must make an Intelligence stress roll to take any direct action, so long as the creature is within 30 feet of himself. A roll of 12+ makes the character immune to the effects of its diabolical presence for this encounter, while a roll of 9+ allows him to take one action, although he must roll again to take subsequent actions (unless he rolls 12+, as noted above).

Story Hooks

- The plague the *sanguisuga* brings with it is extremely virulent. It is possible that it might infect someone from Berwick who travels to another town and spreads it, thereby drawing the attention of outsiders, who would seek out its cause.
- The peculiar nature of the *sanguisuga* might prove sufficiently intriguing to certain magi that they oppose its destruction. Such magi might be motivated purely out of a misguided quest for knowledge at all costs or more sinister

Hellhound

A hellhound is a giant, demonic mastiff whose fur is the color of pitch and whose malevolent eyes glow bright red. From its mouth spew flames of green balefire. The baying of a single hellhound is a terrible sound that can cause fear in the weak-willed — never mind the sound of an entire pack of these foul beasts. Most often, hellhounds serve diabolists and other servants of the infernal realm, but they can occasionally be found on their own.

Characteristics: Cun +1, Per +4, Pre -1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +1, Qik +1

Infernal Might: 25

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Mean +2

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite and Claws	+3	+4	+3	+4
Breath	+5	+5*	n/a	+10

*Must use Brawling defense, cannot be parried.

Soak: +1

Fatigue levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Balefire, CrIg 20, 2 points: As per combat description.

Fear, ReMe 15, 1 point: Frightens a person who hears the sound of a hellhound's baying. He must make an Intelligence stress roll to take any direct action, so long as the hellhound is baying. A roll of 12+ makes the character immune to the baying's effects in this encounter, while a roll of 9+ allows him to take an action, although he must roll again to take subsequent actions (unless he rolls 12+, as noted above).

ter reasons. In either case, they may prove an obstacle to attempts to destroy the creature once and for all.

- Henry de Nolis may not have acted alone in Berwick. In fact, it is quite likely he had accomplices and minions of his own, some of whom may have remained in the town after his death. Indeed, one or more of them might move their master's body to another locale, in order to prevent its being easily discovered by the townsfolk.
- Even after Henry's body is destroyed, many unanswered questions remain. What sorts of books lie hidden in his former home? Where did he get them? Did Henry have other infernal contacts on the Continent or elsewhere in Britain?
- Another option following the destruction of Henry's body concerns the hellhounds. If they remain in the vicinity of Berwick, they too must be destroyed or they will continue to menace the townsfolk, who already have already suffered the combined depredations of the *sanguisuga* and the plague.



Source

William of Newburgh. *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*. Book V, Chapter 23. The Church Historians of England, volume IV, part II; translated by Joseph Stevenson (London: Seeley's, 1861).

Caenis and Caeneus

by Timothy Ferguson

Poseidon raped a nymph called Caenis and afterward asked what boon she would



like. "I want to make sure that never happens again," she answered. "Transform me into a man." Poseidon did as she asked and, as an extra measure, made her invulnerable to weapons. The new man took the name of Caeneus. He sailed with Jason on the quest for the Golden Fleece, and married and fathered a son, named Coronus, who was later slain by Herakles. Caeneus gained so many victories over the enemies of his people, the Lapiths, that he was elected their king.

Caeneus's many successes had made him arrogant. He set his spear up in the marketplace, telling his people that they could not worship any god other his mighty weapon. Zeus was offended, and asked the centaurs to slay Caeneus for him.

The centaurs, who were the traditional enemies of the Lapiths, waited until they were invited to a wedding at which Caeneus was a guest. Caeneus killed half a dozen centaurs in the early minutes of the *melée*, because their weapons bounced off his enchanted skin. The centaurs then changed strategy, and, taking up fallen trees, threw them at Caenus, pinning him down. The weight of the pile grew so great Caeneus could not breathe. They knew that he had died when a bird emerged from the logpile and Mopsus, a seer who was also a guest at the wedding, explained that it was the soul of Caeneus passing from his body. When they dug up the king's corpse, it was again the body of a woman.

Plot Hook 1

A covenant in the characters' tribunal sidesteps feudal obligation by pretending to be a castle under the control of a companion. The companion, Robert the Forthright, is known widely as a private but otherwise excellent man, generous to his neighbors and the church, although a bit bookish. The castellanship is held in gift, which is to say the office is not immediately inherited, but reverts to the king on the death of the

incumbent. Robert has a twin sister, Elaine, who has avoided marriage because she prefers the company of magi and their relatively egalitarian society.

The characters hear that Robert has died in a hunting accident, but he is seen at minor court functions, accompanied by other companions from the covenant. Elaine, however has died while riding. Her body is laid in state, then buried, after which her brother withdraws from society for a time, to mourn for his twin. The characters may realize that Elaine has been transformed, perhaps by catching her tutor advising her on how men behave, but how do they prove it? If they can prove it, how can they profit from it? If the characters are in on the secret, and have at least a luke-warm relationship with the other covenant, they may discover that the magus that transformed Elaine is Susceptible to Divine Power. The enchantment crumbles before the sacraments, including the Mass. The covenant's members are unsure if it will fail during the anointing of a king, which the transformed *consors* would have to attend, in order to swear fealty and retain office.

The other covenant is seeking the Spear of Caeneus. They believe that simply owning it will transform Elaine permanently into a man. It would also have the useful effect of making her immune to weapons, which would hide, to some degree, her lack of skill at arms. Careful research or observation of the other covenant will allow the player characters to discover the spear's location. If they determine where the Spear of Caeneus is, they need to decide if they want to try to recover it. Then they need to consider either snatching it first, or letting the other covenant make an attempt, since if they fail it will soften the Spear's defenses.

The centaurs, the murderers of Caeneus, may guard the spear. Some writers claim that Caeneus was made immortal by Poisedon and is alive, buried with his spear under the heavy stones and logs laid down by the centaurs. Although most writers claim the bird that flew from the pile of logs

The Spear of Caeneus

The Spear of Caeneus is a single-handed weapon of prehistoric Hellenic manufacture. It is a five-foot shaft of pale wood, tipped with a bladed, bronze head. A thick jacket of bronze protects the first two feet of the shaft, and ends with a collar, again of bronze, raised about half an inch. The jacket is engraved with a simple wave pattern, and the collar is inscribed with “I am borrowed from the sea” in early Greek. The butt end is shod in bronze and has two large pearls as ornaments. The Spear of Caeneus is usually a *melée* weapon, although Caeneus also used it as a javelin.

The spear is of obscure pre-Hermetic manufacture. Spells like “Greeting the Maker” do not function when cast upon it, and the spell-equivalent levels given for its powers are for the purposes of laboratory investigation only. The powers do not fail when the bearer enters an Aegis of the Hearth. Ownership is only transferred by death, or the free gift of the spear. The spear provides any female owner with the following effects, regardless of whether or not she is holding it.

Change gender (MuCo40): The owner of the spear becomes male. That the owner is actually female cannot be detected with Hermetic magic. Similarly, Hermetic magic cannot dis-

pel this change. If this becomes widely known, the spear is likely to interest the more research-minded members of House Bjornaer.

Invulnerable skin (MuCo40): Non-magical weapons cannot harm the owner of the spear. Blows of sufficient power can, however, knock her from her feet.

The spear provides two other effects while held:

Improved strength and stamina: While holding the spear, the owner has her Strength and Stamina scores raised to +3. This can be investigated and dispelled as if it were a pair of CrCo40 spells.

Skill of use (ReCo 40): If the owner lacks the ability to use the spear, the weapon guides her body, giving her an instinctive capacity in its use. The user no longer suffers the —3 penalty for having no score in the skills Single Weapon (Shortspear), Shield and Weapon (Shortspear), Longshaft Weapon (Spear/Lance), Javelin (human targets) and Two Weapons (Trident and Net), where the spear replaces a trident. This muscle-guiding power is not an expression of understanding, and so the user cannot train others in spear use.



was his soul, it might be that Caeneus had additional shapes and escaped. If this is the case then Mopsus, the seer who explained the meaning of the bird with tawny wings, was either mistaken or lying. Mopsus is one of the semi-mythical ancestors of the mantric cults described in *The Mysteries*, so if he was in league with Caeneus, perhaps the latter is the ancestor of a line of Bjornaerseers. One writer claims that Caeneus committed suicide, and the spear may be hidden in his grave.

Plot Hook 2

A local nobleman has died in a distant war, and his nobles wait to see if his heavily pregnant wife will bear a son. If the babe is a boy, then, according to his father's instructions, he will become a ward of the Church. The local bishop, a natural brother of the dead nobleman, is on good terms with most of the major vassals and they would prefer he was the boy's keeper.



If the child is a girl, it will become the ward of the king. He will appoint a steward to manage her domains. The king is engaged in an intermittent war, and is therefore short of money and support. To help remedy this he will appoint as governor a neighboring nobleman, who will gouge the territory and split the profits with his liege.

A wealthy character that knows about the covenant chooses to take the risk out of the matter of the child's sex. With connivance of the mother and the midwife, he wishes to arrange for a Hermetic magus to be present at the birth. If the child is female, he wants the gender altered. This may lead to a subsequent story.

The local count cannot have children. He blames his wife for their lack of offspring, even though his many mistresses fail to provide him with natural children. His wife, aware that he might divorce her, or falsify charges against her, seeks the surreptitious aid of the player characters.

The count's problem is that, unknown to him, Hermetic magi transformed him into a male child at birth. If the characters dispel the effect, everyone will think the count has been ensorcelled. If they reveal the effect the count will consider them his enemies, and attack them for their slander. The best solution is to find a way to make first the countess, then one or more of the count's mistresses, pregnant. To do this the characters need to locate viable sperm from a man who looks rather like the Duke, extract it, store it, and then implant it, at an appropriate time in the cycles of each woman. The best candidate as a donor would be a natural son of the count's father. Can they locate his mistress?

Sources

Modern Edition: *The Greek Myths*, Robert Graves, London: Folio.

Appears in the *Iliad*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Epitome*. Suicide noted in Hyginus's

Fables. Caeneus worshipping his spear: Acusilaus, and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri.

The Legend of St. Guinefort

by Patrick Murphy

A baby boy was born to the Lord of Villars and his wife. The infant was strong and hale, and the pride of his father, who felt secure with his heir. One day, the child was left unattended. While his father and mother were off riding, the nursemaid slipped away for some rest. It was at this time that an immense, hideous serpent happened along; it was as big around as a log and breathed unholy vapors. Approaching the baby's cradle, the serpent was intercepted by the lord's greyhound, Guinefort, which had steadfastly remained at the infant's side. The greyhound and serpent were locked in mortal combat, as the two bit each other repeatedly. Finally, the serpent slain, the sorely wounded greyhound carried its body outside and returned to his vigil.

When the lord returned, he found the cradle overturned, and blood everywhere. The dog's muzzle was soaked in it. Thinking that the dog had devoured the boy, the anguished knight drew his sword and slew the beast. Upon finding the baby, unharmed and sleeping soundly, and then the body of the serpent, the lord realized he had unjustly slain a noble animal that had stalwartly protected his son. He interred its body in a well outside, which filled with stones, and planted trees alongside in the dog's memory.

In the years since, God has visited his wrath upon the manor, and it stands deserted. The peasants remember the dog for its

martyrdom, and now take their children to its grave to be healed.

Adaptation: The Death of Petrus

Petrus was a maverick member of House Bjornaer, given to following his compulsions and acting against his own House's decrees. It was his rebellious nature which saw him leave his covenant; he journeyed across Europe in various guises, and used his skills to pay his way, sometimes in blatant violation of the Code.

It was in this way that Petrus found his way to Villars, and eventually, into the employ of its lord. The Lord of Villars became aware of Petrus' abilities, and though he viewed them as a tool of the

Devil, he found he could not pass up the opportunities afforded him. Although he paid Petrus handsomely, in reality Petrus remained for only one reason: interest in the lord's son Daniel. Though young, Daniel seemed very intelligent, and was widely rumored to be "faerie-touched." Petrus thought this a good indication of the Gift, and resolved to discover if indeed the boy might make a suitable apprentice.

One night, Petrus assumed the form of his Heart-Beast — a snake — and crept in past the sleeping nursemaid to get a better look at the boy. The boy cried out, awakening the woman, and her shrieks brought the lord himself. Seeing the serpent form slithering out the window, he hacked wildly at it with his sword, and was stunned to see the dying snake take on the form of his erstwhile advisor.





In the lord's view, he was doubly damned. He had killed a warlock; Petrus' serpent form confirmed that. Worse, he himself had trafficked in, and profited from, witchcraft, and he did not dare let anyone ask questions about the affair. In a panic, the lord spirited Petrus' body away, and threw him down a nearby dry well. He then filled the well with stones, and announced to his wife that Petrus had moved on for parts unknown.

The Well

The locals know the well simply as "The Old Well." It is nondescript, being of cobbled stone some three feet high, and five feet across. There are remnants of wooden beams that once supported a roof, but no bucket or ropes remain. With light, it is possible to see a pile of rocks filling the well's bottom.

The most singular feature of the well is that it is now haunted. In the time since Petrus' passing, several villagers have reported hearing a man's voice emanating from within, and still others have reported seeing an apparition walking nearby.

Petrus died in violence, and having left unfinished his self-appointed task of seeing Daniel trained as an apprentice, now is bound here as a restless ghost. He most often repeats his final, dying words: "I would protect the child." Because of this, the locals decided that a benevolent spirit resides here. Many bring their children to be "blessed," and visitors to the well may find numerous peasant women here with their sick children. The tales surrounding the well will have become convoluted and exaggerated by the time the players investigate; at the storyguide's discretion, the protector of the well may be identified with any number of saints or benign faeries. The obvious candidate is one St. Guinefort.

Players investigating the well will have to contend with these frequent visitors, who would not look kindly upon anyone

The Ghost of Petrus

Petrus' spirit can manifest itself anywhere within 100 feet of his body. He appears sometimes as a man, other times as a snake. In human form, he is of medium height, but slender, with short brown hair and a tendency to lick his lips nervously. As a snake, he appears as a large brown adder. Petrus is generally not communicative and rarely leaves the confines of his well grave, instead moaning or repeatedly intoning his dying words. Occasionally he will be more lucid, particularly when approached by supplicants, although a spell such as *Coerce the Spirits of the Night* or *Incantation of Summoning the Dead* should allow magi to speak to a more coherent Petrus. Even at his best now, Petrus fancies himself a protector of children, having latched on to the suggestion of those who seek his aid. At the sight of a drawn sword he will shrink back and fade away. Petrus may appear substantial, but is incorporeal and unable to harm or be harmed by physical means; only magic can affect him. If Daniel is taken away to train as a magus, Petrus' spirit also finds rest.

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

Magic Might: 27

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Disoriented +3, Driven +3, Individualist +3

disturbing the spirit. However, the site should prove interesting to visiting magi for a couple of reasons, beyond possible interaction with a Hermetic ghost.

First, the site is now a potential vis source. On the anniversary of Petrus' death, a lone lily blooms at the foot of the well. The flower contains 3 pawns of Mentem

vis, and will grow again the next year if cut from its stalk. This vis source would cease if the body were to be removed from the bottom of the well.

Secondly, should magi actually seek to disinter Petrus' body, they find that his corpse was buried with magic items still upon his person. The ring on his finger is his *Twilight Band*. A ring made from silver, it is inscribed with intricate knot work. It fits perfectly anyone who tries to wear it. The wearer finds that he can use any of the following spells at will: *Eyes of the Cat*, *Moonbeam*, and *Light Shaft of the Night*. Additionally, he can cast *Bleak Shadows of Midnight* three times per day or night. [Resize ring (MuTe 5), Detect size (InCo 5), Eyes of the Cat (MuCo[An] 5), Moonbeam (CrIg 1), Bleak Shadows of Midnight (PeIg 15), Light Shaft of the Night (ReIg 10)].

A worn flint statuette in the tattered remains of a pouch is the *Idol of Dream Guarding*. It looks like it was once a rearing horse, though its features are now smooth, and parts of it are chipped. Its power is to protect those sleeping within Near range, such that their dreams cannot be affected by external forces. This means that spells cannot affect the mind of the sleeper, nor can shamans contact the mind of someone under the influence of the *Idol [Dream guarding (ReMe 40)]*.

The Manor

The manor of Villars is not large, consisting of a few dozen hovels, a small chapel, and a fortified manor house. Sir Michel is the fourth Lord of Villars, his great-grandfather having been granted these lands. He is outwardly a devout man, if not overly so in private, and while he is not loved by the local peasants, neither is he particularly harsh with them. On the whole, he is an average noble of little note, save that he has a son with the Gift, and he

lives with the gnawing secret that he has slain a wizard.

The lord is a middle-aged man who jealously guards his sole son and heir, but one also plagued by fear for his immortal soul. He is wary of strangers and a very private individual. Sir Michel is deathly afraid of being exposed, and will not react well to questioning about his son, the well or the departed Petrus. If pressed, he is apt to use any means at his disposal to silence investigators.

Daniel's age should be determined by the storyguide after deciding how long ago all this transpired. He may be too old to begin apprenticeship, or barely older than a toddler. Daniel might have an appropriate Virtue like *Magical Animal Companion* or *Guardian Angel*.

Story Hooks

- One of the children of the covenant or a nearby village contracts a strange illness. The desperate parents approach the magi for a cure, but it is beyond the scope of Hermetic magic. A pilgrim passing through the area relates the tale of a certain "Saint Guinefort" and her grave near the manor of Villars. The site is purported to have healing powers for children. The local church may also be interested in learning more about this mysterious saint, who is unknown to the clergy.
- A magus from a distant tribunal visits the covenant, seeking information from its magi. The magus Radko is Petrus' filius, and one of the few magi the elder magus got along with. He has traced Petrus' steps to their general vicinity and hopes they can shed some light on what happened to him. Radko has traced Petrus to Villars, and either seeks the covenant's approval before meddling with a nearby noble, or suspects the covenant of playing some role in his disappearance.





- When one of the covenant magi begins to look for an apprentice, his attention is drawn to tales of a noble's son some leagues distant. The lad is known to talk to thin air, and is labeled a changeling by some. Daniel is bright and curious, has vague but warm memories of Petrus, and would welcome approaches by similar magi. However, Sir Michel is likely to react poorly to any suggestions of his son being involved with wizards.

Alternate Approach

As presented here, this story deviates from the actual legend, but the storyguide may choose instead to retain the basic premise of the original. In this case, Petrus' Heart-Beast is a greyhound, and the story can be amended as follows:

At about the same time that Petrus arrived at Villars, young Daniel discovered a greyhound wandering in the fields and took him as a pet, which the boy named Guinefort. When not engaged with Sir Michel, Petrus would secretly assume this dog form and spend time frolicking and observing the lord's son. So it was that Petrus was watching over the boy when a large serpent slithered into the room, undoubtedly to steal the baby's milk. A battle ensued, and Petrus failed to note the poisonous bite he had received until his magic failed him, collapsing at death's door. When Sir Michel arrived, he watched, horrified, as his son's new pet feebly spoke to him, telling him that he was Petrus, the warlock he had entrusted with all his secret plans, and that the boy would one day be a powerful wizard like himself.

Again, Sir Michel feared for his family and his soul. With "Guinefort" unconscious, the lord saw his chance to be rid of Petrus. Taking him to a nearby dry well, he threw the greyhound within and began to throw rocks in after him, to conceal the body. Yet one of his peasants had been

nearby, saw him throw in the corpse, and asked what the lord was doing and why he was so distraught. The lord babbled something incoherent in his panic, but the peasant ceased his questioning, and helped his lord with the burial. There Petrus of Bjornaer died.

After a little sleep, and some time to regain his composure, Sir Michel decided to stick as closely as possible to the truth. To those who inquired, Petrus had moved on, and he told everyone at the manor the story of brave Guinefort, who had died to protect Daniel. The peasants ate the story up, and consider the cairn in the well to be a holy place — obviously, God sent the dog to watch over the boy. As an unforeseen result of this story, pilgrims now travel many miles to see this 'blessed' place. While Sir Michel enjoys the extra revenue this generates, he loathes the attention it brings. The Church has begun to wonder about this mysterious saint, and when they discover it is just a dog, they will likely rebuke all involved in the harshest terms. Similarly, the news is likely to travel to a nearby covenant, whose members may have the means and curiosity to thoroughly investigate the well — only to find a human skeleton within, not that of a hound!

Source

Schmitt, Jean-Claude. (1983) *The Holy Greyhound*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 4-6.

The Cambric Shirt

by Timothy Ferguson

There is a king across the mountains who was, for many years, a bachelor. He is brave and handsome, as kings should be.

He is also just, which is rare and therefore valuable. His friends thought it a shame that he had not married and pestered him to take a wife. He answered them “I have wealth and power beyond the dreams of even my noblemen, so I have little need for a wife, but as I love you and know you will not cease in your requests, I will marry. Find me a maiden of charm and sense and I will wed her, regardless of her station.”

The king’s friends searched the adjoining countries, and found him a woman they thought his perfect queen. She was beautiful and intelligent, and related to a neighboring monarch. Her dowry was of no interest to the king, but extensive nonetheless. The king however, demanded far more from a potential bride; he demanded wisdom.

The king wrote to the woman selected by his friends, and in his letter he enclosed a piece of linen three inches square. “From this cloth”, he wrote, “make me a shirt of

full length, so as to fit me, and I’ll marry you.” The maiden considered this, and sent a reply with the king’s messenger. It read “If you can send me a tool suitable for the task, I’ll gladly wed you.” The king was overjoyed by her response. It demonstrated that she was no fool, and was not cowed by his station. They were wed, and they live happily still, together with the king’s friends, who were made far richer from the dowry.

Adaptation

The Queens of the Harvest are a class of faerie noblewomen, representatives of the ancient sovereignty magic. They are forced, by the nature of their role, to name a quest that, if completed, will constrain them to marry. Since marriage places them under the control of their husbands and reduces their personal power, they prefer to select quests that are apparently impossible.



Queen of the Harvest

Queens of the Harvest are, in appearance, among the most human of the faerie races, in part because most of them have many human antecedents. Their coloration and appearance are usually similar to those of the surrounding human population, except in those cases where the population has recently been altered through migration or conquest.

Queens of the Harvest are taller than most women, and although they look slightly frail they have contain a little of the strength of the earth. Their bones are particularly dense, and have a distinctive, metallic sheen. This is most notable in their teeth, which verge on the reflective. Queens of the Harvest dress as they wish, although they rarely wear cut jewelry. Some use living things as ornaments — flowers instead of gemstones, tiny birds for brooches. Most queens travel with a retinue of intelligent minor faeries, and are attended by faerie domestic animals. Usually they prefer a particular signature animal.

Faerie Might: 45

Characteristics: Int +3, Per +5, Prs +3, Com +1, Str 0, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: varies between –1 and +1

Personality Traits: vary by landscape

Weapon/Attack: Not applicable — attack using domesticated faerie animals like hawks and hounds

Soak: +8

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

Body Levels: OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated

Abilities: vary but always include Animal Handling 5 and Craft (Stewardship) 5.

Powers: Vary, but always include Control Animals and Plants, Control Fertility and Control Element Auram. Also common are Travel, Shapechange to Animal, Shapechange Other to Animal and Bless and Infatuation. The powers of a Queen of the Harvest are limited to her regio and the mundane area that corresponds to it.

Immune to iron. A widowed Queen cannot leave her regio until she remarries

Vis: Rego, 4 pawns



The tasks can, however, be completed in a symbolic or metaphorical way, and this is just as binding on the ladies. The husband of a queen gains the ability to command intelligent faeries in the regio that lies at the heart of the territory to which the noblewoman corresponds. Through their wives, husbands can also control the weather and animals in her demesne.

It's possible, and common in non-Christian areas, for a ruler to have a faerie wife who lives in a regio and gives him power, and a mundane wife, who gives him heirs. Sometimes the faerie noblewoman will be promoted into a higher role in her court. Unless this vacancy is filled the weather turns foul and the harvests in the area fail. A chapel being founded on the site of the regio can remedy this, but usually a daughter of the faerie noblewoman takes her place, after completing a quest in Arcadia.

A few of these daughters, half-faeries, are Gifted, and become some of the most powerful magae in House Merinita. If they take their mother's role, they are constrained to remain within their regiones, interacting with the real world through intermediaries. Their statistics are similar to those of Caitlin of Merinita, described in *Lion of the North*, except that they are bound to their regiones with a Conditional Curse.

Story Hooks

This story can be used to support the foundation of a covenant. A powerful nobleman approaches the characters after his daughter has been presented with the strip of fabric and asks their aid in constructing the shirt. If they can give her the shirt, then the king is forced to marry, and set a portion of his demesne aside as her widow's portion. The nobleman promises to give this land to the magi, nominally to administer on behalf of his daughter. This will give them the resources to found a covenant.



A besotted magus, who wishes to marry a queen of the harvest, seeks the help of the player characters to complete her tasks. As a complication, once the characters know how to win the lady, will they give the answer to the Merinita magus, or arrange for a companion to become her consort? This will gain them new vis sources, a hidden site for a covenant, and an impassioned enemy.

Later versions of the story have the maid reply that she will marry the man only once he has completed impossible tasks of his own. The traditional additions, which player characters might have to complete are:

Find an acre of (arable) land, between the salt water and the high tide mark.

Plough it with a ram's horn

Plant it all with a (single) peppercorn

Reap it with a sickle of leather

Bind (all) the wheat with a peacock's feather.

Source

Source/Modern edition: Opie, Iona and Peter (1992) *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. (p.109 The Softback Preview edition) (extract from *Gesta Romanorum*)

Modern derivative: Simon, P. (1968) *Scarborough Fair in Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme* (musical recording).

Meridiana

by Eric Kouris; translated by
Michaël de Verteuil

Gerbert d'Aurillac was famous in Reims for his great erudition. Unfortunately for him, he met the provost's daughter and fell passionately in love with her. In despair at her indifference, he neglected his affairs and lost all his savings.

One day at noon, Gerbert got lost while wandering in the heart of a forest. He found there a women of unheard of beauty sitting on a great silk carpet with an enormous pile of pennies next to her.

Calling Gerbert by name, she invited him to trust her and promised all the silver before him and as many other riches as he might desire so long as he spurned the provost's daughter and adopted herself instead as his lover, not as a lady of superior rank, but as a friend and equal, adding "They call me Meridiana and I am of a high born race."

Noticing Gerbert's efforts to back away, she assured him that she too was one of God's creatures.

All Gerbert had to do to enjoy the riches Meridiana offered him was to renounce for ever his former love. Anxious to escape the poverty that threatened him, he accepted and pledged his oath.

Meridiana kept her side of the bargain and showered her lover with sumptuous gifts. In addition, each night in the forest, she instructed him in the science of things past and in what he had to do during the day.

Of course, this happy state of affairs could not last. One afternoon, the provost's daughter took advantage of Gerbert's having fallen asleep in a garden after too large a meal and proceeded to assault his virtue. The pact with Meridiana was thus broken.

Meridiana nonetheless forgave Gerbert but imposed a new arrangement: she insisted that he now pay her homage.

Gerbert's fortune expanded even more than before. But he now could consume neither the wine nor the host and had to resort to a subterfuge while celebrating mass.

Having become pope (Sylvester II) he succeeded in renouncing his homage to Meridiana. She then predicted that he would not die before having celebrated mass in Jerusalem. Gerbert understandably decided never to leave Rome.

One day while he was celebrating mass in a Roman church, Meridiana appeared and applauded as if rejoicing that he would





soon join her. When he questioned those in attendance, he discovered that he was in the Jerusalem church. He summoned all the cardinals together, the priests and the people, and made a public confession holding back not a single stain on his whole life. He then died in that very church.

Æ Adaptation

What is Meridiana's true nature? Faerie or demon?

Each storyguide is free to choose from two visions of her identity.

Meridiana the Fay

Meridiana is a faerie who enjoys using her powers on behalf of a mortal. She

chooses as lovers intelligent men marked out by destiny. These are invariably unhappy in love, and have sacrificed everything for a woman who nonetheless spurns them.

Meridiana then offers them love and riches in exchange for fidelity and secrecy. Her beauty alone is usually enough to convince even the most wary. Highly loyal to her lover, Meridiana brings him not only wealth but also knowledge both of things present and to come.

If her lover betrays her confidence, Meridiana immediately recalls her gifts, and he returns to the miserable existence in which he lived before meeting the faerie. Nonetheless, Meridiana can forgive an errant lover once. If he returns to her and begs again for her favor, Meridiana demands fealty on terms that exclude the lover from communion with his fellow man



Meridiana the Fay

Faerie Might: 40

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre +5,
Com +3, Str 0, Stm 0, Dex 0, Qik 0

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Loyal +3, Possessive
+2

Soak: +0

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5,
Incapacitated

Powers:

Bless, 2 Might pts: Meridiana can reward her lovers with good luck and wealth. (Faeries power: Bless, 18)

Glamour, 3 Might pts: Meridiana can create illusions that are effectively real as long as she is present. (Faeries power: Glamour, 10)

Infatuation, 1 Might pt: This power produces an intense attraction in any mortal towards Meridiana. The mortal is not directly controlled, but will want to do Meridiana's will and may fall in love with her. A mortal may resist this power on a roll of Int + Awareness of 24+ (Faeries power: Infatuation, 8)

Prophecy, 2 Might pts: This power allows Meridiana to predict future, or possible future, events. She is quite good at it. (Faeries power: Prophecy, 15)

Travel, 2 Might pts: Meridiana can appear anywhere she has been before, and can take one mortal along on her trip. (Faeries power: Travel, 10)

Roleplaying Notes: If Meridiana is faced with a situation calling for actual combat, she will always attempt to flee using her powers.

(through exclusion from communion during mass, for example).

If her lover were once more to betray his word, Meridiana would definitively withdraw her support until his death

(which normally follows shortly thereafter).

After death, the shades of Meridiana's lovers are said to reside forever with her in her palace in Arcadia.

The most famous of her lovers is Gerbert d'Aurillac who became pope under the name of Sylvester II from 999 to 1003.

Meridiana the Demon

Meridiana is none other than the demon of high noon, the most important of the demons designated to preside over the hours of the day. Faithful follower of the fallen archangel, he was rewarded for his fidelity by being assigned the hottest hour of the day; the one in which the sun's heat beats down and leads men to sin.

This assignment does not prevent him from being active during the rest of the day or night, but he can only definitively corrupt his victims and make them sign a pact in which they sell their soul at noon. The rest of the time he sees to it that they enjoy all the material benefits they desire, thus ensuring that, when the time come, their souls will effectively be his.

To these ends, Meridiana uses all the tricks appropriate to a demon of his rank. He is, nonetheless, not a particularly brutal demon. Even if his sun dominated personality can lead him to fits of anger, the regular cycle of the days has taught him



Demons of the Hours

Each hour of the day and night is associated with a demon. The demon's principal charge is to ensure the daily repetition of the sins most appropriate to the hour over which he presides. This structure has all been put in place by Satan to deny men any respite and to push them continually to sinfulness. But God watches, and when the abuses become more numerous at one hour rather than the others, an angel intervenes.

Unlike other demons, those who preside over an hour can only corrupt their victims during that particular hour.



patience. He only has one hour each day to harvest new souls, but he knows that this hour will return each day.

When he can no longer control his anger, he normally targets livestock which he slays under the scorching heat. For these misdeeds he is feared by all peasants and respected by his peers.

When winning over new souls, Meridiana freely changes his appearance to suit his victim's preferences, offering him numerous riches before depriving him of them. Unwilling to return to his former miserable existence, the victim will then agree to anything to regain the luxury with which Meridiana had spoiled him. It is at this point that the demon will collect his due. Once the coveted soul has been so dearly acquired, he will let his victim enjoy his riches for a time before finally provoking his fall. Meridiana may be a patient demon, but he takes no joy in having things drag on indefinitely and prefers to see the souls he has won roasting in Hell rather than striding the earth.

To date, his greatest success has been Gerbert d'Aurillac who became pope while under his influence. Even though Walter Map claims that Gerbert renounced his pact with the devil, this is not the case. The pope died in the rubble of the church of St John of Jerusalem which collapsed on him at the hand of holy providence (as reported by other witnesses).

Story Hooks

Meridiana Returns

Rumors surround someone in the nearest town to the covenant. Recently, fortune favors him. He enjoys unequalled riches whereas only shortly before he lived in poverty. The magi could consider recruiting him as an ally of the covenant, unless they suspect a case of diabolism. An excursion to

Meridiana the Demon

Infernal Might: 60

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

Size: +1

Personality Traits: Fierce +4, Patient +1

Soak: +10

Body levels: OK, 0, 0, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Change Appearance, MuVi (Im) 30, 6 points: Meridiana can assume whatever appearance he deems necessary to corrupt souls. His different characteristics adapt to this transformation (the change is not just skin deep) but his personality traits never change.

Curse of the desert, PeAq 20, 4 points: as for the spell of the same name.

Calling the odious drought, PeAq 35, 7 points: as for the spell of the same name.

Slay Livestock, PeAn, 50, 10 points: When he is seized by anger, Meridiana can kill off the livestock from a whole countryside. He does not abuse this power since he knows that demons need live human beings to gain new souls.

Roleplaying Notes: Meridiana only reveals his "true" form when he is sure that it will not prevent him from winning a new soul, or if he is in a fight. The rest of the time he adopts the appearance most appropriate for his victim.

town is called for, but the magi will not learn anything more than they already know. They may make friends with the beneficiary of the faerie's favors (or is it the demon's?), even if they cannot discover the truth.

But what to do when the target confesses the situation in which he finds him-

self to them, fearing for his soul? Will the magi have to fight a powerful demon or explain to the visitor that he has just lost the favors of a faery?

Sylvester II Was Not A Diabolist

The Order, and particularly the Roman Tribunal, seethes with rumors concerning Gerbert d'Aurillac. He reportedly entered into a pact with the devil and acquired his knowledge from a diabolical bronze head. He would have been heavily involved in the politics of the Order in Italy and may have even assisted House Jerbiton in founding a covenant in the Roman Tribunal.

A Quaesitor familiar with the works of Walter Map and convinced that Meridiana is a faerie wishes to rehabilitate Gerbert's reputation. He hopes in this way to prove that the rumors of diabolism circulating in the Order concerning the Roman Tribunal are unfounded.

To this end, he charges the magi of the players' covenant to investigate the matter. The covenant does not have to be located in the Roman Tribunal. What better than an outsider's perspective for this investigation? Providing assistance to a Quaesitor (and thus gaining his support) is something important enough to interest a covenant.

But what is the truth surrounding the rumors concerning Gerbert, and where can reliable information be found? Walter Map's version is available to the magi, of course, but there are other takes on the story. Why favor one over another? And what are the Quaesitor's true intentions? Could he himself be manipulated by Meridiana the demon in an effort to further corrupt the Order? Or even by Meridiana the Fay, seeking to clear her name?

Source

Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, IV, 11, Montague Rhode James, The Clarendon Press (*Anecdota oxoniensa* 14), Oxford, 1914
Boutémy, A., *Gautier Map conteur anglais*, Brussels, 1945

Laelaps

by Timothy Ferguson

The hound Laelaps could never fail to catch his quarry. Stories about him vary, but in one Artemis gave him to a woman named Procris, together with a javelin that never missed its target and returned to the thrower when called. Procris married a man named Cephalus, whom the goddess Aurora tried, unsuccessfully, to lure him away. After mutual betrayal, the two were reconciled and Procris gave her husband the dart and dog.

Themis, a titaness, sent a magical vixen to pester the flocks of Thebes, in revenge for the death of the Sphinx. It could not be caught by any means. Laelaps was set on her, and sped off so rapidly that the eye could not follow him. Since their two magical natures threatened to create a paradox, Zeus turned them into stone. Artemis thought this unfair, and on her petition Zeus set Laelaps in the stars. Laelaps was the ancestor of the Greek sheepdog.

Despite the loss of his hound, Cephalus continued to hunt. Sometimes he would swim in the rivers, then he'd run naked to dry off, calling for a breeze by flattering it. A passerby heard him, and told Procris that her husband was cavorting with a nymph in the forest. Procris, a skilled huntress, worked her way through the forest to where her informant said her husband was. She hid, out of sight, and listened. When he repeated his prayer for a breeze (*Aura*), she





sobbed and Cephalus, thinking there was an animal in the brush, threw his javelin at her. Procris's scream brought him running, but he could not save her. As a final request she asked Cephalus not to marry Aura, then forgave him when he explained that he had not taken a lover.

Adaptation

A formula for adjuring the Astral Hound can be found in a select few thaumaturgical grimoires, but this is one of the subtler traps the writers have left for thieves. Laelaps cannot be summoned, because the vixen he was assigned to chase still exists. Its body has been turned to stone, and then lost, but if Laelaps is called he is still bound by his very nature to catch it, and the vixen is equally bound by its

Laelaps, Perfect Hunting Hound

Characteristics: Cun +2, Per +5, Str +2, Sta +4, Dex +2, Qik +5

Magic Might: 20

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Ferocity: +3 (when chasing prey), Loyal +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite	+14	+11	+9	+9	+12

Soak: +6

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

Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Abilities: Awareness 8, Hunt 12.

Powers:

Swiftess (ReAn30, 1 point): Laelaps moves so quickly while hunting that the human eye cannot follow him. He cannot use his supernatural swiftess to dodge blows in combat, but it does allow him to make his first lunge at supernatural speed, doubling his Initiative bonus for the first round.

Perfect Tracking (In(any) 75, 4 points): Laelaps knows where his target is, as well as the direction and speed of its movement, the fastest way to reach it, and the best point from which to ambush it on its current path.

Supernatural Stamina, (CrAn25, 1 point): Hunting using his Swiftess power does not tire Laelaps.

Vis: 5 Vim, body, but any use automatically botches.

Adjuration of the Astral Hound

This spell summons the spirit of the constellation of Canis. The Astral Hound, when summoned, cannot fail to find its quarry. It moves faster than the eye can see, but leaves footprints like a normal dog, so it can be followed. Laelaps can run through walls, regio boundaries and other obstructions. His Magic Resistance is trebled against spells that would stop him catching his quarry. If any spell prevents Laelaps from reaching his quarry, he is dispelled.

Laelaps the Astral Hound will attempt to either kill or cripple his quarry, depending on the instructions given him by the summoning magus. Similarly, he will either bring the quarry back to his summoner, or wait at the site of the capture. Laelaps fades into starry blackness that swirls away after a successful hunt, or when Canis sets if he is merely waiting for the summoner. If your troupe uses *The Mysteries* supplement Laelaps is a Lesser Angel. See page 146 for more information.

Laelaps, as the primal ancestor, is the epitome of his breed. The standard Greek sheepdog is large and has a pure white coat that is short about the head and midlength on the body, so that at a distance non-shepherds can mistake them for sheep. They are ferocious and are trained to attack not only wolves, but also humans other than their masters. Redcaps in the Balkan Mountains are advised to carry weapons, at least a pouch of stones to fling at these dogs, if they stray into their territories. It's widely believed that the dog's hearing is improved by cutting off the tip of its right ear.

fundamental nature not to be caught. To prevent damage to the subtle structures of the Universe, Laelaps has been exiled from the world.

An attempt to adjure Laelaps is an attempt to break one of the subtler limits of Hermetic magic; Hermetic magi cannot create irrational situations or things. A magus can no more summon Laelaps than create a three-sided square. The reason this spell is so dangerous is that unless the reader makes a Legend Lore role of 15+ (since the myths of the pagan Greeks are little valued in the Byzantine Empire), they don't realize it attempts to create an irrational situation.

Anyone casting the spell successfully enters Twilight, unless they make a resistance roll against the spell's level, which is usually ReVi25, but is sometimes far higher. The Parma Magica doesn't assist the caster because the effect's range is effectively Personal — the caster is struck by their own magical energy. Unlike many booby-trapped spells, this adjuration doesn't depend on fooling the caster into producing an effect other than the one described for the spell. If Laelaps were a normal spirit, this spell would work perfectly. This means the trap can't be spotted with a Magic Theory roll.

The information in the boxed insert can be given to player characters when they find a book containing Adjuration of the Astral Hound. If they ever manage to remove the vixen from reality, the spell works as billed. At the storyguide's discretion, Laelaps can be told that an inanimate object is his quarry, which allows magi to use him to rapidly retrieve objects.

Although Laelaps himself cannot be summoned until the vixen is removed from the world, he is the forefather of all Greek sheepdogs, and some of his descendants might have inherited some of his powers. None of them, however, are perfect hunters, and so none are able to create irrational situations.

Plot Hook 1

The maga Hebe, one of the handful of thaumaturgists who is aware of the Laelaps ruse, believes that the Hound could be adjured successfully if the vixen was removed from the world. This would allow Laelaps to exist without creating the potential for paradox, so long as no one did anything stupid like commanding him to catch the Holy Spirit.

The vixen needs to be taken somewhere truly unworldly. Destroying the petrified body of the vixen is insufficient, because it's a spirit and would possess or create a new body.

Putting its statute in a regio wouldn't work, Hebe theorizes, because Laelaps could enter the regio, so there would still be a potential for paradox. The maga would pay the characters handsomely for the disposal of the statue, but so far the only ways she can think of getting rid of it are having someone else carry it into





Faerie, or securing it to a magus about to fade into Twilight.

Plot Hook 2

Theodeora of House Tytalus is looking for the statue of the vixen. She believes that the vixen can be unpetrified, so that she can bind it as a familiar. This would allow her to share its ability of never being caught. She doesn't confide this speculation to the player characters, because Theodeora has committed criminal acts, and is inclined to commit many more. She thinks that as a criminal, she is the quarry of the Quaesitores, and that if she binds the vixen she will never be caught. If the player characters help to create an uncatchable Hermetic villain, how will they stop her string of misdeeds?

Source

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
 Modern version: Bullfinch, T. (1963)
Mythology, London, Spring Books.

Underworld Rivalry

by Keith Baker

In the world of Byzantium, not all demons were allies. To begin with, the term “demon” might be used to cover a range of spirits, including creatures that a mage would consider to be magical or fay in nature as opposed to truly infernal. But even within the infernal realm, demons were often presented as being highly territorial. Groups of demons established in the material world often argued or belittled the

demons of other regions. This situation is based on two separate events from the life of St. Theodore of Sykeon, a Byzantine saint renowned for his abilities as an exorcist. The first incident involves a village being plagued by ‘demons’ after appropriating an old pagan sarcophagus lid to use as a water trough. The second occurred when St. Theodore was in the process of cleansing another village infested with demons, and was approached by two ladies who revealed that they had been possessed at an earlier time in a different part of the country — and that their demons really didn't want to be imprisoned with the local demons. St. Theodore actually granted their request — apparently it seemed reasonable to him, and he promised to catch up with them in the future!

While these events originally occurred in the Byzantine region of Galatia, for the purposes of a saga the village could be located anywhere in the Latin Empires or Nicean Empire.

A Village in Chaos

The village of Germa is a peaceful agricultural community — at least, it used to be. At the moment, it is literally in pandemonium. Women and children cry out from the pain of invisible torments, or fall into fits of uncontrollable laughter. The farmers have formed into an unruly mob, and they are breaking into each house in the village in turn. First they eat everything that they can lay their hands on, devouring more food than seems possible, eating raw grain and other odd substances. Then they spoil and smash all of the possessions of the household. Often, the mob will burn down the building in the wake of its visit. At the rate things are going, Germa will soon be a ruin.

But the problems are not limited to the human inhabitants of the village. The animals have also gone mad. The livestock is engaged in behavior ranging from danger-

ous to simply bizarre. Oxen chase children, seeking to trample them underfoot. Chickens scuffle about, using their feet to spell out strange words in an infernal tongue in the dirt. The scene is one of unbridled chaos — and any travelers who pass through the village may be at a loss to analyze the situation. But there are those who are willing to help explain the strange fever that has gripped the villagers. For while Germa is suffering from a plague of demons, not all of the demons are allies.

Demons Divided

Germa is a disturbing and dangerous place for visitors. Those approaching the village are first likely to see the smoke from a burning building or a field that the mob of possessed farmers have set on fire. Coming closer, a traveler will hear the wailing of tormented women and children, punctuat-

ed by fits of insane laughter. Upon entering the village, the most immediate physical threat comes from the possessed animals. The farmers are obsessed with devouring all of the food in the village, and will ignore visitors unless they themselves initiate violence. But the animals of the village may randomly attack travelers — or may be seen in the process of attacking villagers. If visitors don't interfere, they may find themselves the target of an unusually savage flock of chickens or a vicious dog.

It is impossible to have any sort of intelligent conversation with the villagers. Whether filled with ravening hunger, racked by pain, or convulsed in hysterical laughter, they seem almost completely unaware of their surroundings. There is a single exception to this rule — a lone woman who seems to be completely unaffected by the events. Curiously, she doesn't even seem to be concerned or frightened by the strange events; more than anything, she



Eudokia, Infernal Outsider

Eudokia was possessed as a young girl in Antioch. The spirit that shares her body is also named Eudokia — this confluence was one of the things that made the possession possible. Eudokia the demon is a lesser spirit of discord; she is passive in nature, watching situations from a distance and using psychomachia to spread feelings of shame or suspicion when such feelings serve her purposes. If the people of Germa are cleansed and Eudokia is left intact, the demon will have a field day amplifying the villagers' shame and frustration about the actions they took while possessed, causing a lot of finger-pointing and feuding in the village. At this point the two have been together for so long that the woman doesn't really have a distinctive personality to call her own; if the demon were to be expelled from her body, it's hard to say whether she would fall into a coma or whether she would simply continue the same pattern of behavior even without the demon inside her.

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

Infernal Might: 15

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Manipulative +4, Egocentric +2

Weapon/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam

Brawling (fists) +1 +2 +2 -4

Soak: -2

Fatigue: +0

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

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Folk Ken 3 (Peasants), Guile 4 (Slander), Intrigue 4 (Gossip)

Powers:

Psychomachia: Doubt +2, Shame +2, Suspicion +2
(See ArM4, page 254)

Seek the Hidden Shame, InMe 30, 2 points: Using this power, Eudokia can attempt to pry into the mind of a subject to learn their most shameful secret. Between clever conversation and psychomachia she can then try to use this secret to cause more trouble, either by blackmailing her initial victim or causing suspicion to damage the relationship between him and his companions.



simply seems to be annoyed. Her name is Eudokia, and she is the wife of the village reeve, Timotheus. She is about twenty-eight years old, and she has a slightly different cast to her features than the other villagers; she was born in Antioch and traveled some distance before settling in Germa. Currently, her husband is leading the possessed mob. Eudokia seems to consider this to be more of a hassle than anything else.

If any strangers come through the village, Eudokia will eventually approach them. She will apologize for the behavior of her husband and the others, all the while displaying a very blasé attitude about the whole thing. If questioned, she will explain that the trouble started when her husband and a few of the other men brought back a new water trough for the village. In the process, they released an army of unclean spirits — she will roll her eyes at this, mut-

Possessed Ox

The animals of the village have also been possessed. But where the men of the village have been filled with a ravenous hunger, the beasts of Germa are driven by unreasoning rage. Chickens, geese, oxen, dogs, and any other creatures that are around are racing about the village smashing things and attacking people. As noted with the farmer, the spirits are individually quite weak, but a new spirit will quickly fill the vacated spot if a demon is destroyed or driven from its host.

Characteristics: Cun -4, Per -2, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +5, Sta +6, Dex -4, Qik -4

Infernal Might: 5

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Furious +6, Stubborn +4

Weapon/Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Kick	+3	+5	0	+9

Soak: 12

Fatigue: +0

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

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5 Incapacitated

Powers:

Psychomachia: Rage +3, only against animals (See **ArM4**, page 254)

Possessed Farmer

The demons possessing the people of Germa are part of a swarm of minor spirits. Individually they have very little power, but there are hundreds of them in the area. They can only possess people who have somehow interacted with the sarcophagus from the forest. The net result of this is that there are a lot more demons in the area than suitable host bodies, and that while it is a fairly simple matter to destroy a particular demon using *Perdo Vim* spells, another demon will quickly leap in to take its place. Restoring the sarcophagus is the only real long-term solution to the problem.

The typical possessed farmer is interested in eating everything in sight. He cannot be engaged in any sort of conversation, and will ignore virtually all attempts at interaction, although he will respond aggressively if attacked.

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

Infernal Might: 5

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Starving +5, Greedy +2

Wpn/Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Brawling (fists)	+1	+1	+2	-4

Soak: +2

Fatigue: +0

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Psychomachia: Greed +2 (See **ArM4**, page 254)

Strange Appetites: A possessed farmer can eat almost anything he can swallow. This does not give him any sort of superhuman bite attack, but he has a seemingly infinite stomach capacity; he could sit in a spot and swallow a pile of rocks, as long as he could fit them in his mouth.

tering 'Trash.' If her attitude is questioned, she will explain that she herself has been possessed for years, but that the provincial demons are really an entirely different order — just look at the waste. What are they trying to accomplish here? If the visitors want to do something to help the village, Eudokia is willing to assist them, but only if they agree to leave her alone.

The Trough

At the center of the village visitors can find the new water trough. An educated individual can see that the trough is actually the lid of an ancient sarcophagus, probably Greek in origin. That is nothing inherently sinister about the lid itself, but it clearly does not belong in the village; by drinking water from the trough, the vil-

lagers made themselves vulnerable to possession. As it turns out, Timotheus had been excavating an area close to the village — using psychomachia, the spirits had convinced him that there was buried treasure to be found, and when he instead found an old sarcophagus he at least thought to take the lid. This spot could be located using either Intéllego techniques or with Eudokia's assistance; if the lid is returned to the sarcophagus and reburied, the demons will be forced to leave the people of Germa.

Adventure Seeds

One possibility is for a troupe to wander through Germa en route to another location; perhaps they will try to help the inhabitants of the village, or perhaps they will simply flee the scene and leave the vil-





lagers to the nightmare of possession. At the least, they are likely to be attacked by a few possessed beasts as they pass through.

Another possibility is for this event to strike a village located close to the troupe's covenant — thus requiring the characters to find a way to assist the victims in order to preserve their farmlands.

In either case, there is the question of how the troupe will deal with Eudokia. It is possible that characters will refuse to make any sort of deal with her at all, and this will work out fine. Alternately, they may decide that she seems to be harmless and try to use her as a long-term ally against infernal forces. This may seem like a good idea, but she is still a demon and will certainly use this access to try to corrupt the troupe and trick them into questionable acts. A third possibility is that the troupe will agree to work with her and then betray her. While Eudokia herself is not especially powerful, this may invite long-term retaliation from her infernal cousins.

Statistics are provided for Eudokia, a possessed ox, and a possessed farmer. The statistics for the farmer and the ox should serve as general guidelines for other types of animals that might be found in the village. While these spirits are individually quite weak, their strength is in numbers; as long as the sarcophagus remains in the village they will keep returning.

Source

- Dawes, Elizabeth (1948) *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) pages 106-110
- Mango, Cyril (1980) *Byzantium, The Empire of New Rome* (Charles Scribner's Sons) pages 161-162.

Medea and the Ritual of Rejuvenation

by Timothy Ferguson

Jason, the leader of the heroic Argonauts, carried the Golden Fleece to Iolchos. His men joined a celebratory feast, but Jason's aged father, Aeson, was unable to join them. Seeing that his father was close to death, Jason begged his wife Medea to use her incantations to reduce his own life, and add the years to his father's. Medea told him it would be sinful to meddle with his life, but that with her charms she could restore Aeson to vigor.

At the next full moon Medea summoned her dragon-teamed chariot. She flew to the far reaches of the Greek world, harvesting roots and herbs from the tops of many mountains and the beds of many rivers. She also collected gemstones and harvested pieces of mystical animals. This took nine days, after which she returned and constructed a space sacred to Hekate and Youth, using turf altars and sacrifices of blood, milk and honey. Sending Jason and his followers away she enchanted Aeson, so that he was comatose. With arcane rituals she thrice purified his body, then boiled her thousand ingredients in a cauldron. When her stirring staff sprouted leaves, she slit Aeson's throat and drained all of his old blood away, replacing it with her potion. Aeson's hair and beard grew thick and black. His muscles rounded and his pallor fled. When Medea woke him, he exclaimed that his body was as it had been forty years before.

Medea pleased Aeson further by arranging the death of Pelias, the brother who had stolen Aeson's throne. Demonstrating the efficacy of her potion

on a ram, Medea tricked Pelias's daughters into opening their father's veins. She flew away and the usurper bled to death, slain by all of his children. As murderers they could not inherit Pelias's throne.

Adaptation

Medea's ritual of rejuvenation fascinates Hermetic magi, because it does something that their magic cannot do: it reverses aging. Medea's ritual may provide a superior alternative to the Hermetic Longevity potion. Standard longevity potions are, in a sense, toxic, as every twenty years of use increases the level of magical damage to the body. If, instead, magi could just age normally, then reverse the process, they would not develop Twilight points at the same rate.

Medea's ritual begins on a night of the full moon. The maga leaves the place where she has slept, walking through the silence of midnight to a place distant from other people. Her hair is unbound, and her clothes are not pinned. She wears no shoes. Reaching an appropriate place she kneels on the bare ground and prays to the powers that have supported her. Medea calls to the night, the stars, the Trivia including Hekate, the breezes, the Earth, the Gods of Night, and the Gods of Groves. The maga then lists her many previous accomplishments, including, in Medea's case, raising the dead from their tombs, turning back rivers and causing earthquakes. After the powers are sufficiently impressed, they send a dragon-drawn chariot to carry her through the sky.

The dragon chariot allows the supplicant to gather various herbs. The mountains Medea visits are Ossa, Pelion, Othrys, Pindus and Olympus. She also visits the following rivers: Apidanus, Amphrysus, Enipeus, Peneus, and Sperchios. Finally, Medea gathers herbs at the lake of Boebe, the town of Anthedon, and the island of Euboea.

Medea took only the virtuous part of each plant: sometimes she collected the roots, or cut away leaves with a bronze pruning knife. The process of collecting takes nine days, during which the dragons shed their skins several times, affected by the scent of the rejuvenating herbs.

The supplicant places a bronze cauldron over a fire, and throws many herbs into it. To these she adds dozens of odd ingredients. These included precious stones, hoarfrost harvested by moonlight, a screech owl, foam of a sacrificed werewolf, the skin of a Cinphyian water snake, the liver of a stag, and the eggs and head of a crow that has lived as long as nine humans.

The supplicant builds two turf altars, one to Hekate and the other to Youth. She digs two trenches, and slashes the throat of a black sheep, pouring its blood into the trenches. The supplicant then calls out to the spirits of the earth, to Hades and Persephone, while pouring honey and then warm milk into the ditches. The supplicant puts the ritual's beneficiary to sleep and lays him on a bed of herbs. She dips multi-branched torches into the ditches and lights them. The beneficiary of the ritual is then purified with fire, water and sulfur.

As the brew in the cauldron boils the maga stirs it with an ancient staff of olive-wood. This grows green, and then sprouts leaves. Wherever the potion splashes flowers and grasses spring up. When the staff starts to fruit the maga knows her potion is ready. She draws her knife and cuts the beneficiary's throat. She allows his old blood to drain away and replaces it with the dark juice in her cauldron. It immediately makes him young again, and seems to bind shut the injury through which his blood was extracted.

The rejuvenation ritual has only been described once, and so its limitations are unclear. The ritual works as well on animals as humans; Medea rejuvenated a ram to demonstrate her powers to the daughters of Pelias. It also works on faeries, because she used it on the nymphs who had





raised Dionysus. Medea sends Jason and his followers away, because it is forbidden that they should see the mysteries of Hekate, but the daughters of Pelias are allowed to see Medea stirring her pot and lifting the ram into it.

Plot Hook 1

The ritual of rejuvenation has been lost to history. Rediscovering it is a suitable project for original research, using the rules found in the *Wizard's Grimoire Revised Edition*, page 84.

There are several strands of Hekate worship found in a high mystery variant of the Order, but none seems to have access to the ritual of rejuvenation. The most populous, the Cult of Twilight, is ascensionist; it believes that initiates should leave the world. It is, therefore, likely to be of no help whatsoever in reconstructing Medea's work. It's clear from passages in the *Metamorphoses* that Medea is a theurgist dedicated to Hekate, and some of the various Orphic groups in the Order claim to be descended from Medea, sometimes through Orpheus, whom she knew when they sailed together.

A complicating factor for magi attempting to re-enact the ritual described above is that it appears to contain two separate magical workings. The first, summoning the dragon-drawn chariot, is used to collect the ingredients needed for the second, the rejuvenation. Hermetic magicians may not be able to adjure the dragon-drawn chariot because, as Euripides notes in his play *Medea*, the sun god lends his steeds to Medea because he is her grandfather. Since Medea only uses the chariot for travel, however, skilled Hermetic magicians, particularly if they are working in groups, could use travel magic or enchanted items to gather the correct herbs.

This play gives hints to Seekers hunting Medea's legacy. She founded a mystery cult in Corinth following her murder of her chil-

dren, and then fled to Athens. Although this cult's rites ceased after the area came under Roman control, traces of it may remain. Through various convolutions of myth, Medea eventually returned to Colchis, and finally made her son Medus (by the king of Athens) the first ruler of the Medes, a people of Asia. Vestiges of her practices may be found either within the borders of ancient Colchis or in the ruins of the Median empire, at the very edge of Hermetic influence. Medea's death is never recorded. It is possible that she is still alive, and guards her secrets actively.

Plot Hook 2

The Herb of Euboea (Evia) has many miraculous properties. It made Glaucus (described in the *The Mysteries* on page 148) a merman, leading to his ascension to godhood, and is a vital ingredient in the rejuvenating potion of Medea. Chronos sowed it while he was king of the Gods, and it is perhaps through this connection that it can reverse aging. While other Seekers look for the secret of Medea and her potion, one instead searches for this single herb. It is the key to a limitless supply of vis.

The maga Rowena has noted that in Ovid the smell of the herbs caused the dragons pulling Medea's chariot to shed their skins. Rowena comes from a Hermetic settlement in the Voralberg region of the Greater Alps tribunal, where dragons are relatively weak and common. She knows of a dragon that has vis in its scales, and her sodales collect the shed skins of this dragon annually. Rowena believes that if she can find the Herb of Euboea, she can make the dragon shed at will, several times a week if she requires it.

The Herb is so potent it has probably attracted many magical guardians over the centuries, who may inhabit a regio. Rowena needs other magicians to aid her in the search for and recovery of the herb, but

does not want them to know why she requires it.

She will, instead, say either that she wants it to study a spell which would transform a human into a merman, or that she requires it to adjure Glaucus who, she claims, can bring her the treasures of sunken ships from ancient times. The player characters are offered a share of the treasure recovered, but Rowena knows the “Leap of Homecoming” and will disappear with the Herb of Euboea as soon as possible.

Source

Ovid *Metamorphoses* Book VII — description of ritual of rejuvenation, Book XIII — biography of Glaucus.

Euripides *Medea* — time in Corinth

Pausanias, *Description of Greece* — Corinthian cult to expiate Medea’s murders.

The Legend of Queen Beauty

by Matt Ryan

In its simplest form, the story tells how a king married a princess, lost her, and found her again years later. The poet Adais il Rois used Pepin the Short, the king of France from 751 to 768, in the role of the king. The princess who becomes the queen was Berta the Debonair, a beautiful young woman from the kingdom of Hungary. Looking for a wife, the king arranged with the princess’s parents for her to marry him. She traveled to Paris for the wedding, taking an entourage of retainers along, including her old handmaiden and the handmaiden’s daughter. Arriving in the city in August, the king married the

princess, and presented France with a radiant, beautiful queen. The people were thrilled at the auspicious beginning the royal couple was making.

Unfortunately, the king and queen’s wedded bliss lasted less than a single day. The queen’s handmaiden was an evil old crone whose daughter was nearly the exact physical double of the new queen. She devised an evil scheme. Before the queen retired to her marriage bed, the crone convinced the naïve young woman that the king merely wanted her for one night. Even worse, he would kill her in the morning. The crone suggested that her daughter act as a substitute for the queen. She believed the crone’s lie and agreed to the ruse. The crone’s daughter spent the night with the king.

The daughter looked so much like the queen that the crone’s ruse deceived the king. In the morning hours, still following the crone’s wicked advice, the queen crept into the bedchamber and stabbed the daughter in the thigh. She was caught. The king, believing the queen to be the crone’s daughter, declared that she was guilty of attempted regicide. The crone suggested that the queen should be taken to the deep forest of Le Mans and executed; her heart should be carved from her chest and brought back as prove of the done deed. The king agreed. The poor queen was tied up, thrust in a sack and taken to the forest of Le Mans for her immediate execution. But mercy stayed the executor’s knife, and he allowed the queen to flee into the woods. He provided a hog’s heart as false proof to the fake queen and her crone mother. The real queen swore to God that if she survived this ordeal she would never tell anyone who she was, believing that it was her pride that had led her to this ruin. Alone, chilled, and frightened, she was found by the kindly sheriff of the forest and was raised in his home with his wife and two girls. The queen was so attractive that she was named “Beauty” by the family.





Years passed. The crone's daughter bore two sons to the king, both evil and mean men. Beauty's father, the king of Hungary, wanted one of the boys to come to Hungary and be prepared to succeed him to the throne. The false queen refused, being too frightened for her malevolent sons' safety. Concerned by this strange behavior Beauty's mother traveled from Hungary to visit her daughter. The one physical difference between the crone's daughter and the real queen of France was that the daughter's feet only half as large as Beauty's. The crone knew her deception wouldn't hold up to the queen's scrutiny. She tried to prevent their meeting, but failed, and the queen discovered the lie. The crone was tortured and burned, but her daughter was allowed to flee to a nunnery with her dowry. Once the news was announced, the executioner from years past came forward with the truth: he

hadn't killed Beauty but instead had released her into the dark forest of Le Mans.

Naturally, the king and his knights scoured the deep, dark woods for the real queen, searching far and wide and long into the nights. All attempts to find her failed. One afternoon, while the king was riding alone down a woody trail, he spied a lone girl, lovely to behold, and made certain amorous advances towards her. Not wishing the king's affectionate attention, the girl, who was of course Beauty, confessed that he shouldn't overpower her because she was the rightful queen of France. The king's passions cooled and were immediately replaced by the awareness that this humble peasant girl was his long-lost queen. However, once out of danger Beauty denied that she was the queen, continuing to uphold her vow.

Beauty, the missing Queen Ingeborg

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

Age: 45

Afflictions: Loss of Hearing 3, Arthritis 2, Fragile Bones 2, Loss of Sight 0

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer 0, Incredible Presence +4, Educated +1, Strong Personality +1, Venus's Blessing +1, Vow (to never identify herself) -1, Noncombatant -3, Soft-Hearted -1, Lost Love (Phillip II) -1, Uncommon Fear (being outside the forest) -1

Personality Traits: Virtuous +6, Steadfast +5, Graceful +3, Kind +3

Reputations: Gentle (forest folk) 3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	-2	-5	-3	-3	-3

Soak: +0

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Artes Liberales 3 (music), Awareness 3 (forest ambushes), Charm 5 (men her age), Craft Spinning 3 (course wool), Craft embroidery 3

(mythical scenes), Etiquette 2 (affairs of state), Folk ken 4 (peasants), Guile 4 (maintaining her secret), Le Mans Area Lore 2 (forest paths), Play Harp 3 (soothing ballads), Scribe Latin 1 (Psalms), Sing 3 (songs of heartbreak), Speak Hungarian 4 (courtly phrases), Speak French 4 (peasant lingo), Speak Latin 3 (religious prayers), Survival 2 (Le Mans forest).

Decrepitude: 0

Equipment: Well-to-do peasant's dress, distaff, embroidery loop, and needles.

Encumbrance: 0

True to her name, Beauty is beautiful, both physical and personally. She fits the ideal of medieval beauty: she has long, well-proportioned limbs, ivory-white skin, brilliant blue eyes, thin fingers, rosy lips, and shining blonde hair. While her feet are large, they are in perfect proportion with the rest of Beauty's body, and don't seem obtrusive or the slightest bit ugly. She is graceful and kind, humble and gentle to all she meets. She is quite old by medieval standards, but the purity of her spirit has allowed her physical beauty to remain with her as she ages.



The pair traveled to the sheriff's house. Beauty stuck to her lie. After a long discussion, the sheriff guessed the truth, that Beauty must have made a vow to protect herself many years ago, and that the girl was so devout and noble that nothing would make her break her vow. The king decided that there was only one way to be sure; he sent for the queen's mother and made arrangements for her and this "peasant girl" to meet. As soon as Beauty saw her mother she confessed the truth. The story ends happily; the king and the queen were reunited, the sheriff was made a knight and given large sums of wealth, and his family accompanied the king and queen to Paris to live with the royal couple.

The Adaptation

In 1220, the king of France is Philip II. Adapting the legend, Philip II fills the role of the king and Ingeborg, the sister of King Waldemar I of Denmark, becomes Queen Beauty. Philip II began his reign in 1180 and — barring any unfortunate accidents — will finish his reign in 1223. *Ordo Nobilis* contains more information about Philip II and his kingdom. Ingeborg will be deceived by her handmaiden and will be cast out of the royal court, left to wander the vast, dark forest of Le Mans.

Ingeborg was not Philip's first wife. Philip initially married Isabella of Hainault in 1180. Sources remain silent concerning the level of marital joy enjoyed by either participant, but the union did yield a legitimate heir, Louis, in 1187. Isabella died in 1190 delivering stillborn twins, and here the story begins.

Philip met his future queen Ingeborg and fell passionately in love with her, marrying her that very evening. As the celebrants prepared the couple for their wedding bed, the crone handmaiden told Ingeborg lies, claiming that Philip would kill her after he consummated their marriage. Ingeborg believed her and followed





her every command, including stabbing the replacement daughter in the thigh. The enraged Philip condemned Ingeborg to death, and she was whisked away to Le Mans. Ingeborg escaped her execution, was found by the friendly sheriff, and renamed “Beauty” because of her magnificent nature. However, to maintain some actual history, the replacement queen is not as lucky as her legendary counterpart.

According to Philip’s chronicler, William the Brenton, the sorceress Agnes de Méran bewitched the king so that “he could not face his wife without horror.” Agnes, the daughter of a Rhineland count, had been trained in the magical arts by a rural cunning-folkwoman, and constructed a greater bane, an evil talisman of ill luck, to dampen and perhaps even destroy Philip’s love for Ingeborg. Since the real Ingeborg had already been taken away, the talisman worked. This greater bane, hidden beneath Phillip’s royal bed, has given the king the –1 Flaw “Hatred”, targeted towards his queen. (See *Hedge Magic*, pages 34–40.) The careful wording of the bane’s construction, coupled with the unfortunate coincidence that Philip’s true love Ingeborg wasn’t in his bed, has allowed this evil spell to thwart love’s effects. Philip imprisoned his false queen and Agnes became Philip’s third wife, although Pope Innocent III never officially recognized her. Agnes had two children by Philip, Philip Hurepel and Mary.

Agnes de Méran died 1201, but her influence carried on well into the next two decades. Agnes’s spell on King Philip did not end with her death, and the greater bane is still hidden under the king’s bed. He continued to loathe the counterfeit queen and never fully reclaimed her as his wife, although he would sometimes claim her as his queen for political reasons. The target of Agnes’s spell is the imprisoned false queen, not Beauty, which means that if Philip were to be reunited with his true love, the real Ingeborg, the spell would be irrelevant. But in 1220, Philip is not aware

that his real queen lives a quiet, virtuous life in a sheriff’s cottage in the forest of Le Mans. The second lasting remembrance of Agnes’s life is her son. Philip Hurepel, born in 1200, is blessed with the Gift.

Ingeborg married Philip when she was 18, so in 1220 she is 45 yearsold. By this time, the sheriff and his wife are quite old. Their daughters have married and left the household, leaving Ingeborg, known as Beauty, to tend to them. Because of her virtuous nature, Beauty still retains her beauty and grace even in her advanced age. She is still deeply in love with Philip II, but quietly keeps that love to herself. She has maintained her vow of secrecy for so long now that she has lost any hope of being reunited with her true love and being re-installed as the legitimate queen of France.

Story Hooks

This tale is most easily used in France, but with subtle changes a storyguide could use it in nearly any area of Mythic Europe. The changes don’t need to be drastic, requiring extensive research into the royal kings and queens of other areas. They can be as simple as having Beauty live in a more distant forest than Le Mans.

The first story hook follows Adenes li Rois’s legend: Agnes’s spell ends, the king realizes that his true love is absent, and he instigates an exhaustive search. Through a previous encounter, the characters have met Beauty. Perhaps the sheriff has guessed Beauty’s true identity and consults the local magi for guidance.

A more interesting encounter would be for the players’ magi to discover the past of Agnes de Méran and the magical nature of her son, Philip Hurepel. Depending on the availability of gifted people, this might prove to be a powerful incentive for a magus to claim an apprentice. A Jerbiton magus might be especially intrigued to have an apprentice with royal blood. During their investigations into this affair, players

may detect the counterfeit queen and begin a search for the legitimate queen of France.

Finally, Beauty has been created as a starting companion-level character. She could be included in a saga as a player's character or a non-player character. If used as a non-player character, the storyguide has a ready-made adventure seed installed in the covenant, usable at the storyguide's convenience. If used as a player character, Beauty offers a player a role-playing challenge by adhering to her vow of secrecy. However, if Beauty is reinstated as queen of France, she may no longer be an appropriate choice as a player character.

Source

Norma Lorre Goodrich, "Berta of Hungary", *Medieval Myths*, (Mentor Books, 1961), 104-125.

Jim Bradbury, *Philip Augustus: King of France*, (Longman, 1998), 173-185.

The Footbath of Amasis

by Timothy Ferguson

There was a king in Egypt, named Amasis, of low birth rank but great cunning. He had risen to rulership through armed rebellion, but was of common birth, and had coarse manners. Some claimed he had risen to distinction because of his vulgarity.

When it was first rumored Amasis would order his forces to rebel, the pharaoh Apries sent a messenger, a nobleman named Patarbemis, to his headquarters with a command to lay down his arms and come to the palace for judgment. Amasis had risen in his saddle, farted in the direction of

his enemy's messenger, and said "Take that back to your master instead." Patarbemis repeated his request, and Amasis laughed, saying "Oh, I'm coming, and I'm bringing some friends with me." When Patarbemis reported this, the pharaoh fell into a rage and had Patarbemis's nose and ears cut off for failing to produce the rebel. The Egyptians in Apries's army, who thought well of Patarbemis, immediately changed sides, which led to Amasis's victory.

Amasis spent his afternoons in amusements. His nobles counseled against this. His opinion was that a pharaoh who spent his afternoons in inebriated entertainment would last longer than one who stayed stern all day. Like a bow never unstrung they would be warped and snap, he said. The nobles thought this crude.

Seeing that his nobles treated him disdainfully, Amasis had his golden footbath refashioned into the statue of a god. He placed this statue on a major thoroughfare, so that many people passed it each day. The Egyptians, even his noblemen, venerated the statue, bowing down before it as they passed.

Amasis gathered his nobles together and told them they had been bowing down before his footbath, which guests at his house had used as a toilet and vomitorium. He then explained that, like the statue, he was of humble origin, but now he was the pharaoh. Just as they had come to revere his toilet, they should also learn to revere him. Impressed by his arguments and cunning, the nobility of Egypt became his loyal supporters. Perhaps they were worried he'd reveal his joke to the peasantry.

Adaptation

Hermetic magic is the descendant of many ancient traditions, but those interested in magical history claim its earliest progenitor was the Cult of Thoth. The servants of Thoth formed a magical brotherhood in ancient Egypt, and their relics are rare and





prized. One of the best known, in Hermetic circles, is a golden statuette called the Thoth of Amasis. It is kept by a powerful Autumn covenant.

The Thoth of Amasis is four feet high, and is made of wood, over which a layer of thick gold has been molded. A cavity within the wooden core contains a large lead weight, sufficient to fool those who know little about gold into believing that the statute is cast in the precious metal. It is shaped like a monkey wearing a reed skirt. The statue's eyes are green glass. It holds a golden representation of a reed pen in one hand, and its other arm is placed so that it seems likely it once held something to write on.

If commanded by a suitable owner, the Thoth of Amasis produces philosophic substances. Over the course of a year, the lead weight in the center of the statue liquefies and transforms into twelve pawns of philosophic mercury (see *The Mysteries*). This can be drained off through a stoppered hole representing the monkey's anus. It is possible to create philosophical substances other than mercury, by pouring something other than liquid lead into the central cavity. If a substance has several possible philosophic interpretations, the most powerful is expressed. In game terms, the highest bonus on the form and effect table is the appropriate one.

Plot Hooks

Amasis's Thoth is a powerful artifact created by an early alchemist. Its symbolism, the transmutation of the base into the noble, parallels that of secret societies like the Golden Bee, which seek the catalyst that will make lead into gold, and the gross matter of the body, sublime. It is unusual, however, in that it refuses to function for anyone who calls upon gods, or uses the symbols of gods, in their magical rituals.

Amasis, an Egyptian god-king, did not believe in deities and disdained the power



of oracles. Before his rise to monarchical power, Amasis had lived riotously, and regularly stole things while drunk. When he denied culpability his neighbors took him before the oracles, and they only convicted him some of the time. He thought they were a sham, and so his statue will not work for those who call for the aid of gods.

This frustrates many members of the group (a player-character's house, patron covenant or *mystae*) that owns the statue. They know that the statute acts as a sacred vessel, transmuting the material that gives it weight into philosophic substances. For the vast majority of them, it refuses to operate. In an effort to understand why the triggering mechanism works only occasionally, they have called a conference. They require that every attendee try to use the device.

The meeting will allow the characters to network with their elders. Younger members, not yet indoctrinated into the upper mysteries or capable of idiosyncratic spell design, have no reason to call on gods when using magic, and so are likely to be able to command the statue. Paradoxically, this brings them to the notice of their superiors, gains them advancement into the higher mysteries or the resources to develop their own style of magical research, and makes them unable to command the statue.

Amasis's Thoth has a sister statute. Amasis married a woman from Cyrene, but suffered impotence whenever he tried to bed her. He was able to perform with his concubines, so he became convinced that his new wife had bewitched him. The lady of Cyrene prayed to Aphrodite that if only her husband could keep his erection, she would dedicate a statute to the temple of Aphrodite at Cyrene. The goddess gave her assistance, and so this statue was made. It is rumored to cure impotence and infertility even when they are caused by longevity potions. This is of importance to an unfortunate covenant in Italy, which offered a longevity potion to a young nobleman without indicating it would cause sterility. The young man, angered by his inability to

produce an heir, is edging closer to war against the covenant. The covenant has offered a substantial reward for anyone who will lend them the statute. Other groups within the Order are also interested in the whereabouts of this statue. Some believe that if the Amasisian Thoth and Cyrenean Aphrodite were placed together in a bedroom, it would guarantee the conception of Gifted children. Others believe that the pair of statues would counteract the usual sterility of the fay.

Source

Herodotus (trans. A de Sélincourt, revised 1996 J. Marincola) *The Histories*, Penguin Books, London, p.151



Taliesin, Chief of Bards

by Nathan Hook

In the time of King Arthur, Taliesin, then known as 'Gwion Bach, son of Gwreang of Llanfair,' was put to work as a boy to stir 'a Cauldron of Inspiration and Science' by Caridwen, worshipped by the Welsh as a Goddess of Nature. However, three drops flew out and fell upon his finger which he then put in this mouth. By virtue of this, he gained the power to foresee the future.

Fleeing from Caridwen's vengeance, he was forced into a shape changing contest to escape. He lost, becoming a grain of wheat which the goddess consumed. She then bore him for nine months, gave birth to him and cast him into the sea.

Fished out as a babe, he was given the name Taliesin, and showed ability to speak with great eloquence. Taliesin claims to



Taliesin, Faerie Touched Bard

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +1, Pre +3,
Com +5, Str -1, Sta -1, Dex -1, Qik 0

Faerie Might: 25

Age: 720 years (Apparent Age 28)

Size: 0

Confidence: 6

Virtues and Flaws: Unaging N/A (see below), Enchanting Music +2, Hex +2, Visions +2, Well-Traveled +1, Self-Confident +1 x 3, Premonitions +1, Inspirational +1, Free Expression +1, Enemy (Caridwen) -4, Dark Secret -1

Personality Traits: Heroic +2, Just +1, Pious +4

Reputations: Legendary Bard +5, with Welshmen and troubadors; Talented Bard +3, with those who don't know who he really is

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+3	+3	+2	0	+0
Longsword	+7	+6	+8	+3	+0
Longbow	+3	+5	n/a	+10	+0

Soak: +0

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Abilities: Awareness 3 (searching), Brawling 2, Bow 3 (Welsh Longbow), Carouse 4 (courts), Charm 4 (nobles), Enchanting Music 6 (courts), Etiquette 4 (nobles), Faerie Lore 5 (Welsh), Folk Ken 6 (discerning lies), Hex 6 (nobles), Jongleur 2 (insults), Legend Lore 7, Occult Lore 4 (curses), Play Instrument 5 (harp), Premonitions 10 (significant events), Ride 1 (Speed), Shapeshifting 7 (contests), Sing 8 (rhyming speeches), Single Weapon 3 (Longsword), Speak Welsh 6 (stories), Speak English 4 (stories), Speak French 3 (stories), Speak Latin 3 (stories), Storytelling 9 (legends), Visions 10 (significant events)

Powers:

Know all matters of import, N/A, 0 points:
In game terms, the Vision and Premonition virtues allow for knowl-

edge of the past and future. It can be assumed that Taliesin has therefore foreseen important events that will happen. Normally Visions can only show a possible future (otherwise the God granted gift of free will to man would be removed) but his seem remarkably accurate. This can be seen as a reward from the highest divinity (which transcends such limits as flawed mortal logic) for his piety. That is not to say he is completely infallible — he may misunderstand what he sees or he may have a false vision as a test of faith. Note also this only covers matters that are really important in the grand scheme of things, not what people think is important at the time. The visions may or may not include things relating to his own personal safety at any given point, or subjects such as the fate of the Order of Hermes.

Unaging, N/A, 0 points: Taliesin is immune to Decrepitude and afflictions gained through aging. He does not need to ever make any aging roles. This does not make him absolutely immortal; in theory anyone could slay him. However he is likely to foresee such an attempt long in advance and therefore be able to prevent or avoid it.
True Shapeshifter, MuAn(Co,Aq,Au) or MuHe(Co), 3 points: Taliesin may transform himself into any animal or plant, from size -4 to size +3. He is capable of doing this repeatedly round after round for a while, as the description of his shapeshifting contest with Caridwen shows.

Equipment: Longsword, Long Bow,

Encumbrance: 1

Vis: 5 pawns of *Creo Vis* in his finger, 5 pawns of *Intelligo Vis* in his eyes. This vis reflects the power of the transformation from the Cauldron, marking him as something treading between the states of mortal and faerie.



know the past and the future, and all the sciences of the world. He claims that it is God who instructs him and protects him, that he knows 'wizards posing lore and the wisdom of the Druids', and that he uses song to curse royals who misuse their authority and to call up storm winds. He is also known as 'Merddin', (a form of Merlin?). The legend does not describe his death or final fate.

Adaptation

As the legend describes, Gwion Bach was put to work by Caridwen, a powerful being of faerie, and gained great power, both from drinking from the cauldron of Inspiration and Science, and from being reborn from her.

In the legend, Taliesin claims to have been in the highest sphere when Lucifer fell, to have borne a banner before Alexander, been present at the Crucifixion and in the Ark, and to have seen the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra. He further claims that he shall 'be until the day of doom on the face of the earth.' In these things he is partially accurate; though not present, he had seen many of these events through his ability to see the past and the future.

Taliesin continues to exist, blessed (or cursed) with immortality and powers of Faerie. He has watched the gradual decline of his native Celtic culture and continues to wander homeless, often being present at the great turning points of history. Taliesin's true nature lies somewhere between mortal and faerie, and should he spend a great deal of time in faerie his transformation may become complete.

Taliesin was originally raised in a Celtic culture and trained as a Celtic bard. However, he repeatedly proclaims his faith in the Christian God. Some might assume this is merely an act but after all that he has witnessed he has become quite a pious Christian — seeing the Crucifixion first-





hand, even in a vision, has that effect. However in this he has not entirely forsaken his original beliefs, but rather reconciled the two. His Christianity is not that of the church of Rome, but something closer that of the early Celtic church that became widespread under Arthur. Other men may see Celtic paganism (and its ties to the realm of Faerie) and Christianity (furthering the Dominion) as opposed. He does not, believing that all things come from the one above, even the faeries in the forest, and that all are part of God's grand design.

Taliesin may seem to be a being of great power. However, he finds himself caught in the middle of a great many things. Part of him longs for a bygone Celtic age, and to go to the lands of faerie and become as one of them. Yet his visions have granted him knowledge beyond the ken of others, a belief in God that distances him from true faerie. The same long life and visions distance him from mortals, so that he can never settle down with anyone.

His long life and visions have given him a glimpse of a wider picture few men will ever see, yet he lacks the power to wield influence over the world. Many Magi of Hermes have power without the enlightenment to wield it wisely. He represents the reverse, having knowledge of things without the raw power to change or control them easily. Beyond that, he knows it is not the place of a bard to meddle in history in the making, merely to record it.

Story Hooks

- The covenfolk offers shelter to a certain wandering bard called 'Gwion' who happens to be passing their way. During his stay, difficulties arise from some other quarter, perhaps a mythic beast or faerie that has troubled the Covenant in the past. The insignificant bard, who perhaps was previously below the attentions of the mighty magi of the Order present, is able to offer some

secret of how to defeat the creature, or perhaps the faerie recognises who he is and backs away in respect. The Magi may then suddenly show an interest in just who this bard is. They may try to get him to join the covenant permanently (he declines; his destiny lies elsewhere) or may decide to experiment with him. While there, he can be used to introduce a rhyme based around his visions to foreshadow some great event from later in the Saga.

- After cursing a mortal lord for his misdeeds against the people he is supposed to protect, Taliesin finds himself hounded by the lord's men. The magi hear accounts of a 'a wanderer who has cursed the lord and his land', and join in the hunt for their own gain, without realising who it is they seek. This works particularly well if run in the Loch Leglean Tribunal, where the reports may be mistaken for one of the Gruahachan (see *Lion of the North*) given his power to curse and shape shift. Alternatively, the magi may wrongly assume it is another magus interfering in the affairs of mundanes. When they finally catch up with him, they (or another magus involved) may decide he is too powerful to be ignored and must be given the choice of 'join or die.'
- Having had a brush with him once before or heard tales of him, magi may seek out Taliesin (or whatever name they know him by) to hear his guidance on some great quest. For example magi may be seeking to learn more of the Cauldron of Inspiration, which some tales say can restore life to the dead (knowledge of it could further research to break the limits of hermetic magic). Furthermore, magi researching legends of the Grail (which may be another manifestation of the Cauldron) will no doubt be interested in finding him due to his connection to the Arthurian era. But then, just how does one go about

tracking down someone who can see the future if he doesn't want to find you? . . .

- Early in the Saga, the magi happen (by accident or cause and effect) to be present at history in the making, such as the signing of Magna Carta or the accession of a new king. They notice the talented bard standing around also, composing a rhyme to record the event. Some decades later, they are present again at one of the turning points of history, and notice the same bard, seemingly unaged, doing the same again. Depending of the timescale of the Saga, paranoid magi may leap to the false conclusion that an immortal hedge wizard, or rival magus, is interfering in the matters of the mundane state.
- Many magi have very strong reactions to faerie. Some hate it, and some love it to the point of wanting to become faerie. Taliesin represents a character who walks a path between the worlds of men and faerie. As a being on the border between human and faerie, he offers an interesting contrast to Merinita magi, some of whom tend to become so obsessed with faerie they neglect the 'real' world and God. Is it wise to push through the looking glass, to stay on one side, or to trace across it's smooth surface? Taliesin can be used in a story to depict a 'third way' between the two extremes, as he can between the seeming extremes of pagan and Christian.

Source

The Mabinogion, translated by Lady Charlotte Guest, published by Voyager 2000, first published by Llandoverly in 1838-46.

The Knight Who Hunts His Beloved With Hounds

by Timothy Ferguson

Nastagio degli Onesti, a young nobleman of Ravenna, courts a beauty of higher station. She becomes increasingly cruel. Nastagio, pressed by his friends, agrees to leave Ravenna, so that his heart will heal, but he changes his mind. To keep his promise he moves to Chiassi, three miles away. One day, while brooding on his mistress's cruelty, he takes a walk through a nearby forest. There he sees a beautiful, bedraggled, naked damsel being pursued by a knight and his two mastiffs. He tears a branch from a tree, to use as a weapon, and steps between the knight and the lady.

The knight, Guido degli Anastagi, reveals that he loved the fleeing lady, but she treated him so cruelly he committed suicide. The lady exulted over his death, and shortly after died. In punishment, the knight is doomed to hunt his beloved for as many years as months he courted her. He catches her in those places where she plotted the cruelties that she inflicted on him, and strikes her down with his sword. He then tears open her back, and feeds her organs to his dogs. Soon after she rises again, made whole, and flees. The events repeat themselves every week, so he kills her in this spot every Friday at about the same time.

Nastagio invites his friends to a party and sends a letter to the lady's father. It says that he will cease pestering her if she comes to dine with him a final time. During the feast, which the lady attends, the lady and





knight enter the clearing. The knight repeats his story, kills the damsel, and feeds her heart to his dogs. The lady Nastagio was courting immediately agrees to marry him.

Adaptation

Guido and his lover are damned souls that God has chosen to provide a moral lesson to other people, through their pitiful and horrific example. This means that they are of Infernal nature, since they are the living dead called up from Hell, but their mission and function are extensions of the Divine will.

Plot Hooks

This story can provide an encounter for player characters with little adaptation. To link the characters into the story, it is only necessary to change the wording of Guido degli Anastagi's speech slightly. To make the player characters more interested, the lady might offer the characters treasure or

Black Palfrey (Riding Horse)

Characteristics: Cun -1, Per 0, Str +5, Sta tireless, Dex +2, Qik +4

Infernal Might: 15

Size: +2

Personality traits: Stoic +5

Weapon/Attack	Init.	Atk.	Dfn.	Dam.	Fat.
Hooves	+9	+7	+3	+9	N/A

Soak: +11

Body Levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 Dead

Powers:

Supernatural Stamina, 0 points: The black palfrey does not tire.

Vis: 2 points infernally-tainted Animál, heart

The black palfrey is willing to be captured and led away by a character of knightly rank who defeats its master. It will be teleported, minus any rider or burden other than Guido's kit, to Guido's side when he revives. If it is killed, an equivalent is provided for Guido at the end of the current scene.

Black Mastiffs

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per +5, Str +3, Sta tireless (+5), Dex +2, Qik +2

Infernal Might: 10

Size: -1

Personality traits: Bloodthirsty +5, Ferocity +3 (when attacking the fleeing damsel)

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite	+6	+8	+7	+7*	n/a

*The hounds never kill the damsel with their teeth.

Soak: +3

Body Levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0 Dead

Abilities: Hunt (damsel) 8.

Powers:

Paralyze (PeCo20), 1 point: If a mastiff injures someone who is knowingly attempting to prevent Guido dispensing Divine justice, the victim is paralyzed until Guido is out of sight.

Supernatural Stamina, 0 points: The black mastiffs do not tire.

Vis: 1 point infernally-tainted Animál each heart

These minor hellhounds are swifter than mortal animals, but they do not run at their full speed while chasing the lady. They catch her only at the places appointed by her misdeeds. If they are destroyed, equivalents appear after the end of the current scene, so that the chase can continue.

information in exchange for protection, or they may have known the lady while she was still alive. This is an interesting way to reuse a villainess that the characters have slain.

The characters cannot save the lady from Divine justice. Even if they defeat Guido, the next day the lady reappears at the correct point on the weekly circuit, chased by her lover. It's possible that an act of contrition during the interval might allow her to rest, but Guido's curse, for suicide, would remain. Characters who save

Guido degli Anastagi, Minor Infernal Knight

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

Infernal Might: 20

Size: +1

Personality traits: Loves victim +5

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Mounted:

Sword/shield +12 +10 +14 +11* n/a

On Foot:

Sword +20 +12 +16 +11* n/a

*The rapier does +25 damage to the fleeing lady, and to those who knowingly attempt to inhibit divine justice.

Soak: +20

Body Levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, Banished

Abilities: Ride 8, Single Weapon (rapier) 8, Shield and Weapon (rapier) 8. Awareness (quarry) 8.

Equipment: Armor suitable for a rich knight from the region in which he is encountered, but around 20 years out of date.

Powers:

Cursed to Pursue, 0 points: Guido is cursed by God to complete his term of punishment. Killing or banishing Guido does not permit him to rest. The next day he, the lady and the hounds will reform and continue their circuit.

Supernatural Awareness, 0 points: Guido knows the name and personal history of everyone who attempts to interfere with the hunt. It is his duty to explain God's curse and highlight related moral failures in the lives of those he

meets. As a reflection of his Divine mission, this power cannot be resisted using magic.

Supernatural Confidence, 0 points: Guido is immune to any mind-affecting spell that might hamper his chase. He cannot fail Bravery or Confidence checks, because he knows he is an extension of the will of God, and no lesser power can permanently affect his state.

Supernatural Stamina, 0 points: Guido does not tire.

Terror, (ReMe 40), 0 points: Those who hear Guido's story must make a Brave check of 9+ before they can attack him. Those who fail this check are so terrified they remove themselves from his path.

Vis: 5 points infernally-tainted Intéllego, sword. Guido's sword reappears in his hand when he rises from the dead, regardless of where it is, or whether it has been destroyed.

Guido's undead state has provided him with few advantages. He can be mistaken for a human knight on a high-quality horse preceded by two excellent dogs. As the involuntary dispenser of Divine justice, he always attempts to clear his path with his *Terror* power, or his hounds. Guido is a damned soul, so he is tied to the infernal realm, but the Divine has given his task to him. This gives him a resistance to holy things that usually banish demons. He will explain this to anyone who attempts to exorcise him.



the damsel might find that after her act of contrition she is still pursued by her hunter, he simply cannot catch her.

The story can be retold conventionally, with a player character taking the role of Nastagio or the lady, but an interesting inversion would be to have a female pursuer

and a magus placed in the role of the cold and heartless woman. Magi who govern covenants are, in a sense, landholders and the daughter of a wealthy family might pitch her cap at one. This is particularly appropriate for those magi with the Curse of Venus flaw. Since many magi subsume



their sexuality into their art, they are uninterested in marriage. The lady may pester the character for years, then invite him and his scholar-friends to a feast in the woods. A character failing to take the hint will have to deal with the repercussions of her suicide, and the knowledge that after death he may have a penance to perform.

Source

Boccaccio's *Decameron*

The Treasure of al-Sharmadal

by Niall Christie

It is told in the *Thousand and One Nights* that there was once a mighty magician named 'Abd al-Wadud, who had four sons. He trained his sons in sorcery, and when he died they divided his possessions among themselves. However, they could not agree on who should receive the greatest of his possessions, a book of lore known as the Book of the Stories of the Ancients (also known as the Book of Eld). So they prevailed upon their father's teacher, al-Abtan, asking him to judge between them. He declared:

"The owner of this book shall be he who opens the treasure of al-Sharmadal and brings me the celestial globe, the phial of kohl, the sword and the seal-ring which that hoard contains. These things have extraordinary powers. The ring is guarded by a Jinni whose terrifying name is Thundering Thunder, and he who gets possession of it may front the powers of kings and sultans without a qualm and dominate the length and breadth of all the world. The man who holds the sword may destroy

armies with the bright flames which shoot forth from it. By means of the celestial globe a man may voyage to any part of the world without leaving his seat, and visit all the lands of East and West. He has only to touch with his finger the place which he wishes to reach and the globe will turn until that land, with its people and strange sights, appears as if it were in the same room. If the possessor of this globe has any fault to find with the people of a land or of a city, he has but to turn its equivalent on the surface of the globe to the rays of the sun and all the people there will be burnt up by a consuming flame. He who rubs his eyelids with kohl from the phial may see all treasures hidden in the earth. The Book of Eld shall belong solely to the one of you who opens this treasure."

So he declared and so it was agreed. Two of the brothers died attempting to win the items named, but the third, 'Abd al-Samad, succeeded with the help of a fisherman named Judar (the fourth brother chose not to contest for the treasure). It is not told whether or not 'Abd al-Samad used his prizes to obtain the Book of Eld, but later he gave the ring to Judar. After Judar's death the ring was destroyed by his wife Asia. However, it is not known what became of the sword, the globe and the phial.

Adaptation

After acquiring the four items from the treasure of al-Sharmadal 'Abd al-Samad did indeed obtain the Book of Stories of the Ancients from his father's teacher. As noted, he then gave the seal-ring to Judar, after whose death it was destroyed. However, the sword, the globe and the phial he kept until his untimely death at the hands of another wizard. This wizard took the book and the three other items for himself, only to lose them to another. Many more sorcerers continued to fight over the treasures, and soon they were scattered to



the four winds. No one knows where they are now.

The Sword of al-Sharmadal

The sword is an extremely well made broadsword with a gold hilt. The hilt is engraved with flame designs. It has one power:

Burn my Enemy, [CrIg 30]: As *Arc of Fiery Ribbons* (CrIg 25, ArM4, page 135), only duration is increased to Concentration (the sword continues projecting a spray of flames while concentration is maintained). The power is activated when the sword is pointed towards the target and the word *nar* (Arabic for “fire”) is spoken. The number of uses is unlimited (Level rationale: As *Arc of Fiery Ribbons* (CrIg 25, ArM4, page 135), increase duration to Concentration (+5) = CrIg 30).



The Globe of al-Sharmadal

The globe is about three feet in diameter, and shines like the moon. The globe has four powers:

Shine like the Moon: [CrIm 2]: The globe shines with a soft, pale white light. The effect is constant. (Level rationale: Create an image affecting a single sense (CrIm 5), decrease range to Personal (–10), duration to Concentration (the globe maintains concentration, –5) = CrIm 2).

Await my Command, [ReTe 3]: The globe constantly floats about four feet from the ground or floor (Level rationale: Control glass (ReTe 10), reduce range to Personal (–15) = ReTe 3).

Display my Enemy: [InCo (Mu, all other Forms) 45]: When the user places his or her right hand on the globe, holds an Arcane

More information on the Book of Stories of the Ancients may be found in *Blood and Sand: The Levant Tribunal*, page 94.



Connection in his or her left hand and speaks the word *izhar* (Arabic for “appear”), the image projected by the globe shifts to display the creature or object to which the Arcane Connection is linked and everything within a pace thereof. The image lasts as long as the caster maintains concentration. Use is unlimited. (Level rationale: Scry upon a person (calculated as InCo 30), add requisites of Muto and all other Forms to account for changing image and viewing other Forms, increase range to Arcane Connection (+5), duration to Concentration (+5), target to (approximately) Group (+5) = InCo (Mu, all other Forms) 45).

Consume my Enemy, [CrIg 60]: When the user allows rays of direct sunlight to fall onto the surface of the globe and speaks the word *ihriq* (Arabic for “burn”), the real-world equivalent of the image generated by the *Display my enemy* power is consumed by fire. This power lasts as long as the user maintains concentration. Remember that the user will also be concentrating on maintaining the image, so at least one concentration roll will be required when the second power is invoked. Concentration rolls should also be made to maintain each power every round after the first. Cruel storyguides may wish to rule that if at any point an image is not being maintained, but the fire is, the latter spills into the room and strikes the user. Use is unlimited (Level rationale: Create a fire capable of doing +30 damage (CrIg 30), increase range to Arcane Connection (+15), duration to (effectively) Concentration (+5) and target to (effectively) Group (+10) = CrIg 60).

The Kohl of al-Sharmadal

The kohl is kept in a clear glass phial on gold chain. Others have used it before, so now there is only a limited amount left.

Each time the kohl is used, roll three dice as if it were a potential botch. On a triple botch, the kohl has run out. The kohl has one power:

Display the Riches of the Earth [InTe 40]: As *The Miner’s Keen Eye* (InTe 20, ArM4, page 150), only the user can see the target, as long as it is within range, through any amount of intervening stone and earth. The effect lasts until the kohl is rubbed off. If not removed, it will rub off naturally in a few hours (Level rationale: As *The Miner’s Keen Eye* (InTe 20, ArM4, page 150), increase range to Sight (+10) and duration to (approx.) Sun (+10) = InTe 40).

The sword, globe and kohl are all of utterly non-Hermetic manufacture. This means that all levels are doubled for the purposes of investigation. In the case of the globe, this is probably a very good thing! It should also be noted that the powers of the items were exaggerated in the legend, although players will probably feel that they are quite powerful enough.

Story Hooks

The Sword

1. A local noble finds the sword, and decides it is time to teach those jumped-up magi a lesson in humility. He gathers an army and sets out for the covenant. Although he and his army should be relatively easy to overcome, they could do a reasonable amount of damage to the covenant’s turf before they are.

2. One of the characters finds the sword and injures or maybe even kills someone close to them, before he or she realizes how easy it is to activate by accident. This could make for a heart-wrenching story as the character attempts to come to terms with guilt or loss.

The Globe

- An enemy of the covenant obtains the globe. The characters hear about this, and also hear rumors of its potentially devastating powers. Can they steal or destroy the globe before their enemy learns how to use it?
- A senior member of the covenant owns the globe. One day the characters hear a tremendous explosion and an anguished scream from the magus' chambers. When they arrive they find little left of the magus but a black smudge, while the globe floats innocently in the middle of the room. No one else at the covenant knows anything about the globe. The characters will have to be very careful if they are to discover how to use it without incurring injuries!

The Kohl

- The characters find the kohl and, after some effort, learn about its power. To the right buyer, it has the potential to command almost any price. On the other hand, not all people who might value it are above using underhand methods to obtain it from the characters.
- The kohl has the potential to show the way to all manner of hidden riches. It might even be possible to find the rest of the treasure of al-Sharmadal. What other wonderful, but perilous, marvels might be found in the hoard? It is said that mighty al-Sharmadal himself sleeps with his treasure. What might happen if he were to be wakened?

Source

The Thousand Nights and One Night (1964 reprinted 1996) (trans. J.C. Mardrus & P. Mathers) (2nd ed., 4 vols., London

& New York: Routledge), Vol. 2, pages 554-92.

The Lamps of Mycerinus

by Timothy Ferguson

The wisest ruler in Egypt's history was named Mycerinus. He cared deeply for his people and, on his ascension to the throne, he reopened the temples his father and uncle had suppressed. He allowed people to return to their normal occupations, freeing them from the slavery imposed on them by his kinsmen. Mycerinus was devout and just, and often paid the compensation for cases he heard where the law did not support a claimant, so that no one would leave his court feeling cheated.

After a brief but successful reign the oracle at Buto sent news that Mycerinus would die in six years' time. He asked the oracle how it could be that he, a devout man, would live only a scant year more than his father or uncle, who were defilers and tyrants. The oracle responded that his ancestors had understood that the people of Egypt were divinely ordained to suffer for 150 years. By making the lives of the people easier, Mycerinus had offended the gods he claimed to serve.

Mycerinus was deeply angered by the oracle's response, and grew to care little for the gods who would treat him so cruelly. He called his most cunning magicians together, and had them craft him many lamps. As the sun set, their wicks would burst into flame, turning night into day. With the assistance of the lamps Mycerinus planned to make his remaining six years of life last for twelve calendar years. Once he had lived beyond the time prophesied for his death, Mycerinus planned to attack the oracle's





veracity. In the interim he and his court wandered the country, living debaucherously. Mycerinus was unable to take his revenge, for his lamps did not save him from accidents, but Hermetic magi remain interested in them regardless.

Adaption

Hermetic archaeologists are extremely interested in the magical items detailed in the chronicles of historians like Herodotus, particularly those that breach the limits of Hermetic magic. One such set of items are the Lamps of Mycerinus. Their power, according to Herodotus, is to dilate time, extending the lifespan of the owner. The light of the lamps also fuels magic that should fail at nightfall, so that it continues until dawn.

There are sixteen lamps of Mycernius, of which Hermetic magi have recovered twelve. Each is an Egyptian lamp — a painted, clay pot in which a wick would float in oil. The lamps are numbered on the base and decorated with designs intertwining solar and festive imagery. A minor magic of the lamp makes the smoke they generate heavy and blue. It smells like fruit slightly beyond ripe, but to those who have recently consumed alcohol it is warm, spicy and pungent.

Each lamp will flare at sunset and burn until sunrise, provided it has a source of fuel. It needs no wicking. The light of the lamp is non-magical if conventional oil is used. If oil containing vis of any type is kept within the lamp, a single pawn will fuel its magical powers for a year. The lamps are all but immune to fire damage (Magic Resistance 75).

A single lamp, burning vis-infused oil, makes each night an extension of the previous day within its circle of light. Those spells, or spell-like effects, which should fail at sunset continue until sunrise. This includes the Parma Magica ritual. Characters within the light are also affect-

ed by personality altering magic, adding one temporary level to any personality trait linked to festiveness or hedonism. This is resisted as a MuMe spell of 25th level, but magic resistance maintained by the light of the lamps is of no assistance. Longevity potions brewed by the light of a lamp are five points more powerful than their ingredients and the skill of their brewer would otherwise suggest (+5 on Lab total). For each additional lamp burning vis infused oil, brewed longevity potions are one point more powerful.

If all of the lamps are gathered together, and fuelled with vis-infused oil, their effect becomes far more pronounced. A character who conscientiously ensured that all of his nights were lit with the lamps would age at half the rate of his peers. Spells he had cast, including the Parma Magica ritual, would last twice as long, provided their areas of effect were lit. The personality altering effect is far stronger when all of the lamps are gathered together. It is treated as a 60th level MuMe effect, which adds three levels to appropriate personality traits, or reduces opposing traits by three. Characters influenced by the light act as if they are mildly inebriated.

Magi who have investigated the powers of a single lamp are usually aware of the collective power of the lamps. They are also aware that each lamp provides an arcane connection to the others. For reasons that are unclear to them some of the buried lamps cannot be magically acquired by acquisitive spellcasters, although this is not a property of the lamps themselves, as those that have been collected by Hermetic magi are occasionally stolen in this way. Some Seekers speculate that the lamps which are unavailable were the funeral goods of kings and have been magically warded to prevent theft. Others believe that some of the burials were into regiones, and magical transport between the mundane world and upper levels of regiones is difficult.

The cunning sages of Egypt designed the lamps so that if one is destroyed, the

effect for having all of the remaining lamps remains the same, provided the total number of lamps does not fall below five.

Plot Hook 1

A Bonisagus magus, who owns one of the lamps, has determined the site of one of the missing four. He believes it to be buried in an Egyptian cliff-tomb. He expects the area to be defended by local magicians, ancient curses, enslaved spirits and the living dead. He is recruiting muscle for the expedition, and will allow his colleagues to take the mundane treasure from the tomb, provided he is allowed to keep his choice of the magic items.

Plot Hook 2

Several powerful magi have been killed in their laboratories. Although, initially, they seem unlinked, eventually it becomes apparent that each owned one of the lamps. While it is usual to use the sympathetic connection among the lamps to steal them, an assassin is, instead, sending a powerful fire elemental to kill each of the other owners. The assassin is a Flambeau maga who has become convinced of the sacredness of the lamps, and has chosen to punish the vulgar users of the holy vessels with incineration.

Source

Herodotus (trans. A de Sélincourt, revised 1996 J. Marincola) *The Histories*, Penguin Books, London.

Zopyrus

by Timothy Ferguson

Darius, king of the Persians, laid siege to the city of Babylon. The Babylonians mocked him, sending him the message that he would take the city when mules had foals. The siege dragged on, for the city seemed invulnerable to any strategy, but Darius could not desist. Babylon would recover its prosperity and military might quickly. To end the siege short of victory was to invite ridicule from his nobles and revenge from the Babylonians.

In the twentieth month of the siege, a pack-mule belonging to the general Zopyrus foaled. He became convinced that Babylon would fall, and that his foaling mare marked him as the instrument of its submission. He asked the king if the fall of Babylon was of utmost importance, and when told it was, he retired to plan, then act.

The next day the king heard his general had been grievously wounded. Zopyrus was commanded to attend the king. His face was swathed in bandages, and his body encrusted with the blood from whip welts. Zopyrus's ears and nose had been hacked away. "Who could have done this to you?" asked the king "here among our supporters."

"Only you have the power to have done this to me." replied the general, "I did it with my own hand." To the king's horrified look he smiled and said "I shall go to the Babylonians and say that you blamed me for the failure of the siege, and had my nose and ears hacked off as punishment. They know that the army thinks highly of me, and will give me an honored place. I will ask for the command of a small force, which they will grant me. On the tenth day after my entry into the city send one thousand men, those who you do not value, to the gates of Semiramis. Arm them with only with daggers. My men will surround them, and massacre them. Then seven days





after, do the same at the Nineveh gate, and again I will massacre these men. Twenty days after this send 4,000 men to the Chaldaen gates. These too I will destroy. With each victory my place among the Babylonians will rise, until I think they will place their forces under my command. Then, after twenty days, order an attack from all directions, with your fullest force.

S t a t i o n
Persians opposite the Belian and Cissan gates, and I will open them.”

The general’s plan went precisely as he predicted, and so great Babylon, most powerful of cities, fell to the Persians. Darius prized Zopyrus above all men, and made him the governor of Babylon, for the rest of his life.

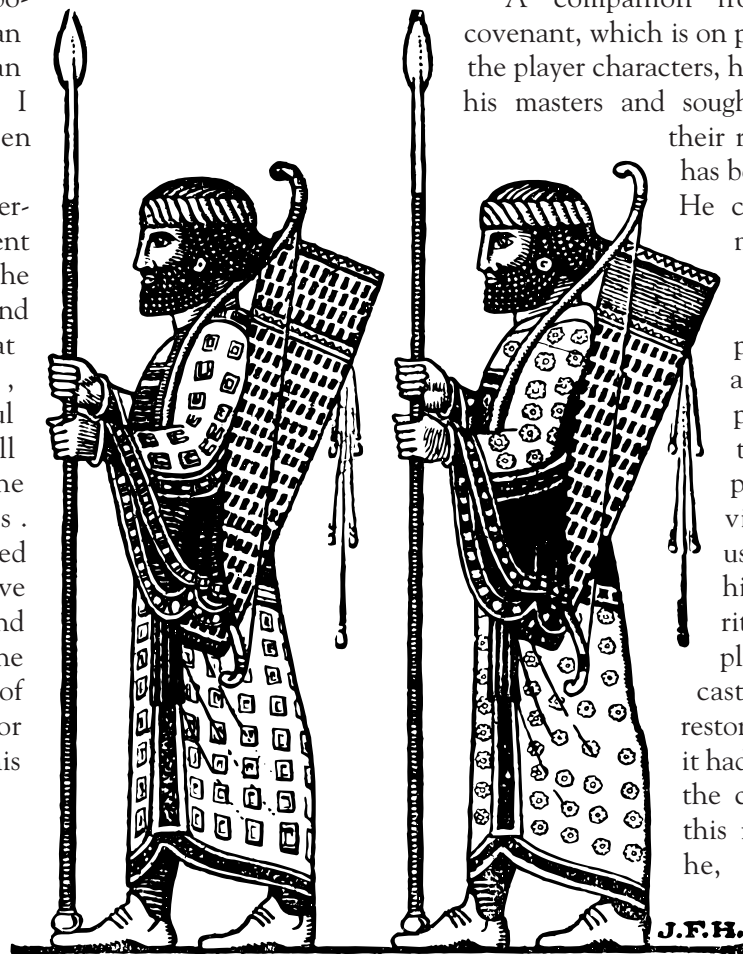
Story Hooks

The Adjunction of the Mutilated General is one of those spells that many theurgists know about, but very few actually know. Zopyrus’s powers are not clearly understood, and it is widely rumored that he has the ability to cast down magical wards, including the Aegis of the Hearth. A powerful theurgist’s apprentice has stolen some of his books, including one contain-

ing the Adjunction of the Mutilated General. The theurgist needs the books back, because his reputation will be damaged if his rivals discover that Zopyrus, like many of the spirits he can command, is not nearly as powerful as they had previously imagined. The retrieval of the books is made more difficult by a second group of magi, who want to be able to conjure Zopyrus during an inter-covenant war.

A companion from a nearby covenant, which is on poor terms with the player characters, has killed one of his masters and sought refuge with their rivals. His nose has been hacked off.

He claims that his master was conjuring Zopyrus, in preparation for an attack on the player characters, and promised that vis would be used to regrow his nose after the ritual was complete. His master cast the spell to restore his face, but it had no effect. Can the characters trust this new ally, or is he, like Zopyrus, just waiting to betray them?



Source

Herodotus (trans. A de Sélincourt, revised 1996 J. Marincola) *The Histories*, Penguin Books, London.

Daemonic Adjuration of the Mutilated General

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

Magic Might: 15 (20 where Babylon once stood)

Size: +1

Personality traits: Ruthless +5, Loyal +3

Weapon/Attack: n/a

Soak: +7

Body Levels: OK, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, Banished

Abilities: Many, including Charm 8, Guile 8 and Leadership 8

Powers:

Convince, 1 point: Zopyrus can craft stratagems that create positive reputations. Usually these are a lie followed by an accompanying action which serves as proof. Each lie increases the desired reputation's score by one point. Zopyrus can give a caster a sequence of stratagems which raise their reputation to 3, but this requires three proofs. Accompanying proofs are likely ruthless and bloody, increasingly so as the reputation rises. In Babylon Zopyrus's lies are particularly effective, he can set a reputation to 3 with a single proof.

Designate of Zopyrus, 1 point: Zopyrus can grant one use of his Unbar power to a human being, who may use it within three lunar months. The Designate of Zopyrus must be invited into a house or city before his power will work on its portals. Only one human may be Zopyrus's Designate at any time. Zopyrus can recall his gift at will, and if forced to give it to a second person, the gift disappears from the first.

Hide Traitorous Thoughts, (CrMe 40) 2 points: Zopyrus can make the traitorous thoughts of one individual undetectable, through either mundane or magical means, for a period of three lunar months.

Unbar, (ReHe(Pe,Te,Vi) 45) 1 point: Zopyrus can unlock or unbar any door, provided any magical protection it has is less than three times his Might score.

Vis: none.

Hermetic theurgists, using the abilities described in *The Mysteries*, can command the daimon of Zopyrus. He can be summoned anywhere within the borders of ancient Persia, but is most powerful in Babylon. The ritual of adjuration requires either the caster or one of his servants to willingly mutilate themselves. Hermetic wizards are not sure what minimum level of mutilation is acceptable, but removal of the nose and three lashes with a broad whip has become traditional. Any caster can only call Zopyrus once.

The daimon of Zopyrus appears to be a tall man of middle-eastern extraction wearing a Persian robe over old-fashioned armor. His face was handsome before it was mutilated — his nose and ears are missing. He holds a whip in his left hand and a dagger in his right. He appears fully solid, but does not engage in combat. Zopyrus's manner is cold and precise. To him, lives are of no consequence. He does not enjoy harming others, but sees no point in avoiding their harm, if that is the most efficient course.





Chapter 4

The Hand of God

Al-Namir al-mujahid

by Niall Christie

“In the church of Hunak was a window forty cubits high. Every day at noontime a leopard would come and jump to the window, where it would sleep until the end of the day, at which time it would jump down and go away. At that time Hunak was held as a fief by a Frankish knight named Sir Adam, one of the devils of the Franks. Sir Adam was told the story of the leopard and he said, “As soon as you see it, let me know.” The leopard came as it was wont to do and jumped into the window. One of the peasants came and told Sir Adam about it. The latter put on his coat of mail, mounted his horse, took his shield and lance and came to the church, which was all in ruins with the exception of one wall which was standing and in which the window was. As soon as the leopard saw him, it jumped from the window upon him while he was on his horse, broke his back and killed him. It then went away. The peasants of Hunak used to call that leopard, “the leopard that takes part in the holy war” [al-namir al-mujahid (al-NAmir al-muJEHhid)].”

— *From the memoirs of Usama ibn Munqidh (1095-1188)*

Adaptation

Al-namir al-mujahid is a divine creature that may be found in the Levant, acting as an agent of God’s vengeance on evil-doers. It is not known if it is an individual creature that roams the area, if there are several, or even if it is a form of temporary angel, appearing only for as long as it takes to complete its task. The last written record of its appearance is that given above, described by Usama ibn Munqidh, an amir from Shayzar in Syria.

The castle of Hunak is in northern Syria, in the vicinity of Ma’arrat al-Nu’man, about 50 miles south-east of Antioch. At the time of al-namir’s appearance, Hunak was ruled by a minor Frankish nobleman named Sir Adam. Although Sir Adam and his retinue were Franks, descended from Crusaders who had settled in the area, the majority of his subjects were Muslim peasants, living in nearby villages. Sir Adam treated his subjects harshly and imposed heavy taxes on them. An avid hunter, he would also lead groups of his followers in wild chases across the countryside, not caring what crops were ruined by the hooves of the passing horses. The culmination of his evildoing came in 1140, when a young maiden in a nearby village caught his lustful eye. Sir Adam rode into the village and demanded that the maiden be given up to him as a concubine. Her

father, the qadi (QAWdee, Muslim religious judge) of the village, refused. Sir Adam was wroth, and his vengeance was cruel. By nightfall the village was a smoking ruin, its inhabitants slain, apart from the unfortunate maiden, who was taken back to Sir Adam's castle. A week later her broken and violated body was found outside the castle wall.

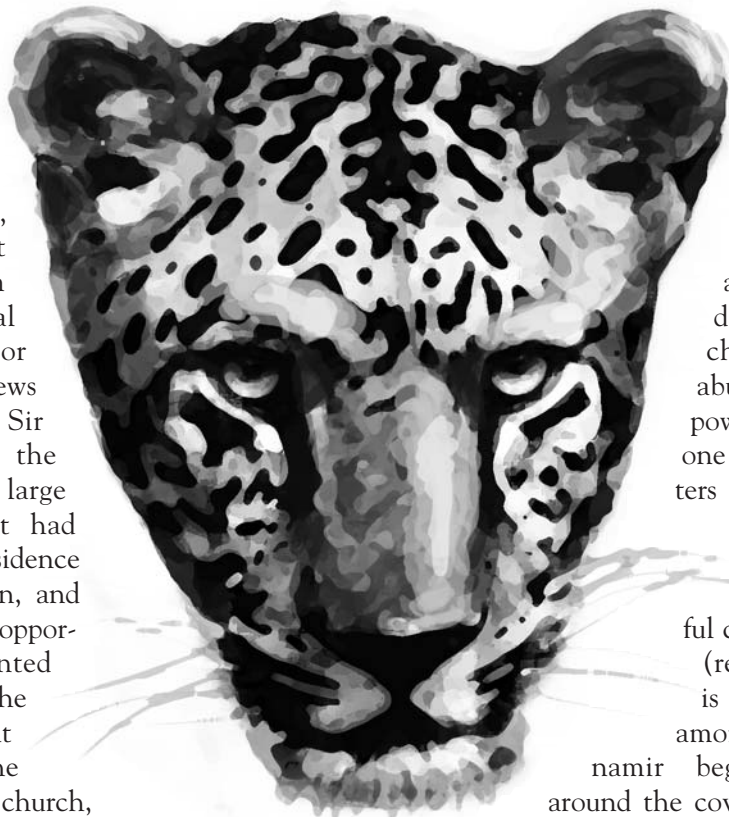
It was some six months later that the leopard first appeared at Hunak. Sir Adam was not a pious man, and had long since allowed the local church to fall into disrepair. The leopard

made its home in the window in the remaining wall of the church, although it did no harm to the local inhabitants or livestock. News traveled to Sir Adam of the unusually large creature that had taken up residence in his domain, and so when the opportunity presented itself to him, he set out to hunt it. When he arrived at the church,

the leopard leapt onto him from the window, knocking him from his horse and breaking his back. It is said that the leopard looked him full in the face as he lay dying. It is also said that when it did so, his eyes grew wide with shock, and he whispered the name of the unfortunate maiden who had fallen prey to his lusts. Then his eyes clouded, and his soul departed his body to whatever infernal reward awaited it. The

leopard departed from Hunak, and was never seen again.

The news spread across the land like wildfire. It is said that other noble lords, both Christian and Muslim, left off evil treatment of their subjects. For some the news was enough, but for others the change in their ways did not occur until they heard tales of an unusually large leopard stalking through their domains. Even now it is said that peasants mistreated by their lords pray fervently to God, hoping that al-namir al-mujahid might come to save them.



Story Hooks

1. Al-namir al-mujahid can be used as a warning device to stop characters from abusing their power too much. If one of the characters starts to follow a particularly unpleasant or sinful course of action (remember pride is a common sin among magi), al-namir begins to lurk around the covenant, waiting

for an opportunity to extract divine vengeance. If the characters investigate, they soon hear the story of Sir Adam. If, upon hearing of this, the character desists from her behavior and sincerely repents, the leopard will depart.

Alternatively, it may be one of the NPC members of the covenant whom al-namir is seeking. Can the characters find out who the sinful member of the





- covenant is and encourage them to repent before the leopard strikes?
2. The characters are contacted by a member of the local nobility. He has recently noticed al-namir lurking near his home, and has heard stories of what the leopard's presence means. However, rather than repenting of his evil ways, he is hoping to enlist the aid of the magi to rid him of the beast. It may be that the characters will only learn of the leopard's true nature when it is too late, in which case they will be in deep trouble with the divine!

Source

Usama ibn Munqidh (2000), *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman & Warrior in the Period of the Crusades* (trans. P.K. Hitti) (New York: Columbia University Press) pages 140-1.

The Relics of Saint Mary Magdalene and the Oratory of Lebroye

by Matt Ryan

Holy relics, the physical remains of saints and martyrs, were prized possessions in the Middle Ages. For the faithful, these sacred artifacts provided a link between their daily world of labor and toil and the promised rewards of heaven. By petitioning the relics, people requested miracles from the saints. People spent significant effort obtaining the bodies of saints and any relat-

Al-Namir al-Mujahid

Characteristics: Cun +3, Per +3, Pre n/a, Com n/a,
Str +5, Sta +3, Dex +3, Qik +3

Divine Might: 40

Size: 2

Personality Traits: Vengeful +5, Relentless +4,
Patient +3

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Bite/Claw	+8	+7	+5	+8	+4

Soak: +8

Fatigue levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics (leap) 5, Awareness (sinners) 5,
Hunt (tracking) 5, Stealth (stalking prey) 4

Ferocity: 5 (against sinners)

Powers:

Claws of Divine Vengeance [PeCo 30], 6 points: Al-namir may choose to use this power against any character it has successfully struck in combat. The character should immediately make a

Stamina stress roll against an ease factor of 15+. A failed roll indicates that the character will die from their injuries within three combat rounds (about 30 seconds). Al-namir's favoured method of attack is to leap upon the target from concealment (thus gaining the bonuses for charging and surprise, see ArM4, pages 163-6), and slay them with a single blow.

Face of Remembrance [MuIm 2], 0 points: As al-namir's victim lies dying, it looks them full in the face and alters its own face to resemble that of their last victim. In this way it reminds them of the reason it has meted out divine justice upon them.

Vis: None

Note: Al-namir al-mujahid is a divine agent, above such concerns as the religious divisions of humanity. As such, it may be found wreaking God's vengeance on followers of any faith.

ed items associated with their lives. The following is a local Burgundian legend concerning the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene and the mythical powers associated with them.

Words associated with medieval relics need to be defined. The individual remaining body parts of a saint are called “relics.” During the Middle Ages, it was common practice to separate and distribute these parts, purposefully scattering a saint’s relics to worthy recipients. The relics themselves were stored in “reliquaries”: ornately decorated vessels, boxes, or small caskets. Reliquaries could even be fashioned in the shape of the body part they held. A “bier” is a stand that a reliquary sat on, often used during religious ceremonies. Biers were also litters and were used to carry the reliquaries from one location to another. That said, when medieval sources refer to “relics”, they are generally referring to the entire movable ensemble.

The Legend

During the 11th and 12th centuries, the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene were kept at the monastery of Vézelay, a small monastic community overlooking the fertile valleys of central Burgundy. Derived from a conglomeration of women named Mary in the New Testament, medieval Latin theologians believed that Mary Magdalene was a contemporary of Jesus Christ and a beloved follower of his ministry. French legend further credited Mary with converting the pagan Franks of southern and eastern Gaul to Christianity. She died and was canonized around the year 78 AD. By the thirteenth century Vézelay had become the center point of worship for her cult and an important pilgrimage site.

Several hundred pilgrims came annually to worship the saint and view her relics. Like most medieval saints, St Mary Magdalene performed miracles. Specific saints performed specific miracles, and

Saint Mary Magdalene had her own distinct marvels. She was the Saint of liberated prisoners and people petitioned her for release of their loved ones. She had great curative powers. Many legends recount how St Mary Magdalene made the blind see, the lame walk and the sick healthy. Other stories describe how she transported her faithful out of dangerous situations, predominantly storms at sea. Noble women held her high esteem because St Mary Magdalene’s legendary conversion began with the Provence governor’s wife. To encourage the saint’s miracles, worshipers venerated her relics through acts of physical devotion and gifts.

Besides showing the relics for public adoration, the monks of Vézelay would also take the Relics on tours, walking through the neighboring counties from castle to castle. These tours generated great attention, and large crowds would gather at each of the scheduled stops, anxiously awaiting the group of monks and their revered artifacts. The tours also encouraged great generosity from the faithful, and the collected alms went to rebuild the basilica that permanently housed the Relics in Vézelay. The monastic brothers made many tours of Burgundy, but one in particular stood out.

According to the legend, the abbot of Vézelay charged a monk with taking the relics on a tour through the nearby county of Amiens. Brother Renaud readily agreed to his abbot’s wishes. He and his group took a portion of the relics and traveled through the countryside. Crowds of people, eager to see and perhaps even touch the relics, met the monks everywhere they went. Renaud’s circuit through the villages was very successful, both spiritually and financially.

Eventually the monks arrived at Lebroye, a large castle ruled by a noble knight named Sir Elmo. The brothers held a public showing of the relics in Lebroye’s chapel. After two days Renaud prepared to continue the tour and leave Lebroye. Strangely, the monks could not move the bier from the chapel. It was impossible to





exit the doorway with them. Everyone tried to help them, including the nobles, but no amount of effort could force the relics from the building. The monks returned the relics to the chapel altar and lowered themselves in prayer, hoping that divine inspiration might solve this mystery.

While the monks were praying one of their younger members rashly struck the bier with his staff. Perhaps young Peter believed that blows could move the saint. Medieval saints were sometimes obstinate, refusing the requests of their monastic guardians. There are other examples where their caretakers threatened saints' relics with humiliations, beatings, and exposure, all in an effort to coerce miracles from the saints. But Peter's blows failed. Not only was his attack unsuccessful, he was immediately frozen with paralysis, falling to the stone floor like a child's wooden doll. Brother Peter died a few days later.

Sir Elmo conferred with Brother Renaud over the unfortunate events caused by the touring relics. The illustrious figures reported their decision to the people of Lebroye. Divine decree was responsible. The two leaders said that Saint Mary Magdalene wished for her relics to remain at the castle. Sir Elmo promised to build an oratory, so that traveling pilgrims could visit her relics and venerate them. He also promised that he would provide for a group of monks to stay and administer the relics, and that the oratory would be under the control of the abbot of Vézelay. Once the oratory was built, the relics were easily moved inside, and it became a celebrated spot for pilgrims and petitioners of Saint Mary Magdalene.

Æ Medieval Saint

Saints are men and women who led holy lives on earth and were rewarded by eternal life in heaven in the presence of God. There are three different groups of saints: saints of the New Testament, mar-

tyrs who died for Christ, and confessors, those who lived exemplary Christian lives and died of natural causes. Saint Mary Magdalene belonged in the first group. God allowed the saints to work miracles in the world, and He granted them the divine power to perform these wonders. Less commonly, He used the saints as messengers. In very rare circumstances, God allowed the saints to manifest in human form. The saints did not have God's wisdom or impartial judgment.

Saint Mary Magdalene was an interested observer of her devoted cult, especially when they concentrated on the veneration of her relics. In heaven, she retained some very human personality traits. It seems paradoxical that a saint had not dismissed her human foibles, but many medieval saints retained aspects of their human character. Perhaps faithful parishioners felt a stronger fondness for saints who seemed more human than angelic. Saint Mary Magdalene could be petty and jealous, especially concerning the attention paid to her relics. She granted more miracles when her relics rested in a gem-studded, golden reliquary than when they lay in a simple wooden box. She liked to be adored and took a focused role in any activity that resulted in greater adoration for her and her relics.

The Adaptation

The story about the origins of the oratory comes from the chronicles of Vézelay, written during the 12th century. In the magical world of Mythic Europe, the story and the power of the relics are not merely legendary; they are actual accounts of real phenomena. Through her relics, Saint Mary Magdalene can create miracles. The miracles cause a great stir among the population, who forms cults of faithful followers. The relics also affect the political balance of power the nobles and the monks have achieved. All of these aspects of the legend

are perfectly suitable for an *Ars Magica* saga.

The Tour

The wondrous stories of Saint Mary Magdalene have spread through out Mythic Europe, making her one of the most popular medieval saints in the 13th century. Her relics attract large crowds of people, who venerate the Saint and hope she will help them with their personal petitions. Groups of devoted follower of a saint are called cults, and all of the more famous saints had their own cults. Medieval people played favorites with the saints and would pick one as their favorite or patron saint. They would praise this saint more than they would other saints.

Word spreads through the population of a county as soon as the monks begin their tour. The train of brothers, attendants, and staff may number up to two dozen people and they consequently travel slowly along a planned itinerary. Realizing the slow rate of travel, the leader of the journey plans according, moving between castles and cities that are relatively close. Under no circumstances will the brothers spend the night camping outside with the relics, so they must necessarily be under someone's roof by nightfall. The population's movements are not restricted by this lack of speed. People run to relatives and friends in the towns ahead to announce the news of the relics' impending arrival. The monks encourage this behavior, as the result is more people waiting at the next location.





Besides alms and religious fervor, the tour also generates political influence. The monks realize this. They wish to increase the saint's reputation, the size of her cult, the amount of monetary contributions, and ultimately increase the faith of the people. In the case of the Oratory of Lebroye the saint was especially successful. She managed to force the noble, Sir Elmo, to build her a shrine on his land, a shrine managed by her attendant monks yet maintained at the lord's expense. Alms collected at the Oratory go back to Vézelay; they do not go to Sir Elmo. Situations like this often became sore points between the nobility and the monks of the 13th century, who vie for control of the money-producing holy places. The two parties are fully aware of the political ramifications of such a building. The noble has a prosperous fief and the monks would like some of its fruits that the noble would rather not share. In the noble's jaded opinion, the primary motivation of the monks is taking some of his revenues; the miraculous aspects of the relics are secondary.

A Relic

Divine Might: 5

Size: -4

Soak: +2

Body levels: OK, Destroyed

Faith Points: 1. See "True Faith" in *ArM4* page 244.

The remaining body parts of the Saint are her relics. Initially, the Saint's body was complete; skin covered her bones and her hands were folded peacefully over her chest. Her remains smelled of the sweetest fragrances and perfumes, a sure sign of saintly status. The body parts were separated, divided, and placed in many different ornately decorated boxes called reliquaries. Most reliquaries are size -2, have a Soak of +2, and have two Body levels before being destroyed. The contained relics were then distributed to the faithful. Individual relics may be combined, which in turn increases their Divine Might and Faith Points. Regardless of the size of the collection, however, the relics' Divine Might may never exceed the saints' total might of 40.

A Traveling Aura

Since Mythic Europe is awash with overlaying realms of supernatural powers, the tour also generates a movable Divine aura as it progress through the countryside. This differs from standard Divine Auras, which are covered in "Divine Areas" on page 243 of *ArM4*, in that this aura is mobile. The Divine aura is calculated by the collected number of individual body parts of the saint. Each piece is worth one point of Faith and the total Divine aura equals the total of the relics' Faith points. Brother Renard's bier contains six pieces of the saint, making the Divine aura +6, which extends in a circle 15 paces from the relics. Each body part is also worth 5 points of Divine might, which are combined to generate a total Divine Might.

The Miracles

The saint may produce miracles through her relics. Each of her miracles acts as a Divine power and has a point cost associated with it. The points are drawn from her Divine Might when she manifests a miracle. Saint Mary Magdalene may perform miracles wherever any of her relics are located. However, the saint's Divine Might is limited by the number of Faith points contained in the collected relics in any one specific location. Each point of Faith allows 5 points of Divine power to manifest. The size of the assembled relics also limits which miracles she may bestow. A collection of relics must have enough Divine Might points for a miracle to function at least once, or that miracle may not be performed at that location.

The miracles themselves are divinely granted marvels, irreversible wonders stemming from the Divine Realm of God and his Holy. The section "Miracles" in *ArM4*, page 244, details miracles directly descended from God. As mentioned, God could not be bargained with or enticed to perform

miracles. There is a difference between God and His medieval saints; the saints can be enticed into action. Generally, this saint can free prisoners and cure the sick. The sidebar lists her specific miracles.

The saint uses her powers to influence the relics' wardens. She can anchor her relics to their position in the world, meaning that the relics can not be physically moved. Since her power comes from God, no magical, mundane, faerie, or infernal source can undo this effect. This is the primary way that Saint Mary Magdalene makes her will known. A second and less often used way is her ability to enter a sleeper's dream. In a dream, the saint talks and interacts with the sleeper, who remembers his conversation upon rising. The dreamer need not be a member of the saint's cult. With her miracles and powers, Saint Mary Magdalene can certainly influence a story.

Story Ideas

There are two ways to include the relics in a saga: either the player characters go to the relics or the relics come to the player characters. Going to the relics is the less aggressive approach, and this sort of interaction can be further divided into an active search for the relics or passive inclusion in a nearby relic encounter. For example, a player character could be suffering from a debility or illness that is beyond the curative powers of the covenant. The relics of Saint Mary Magdalene may even be able to remove harmful effects from uncontrolled Twilight experiences. The relics are not powerful enough to remove any accumulated Twilight Points, however. The saint is famous for her healing powers, and a sick character might wish to venerate her relics to enlist her aid.

A more direct method of involving the relics is to have the monks' tour include one of the covenant's neighbors. Covenants usually interact with their

neighbors in some fashion. A high degree of involvement can quickly draw player character magi into a story. In the simplest example, the monks visit a lord with whom the covenant has friendly relations. This lord is not pleased that the relics refuse to leave his property. He wishes to know if it is really Saint Mary Magdalene's will or if it is the monk's desire to swindle the lord out of his property. He could ask the magi to intervene and investigate the monks to see if they are telling the truth.

Alternatively, perhaps the monks suspect the lord of foul play. In this case, it would be the monks requesting aid from the magi, which could be an unprecedented situation with the religious-minded monks asking the magic-practicing wizards for aid. The intrigue could be deeper. Imagine if the noble had initially asked one of the magi to aid him. This magus, who might be a player character, casts a spell to prevent the relics from leaving. Remember that the miracles of the saint are immune to magical spells; the relics themselves are not. With the relics pinned down in the lord's castle, the monks then ask the other magi for help. A clever storyguide can weave an intricate political puzzle using the relics.

The most direct encounter would be to bring the relics to the covenant itself. The visit could be purposeful or accidental. Perhaps the covenant is famous and the monks would like to visit it. Even with the slightest reputation, the monks could wish to use the covenant as a resting point between two other locations —unless, of course, if the covenant's reputation is diabolical. A curious abbot might wish to have a look around the covenant. Including the covenant among the touring circuit, especially considering the large number of cult followers who will come along, would be a way for a monk to take a subtle look around the covenant.

The visit could also be accidental, meaning the monks have no idea why the relics wished to come to the covenant. While passing through a crossroads, Saint





Saint Mary Magdalene

Divine Might: 40

Personality Traits: Stubborn +3, Decisive +2, Arrogant +1

Reputations: Healer 3, with population of Mythic Europe; Liberator 3, with prisoners; Rescuer 2, with noble women

Powers:

Disturbing the Tyrant, MuMe 30, 3 points: The Saint can enter into a sleeper's dream and begin a conversation. Upon awaking, the recipient will clearly remember the dialogue. Saint Mary Magdalene uses this power to make her will explicitly known to a person. Her first use of this power was to dissuade the ruler of Marseilles from continuing his pagan worship. After three nights, she converted the tyrant by disturbing his sleep. Dream situations are fully explained under "Spiritual Dream Travel" in *The Mysteries*, pages 97 & 98.

Heal the Contrite Petitioner, CrCo 50, 1 point per needed magnitude: The Saint can cure her followers. She will exercise an economy of divine power, using the least amount of divine might necessary to achieve the spell magnitude required for the remedy.

Liberation of the Saint, PeTe 10, 1 point: This miracle makes shackles fall off a prisoner. It has limitless range, mean-

ing that the target being freed need not be in proximity to the relics.

Restraint of the Relics, ReTe 30, 3 points: If the Magdalene does not wish her relics moved, she may attach them to their current location. These anchored relics are impossible to move by mundane, magical, faerie, or infernal means. The saint alone can cancel this effect, making the relics movable again once her will has been obeyed.

Retribution of the Saint, ReCo 30, 6 points: With this power, the Saint can paralyze a person. Only Saint Mary Magdalene can remove this effect. A paralyzed person will die in five + Stamina days if this effect is not removed. It is suggested that the saint use this power rarely, if at all. However, according to her legend, she has caused at least one death with this power.

Succor for the Sinking, ReCo 60, 10 points: Saint Mary Magdalene can move people, plucking them up from one location and depositing them in another. This divine transportation is errorless, safe and instantaneous. This is the only miracle that does not require the petitioner to be near the saint's relics.

Mary Magdalene anchors her relics, refusing to let the monks continue until they move them in the direction of the covenant. This alone might prove mysterious enough for the monks that they send someone to ask for the magi's aid. At the covenant, the monks would not have any more idea of the saint's motivations than the magi would. Perhaps Saint Mary Magdalene wishes an oratory at the covenant. This would seriously affect the magical aura most covenants have. The saint could desire a certain decoration or

beautifully constructed item for the veneration of her relics. Stories along these lines would have the player characters eventually interacting with the saint herself. She, too, could have any number of reasons for wishing to visit the covenant.

St Mary Magdalene is part of the Divine Realm and may have some insight into the immediate future. The saint may wish the player characters to accompany the monks to the next stop on the tour, thinking that the simple monks might need magical assistance. Depending on the

magi's personalities, she might wish one of them to perform some act of imposed contrition. Perhaps the saint wishes to acknowledge the benevolence of the magi's magic to the monks. Her reasons can be many and will most likely hinge on the player characters' past actions.

Other adventure seeds could concentrate on the touring aspect of the relics as opposed to the items themselves. A group of alms-carrying monks traveling through the countryside could attract all sorts of attention, not all of it beneficial. Perhaps a gang of bandits thinks the tour a fat prize and robs them, forcing the monks to seek aid from the nearby covenant. The threats don't need to be merely mundane. Saint Mary Magdalene could subtly guide her entourage into a magical or faerie regio, somehow anchoring her relics to create a passageway between the mundane realm and the regio. For example, through her Divine wisdom the saint discovers a faerie regio housing a griffin. This beast periodically exits the regio to raid the surrounding farmers, who are faithful followers of the saint. Through her dream miracles, she guides the monks into the regio and anchors herself there, refusing to leave until the evil beast is destroyed. This task is much too great for the monks to accomplish, and they rush to the players' covenant for help. Who better to fight the beast than the curious, perhaps semi-blasphemous wizards?

Another idea is to have the tour collect the saint's relics as it travels from site to site, rather than carry a complete ensemble of relics. Sprinkle small shrines to the Magdalene — shrines similar to the oratory at Lebroye — throughout the nearby countryside, each containing an individual relic of the saint. As the touring monks travel, they combine the various relics and their collection grows. Certain powers may wish to prematurely end the tour and thwart this accumulation of Divine power. A faerie queen might wish this, so that the traveling Divine aura doesn't disrupt her sylvan for-

est. The players could be drawn into this conflict to aid either the faerie or the monks. Perhaps a demon has had a possessive influence over a particular noble, and his influence will be banished once the gathered relics reached the lord's castle. His only hope is to stop the tour before it become too powerful. Black, savage dogs begin harrying the itinerate monks, who quickly request wizardly aid against the demonic hounds.

Source

Hugh of Poitiers. *The Vézelay Chronicle*. Trans. John Scott and John Ward. Binghamton, New York: Medieval & renaissance Texts 7 Studies, 1992. 251-252 and 334-341.



The Holy Griddle

by Keith Baker

St. Lawrence was a deacon of the Christian church. He was martyred during the persecution of Valerian in 258; after refusing to turn over the gold that the church was thought to possess, he was burned to death on a grid-iron. This grid-iron went on to become a sacred relic of the church, and Lawrence himself became the patron saint of cooks.

Rather than recreating the martyrdom of the saint, this extracts the relic from the legend. What if the saint's execution had occurred in a place less public than Rome, and the grid-iron had remained in use afterwards? This gives the opportunity to work a holy relic into a session — a relic whose true value is not even known to those who own it.



The Griddle of Angelo

A wooden sign hangs over the door of a building with a foundation of Roman stone. The image on the sign is that of a man holding an enormous grid-iron, and as a result this inn has come to be known as “The Griddle” by those in the area. Depending on the needs of the saga, it could be found in a village, market-town or on a well-traveled road between two major locations. For reasons that will become clear, it should not be located in a major city.

The Griddle has ten rooms to accommodate travelers, but it is its food that it is known for. People who pass through the area may hear of the Griddle’s food spoken of in reverential terms. There is a rumor that a local priest has been surviving on bread from the Griddle’s oven for the last

forty years, eating a single piece each day. Others say that the bread of the Griddle is a remarkable restorative and talk about travelers who recovered from terrible illnesses after a meal at the Griddle. Some of these tales are true, but many are the result of generations of propaganda spread by the Carnini family, the owners of the Griddle.

The current innkeeper is Angelo Carnini. A large Italian man who has just celebrated his thirtieth birthday, Angelo has a well-trimmed black beard and a shiny bald pate. He is extremely cheerful and extends a warm welcome to all visitors. This cheery demeanor conceals a cunning mind. Angelo excels at evaluating customers and squeezing every coin he can from a guest. If someone has heard tales of the supposed ‘magic bread’ of the Griddle, Angelo will be more than happy to elaborate on the stories. Using his considerable



guile he will explain how a holy man blessed the inn's kitchen many generations ago. He can then spin a host of tales about the restorative properties of the food, ranging from the people saved from plague by a good pint of ale from the inn's cellars to the dying man who was restored to health by simply smelling the fine venison stew. However, the truth of the matter is that Angelo is just following a family practice of using these tales to prepare his customers for his unusually high prices. He will carefully evaluate visitors' reactions to his stories and use this information to set his prices. A character skilled in Folk Ken or Bargain may be able to sense that this is a marketing ploy on Angelo's part.

The irony of the situation is that there is actually more truth to the tales than Angelo knows. The persecution of Christians instituted by the Emperor Valerian in AD 258 was largely focused in Rome itself, but the effects of Valerian's edict stretched throughout the Roman Empire. The inn currently known as the Griddle was the site of a brutal event. A traveling priest named Licinius was stopped by a patrol of soldiers who demanded that he pay for his passage with gold. When Licinius said that his wealth was in the love of Christ, the angry soldiers responded by throwing him onto the inn's large grid-iron and broiling him to death, saying that perhaps his followers could eat of his body. The soldiers then forbade the innkeeper to speak of the event. Although no one knows of the events surrounding the death of Licinius, his faith was true and he gave his life for the church, and he has taken his place among the saints. His purity of spirit remains within the object that touched him during his martyrdom —the grid-iron that took his life. Not only has it held together for over nine hundred years, serving generation after generation of innkeepers, but it is actually the case that food prepared on the griddle is purified and good for body and soul.

The Grid-Iron

As the site of a saint's martyrdom, the grounds of the Griddle are suffused with holy power and have a divine aura of 4 — something that will be quickly obvious to those who possess the Gift. Generally pious individuals find the area to have a peaceful, comforting aura, and as such the Griddle is a common stop for traveling monks or pilgrims. Unsavory individuals may feel uncomfortable there; Angelo himself is occasionally overcome by pangs about his price-fixing ways, but having grown up around the inn he has had many years to come to terms with this effect.

The griddle itself is made of iron; its cooking surface is two feet by four feet in size, and it has an iron-shod handle. Having been in contact with the saint at the time of his martyrdom, it is a powerful relic and possesses a number of abilities. It carries two points of True Faith. A character who already possesses True Faith may add these points to her normal total while holding the griddle, while a pious Christian without any pre-existing True Faith can gain the benefit of the base two points. In addition, any food cooked on the griddle will be cleansed of any contamination and will be especially filling. An individual whose regular daily diet includes a meal cooked on the grid-iron should receive a -3 to all rolls on the Aging table and should be protected from minor ailments. It is possible that the griddle can perform more impressive miracles, such as curing existing afflictions — but such miracles cannot be controlled by the owner of the griddle, and depend a great deal on the faith of the supplicant who partakes of the meal cooked on the relic.

Adventure Seeds

Angelo does not realize the power of the treasure in his possession. He will continue to use the stories to fleece gullible pil-





grims, but even if he were to begin to take them seriously he would not pay any particular attention to the grid-iron. However, other people who are more sensitive to the nature of the divine might take an interest in the Griddle, which could provide a number of options for your saga:

- A powerful individual finds a reference to the slaying of Licinius, and cross-referencing this with the stories about the inn and its remarkable food he deduces the powers of the holy griddle. He sends a group of men to acquire the relic by any means necessary — and a group of characters happen to be in the inn when they arrive. The big question here is: Who is it who wants the griddle? A wealthy noble who is simply collecting relics for personal glory and status? A churchman who wishes to use the relic in the service of the Lord? Or a magician who may be planning to destroy the relic to gain favor with infernal powers? What other relics might this individual possess?
- If a character is seriously injured near the Griddle, a superstitious farmer may send the characters to the inn in hopes of healing. Alternately, a sickly character could be miraculously healed after dining at the inn, or the characters might meet a man who has lived to an amazing age due to a steady diet of bread baked on the holy griddle. Can the party identify the true nature of the relic? Such an object could be a valuable addition to the kitchen of a covenant ...
- At the very least, the holy nature of the inn itself may be a mystery to the magi who stumble upon it. Why does this aura of power surround this place, which seems so mundane in all other ways?

Source

Prudentius (1961), *Prudentius, vol II* (trans. H.J.Thomson) (London, William Heinemann Ltd.), pages 109-143.

Saint Kevin's Fruit

by Matt Ryan

During the later years of his life, Saint Kevin was the abbot of the monastery at Glendalough, located in modern Ireland's County Wicklow. His duties included teaching the abbey's youth to read. One day one of his students, a noble boy being fostered at the monastery, came to Saint Kevin and said he was sick. The boy begged for fruit to help ease his pain, but at that time the monastery was poor and had no fruit. Undaunted by the lack of stores, St Kevin prayed to God for health-giving fruit to be provided.

The monastery's cemetery was built near an old willow tree, its bark wrinkled and leaves sparse from age. When the Lord heard the saint's plea the old willow started to bare oblong, white fruit, and in just a few minutes the tree's branches were heavy with it. Saint Kevin praised his heavenly Father and plucked one of the fruits, giving it to the boy to eat. The fruit tasted bitter, but despite its unpleasant taste the young lad was instantly cured. Together, the saint and the boy picked the remaining fruit and took it to the sick men in the monastery's infirmary. These brothers were also cured, simply by eating one of the white fruits. The Lord was bountiful, and provided more fruit than the monastery needed. Saint Kevin distributed the surplus fruit to the surrounding peasants, some of whom carried it to the farthest reaches of Ireland.

The story of Saint Kevin and the white fruit happened a long time ago, around the middle of the sixth century, but because of the Lord's benevolence the willow continues to bare the saint's fruit. After the first occurrence of this miracle, the monks planted saplings from the old willow in a circle surrounding the cemetery. Each year on Midsummer's Eve, the annual date of the miracle, the trees bear fruit. This fruit is sought after because of its healing powers, and the monks of Glendalough dutifully collect and redistribute their precious crop to the sick and suffering. The fruit is carried throughout Ireland and is known by all as the Fruit of Saint Kevin.

Adaptation

The saints who, like Saint Kevin, converted the pagan Irish to Christianity also built monasteries. In pre-medieval Ireland, when villages and towns were unknown, monasteries became important centers for trade, communications, and civilization. Following Pope Gregory the Great's conversion program, which claimed that pagan conversion could better be accomplished by superimposing Christian beliefs over existing pagan myths, many Irish monasteries were built on sites that were already important to the Irish pagans. Glendalough is one such place.

Irish monasteries served as more than isolated retreats for the holy ascetics who wished to remove themselves from society. They were community centers that provided homes for monks and laymen, men, women, and children. Glendalough — meaning “the valley of two lakes” — sits at the crossroads of two very important routes: the first road running east-west through the Wicklow Gap and crossing the second road running north-south from Dublin. The monastery is a large community surrounded by a high wall of piled stones, whose interior spaces are divided into three segregated areas using additional concentric stone

walls. At its very center is the stone church, built facing east, and having small windows and a step-pitched stone roof. Nearby is the round tower, a slender stone structure which rises 100 feet into the air. This tower is unadorned except for four small windows at its top, one facing each cardinal direction, and topped with a flat roof. The tower is used as a lookout platform and houses the church bell, a hand rung iron bell which calls the faithful each Sunday for mass, as well as heralding other events both fair and foul. Finally, one or two small stone houses provide isolated cells for the community's holy hermits. A handful of men who have abandoned society in order to better know the passions of the Lord, live in isolation in these small cells and refrain from interacting with others. The church, cells, and tower are surrounded by a high stone wall that has a single, narrow entrance.





Irish Devils

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

Infernal Might: 10

Size: -2

Confidence: 0

Personality Traits: Brazen +3, Braggart +2, Tormenting +1

Reputations: Evil tempters 3, with the Irish

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Claws	+9	+6	+9	+3	+7

Soak: +5

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Brawl 4 (claws)

Powers:

Wings of the Sulfurous Winds, ReAu 15, 1 point: This power allows the demon to fly. It need not make Finesse rolls to control its flight. Each small demon may carry along one full-sized human.

Shroud of Invisibility, PeIm 10, 1 point: This power makes the demon invisible, although it does not mask its sulfurous stench. Like the hermetic spell *Veil of Invisibility*, the demon does cast a reflection.

Shape of the Innocuous Form, MuCo 20, 1 point: A devil may assume the form of either a beautiful woman or an innocent-looking child by using this ability. Because of its infernal nature, her-

metic spells that detect magic or false forms will fail if used to discover the devil's true shape.

Vis: A single devil's ten iron claws can be melted together to form 1 pawn of Terram vis.

Irish devils are small, misshapen, humanoid creatures. They have evil, leering faces and wickedly sharp iron claws. They can act individually, but often gather en masse to torment their victim, typically grouping in gangs of five or six. Individual devils only have one of the three powers listed above. Unlike other infernal creatures, Irish demons do not suffer any discomfort from divine auras, so that many holy men have been attacked in their beds and even in church. The ringing of church bells will drive them off, as will overtly pious people. A character that beats the Infernal Might of the devils with a stress roll + religious or virtuous personality trait will drive the devils away for the night. True Faith, Piety, and the divine aura all add to this roll. Irish devils are also susceptible to Holy Water. Splashing a devil with Holy Water will cancel any power that it is currently using. Hence, an invisible devil becomes visible, a flying devil falls to the ground, and a transformed devil regains its devilish form.

The monastery's religious population lives outside this inner wall in a secondary compound. The abbot's house, the guesthouse, the infirmary, kitchen and refectory, are found within this second wall. Unlike the reclusive anchorites within the inner wall, these monks, including the abbot, interact with lay society on a daily basis. Much like continental monasteries, the abbot is often a member of a royal Irish Clan, and he certainly maintains ties to his influential kin. The monastery is prosper-

ous and visitors are frequent. Outside these walls live the laymen and women who make up the rest of the monastic community. Here, tradesmen, freemen, and bound men all spend their lives, living very much as an ordinary villager would live in their secular village. This tertiary area is large enough to encompass some of the small fields and pastures the community uses. Finally, the monastery's cemetery is located here, surrounded by a border of tall, wrinkled-skinned willow trees.

The cemetery itself is small, surrounded by the artificial grove of the willow trees. The original tree still stands as part of the grove. Celtic cross grave markers stand in uneven rows beneath the leafy trees. This is an old site. Long before it became a Christian cemetery it was a site dedicated to the practices of the ancient druids. The Divine nature of the monastic community has repressed the magical aura of the old druid site.

In *Ars Magica* terms, the entire monastery and the outlying houses have a +3 divine aura. The inner most area, that of the church, monastic cell, and round tower, has an increased +6 divine aura. These auras fluctuate slightly. On holy days, for example Easter, Saint Kevin's festival, and Christmas, the auras increase by 2. At night the auras dip by 1. Beneath the divine aura a magical aura exists. Once a year, on the anniversary of Saint Kevin's fruit blooming, this magical aura rises above the suppressing divine aura. At midnight the magical aura reaches +3, which supercedes the +2 divine aura of the outer ward. When the magical aura achieves its apex, the white, oblong fruits appear on the branches of the willows. Once the trees fruit the magic starts to decline, receding until it again disappears beneath the divine aura. The fruits remain on the trees. Annually, the willows produce between 40 and 60 pieces of fruit.

The fruit itself is oblong and white and it is not particularly pleasant to the palate. It is famous, however, and many people know of its power. Within Ireland itself the fruit has a reputation of 3 with the entire population as a health-healing fruit. In Scotland and Wales this reputation dips to 2, and in England and Normandy the fruit's reputation is 1. Eating one of the fruits cures the eater, who receives aid as if the Hermetic spell *Restoration of the Defiled Body* (CrCo25) were cast on them. The fruit will not cure Body Levels, however, and is used exclusively as a cure for diseases.

St Kevin's fruit has a second property, one that is currently agitating many mem-

bers of the Hibernian Tribunal. A Flambeau magus from the small covenant of Lombard has discovered a way to produce vis from a whole piece of fruit. If the fruit is dried and the procedure followed, the fruit will produce one pawn of Creo vis. It takes one month to properly dry one of St Kevin's Fruits. Lombard has released the procedure to several other covenants in the Hibernian Tribunal.

Story Ideas

Using this legend in a saga essentially means that the storyguide is dropping a nice, juicy vis source into their game. On the surface, it would seem that there is a large cache of vis available in an unprotected Irish monastery, and that it would be a simple matter for anyone to retrieve it. This is far from the case. The monks know about St Kevin's Fruit. They treasure it as a sure sign of their saint's magnificence and God's majesty. They know when it blooms and they know that it is valuable to people besides them. The story ideas all stem from the interactions generated between the monastery, her neighbors, and the player characters.

If the players are unfamiliar with the monastery or far from Ireland, rumors of a Hermetic breakthrough that can distill vis from divine fruit might attract them. When the rumors are revealed as true, the players could become embroiled in the Hermetic squabble governing access rights to the site. This discovery has sparked other important questions. How can a divine fruit produce vis? Are God's miracles magical in nature or is there some peculiarity about the exact nature of Ireland and the Almighty which allows this? Did the fruit previously exist and God merely allow it to re-blossom to aid His saint? Lombard covenant wants to claim the monastery's fruit as their rightful vis source. How will this be resolved? Perhaps the players want some of the fruit for themselves? Storyguides interested in





these avenues would need to develop some of the important covenants and magi of the Hibernian Tribunal.

A more interesting idea would be for one of Glendalough's monks to ask the player characters for help in protecting the grove. A year ago on Midsummer's Eve, the night the fruit blooms, a few daring midnight raiders absconded with several pieces of the fruit. The monks wish to prevent a similar raid this year. The players will certainly be surprised when they discover the culprits to be one or more of the magi of covenant Lombard. Alternatively, the thieves could be Anglo-Norman knights raiding the Irish monastery's precious fruit. The conquest of Ireland was only two generations ago, and hostile emotions still flare violently between the indigenous Irish and the foreign Anglo-Norman settlers. Using the legend in this manner will entangle the players in Hermetic or mundane politics.

A more straight forward way to use this legend is to have the raiders of the fruit be devils. Irish legends are full of stories about pious monks being tempted — even physically beaten — by devils seeking to corrupt them. These Irish devils must simply ignore the discomforts of the divine aura while they molest the monks. The night of the fruit blossoming coincides with the time the divine aura is weakest, meaning that the raid is only incidentally related to the fruit. This very simple idea pits the players against the devils in a battle royal. Hopefully, they will defeat them and perhaps be rewarded with some of the magical fruit. Statistics for a sample Irish Devil can be found in the sidebar.

Finally, this legend need not take place in Ireland, although it is best suited there because of the mix of secular and ecclesiastical properties of an Irish monastery. All that is really necessary is a monastery built upon an existing magical site. The saint's name can be easily changed to fit in the storyguide's desired location.

Source

Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, (Penguin Books, 1982), 77-8.

Jean-Michel Picard, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, (Four Court Press: 1985), 55, 73, 74, & 76-78

The Funeral Cloths of Jesus

by Timothy Ferguson

The Mandyllion

The Mandyllion was an image of Jesus that was sent, by him, to Edessa, following his Resurrection. It was carried by Saint Jude and cured the king of leprosy. The cloth was hidden in the city's walls, and recovered in 544. In 944 it was taken to Constantinople, where it was displayed every Friday. In 1204, the Mandyllion was stolen by Crusaders and disappeared. Some writers describe the Mandyllion as an image of the face of Jesus, while others record it as a sheet folded in eight parts, with the Lord's face on the uppermost, which miraculously lifted itself during the mass so that the remainder of the image could be seen. A latter to the Pope protesting the sack of Constantinople calls it the burial sheet of Jesus. Some suggest it is the length of linen described in Mark: 15:46.

The Face Cloth of Oviedo

It was a Jewish practice to cover the face of a corpse with a cloth while it was being prepared for burial. The Sudarium does not show the face of Jesus, but is



believed to be the cloth rolled in the tomb, separate from His shroud, in John 20:6-7. It was one of the relics sent from Jerusalem during the Persian invasion of 644. It was later evacuated before advancing Muslim armies from Alexandria, then Seville, then Toledo. It arrived in Oviedo in 718, and is kept in the Cathedral of San Salvador. It has served as a focus for pilgrimage since that time, but is not displayed. The ark of wood in which the Sudarium, along with other relics, is held has been opened only twice. In 1030 some priests opened the reliquary and were struck blind. In 1075, after Lenten fasting and prayer, the king, bishop and hero El Cid opened the ark and recorded its contents. The ark was then encased in a silver coffer.

Adaptation

The Mandylion, which was touching Jesus at the moment he conquered death, contains 10 Faith points. It is a linen sheet about 14 feet long, and a faint image of the body of Jesus is visible on the cloth. There are stains on the cloth from His many injuries, including the spear wound in His side, the holes from the nails driven into His arms and feet, and the lesions from the beating He received. The image is faint enough for the detail to be unclear, but Jesus may have been wrapped with something, coins perhaps, over his eyes. Storyguides should be aware that the Shroud appears in Turin after the game period, and was damaged by molten silver during a fire there. The patches on it date from that time.

The Sudarium contains 5 faith points. It is a rectangular linen cloth. Jesus had been beaten about the head and his scalp lacerated with thorns before his death, so the image on the Sudarium contains little detail. The marks where someone pressed the cloth down on either side of the Divine nose are clearly visible. It also indicates





He who has been to Saint James
And not to San Salvador
Visits the Servant and
Neglects the Master

—*Pilgrims' rhyme,*
from *Santiago de Compostella.*

Jesus wore his hair tied in a ponytail, but this is unknown to even the relic's keepers.

Plot Hook 1

Theodore of Epirus, a nobleman of the East, wrote to Pope Innocent III in 1204 and demanded the return of the treasures of the eastern capital. He stated that during the sack of the reliquaries of the city, the Venetians stole the gold, silver and ivory, while the French stole the relics of the saints and “most sacred of all, the linen in which our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped after his death and before the Resurrection. We know that the sacred objects are preserved by their predators in Venice and France and in other places, the sacred linen in Athens.” Innocent III would like to recover as much of the pillage of the reliquaries as possible, although he mightn't want to give it back to the Eastern Church. He's had a group of priests looking into the matter, and one of them is a servant of House Jerbiton.

Andru, Primus of Jerbiton, has some odd ideas about reconciling the Church and Order and needs to strengthen his negotiating position with several key ecclesiastical figures. He feels he can do this by finding the relics of Constantinople, to use as gifts, bribes or signs of God's trust in him. Although it is not possible to detect holy objects with Hermetic magic, he has had his many contacts watching for the spoils of Constantinople, and he thinks he knows where many of them ended up. The Templars, a brotherhood of warrior-monks, are gathering these spoils as they become

available, by purchasing them from the families of Crusaders.

The Mandylion is such a significant object that Andru feels a few risks are reasonable in acquiring it. He asks the player characters to infiltrate a Templar fortress-monastery in the same tribunal as their covenant. Friendly priests can provide documentation and cover identities, but the magic items Andru loans his agents will be less effective than usual in the Templars' fortress because of its surprisingly vivid Dominion aura.

Plot Hook 2

The Sudarium is an unusual relic, in that it was soaked in the blood of the dead Jesus. Virtually every other sanguineous relic was stained with Jesus' blood while he was alive, or, far more rarely, both while he was alive and dead. The Sudarium is the one relic that is exclusively stained with the mortal blood of God. This makes the relic particularly precious to demonologists who hope to use it for nefarious purposes. To protect it, the Sudarium is kept in a cathedral and packed in a box with relics of the Virgin, the Apostles and a sliver of the True Cross.

Philomenus, a Bonisagus magus in Spain, has breached the Code by attempting to acquire the Sudarium. Only a miracle prevented his success. He has fled to the characters' tribunal to recuperate, hide from the Quaesitores, and prepare for his next attempt. Philomenus believes he failed because he had not undertaken the proper purgative measures before attempting to open the reliquary.

Philomenus is dangerously delusional. He believes that this unique sample of the blood of a human God, if examined, could yield the secret of immortality, even godhood. He thinks he is in league with guiding angels, but actually he's bound an Infernal spirit as his familiar. When the characters ascertain his identity, he promis-

es to share his discoveries with the rest of the Order once he has tangible evidence of his theories. He will offer to create longevity potions for the characters, based on his marvelous insights vouchsafed by angels, in exchange for shelter and resources. At the Storyguide's discretion his voices might also provide Philomenus with useful information, vis, or other bribes that might convince the player characters to hide the fugitive magus for a time.

Source

Shroud:

Letter from Theodore of Epirus to Innocent III
Robert de Clari (Edgar Holmes McNeal
trans.), *The Conquest of Constantinople*

Sudarium:

Pelayo of Oviedo, *Liber Testamentorum*

Spare the Rod

by Keith Baker

This encounter was inspired by a section in the life of the Byzantine saint Theodore of Sykeon:

A boy, called Arsinus, who had an unclean spirit and suffered terribly was brought to him from a monastery. The Saint received him but was not anxious to cure him quickly as he said that such chastisement was beneficial to him for some time.

In the source material, Arsinus remains possessed until he is fully grown, and even then the saint only agrees to cure him after he has adopted a "good and strictly disciplined mode of life." Once cured, Arsinus proceeds to follow in the footsteps of the saint and becomes a holy man. This encounter focuses on the idea of the pos-

sessed child living with a priest who could cure him but chooses not to — giving passerby an interesting opportunity to observe demonic possession in a relatively passive environment.

The "pillar saint" is a Christian ascetic tradition that became popular in the Byzantine Empire towards the end of the fourth century. While the custom became less common over time, it was still practiced in eastern Europe as late as the fifteenth century.

The Shrine of St. Alypius

Some eight miles from the nearest village stands a small shrine to the blessed Saint Alypius, a Christian ascetic who spent 67 years on a stone column. The precise location can be altered to suit the saga, but given its nature and dedication to Alypius, it should be found somewhere within the territory of the Byzantine Empire. The shrine itself is a rather plain stone building with a domed roof, containing a single barren room. This chamber is dominated by a seven-foot pillar. While the main body of the pillar is carved granite, a single brick of more weather-worn stone has been set into the base of the column. This was taken from the pillar that St. Alypius spent his life upon, and is the focus of this shrine. The shrine has a divine aura with a strength of six.

A devout Christian eremite named Michael inhabits this shrine. Following the example of Alypius, Michael has spent the last ten years standing on top of the stone pillar. The local Christians respect the holy man and believe that he has the power to expel demons. The sickly or afflicted frequently come to his shrine to ask for his assistance, and he has helped many overcome the power of Hell. But sometimes he chooses not to help those who beg for his aid. A notable example of this is the child who lives in the shrine with the hermit — an eight year old boy named Elias.





A Boy and his Demon

Elias has been possessed by a demon — a minor imp named Tezzerael. When this affliction first manifested itself, the boy's father brought him to the holy Michael so that the evil spirit could be driven from his son, but Michael refused to perform the exorcism. This early experience with the forces of Hell, Michael said, would teach the child to fear the wages of sin and lead a god-fearing life in the future. The boy's parents could not stand to watch their child suffer at the hands of the unclean spirit, and so Elias was left under the watchful eye of Michael, to serve the holy man and learn the Psalter from him. While he has not driven it from the boy, Michael has placed bonds upon Tezzerael, preventing the spirit from roaming too far from the shrine or from doing harm to others. And so the two remain as strange companions — the hermit standing on his pillar, looking down at the cursing child who shares his cell.

The first thing a traveler passing by the shrine is likely to notice is the voice of Elias. There are two possibilities. One might hear two voices raised in song, as an elderly man and the melodic voice of a child join together singing psalms in praise of the Lord. But it is more likely that the sound that reaches the ears of a traveler will be a discordant screech — Elias cursing at the top of his lungs, blaspheming the name of the Lord and listing the torments that lie in store for the accursed Michael. Within the shrine, the traveler's eye would first be drawn to Michael atop the stone pillar — a gaunt man of some forty years of age, filled with a commanding presence and sense of authority that belies his emaciated body. Streaks of gray run through the otherwise dark beard that flows down the chest of his plain monkish habit, and a keen eye will spot the hair shirt he is wearing beneath the robe. The strength of his conviction shines through in his brown eyes. He holds himself as still as stone, keeping every movement to the barest minimum. He



Tezzerael, Scourge of Children

This imp specializes in possessing children. It has no particularly useful abilities in the physical world, but it can only be driven out of its victim through mystical means; any attempt to harm it physically will simply endanger the child it is using as a host. The statistics provided below are a combination of the physical statistics of the child and the mental abilities of the demon. If Tezzerael's Infernal Might is reduced to zero, it is banished from the world and must return to Hell. If Tezzerael's host body is slain, it will simply leave it and seek another victim. Currently, the spirit has been bound to Elias' body by Michael's powers, and the only way it can leave is if Elias is killed; as such, it might actually try to provoke visitors to kill the child, both to get away from the holy man and to place a stain on the soul of the murderer.

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

Infernal Might: 15

Size: -1

Personality Traits: Annoying +1, Vengeful +1

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam
Brawling (fists) +1 +1 +2 -4

Soak: -3

Fatigue: +0

Fatigue Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incap.

Powers:

Possess the Unformed Mind, ReMe 25, 10 points: If the demon is not currently occupying a physical body, it may attempt to possess any human of ten years of age or below. If the attempt is successful, the demon can maintain control of the child until it is exorcised from his body.

prefers to speak quietly, but when necessary, his voice will echo like thunder within the confines of the shrine.

The boy Elias paces around the base of the pillar like a caged tiger. Now about nine years of age, he has a dark Mediterranean cast to his skin, and his hair falls to his shoulders in dark brown curls. In stark contrast to the rigid stance of the hermit, the boy alternates between a lazy slouching stance and bursts of psychotic activity, beating against the pillar or the walls of the shrine while he screams and curses.

Should anyone enter the shrine, Elias will typically stop his screaming in order to evaluate the newcomers. Michael will quietly warn the visitors that the child is possessed, and that they should not heed his words; if questioned further, he will simply say that this is a valuable experience for the boy and something he must endure. Should someone offer to drive the demon from the child, Michael will angrily remonstrate them, saying that Elias has been set a trial and that he must see it through. He will warn them again not to listen to the words of the demon.

Elias — or Tezzerael — will study newcomers carefully, trying to determine the best approach to take. He may play up the role of the suffering innocent, claiming that the hermit mistreats him and has kept him from his parents. He could start listen off faults or failures of Michael, hoping to goad the hermit into some unseemly action. He might instead turn this onto a visitor, questioning recent actions and trying or promising rewards of treasure or secret knowledge should someone kill the hermit. Should all of these approaches fail, he will simply fall back to screaming and cursing. Eventually, if someone waits out this storm, it will pass; for an hour or so, Tezzerael will release his hold on Elias, and the boy will be the sweetest child in the world as he cleans the shrine and sees to the needs of the hermit.





Adventure Seeds

The shrine of St. Alypius can simply serve as an unusual encounter to break up an otherwise uneventful journey, giving a group a small taste of a Christian ascetic tradition and presenting a few interesting characters to interact with. Here are a few more active roles it could play in your saga:

- If any character in the covenant has skill as an exorcist, he could be approached by the parents of Elias. Regardless of the wishes of the holy hermit, the boy's mother doesn't want to leave her child in the clutches of a demon and asks the player characters to go and cure Elias. His decision regarding Elias notwithstanding, Michael is a powerful exorcist and has a considerable amount of experience dealing with the denizens of the infernal realms.
- If a member of the party is having trouble with the forces of Hell, she may be directed to Michael for assistance — although the demonic nature of Elias may give a visitor second thoughts about asking for the hermit's help.
- The strange situation at the shrine of St. Alypius does give a character the opportunity to talk with a demon in a controlled environment. Perhaps the characters are sent to learn more about the infernal realms by interrogating the captive demon. Elias cannot leave the shrine unless Michael gives him permission to do so, and as a result he can be backed into a corner without much difficulty. Of course, he will try to use any conversation to tempt the character into some form of sin, or to mislead them and send them astray in some other manner. Of course, any conversation will occur under the watchful eye of Michael; he may be willing to let a visitor learn about Hell in order to warn others of its dangers, but he will put a stop to any conversa-

Michael, Holy Hermit

Michael has been standing on a pillar for the last ten years, and even if he were to climb down from his post (which is extremely unlikely), the experience has caused his muscles to atrophy. But his true strength lies in his faith and his mind. He is a stirring speaker with considerable knowledge of the scriptures, and he possesses considerable power to expel demons or unclean influences from those who share his faith. This is represented by the Purifying Touch virtue; Michael can only heal devout Christians, but the limits of his power to cure Christian ailments are left to the storyguide. Note that he does not actually have to touch his targets (which would be difficult, what with his being up on the pillar); they simply have to be within his presence. He may use this virtue to drive demons from their hosts, and he can also set limits on the behavior of demons.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +2, Pre +3, Com +3, Str -3, Sta +1, Dex -2, Qik -2
Age: 41

Size: 0

Confidence: 3 (True Faith can be used in place of Confidence; see ArM4 p. 244)

Virtues and Flaws: Mendicant +1, Purifying Touch +4, Sense Holiness and Unholiness +1, True Faith +3, Dutybound -1, Arthritis -3, Enfeebled -5

Personality Traits: Devoted (to the Church) +6

Reputations: Holy Man and Exorcist +4, Galatia

Weapon/Attack

Michael cannot fight, due to his enfeeblement.

Soak: +1

Fatigue: +1

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 3 (alertness), Disputatio 5 (religious debate), Lectio 2 (religious texts), Scribe Latin 3, Sense Holiness and Unholiness 6 (demons), Speak Greek 4, Speak Latin 2 (Church ceremonies), Theology 5 (biblical knowledge), True Faith 5

tion that revolves around the power of the black arts.

Source

Dawes, Elizabeth (1948) *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) pages 121-122.

The Life of St Dymphna

by Timothy Ferguson

Oral sources indicate that Dymphna was a princess from Ireland. Her mother converted secretly to Christianity, and had her daughter baptized. When Dymphna's mother died her father, Damon, was driven mad with grief. His advisors thought it best for him to remarry, and promised they would find him a second wife as beautiful as the first. They sent representatives throughout Europe, but could not find a woman as beautiful as Dymphna's mother — with the exception of Dymphna herself. Since they could slake his passions in no other way, the advisors suggested he marry his own daughter.

Dymphna was disgusted by her father's advances, and fled the country. Taking as her companions her confessor, her fiddler and his wife, she sailed for the Continent. She landed in Antwerp, but thinking her presence might be noticed in so large a city, headed inland to Zammel, near Gheel. The king sent out scouts to find his child. One group of them landed at Westerlo near Zammel. When they tried to pay their inn bill, the keeper refused their coins saying their coins were too difficult to change.

When asked where he had seen these coins before, he told them a woman lived with an old man and two servants in a nearby village. The scouts returned to Damon and then led him to his daughter.

Damon's forces captured Dymphna in her local church, and Damon renewed his request. When she refused him, Damon had her confessor, later called Saint Gerebernus, killed. He then struck off Dymphna's head. She and Gerebernus were buried in coffins of white stone, made by angels. Locals prayed at the graves of the saints for the comfort of those who suffered madness. Later the two saints were exhumed and Dymphna's relics taken to Gheel.

Adaptation

The town of Gheel is famous for its cures of the mentally ill. They are taken one at a time to a special building, called the sickroom, where they live for nine days while waiting for a miracle. Those who are able pray, and perform small acts of spiritual preparation. While people are waiting for their turn in the sickroom, they live in the houses of the citizens of Gheel, and those who are able help the locals in their work, which is mostly agricultural labor. Many stay on in Gheel after visiting the sickroom, adopted into the families of the locals, particularly if a miraculous cure has not occurred. The people of Gheel keep a careful but non-intrusive eye on their charges.

Plot Hook 1

A redcap comes to the characters' covenant and asks for their assistance. A Criamon Archmage has returned, addled, from a temporary Twilight lasting a century and settled in a small village near Antwerp. He refuses to leave, and since the village is a pilgrimage site, his sodales





St Dymphna

St Dymphna is usually portrayed as a beautiful teenage woman, with a lily (for purity) and a shamrock pattern on some possession to symbolize Irish origin. She is often portrayed with a sword and a chained devil, or with a group of lunatics chained in gold. Her feast day is May 15. Her cult has been active since around 1000 AD, and she is a patron of the mentally ill, the possessed and sleepwalkers. Dymphna is also a patron of those who have suffered sexual abuse, although this isn't discussed as much as her other roles.

Saint Dymphna's story, of the king who wants to marry his daughter, is found throughout the Europe. The people of Gheel are aware of this, but don't see that it makes Dymphna's version less believable. If similar incidents are reported everywhere, then that's evidence for the story's truth.

believe he will certainly break the Code eventually, as he has little patience with conventional religion.

If the characters attempt to intercede, they find the Archmage, who has changed his name to Paul, living with a family in the town, and helping them using subtle magic. If the characters threaten him, he points out that they can't punish him for breaking the Code until he has done so. Despite any threats, Paul is pleased to learn that the Order has survived the century he was in Twilight, and is extremely curious about the leading members of each House, and their opinions of the Church.

If the characters ask him what he is doing in Gheel, he claims he has become devoted to the local saint, who led him out of Twilight when he prayed for assistance. He only regrets he didn't think of prayer in the first decades of his exile. He also claims that the saint removed the ravages of Twilight from his body, and says



that he would like the characters to attend their Tribunal and say, on his behalf, that he has been granted the knowledge that there is a Patron of the Twilight-Afflicted, and that he wishes to form a religious community in Gheel.

Paul's claims are likely to arouse the curiosity of the magi of the tribunal. If they find that Paul has been cured of his Twilight afflictions, Gheel may become a pilgrimage site for magi, and the base for a very unusual covenant. Storyguides using this hook might decide that Paul is delusional, that Dymphna's miracle for Paul was unique, that she only removes Twilight flaws, but not Twilight points, or that she only performs miracles for the Faithful.

Plot hook 2

Cecile, the daughter of a nobleman who has clashed with the covenant previously, sneaks into the covenant in disguise, but is apprehended by the grogs, who recognize her because she has the Mythic Presence virtue. Cecile asks the magi to hide her from her father, who has gone mad, and tried to rape her. Even if the magi are not moved by charity, Cecile is the nobleman's only child, and therefore his heir.

Cecile's father can request the assistance of the Church and his feudal overlord in recovering his beloved daughter from the magi, so the characters must isolate him. They can discredit the nobleman by tricking him into confessing before credible witnesses. The characters must find a way to draw their witnesses and the nobleman together, and then fool him into declaring his intentions publicly. Once he knows he has been exposed, Cecile's father tries to kill the witnesses and blame the magi.

Source

Original Source: "Pierre, a canon of the church of Saint Aubert at Cambrai,

wrote a "Vita" of the saint during the 1240s, which records that she had been venerated for many years in a church at Gheel, which was devoted to her. The author states that he has drawn his biography from oral tradition." — *Catholic Encyclopaedia*

Modern source: *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

Saints and Sinners

by Keith Baker

This is based on the early years of *The Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon*. At a young age Theodore decided to follow the path of the Christian ascetic, much to the concern of his family. After school he would make his way into the rocky hills near his village. A shrine to St. George stood in these hills, and the *Life* states that "The Saint would guide him to the spot appearing visibly before his eyes in the form of a young man." Soon Theodore was leaving his home at night to sleep at the shrine. Concerned that her son was starving himself and following a misguided path, Theodore's mother had the boy physically restrained in order to keep him home at night. At this point,

... God's holy martyr, George, appeared to Theodore's mother and the other women, girt with a sword, which he drew as he came towards them saying threateningly, 'Now I shall cut off your heads because you illtreat and punish the boy and prevent his coming to me.' On their swearing solemnly that they would never do it again, he took back his threat and disappeared.





Questioned further on the matter, Theodore explains that he went up to the shrine with “a very handsome and fine young man.” In the *Life*, the mother repents and does not attempt to interfere any further with her son’s religious devotions. But could she be blamed for harboring concerns about this potentially violent stranger who has taken such an interest in her child?

The Inn at Sykeon

Sykeon is a village in the Byzantine province of Galatia. It lies along a major highway that was once a central path for the imperial post, and contains an inn that was built to take advantage of the regular traffic that passes through the region. The inn is owned by a woman named Elpidia Cosmas, who runs it with her two daughters, Despoina and Mary. Once courtesans, the Cosmas ladies came into a small fortune and were able to abandon this profession. Where travelers once came to the inn to sample the charms of the three ladies, its current claim to fame and success is the culinary skill of its cook, a humble man by the name of Stephen. The food of the Sykeon Inn is known throughout the region, and travelers who ask about local hostelries will certainly hear of it.

Elpidia Cosmas is a clever and calculating woman. She is 41 years old, but she has lived a comfortable life and has aged gracefully. She studies her guests carefully, always looking for ways to advance the position of her family. Nominally Christian, she is more concerned with ensuring the comfort of her family in this world than the next. She will keep a close eye on guests whom she has not met before, fishing for information about travel destinations, occupation, and place in society. Well-versed in etiquette, she knows just how to treat each guest according to his status.

Elpidia’s daughters are charming women, and while they are no longer prostitutes they do their best to mingle with

the guests and lighten the mood in the common room. At 24, Despoina is the elder of the two sisters. Compared to her mother and younger sister, Despoina is slightly slow-witted, but she has a lovely singing voice and will often entertain guests with a song. 23-year old Mary is a stunning black-haired beauty, and when she followed her prior profession she was the major attraction of the inn. She is somewhat shy, and while she does her best to entertain guests, she is not as outgoing as Despoina and does not have Elpidia’s calculating curiosity. As a result, she focuses on the everyday tasks of the inn, assisting the servants and keeping an eye on her eight-year-old son, Theodore.

Theodore is the final member of the Cosmos household. Born from Mary’s liaison with a popular athlete, he is a remarkably intelligent and sophisticated child. But observant guests may notice that for a child of what appears to be a successful family, he seems thin and pale. He does his best to avoid guests and keeps to himself, eyes closed in silent prayer, for he has come to the conclusion that he wishes to become a monk or holy hermit, giving up the pleasures of the material world to become closer to God. For the two years he has been following a regimen of strict fasting. His mother Mary has been worried about the toll this lifestyle has been taking on his health; meanwhile, Elpidia is frustrated as she would rather see her grandson in court than in a monastery. However, over the last month a new problem has arisen that has raised the concerns of both women even further.

The Shrine

The village of Sykeon is surrounded by rocky hills. Tucked away about two miles from the village, an ancient shrine can be found up in the hills. Once dedicated to St. George, this barren cell has been abandoned for centuries. Seven months ago,

St. George, Divine Guide

This being is a servant of the Divine — a saint who has been empowered to guide and protect Theodore as the child walks the perilous path to sainthood. He is somewhat single-minded in his task, but he is still part of the Divine realm. So while he reacted in a threatening manner when Mary confined Theodore, he would not in fact have slaughtered the Cosmas women; he simply sensed that it was the simplest way to accomplish his goal. But he will certainly use his blade against anyone who threatens his mortal charge. The powers listed below are the abilities that he requires to protect Theodore; if you wish to use the saint in a different context, he can possess any additional powers that seem appropriate to the situation.

As an aspect of the Divine, St. George is disturbingly handsome and his voice is almost too perfect; he seems more like a work of art than a real person. Generally, he does not carry his sword; he will simply materialize the blade if it is required.

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +4, Pre +4, Com +1, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex +1, Qik +3

Divine Might: 35

Size: 0

Personality Traits: Devoted (to mortal charge) +7, Ruthless +2

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Holy Blade	+10	+12	+10	+8

Soak: +10

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Banished

Abilities: Theology 8 (biblical knowledge), Single Weapon 5

Powers:

Travel to the Chosen One, ReCo 45, 3 points: The guide can mystically sense his mortal charge and travel to his location in the blink of an eye. However, he will not materialize within sight of a mortal, even his charge; instead he will appear just out of sight and travel on foot to greet his charge or to face those who might be mistreating him.

Shield of Sanctity, ReVi 45, 2 points/hour: While in the company of his mortal charge, the guide can hold infernal creatures at bay. While this power is in effect, infernal creatures with Might less than that of the guide must stay at least ten feet away from the guide and cannot directly affect the guide or his charge physically or by magical means.

Holy Blade, CrCo 30, 3 points: The guide's sword is an expression of his purpose as opposed to a physical object. If he is somehow disarmed or if his weapon is damaged or destroyed, he can summon it back to his hand by invoking this power. If a mortal comes into possession of the guide's blade, it will melt away into mist and vapor.



Theodore found was led to the shrine by a young man who claimed to be the spirit of St. George himself. At first Theodore would travel to the shrine after school, telling his mother that he had been held back at school. Eventually Mary discovered the deception and ordered her son to stop his eccentric behavior. The child not only refused, but more recently he began to

sneak up to the shrine at night. When he was caught, his panicked mother asked how he made it safely to the shrine in the dark of night; his explanation that he was always escorted to the shrine by a very handsome and fine young man did little to ease her concerns. At her wit's end, Mary ordered the servants to bind her son to his bed with rope.



George Dukas, Scam Artist

George Dukas is a handsome, charming man with almost angelic features. But he's got more than just a pretty face. He is remarkably sensitive to disruptions in the natural order of things, which makes him equally aware of the presence of magi, demons, angels, or other forms of mystical power. Of course, he himself is a perfectly normal individual, and this has gnawed and eaten at his psyche, causing him to develop a terrible delusion. This could be one of two things, depending on whether you want him to be sympathetic or completely villainous.

The first possibility is that he honestly believes that he is the spirit of St. George, and that he has been sent to protect this child whose holy nature he can sense. He threatened Mary because he wasn't sure what else to do; it's not like he has any divine powers to speak of. But he truly believes that it is his duty to look after Theodore and guide him on the path to sainthood. While he has no real skill with his shiny sword, he *believes* he is a saint and will challenge impossible odds to 'protect' his charge.

The second option is that he believes that if he raises a child with a mystical gift — whether a mage or a saint — that he will then be able to slay the child and devour his spirit, thus gaining his powers for himself. He puts on a friendly face, but behind it beats the heart of a disturbed murderer. He would kill Mary without a moment's remorse if it meant getting the power that he craves. This option also works well if Theodore has the Gift as opposed to a holy nature. Needless to say,

this version of George is well aware of his lack of martial ability and will attempt to flee if challenged by a significant force.

In either case, George has given this a try in other parts of mythic Europe, and it is possible that the troupe has heard of his activities before, or has encountered someone who has.

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

Age: 20

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Virtues and Flaws: Wanderer, Magic Sensitivity +1, Sense Holiness and Unholiness +1, Bad Reputation -1, Delusion -1

Personality Traits: Obsessed (see description) +4

Reputations: Disturbed Con Artist 3, Constantinople

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+1	+1	+1	-1	-2
Longsword	+4	+2	+4	+3	-2

Soak: -3

Fatigue: -3

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

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Awareness 3 (alertness), Brawling 1, Charm 3 (first impressions), Guile 3 (religious demeanor), Magic Sensitivity 5 (children), Sense Holiness and Unholiness 5 (children), Single Weapon 1, Theology 1 (biblical knowledge)

Encumbrance: -0.5

A Nocturnal Visitor

The night that Theodore was restrained, a handsome man appeared in Mary's chambers. He threatened Mary with a gleaming sword, saying that he would cut

off her head and slay the rest of her family unless Theodore was released and allowed to come to him. Terrified, Mary agreed not to interfere with her son's religious devotions; the stranger nodded curtly and disappeared into the darkness.

Ever since this encounter, Mary has stood aside and let Theodore continue with his devotions. But while she attempts to maintain a calm demeanor, she is terribly afraid for her child. She cannot help but fear that the visitor was no saint — for why would a true servant of the Lord level such a terrible threat at her mother and sister? And if the man is not who he claims to be, what are his designs on her son? In addition, she has described the encounter to her mother — and while Elpidia is concerned about the boy, she is also trying to come up with a way to turn the situation to benefit the family.

The storyguide must determine the true identity of the mysterious nocturnal visitor. Is this threatening stranger what he claims to be — a heavenly messenger sent to set young Theodore on the path to righteousness? Or is he a fraud — a handsome rogue

with an unsavory interest in the child? And if the latter, what exactly is he doing with Theodore in the abandoned shrine?

Statistics are provided for two versions of “St. George.” The first set should be used for a divine manifestation — with the understanding that this is not the saint himself, but rather an image of him, provided with power to guide and protect. The second set of statistics are those of a rogue whose name is also George — but who is certainly no saint.

Adventure Seeds

Here are a few ways to work this into a saga:

- As the troupe is passing through the region (which can be adjusted as required to meet the needs of the saga),





they hear of the quality of the Sykeon Inn. While staying at the inn, they are approached by Mary and Elpidia. The two explain the situation and ask the troupe to investigate Theodore's divine patron. If the situation alone does not interest the travelers, the women will often to pay them with money or favors; the Cosmas family is quite wealthy, and Mary remains a beautiful woman. The outcome of such an encounter will depend on the nature of Theodore's mentor. Do the characters find themselves in conflict with an agent of divinity, or can they expose the "saint" for a fraud?

- One issue with this is why Elpidia would approach the troupe in particular for help. It's possible that she is at her wit's end — the troupe arrives the day after the confrontation with the "saint" and she's desperate for help from anyone. Another possibility is that she hopes that men or learning might be able to unravel the mystery. Alternately, she could initially approach a grog; she wouldn't expect a skinny scholar to be able to help her, but perhaps one of these powerful soldiers can get rid of that evil man.
- Perhaps Theodore actual has the beginnings of the Gift, and the "saint" has sensed his potential. While not a mage himself, George has a talent for spotting those with the Gift and has been testing Theodore to confirm this theory. He eventually plans to sell the child to a covenant. If he is caught and exposed, Theodore may make a suitable apprentice for one of the characters in the group. The child is remarkably intelligent and perceptive; if he turned his focus from the Church to the magical arts, he could become a highly talented apprentice.
- Another twist on this would be for the villainous George to approach the troupe before they arrive at the Inn, offering to give them information on a

gifted child in exchange for gold or services.

Source

Dawes, Elizabeth (1948) *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) pages 91-93.

The Knight of the Swan

by Timothy Ferguson

The Duke of Brabant dies and leaves a daughter, Elsa, as his heir. A neighboring count, Frederich de Telramund, claims that Elsa promised to marry him. If she is forced to marry Frederich, he will become governor of her lands. Elsa appeals to the Emperor and a court is held to consider the issue. Trial by combat is ordered, but no knight dares stand against Telramund, who is the finest warrior in the area. A mysterious knight arrives in a boat drawn by a swan. He defeats Frederic and agrees to marry Elsa on the condition she not ask his name or race.

Elsa and her husband live happily for years, and the Knight of the Swan acts as guardian of her duchy. He leads Imperial forces against invaders from the east. Eventually Elsa asks her husband his name and race, and he replies that he is Lohengrin, the son of Parsival of Montsalvat. His people guard the Grail, and venture forth to protect the innocent. They must leave them if asked who they are. Lohengrin's sons take his swan as their arms.

The ruling families of Hohenschwangau, Bouillon, Kleve and Brabant claim the Swan Knight as an ancestor, although he is known under several names. Helias is a common alternative in France.

Lohengrin later remarries. His second bride is Princess Belayne of Lizaborye (Luxemburg). Her parents believe that she married under sorcerous coercion, and send a force of men, who kill Lohengrin. Belayne dies of grief, and her country changes its name to Lorraine, in Lohengrin's honor.

The Knights of the Grail Chapel

Symbols: This order avoids the use of symbols. In the original story the knights are called the Templars, but in this book the name has been changed to avoid confusion with another order who named themselves after the Temple of Jerusalem.

Motto: Terrae servimus. ('We serve the Grail' or 'We serve the Earth')

Origin myth: When Satan and his angels rebelled, a magical stone, the terram excelis, fell from Heaven. It remained hidden for eons, but eventually God appointed a knight named Titurel as its guardian. Titurel, keeper of the spear that pierced the side of Christ, was the first Fisher King. He gathered the Montsalvat community and built the Chapel of the Grail, which has gradually been expanded into a temple, about which lies a castle.

His great-grandson, Parsival, is the current Fisher King.

Levels of Initiation: There are no members of the Montsalvat community who are not initiates. There are five levels of initiation. The lowest level of initiation is as a Servant. Servants live much as people everywhere do, although they are more pious than most. The level above Servant is Page. Pages are those who serve the knights directly, either as body-servants or as skilled

specialists, like blacksmiths. The Squires are usually exceptional young men who are being prepared for the role of Knight. They are sometimes ordered to go into the world, to harden their faith through its trials. There are a few female Squires, although these never become Knights. The Knights of the Grail are the agents sent into the world to deal with the most difficult problems. They serve in lieu of the twelve apostles at the Grail Mass. The Fisher King, a role that has only one office-bearer at a time, commands them.

Goals and practices: The Knights of the Grail Chapel are an order of warriors who assist those in distress. They live in a community called Montsalvat, which is in a regio within the borders of Lotharinga, although entrances to the regio are found in other places, so that it sometimes seems to move. There are only 12 knights active at any time, although there are other members of the community whose training is such that they could become knights if a vacancy arose. The Fisher King, whose title is possibly a play on the French word for sinner, leads the community and is the commander of the knights. Membership of the knights is usually granted to members of the Montsalvat community, but occasionally it will be offered to the descendants of a Montsalvat knight who married in the outside world.

Virtues taught:

Servant: Higher Purpose. Also, people who live in Montsalvat have a lifestyle like that of Prosperous Peasants at minimum, provided the King is well.

Page: Varies. Sense Holiness and Unholiness is usual for those who are going on to become squires. The Visions virtue is more common in women. Characters who already have one tend to get the other.

Squire: True Faith. Some squires already have Faith when invested. These tend to gain the Guardian Angel virtue.

Knight: Guardian Angel; if you already have one of those, Destiny.





King: Grail kings do not age. Most step down at the time that seem right to them. They see life, although joyous, as a delay before Paradise.

Players wanting to design a Knight as their main character sacrifice their magus slot and gain 10 free points of virtues. They may select an additional ten points of virtues provided they balance them with flaws.

Preferred ordeals:

To become a Servant: The character must accept baptism, promise not to leave the Montsalvat community and to serve the Fisher King (variant of Oath of Fealty -1, 1 point)

To become a Page: The must participate in the Grail Mass. This is a form of Purging the Vessel, but if a character is clean of sin, for example if they have recently confessed their sins and completed penance, they are not harmed by the experience. If the character is in a state of sin during the Grail Mass they suffer three aging rolls. (3 points)

To become a Squire: The character becomes a zealot (3 points). The appropriate trait is "Montsalvat Piety:" +3. This is a sort of ferocious, but non-evangelical, belief in the variant of the Christian message found at Montsalvat.

To become a Knight: Squires embark on quests (variable value). There is no magical oath binding squires, and many of them fall prey to temptation. Those who fail to live as expected are not allowed to return to Montsalvat. Those who are being prepared for knighthood are given quests of extraordinary difficulty. In his ceremony of investiture as a knight, the candidate makes a binding oath to live a virtuous life, and to keep the secret of the Grail. Those who break their oath, for example by adultery, are forbidden to return to the castle. If they reveal their name, they must return to do penance at the Grail castle, or die forsworn. (Prohibition: Geas -3, 6 points)

To become King: Candidates for the role of Grail King must undertake an extra-

ordinary task (Quest), and must take holy orders (Vow, includes enforced celibacy). Those who break their vow are injured and bring down curses on the whole community, since they cannot act as Christ in the Grail Mass.

Plot Hooks

Klingsor, a member of the bloodline of the Grail, was cast out for adultery. He attempted to redeem himself by castration, but this was insufficient. Klingsor is now a powerful, possibly infernally-assisted, magician who has filled a regio near Montsalvat with the delights of the world. He preys upon squires of Montsalvat. A squire may arrange for the player characters to become aware of Klingsor, and his regio filled with treasure, in the hope that they will destroy him.

A knight in white armor rescues a character suffering from the Plagued by Supernatural Entity Flaw (demons or faeries). The Knight stays close by to defend the character from further attacks, but warns he will leave if any attempt is made to discover his name or background. The supernatural will try to seed doubts in the minds of the other player characters, for example by suggesting that he can defeat demons because he is an infernal duke. He might be from Montsalvat, but he might instead be a faerie nobleman who can only stay so long as he does not recall the marvels of Arcadia. Once asked his name and race, homesickness forces him to depart.

Source

Parsival, French variant appears in *The Marvels of Rigomer*.

Modern edition: Coghlan, R (1993) *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Arthurian Legends*, Element, London.

The Holy Lance

by Niall Christie

In 1098, the city of Antioch fell to the Crusaders. However, no sooner had they taken the city than they were themselves besieged by the Turkish regent of Mosul, Kerbogha. As supplies ran out and famine spread among the Crusaders, panic seized them. It was at that time that the leaders of the crusading forces were approached by a southern French servant named Peter Bartholomew. He claimed to have experienced five visions of St Andrew, who had shown him the resting place of the Holy Lance that had pierced the side of Christ as He hung upon the cross. He persuaded his listeners to dig in the cathedral church of St Peter. The following account is that of Raymond of Aguilers, the chaplain of the Crusader Count Raymond of St Gilles.

“After we had dug from morning to evening, some began to despair of finding the Lance. The Count left, because he had to guard the castle; but in place of him and the rest who were tired out from digging, we induced others, who were fresh, to continue the work sturdily. The youth who had spoken of the Lance, however, upon seeing us worn out, disrobed and, taking off his shoes, descended into the pit in his shirt, earnestly entreating us to pray God to give us His Lance for the comfort and victory of His people. At length, the Lord was minded through the grace of His mercy to show us His Lance. And I, who have written this, kissed it when the point alone had as yet appeared above ground. What great joy and exultation then filled the city I cannot describe.”

Some doubted the authenticity of the Lance, but the Crusaders took it with them on a sally from the city and soundly defeated the besieging Turks. The Crusaders con-

tinued to carry the Lance into battles until 1101, when it was lost in Asia Minor.

Adaptation

The Holy Lance is indeed that which pierced the side of Christ. When the Crusaders were defeated in Asia Minor in 1101, the Lance (actually a Roman pilum, or short spear) was taken by one of the survivors, a minor knight from the household of Raymond of St Gilles, who hid it in a cave in the mountains. To avoid being captured by the Turks, he was forced to bury the Lance and flee the area. He was finally able to return a month later, but when he did he found that the Lance had disappeared. He never saw it again, and no-one knows where it is now.

The Lance is a powerful relic in the hands of a Christian. Not only does it contain 6 Faith points, but it also has protective powers, described below, although that these powers only work when the Lance is carried by someone with True Faith of their own:

Turn weapons, [ReTe(He) 40]: The Lance protects all friendly characters within 15 paces, preventing any metal, stone or wooden weapons from touching them. The effect is constant, as long as the Lance is held by someone with True Faith (Level rationale: Deflect all attacks by wooden, metal or stone weapons (ReTe(He) 25), increase range to Near (+5) and target to Group (+10) = ReTe(He) 40).

Ward against flames, [ReIg 35]: The Lance protects all friendly characters within 15 paces from fire, preventing the flames from harming them. Fires smaller than a house fire do not harm the targets, while they receive a +15 Soak bonus against all other fire-related damage. The effect is constant, as long as the Lance is held by someone with True Faith (Level rationale: As *Ward Against Heat and Flames* (ReIg 25, ArM4 page 139), increase range to Near (+10), reduce dura-





tion to Concentration (-5), increase target to Group (+5) = RelG 35).

Note that these powers are divine in origin, and as such they defy investigation by magical means.

Story Hooks

- The characters receive information that leads them on a quest to find the Holy Lance. The quest takes them across the Mythic world, and forces each character to face up to and deal with their own failings and weaknesses. They are likely to suffer emotional and physical injuries and pain along the way, suffering in imitation of Christ (referred to in the Middle Ages as *imitatio Dei*). It may even be that some of them will die for the sake of the others. In this way it is as much a spiritual as a physical quest. Even if the characters do not return bearing the Lance, they will still have been changed by the experience. This story can form an episode in a larger saga, rather like the Arthurian quest for the Holy Grail, or it may itself be the overarching theme of an entire saga.
- The Lance was found soon after it was buried by a religious hermit. He kept and venerated it for many years, but after his death it passed to one of his followers. After passing through several more pairs of hands, the Lance finally attracts the attention of more senior members of the clergy. Eventually it comes into the possession of a bishop, who decides he has been appointed by God to rid the world of the magical menace represented by the Order of Hermes. He begins to preach his mission near the characters' covenant, and soon gathers a large army of nobles and peasants alike to his banner. Can the characters find a way diplomatically to resolve the situation, before it starts to



threaten them and the rest of the Order?

Sources

Peters, E. (ed.) (1971), *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials* (Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press) page 184.

Riley-Smith, J. (1986), *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press) pages 95-7.

The Cage

by Keith Baker

In the Byzantine Empire and the region of the Levant, the ascetics of the Christian Church went to great lengths to mortify their bodies. Most people are familiar with the traditions of fasting, flagellation, the wearing of hair shirts, and the like. But in the east, dedicated Christian mystics might spend their entire lives on pillars or in cages, using this extreme physical strain to force the body to submit and allow the mind to focus on spiritual matters.

This particular situation is based on an event from the life of St. Theodore of Sykeon. While engaged in one of his traditional periods of caged fasting he passed out in the sun. A concerned observer spread a cloak over the cage to provide shade for the holy man, but when he awoke from his swoon Theodore was furious with this interference. The purpose of this situation is to provide a troupe with a glimpse into the extreme behavior of the eastern ascetics and to give players a chance to jump to the wrong conclusion — to help someone who does not want any help.

The Caged Man

Some five miles from the nearest village, somewhere in the Nicean Empire or the Levant, there stands an iron cage. It is very narrow, barely wide enough for a man to stand up in, and slightly over six feet in height. It has been standing untreated in the wilds for some time and rust has begun to form on its bars. It is the work of the blacksmith in the nearby village, and as such, it is plain and functional; it is a simple tool for a simple job, and has no decorations or embellishments of any sort.

While the cage itself is fairly unremarkable, the figure inside certainly calls attention to itself, for it appears that someone has gone to great effort to imprison this man. About thirty years of age, he appears to be of Nicean ancestry. He has a scraggly beard that has been bleached gray by the sun, while his skin has been heavily tanned. But what draws the eye are his chains and fetters. He wears heavy metal rings on his wrists and ankles, each one about fifteen pounds in weight, linked together by thick iron chains. A metal collar has been locked around his neck, and a heavy weight — some eighteen pounds — dangled down in front of his chest, pulling his neck towards the ground. A thick belt of linked weights is secured around his waist. And most curiously, he is garbed in a corselet of extremely heavy chainmail — though it seems unclear whether the mail is intended to protect its wearer or simply to slow him down. Like the cage itself, all of this iron shows signs of extended exposure to the elements. A curious traveler may wish to question this figure, to find out why he is being imprisoned or whether he is being punished for some crime, but conversation is impossible. At first glance, it appears that the man is dead. On closer inspection, it is clear that he has simply passed out, either due to starvation or extended exposure to the elements. The confines of the cage are so narrow that he has not fallen to the ground. Instead, he is slumped against the bars, the heavy weights





on neck, arms, and waist pulling on his body even in unconsciousness. A heavy metal lock keeps the narrow door held shut. Will a traveler force the lock open in order to help this strange prisoner, or will he pass by and leave well enough alone?

The man in the cage is a Christian holy man named Leontius. He has been fasting in the cage for a few months, and has succumbed to a moment of weakness. This will soon pass; despite his frail appearance, he has an astounding constitution. If anyone has interfered with his attempts at mortification, Leontius will be most upset; he considers his suffering to be in the service of the Lord, and anyone who eases his pain in any way is wasting his time. If someone actually damages the cage — shattering the lock to free him, for example — he will be furious and demand that the village blacksmith be sent for to effect immediate repairs. He is not talkative by nature; when conscious, he spends most of his time singing psalms, and has little interest in idle chatter. If he is drawn into conversation about his reasons for being in the cage, he will explain that he seeks to drown out all passions of the flesh so as to focus solely on the glory of the Lord—but that his body is so vigorous and strong that only such extreme measures can silence it. This may seem a little odd coming from a man who in some ways appears to be on death's door—on the other hand, he is not only alive but appears to still be quite healthy, apart from the occasional swoon.

The people of the nearby village are familiar with Leontius and hold him in high regard. They possess an old wooden cage that he used for a previous fast, which they keep in the center of the village as a token to defend the place against evil forces—and it does carry a divine aura of three, so there may be something to this. Many of them donated tools to the blacksmith, to be melted down and reforged into the iron used for the hermit's cage, and on Sundays one of the villagers will travel to Leonatus to bring him a simple meal of vegetables.

These people see nothing strange about the hermit's behavior; on the contrary, is he not suffering for the sake of the people, as the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for the salvation of all?

Adventure Seeds

The simplest way to use this device is for a troupe to encounter the cage without warning while traveling through the region. Leontius has passed out, and as a result, he appears to be an unfortunate set out to suffer and eventually die from exposure. Should the troupe attempt to help him, he will wake and vent his frustration upon them. While there is no long term result to this, it can be an interesting way to break up a journey, especially as players try to determine why anyone would imprison this seemingly harmless man in such a severe fashion.

Once the players have become familiar with the tradition of the cage, they might find Leontius to be useful for some other purpose. He is a holy man, widely believed to have powers over disease and the forces of Hell, and, well, he's not going anywhere any time soon. So if the troupe is in the area and runs into trouble with diabolists, they'll certainly know where to find him.

A third possibility is that Leontius could be murdered. The local villagers are horrified—who would kill a holy hermit? Either the characters could be blamed for this crime—especially if they had interfered with Leontius' devotions before—or the villages could ask the troupe to help solve the mystery.

Source

Dawes, Elizabeth (1948) *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford) pages 106-110.

Chapter 5

The Western Ocean

The Isle of the Small Cat

by Sheila Thomas

Mael Duin and his companions had been many days and nights at sea, rowing through strange waters where they found many wonders. They were suffering great thirst and hunger when they caught sight of a small island where there seemed to be a white fortress surrounded by a high white rampart. They landed and walked through the gate unhindered. Within the rampart they found white-walled houses but saw no-one. They entered the largest of the buildings where a small cat was at play, leaping from the top of one of four stone pillars to another. The cat looked at the visitors briefly, but carried on jumping.

Around the walls they saw three rows of treasures, one above the other, each running all around the room. In the first row were gold and silver brooches, their pins stuck into the wall; the second row was of large torcs of gold and silver; and the third was of great swords with hilts of gold and silver. Alcoves off the main room contained white feather beds with brightly colored fabrics strewn over them. Then the

men noticed a table where stood a generous meal of roasted ox, bacon, and strong ale. Mael Duin turned to the cat and asked, "Is this provided for us?" It glanced at him but gave no other sign so the desperate men fell to. After they had eaten and drunk their fill, they lay upon the beds and slept for many hours.

When they awoke, they took the remains of the feast and made to depart. One of Mael Duin's foster brothers wanted to take a torc with him but Mael Duin reminded him that the house had a guard. Greed overcame him, and the man took a torc while no-one was looking. He had reached the middle of the courtyard when the cat streaked out of the house and launched itself at the thief in the form of an arrow of fire. It passed right through the man, leaving just a pile of ashes. Then the cat stalked back inside and jumped back onto a pillar.

The Regio

Someone who is very tired and/or hungry perceives the whole regio as part of the normal world and can pass unhindered between the levels just by walking around. For anyone else, the normal rules for finding a way into a regio apply.





On the Mundane Level

It is a roughly round island surrounded by low cliffs of gray stone with just one small beach, at the mouth of a dry gully, where a small boat may land. The island is about a furlong and a half (ca. 300 meters) across at its widest point. The short-cropped grass is kept so by rabbits, which may occasionally be seen. Evidence of their presence is everywhere, in the form of droppings. Pretty low-growing wild flowers of pink, blue, white, and yellow decorate the ground. Here and there gray rounded stones protrude through the earth. There is a low hillock in the center of the isle, where the grass grows noticeably longer. Anyone getting close to the top of the hillock is likely to notice a number of gray rocks protruding through the grass and may observe that four in the center stick up a little more than the others and are set roughly in a square.

A character with high Awareness may catch sight of what appears to be a small

orange-colored animal darting behind one of the stones at the top of the hillock but it is only ever seen the once. Following its route exactly leads into the regio.

If the location is on an isolated island, there will be no aura on the mundane level. If the mound and its regio are moved to another setting, the mundane aura will be whatever is appropriate for the location.

Lower Level — Faerie Aura 2

This level covers the whole island, though it does not extend out to sea. Along the cliff tops runs a grass-covered embankment topped by a wall of white stone. There is just one gap in the defenses, which is on the western side of the island and takes the form of an opening wide enough for two men to walk abreast between two tall white stones surmounted by a stone lintel. Within the ramparts are a dozen single-story, slate-roofed cottages of the same white stone, built around a mound that occupies the center of the enclosed area. Each cottage has two rooms, either side by side or one behind the other. The door into the cottages always leads into the larger room, which has a bare fireplace in the center and a hole in the roof above it. All are bare and empty but wind-proof and dry.

The ground around the cottages is covered with short turf speckled with pretty little flowers. There is no other sign of life of any sort. On the central mound stand four columns of white stone, each about as high as a woman's shoulder and a little more than a hand's span in diameter. They are arranged at the corners of a square, about a pace apart. The sides of the columns are smooth and the tops are smooth and flat.

Upper Level — Faerie Aura 4

This level covers just the mound in the center of the island, where a building of shining white limestone, twice the height

The Cat

Characteristics: Cun +3, Per +3, Pre 0, Com n/a, Str -3, Stm +1, Dex +3, Qik +4

Faerie Might: 15

Size: -3

Virtue: Perfect balance

Personality Traits: Vigilant +5, Playful +3

Weapon/Attack

	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite and claws	+5	+5	+7	-3

Soak: -1

Fatigue: 0

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Abilities: Athletics (jumping) 6, Stealth (hiding) 5

Powers:

Punish the Thief, CrIg25, 3 points: Allows the cat to turn into a bolt of fire that flies at the thief. If necessary, the guardian will pursue in cat form and turn into flame as it leaps. The bolt will hit provided the target is still within the faerie regio (either level) and is anywhere a cat could get to it. Does +25 damage.



of the cottages, stands. A small, paved courtyard on the south side of the building leads to the door which is of thick oak and set into a rounded arch carved with intertwining branches. The door opens easily onto a hall large enough to entertain twenty warriors.

In the center of the room stand the four columns; they are as described above except that the sides of the pillars are carved into patterns of intricate intertwining vegetation. The ginger cat is found playing here, jumping nimbly from the top of one pillar to another.

Two deep alcoves on the north side and one on the west side of the hall provide sleeping places for about six people each on wide shelves of rock. Large white feather-filled bolsters lie on the shelves, making them very comfortable to sleep on, and there are warm woven blankets of soft wool, thick quilts, and embroidered shawls of every color to sleep under. Those who pass the night here usually awake refreshed after a very good night's dreamless sleep.



The Feast

The refreshments appear on trestle tables along the eastern wall about ten minutes after the first person enters the hall. It is always the same food and drink: roast beef prepared on a spit, boiled bacon, and strong ale. They are perfectly natural, sustaining, and wholesome when created but, if left, will deteriorate as fast as freshly-prepared natural foods of the same types. Magical investigation may reveal only that the feast is provided to combat hunger and thirst. Anyone can enjoy the feast once, whether in great need of sustenance or not, but the feast will not re-appear for the same visitors unless everyone in the building leaves without stealing anything and a desperately hungry or thirsty person is the first to re-enter.



The Treasures

Cloak pins and torcs of silver and gold and swords with hilts richly inlaid with the precious metals are displayed around the walls of the hall. They are all of Celtic design, showing the highest standards of craftsmanship. They are all glamour and will turn to small pieces of chalky stone if taken into the mundane world by a thief. The glamour also fades in this way if the cat guarding the treasures is hurt. If someone manages to acquire a treasure by some means other than theft, it will still turn into a stone outside the regio, but it will be a white stone with a few flecks of silver or gold and will contain 1 pawn of *Terram vis*.

The Guard

The cat, a tom, looks like a medium-sized domestic ginger tabby with golden eyes. It plays, but does not eat, drink, sleep, or make any sound. A character with good Animal Ken or Faerie Lore may realize right away that the cat is not quite what it appears. It is a faerie creature, set there to guard the treasures. It may be lured off the pillars to play for a short while but will not neglect its primary duty. The cat will normally only leave the hall when pursuing a thief.

Story hooks

Charity

If someone can find a way to communicate with the cat, they will learn that it was set here by order of a lord of the fay as a favor to Synnöve, a Celtic princess who he lured away from her home on account of her beauty. Although she lived for many years with the fay, she did not forget the Christian charity she had been taught and sought by this means to make amends for

her sins. Her lover created the regio and all within it to please her, and keep her by his side.

The provision of food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty are classic Christian Works of Mercy, and a pious character will probably notice this. If the place came to be recognized as a place of pilgrimage, the faerie aura would gradually be replaced by a Dominion one. If the characters find out about Synnöve, they may feel that the miracle of the Feast for the Famished constitutes sufficient evidence to have her declared a saint. Can the connection be proved sufficiently to convince the Church? If she were to be canonized, the faerie aura could be quite swiftly swamped by a strong Dominion aura — the regio and all within it would vanish.

Synnöve

Synnöve tried to return to her parental home one day, only to find that it had long ago fallen and she died in that remote spot of a broken heart — unable to return to faerie and without a friend left in the world. Eventually her bones sank into the earth and the grass grew over them. Her remains lie beneath the center of the mound.

The cat has no idea how long it has been here, nor does it know what became of the princess once she left her faerie lord. Suitable *Intéllego* spells cast on the mound may reveal the presence of a few bones at a depth of about three spade-lengths.

If you want to conclude the scene:

A few fragments of decayed bone remain, but after so many years in the faerie aura the princess' spirit has become an integral part of the regio so cannot be contacted. Removing the bones will collapse the regio, if it suits your story to do so. Of course, destroying the regio might incur the wrath of a lord of the fay.

If you want to build on the story:

Since she was not given a Christian burial, the ghost of Synnöve may be called up by a suitable spell. She has been dead a very long time and all that remain to her are a longing to see her faerie lover again and a desire to be properly laid to rest in hallowed ground. Once the second wish has been carried out, the former cannot be fulfilled, but she does not know this.

She calls her lover Oenghus. Characters may discover, perhaps through research or a good Legend Lore roll, that this was a name given to a lord of the Sidhe honored as the god of love in pre-Christian Ireland. He was said to live at Newgrange, a prehistoric passage grave at Brugh Na Boinne in the Boyne valley. Stories report that he had four birds hovering over his head at all times. If he can be found, he may be grateful for news of his long-lost beloved, or angry that her remains were disturbed.

Source

Jackson, Kenneth Hurlstone (1971) *A Celtic Miscellany* (Penguin Books) pp.154-155.

Saint Brendan the Navigator

by Eric Dahl

Brendan was abbot of an Irish monastery in the sixth century, and embarked with seventeen of his monks on a naval expedition to find the Promised Land. They sailed in a boat fashioned from leather hides stretched across a wooden frame, with fourteen oars and a sail. The abbot's account of their travels included

tales of many strange lands and fantastic creatures, and while the Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* ("The Voyage of the Holy Abbot St Brendan") was written as early as 800 A.D., a vernacular biography with many similarities (*De reis van Sint Brandaan*) also became common in the twelfth century. By 1220, the stories of Brendan's travels were an authoritative guide to many of the mysteries of the mythic ocean, familiar both to sailors and to scholars of the sea.

Magical Islands

Early in his journey, Brendan's ship was blown off his northwestern course, and he and his brothers found themselves among a series of magical islands. Enormous rocky cliffs surrounded the first, and a great waterfall flowed down on them from above. When they found shore, a dog led them to a great hall filled with pagan riches, and there they found food and drink prepared for them.

On another island, just before Easter, they encountered an Irish shepherd tending sheep the size of oxen. He directed them to a third island to celebrate the holy day, a place he called the paradise of birds. They landed on what they thought was the island on Sunday, but it turned out to be the back of a gigantic fish. Finally, they sailed up a long channel and landed in an idyllic wood filled with talking birds, where they stayed for many months.

The Faroes

Brendan and his followers happened upon the Faroes, a series of islands north of Scotland. These lands were colonized by the Vikings in the eighth century, and later converted to Christianity in the 11th century. With favorable winds, a boat can sail from the Shetland islands to this area in about two days.





Magical Animals

The Faroes are home to a wide variety of animals with magical properties, especially sheep and birds. Mythic breeds such as the following are much more common in these legendary lands than in places closer to the rest of Europe.

Sheep of Virtue

Characteristics: Cun -4, Per 0, Str +4, Sta +3, Dex -1, Qik -1

Magic Might: 5

Size: +2

Personality Traits: Obedient +6, Peaceful +4

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Kick or Head-					
Butt	+1	0	-3	+7	+3

Soak: +5

Fatigue levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Immune to Cold, ReIg 20, 1 point: The sheep is not affected by extreme winter temperatures. With this power, the sheep can remain perfectly warm and safe for an entire night of cold arctic temperature.

Vis: 1 Animál

The sheep of these islands graze in pastures day and night, and are unhindered by winter as long as no one collects their milk. They grow much larger than common sheep, and in Brendan's day were so numerous that the ground beneath the flock could not be seen.

Jasconius

Characteristics: Cun -5, Per -2, Str +24, Sta +12, Dex -2, Qik -3

Magic Might: 80

Size: +25

Personality Traits: Lethargic +8, Violent +1

Soak: +50

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Smash (tail)	-9	+6	+2	+29	+12

Powers:

Ram: Like an enormous whale, Jasconius can ram a sea vessel with an attack bonus of +6 and a damage bonus of +30.

Swallow: Those who find themselves in the vicinity of the great creature's mouth may be swallowed whole. This is similar to a ramming attack, except that no damage is dealt. Eventually, after many weeks within his belly, the characters may be regurgitated, alive and relatively unharmed.

Vis: see below

Jasconius, also called the Living Island or Aspidocoleon, is an enormous whale whose size is so great that he could easily be mistaken for land. According to Brendan, "he is always trying to bring his tail to meet his head, but he cannot because of his length." In the legend, the monks landed on him and made camp before they realized their error. After he dived into the sea, and those thrown from him made it back to their boat, the monks could see their cooking fire still burning on his back as he swam away.

Jasconius contains so much *vis* that magi could spend an entire season or more harvesting it from his back (rules for this are provided in *The Mythic Seas*, page 80, or *Medieval Bestiary, Revised Edition*, pages 71-72). However, enterprising collectors with more short-term goals could simply hack pieces off of him. Each Body level of damage done to the beast in such a way that the flesh remains intact can be used as five pawns of Animál *vis*. Jasconius usu-

ally sleeps when he is on the surface of the water, but once attacked he will awake and respond if he makes a successful Perception + Damage roll of 20+ (roll a stress die and add his Perception plus the total amount of damage he has taken). He is most likely to simply dive deep into the ocean, but he may behave more aggressively depending on the severity of his wounds.

Ptarmigan of Virtue

Characteristics: Cun 0, Per +1, Str -6, Sta -2, Dex 0, Qik +1

Magic Might: 12

Size: -4

Personality Traits: Gregarious +6, Peaceful +3

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Wings	+1	0	+5	-11	-1

Soak: -5

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated

Powers:

Musical Speech, CrMe 20, 3 points: The ptarmigan can communicate with a group of people through its song. All those who can hear it experience magical visions and feelings of peace and calm until the next sunrise or sunset.

Vis: 3 Mentem

The ptarmigan is a friendly northern bird, similar in shape to a quail or dove. It is snow white in color during the winter months, and becomes spotted brown in the summer. In the legend of Brendan, the birds cover a tree of extraordinary girth (and large trees are very unusual in the region), where they are so numerous that the monks could scarcely see the leaves and branches beneath them. When one of the birds flies down to perch beside Brendan, its wings make a sound like a bell, and it speaks to him, saying: "...We had once been angels in heaven, and like Lucifer had fallen from grace. But because our trespass was small, God has separated us here to serve Him. We wander the air and the earth, like other spirits, but on holy days we are given these bodies so that we may praise our creator." For the time that Brendan and his monks remained with these birds, they experienced recurring visions of wonder and slept in blissful slumber.

The birds tell what the listener wishes to hear. Brendan and his monks, being pious and holy, believed the birds were angelic spirits. However, the birds are very friendly and accommodating, and might speak very differently in the minds of Hermetic magi, predators, or seasoned warriors. No matter whom their listener, the birds' song is calming and comforting, like a soothing dream, and their influence often lingers in the heart for many years.



There are eighteen islands that make up the Faroes. The largest island, Streymoy, is home to the biggest settlement, Kirkjubøur. This city was built upon the remains of an earlier Irish colony, and it is most likely here that Brendan landed and discovered shepherds tending gigantic sheep. St. Olav's Church, built in 1111, is the Episcopal center of the area, but the older St. Brendan's Church is still in use. Further inland, to the north, is a trading center known as Thorshavn. This is the

center of Viking government among the islands (an event called a Thing; see *Ultima Thule*, pages 33-35, for more information) and by 1220 it has become a village of some importance.

The other islands are largely unspoiled wilderness. One of the western islands, Vagar, has cliffs more than a thousand feet high on its southern bank, and there a waterfall pours down the natural wall into the ocean. Brendan, who cautioned his crew against steering too close to the falls,

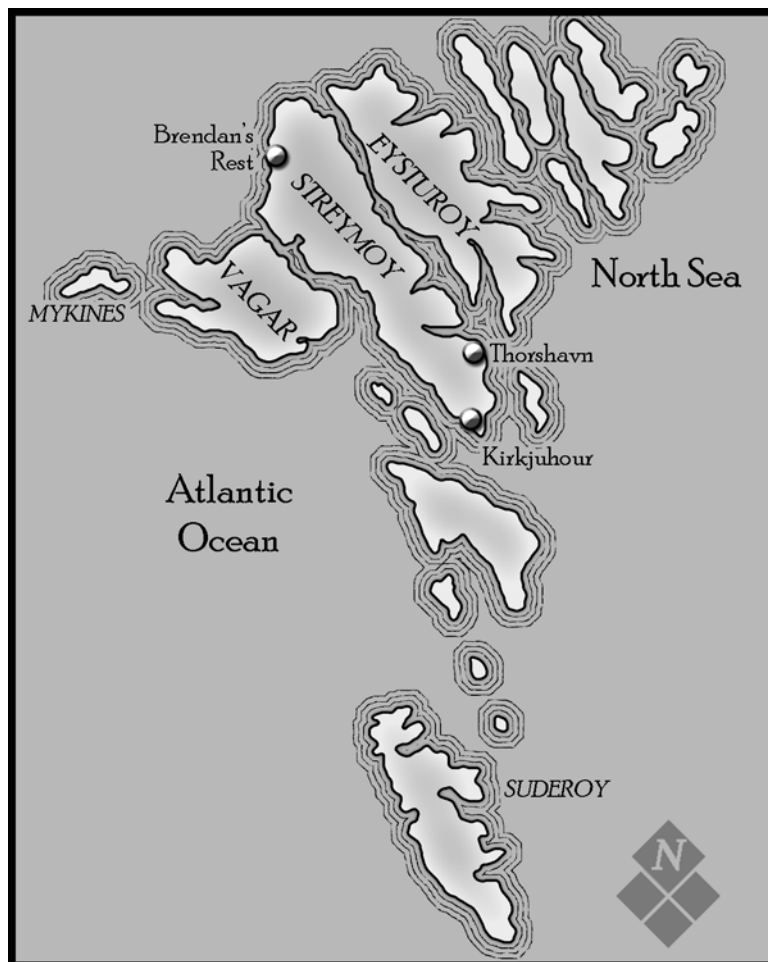


described this “exceedingly rocky and high” island in his legend. In the story, when the monks finally found a port, a dog led him into an empty village. There he and his brothers found a great hall, filled with pagan wealth, and their invisible hosts made food and drink ready for them. Brendan cautioned his monks not to take anything, and when one of the brothers tried to leave with a silver bridle, he was stricken by a curse and died on the spot.

The smallest and westernmost island, Mykines, is one large and isolated rock, and the nesting place of tens of thousands of sea birds. They nest throughout the area, and all kinds of birds are represented: geese, ducks, gulls, puffins, terns, loons, and ptarmigans. It is truly a paradise of birds. However, it is unlikely that this is where Brendan landed, since it is almost impossible for a boat to land upon the tiny island.

On the northern end of Streymoy is a long channel that leads to a woody glen and spring, and this is probably where the monks stayed until Pentecost.

The Dominion has begun to gain prominence in the Faroes, but only recently compared to the rest of Europe, and the wild lands are still rich with *vis* and magic. Pagan influences are also still very strong. Hermetically, the Faroes would probably be considered part of the Loch Leglean Tribunal, as the Shetland and Hebrides islands are its closest trading partners, though its inhabitants are mainly of Scandinavian descent and speak Western Norse. Because of the original Irish colonists, however, the Order of Hermes might consider the islands part of the Hibernian Tribunal, especially if the covenant has been there for some time.



Adventure Seeds

1. The magical islands of Brendan may sound like a good place to found a covenant, and perhaps an optimistic group of magi has set out to accomplish this feat. Assuming they and their companions are willing to relocate to such a distant locale, they will trade many hardships of living (growing crops is difficult in this climate, and the most reliable source of food is seabirds and their eggs) for a land rich in magical resources. Are the player characters up to the challenge? They might even use the Faroes as an alternative setting for a covenant based in the saga of the supplement *Land of Fire and Ice*, with the Faroes giving them the means to explore the wonders of Mythic Iceland from a safer, more distant port.
2. A maga specializing in Mentem is trying to bind an appropriate familiar, and her research leads her to seek out a ptarmigan in a far northern paradise. However, she cannot handle a sea voyage, as she is deathly afraid of the

Soporific Wells

On this island, and others associated with the Divine, there are wells that produce a natural holy water. The water from these fountains can have powerful effects on those who drink it, depending on their purity: they might be healed of disease or sicknesses, regain lost youth, or experience a holy vision. If the drinkers are impure, gluttonous or greedy, the water can send them into a coma, where they will remain until the water leaves their system. During this time, characters that do not have True Faith will gain a temporary Faith point, as if they carried a holy relic, which lasts one day for each cup of water they drink. These effects remain if they leave the Divine aura during that time, but the water loses its holy properties soon after it is removed from the spring.

The monks of the community of Ailbe are a good example of the kind of purity that is required for the beneficial effects of these waters: they are obedient, humble, pious and filled with love. In the legend of Brendan, when they landed near the island spring, he cautioned his desperate monks to wait until the drink was offered to them, and the abbot later confirmed their virtue for abstaining, freely giving to them what they thought to take in stealth. Later, on another island, the monks drank deeply of similar waters. Though they were all men of faith and good will, each of them fell unconscious and slept for one, two or three days according to his measure, and even the saintly Brendan was very troubled by the experience.

water. Perhaps her friends or allies, the player characters, can fetch her a few specimens? She would be very, very grateful...

3. A group of adventurous young magi at Tribunal propose a waterborne *vis* hunt, using the Faroes as their base of operations for a three day "camping trip." They hope to catch a glimpse of Jasconius, but will settle for any magical animals they can find. To goad reluctant characters into joining them, they might agree that all the *vis* collected in the preceding days will go to whoever first sights the living island.

Æ Holy Island

Brendan and his monks sailed south for many days, and had almost run out of food and water. They finally came upon an island, but when they tried to approach the shore they found the banks too steep to land, and fierce winds blew them back out to sea. For forty days they tried to find a port, but they were repeatedly turned away. Finally, after fasting and praying continually for three days, they miraculously found a tiny beach. On this island they found a community of Irish monks, so pious and blessed that God saw to all of their needs, and none of them aged or grew sick. These brothers kept a holy vow of silence at all times, except to speak with their guests, and Brendan and his followers stayed with them throughout the winter holy days, until the abbot sadly informed him that it was time to leave, for God had told him that Brendan must fulfill his destiny elsewhere.

The Community of Ailbe

Many leagues west of Portugal, in the chain of isles that would later be called the Azores, there is a haven that has been blessed by God. The men who inhabit this island are immortal in their service to Christ, living simple, strict lives of devotion and meditation. They have built a monastery about a mile inland, where the





twenty-four of them live peacefully. Because of their faith, an angel watches over them and protects them from harm, and brings to them whatever they might require.

The island lies within a powerful Divine regio, centered on the monastery's church. It has three levels: level 7, level 8, and level 9. Because passing through the boundaries into these holy lands is so difficult, the community is kept secret and safe from visitors.

On the mundane level, the island is impenetrable, with steep cliffs on every side and strong winds that confound approaching ships. There is no safe place for a seafaring craft to land or even anchor without damaging the hull. The island itself is mountainous and grassy, and two water springs may be found on the southern side. Here, the water produced from these

springs is strong and tastes of minerals, but has no obvious effects apart from quenching thirst. Flowering trees and grasses are all that may be seen of the Eden that is hidden beneath.

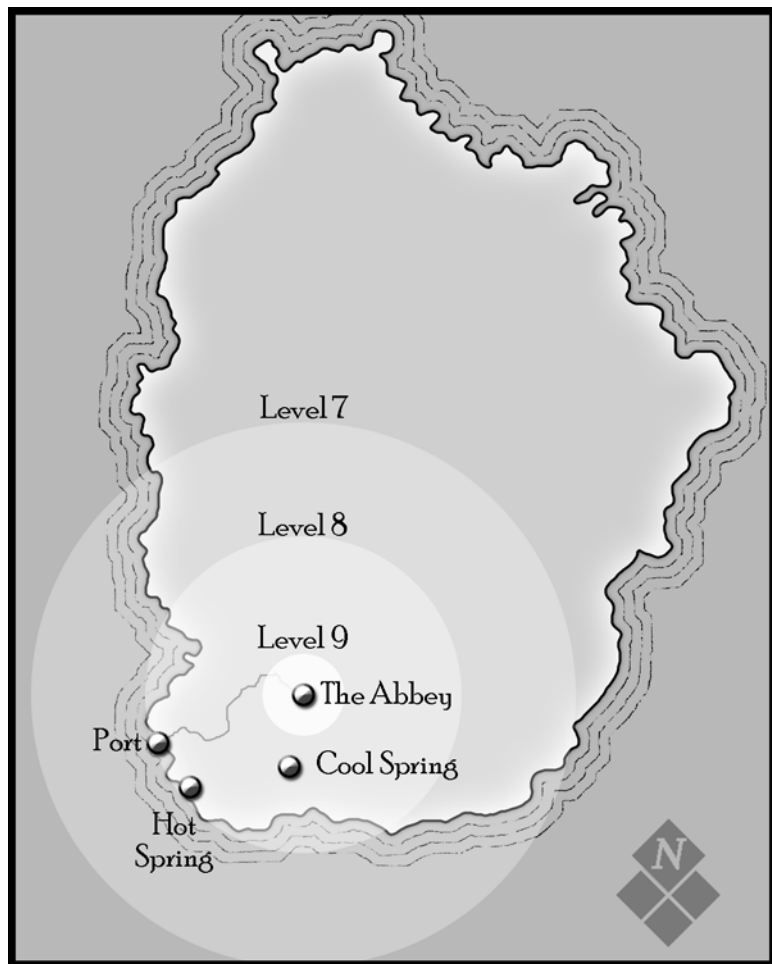
The lowest level of the *regio* covers most of the island, about forty square miles, and extends into the ocean. On this level, there is a little port near the southwestern tip, large enough for one small boat to land. Nearby, a warm-water spring bubbles out from the surrounding rocks above the shore into a small pool, and beyond it a second stream of cool, clear water flows into another pool. The water on this level still tastes of minerals, and is in fact soporific (see *Soporific Wells*, page 143). Here, the incredible beauty of the island is breathtaking to behold, with lush grassy landscapes and flowers in every season. There is no trace of the monastery, only an empty mountaintop and the faint echo of bells and song in the distance.

Above, the second level of the *regio* contains the monastery and is where the monks live. It extends over much of the southern half of the island, including the two springs, and the water there has holy properties, described below. A powerful silence pervades the place, so still that one can hear the slightest motion, and when the bells ring or the monks sing, the sound is carried through the air for many miles.

The final level of the *regio* surrounds the monastery proper, centered on the church. The light and the sound of the brothers' devotions are so intense on this level that they may temporarily blind and deafen those who enter it. The angel who watches over the community lives here, as it has lived since the earliest days, caring for the monks and praising God for eternity.

The Angel

God placed the angel of the island here after the Fall of Man, to guard this vision of paradise against those who would spoil it.



There is no point in describing its statistics, for it can be as powerful as it needs to be, and it can simply return any who threaten it to a lower level of the regio. Every morning at dawn it fills the larder with fresh, sweet loaves of bread, one for every two monks, and when the sun sets it lights the candles in the church, which never lessen or burn down. Because of its influence, the area remains a comfortable temperature, and none of the monks are ever overcome by heat or cold.

Those near the refectory at dawn or in the church at dusk may see a glimpse of its passing. In the morning it appears as a ray of bright sunlight, shining upon the pantry, as the loaves appear in their baskets. In the evening, a fiery arrow speeds through a window to light the lamps before flying out again.

When Brendan landed on the island, the angel alerted the monks by placing twice as many loaves in the pantry, so that the abbot knew they were expecting guests. It can also give visions of the future to those who enter its level of the regio, speak the truth and God's will directly into the hearts of the brothers, or whisper advice into the ear of the abbot when he sits within the church.

The Monks

There are twenty-four monks living in the monastery, and they work and pray in shifts of twelve. They do not normally speak, but they sing the offices and reply to the abbot when asked a question directly. Every day after Prime they go to the springs and collect water, a cupful from each for each monk, which they take back to the refectory. Before every meal, they wash their hands and feet in the warm water, and drink three times from the cool water. Because of their purity, the waters of the two wells wash away the brothers' physical ailments and fill them with life, so that they do not age.

According to Brendan's account, these monks sailed to the island in the fifth century, and have remained there ever since. In the legend, the abbot refers to St. Ailbe as their father, an Irish saint who in turn was a follower of St. Patrick, and so the monastery is named after him. The monks have given up their names, for they remain always humble and are addressed only by their activity or as "Brother."

Many of them have no idea how much time has passed in the world outside, and they certainly have no knowledge of human progress or the events that have occurred since they left. They share freely what they have with any who arrive on the island, for Ailbe was known for his hospitality, and if the angel tells the abbot of visitors, he will personally go to the shore to meet them and lead them to the monastery.



Adventure Seeds

1. Three of the monks have grown restless since Brendan visited so many years ago, troubled by the burdens of immortality. They wish to leave this world and join God in heaven. However, through the abbot, the angel first charges them with a task: they must find three who can take their places before they die. Since returning to mortal realms, they have visited countless monasteries and churches, but so far no one has believed their tale or been willing to go with them, and the monks are becoming discouraged. When the player characters hear their story, what will their reaction be?
2. An elderly magus with True Faith has read the story of Brendan, and wishes to join the community of Ailbe. He believes the soporific water will allow him to live beyond his failing longevity potion, and promises the player characters all of his magical possessions if they will help him find the island — not an easy task, according to the legend. If



- they succeed, what will they do with him should the monks refuse his application?
3. A young seaman tells a story about an island he discovered in the seas far to the west of Portugal. His crew happened upon the place during a horrible tempest, miraculously stumbling upon a beach where they had first thought there were only impassable rocks. Nearby, they found two springs, one warm and one cool, and when they drank from the waters, they saw themselves become younger and healthier, like the cleaning of a dusty mirror. They have searched in vain for this “fountain of youth” ever since, but they have never found it.

The Faerie Ocean

Brendan and his monks sailed west with a good wind. There they encountered many fantastic lands and beasts, and places where natural laws seemed to be suspended. They discovered a sea that was very thick; it appeared to them to be congealed. In another place, the water became clear and transparent, so that they could see to the bottom of the ocean and all the beasts and lands below. Fierce guardians protected both of these places, and chased the monks and their boats seeking to devour them. In both instances, Brendan and his followers were saved by smaller, similar creatures, which they presumed were angels that had been sent by God.

Many of the islands they encountered in these lands bore strange, wonderful fruits, and grapes grew on trees instead of vines. Some of the people they encountered sang and danced continually, or saw the monks’ names and hearts as clearly as their faces. Other islands altered the passage of time: there were lands where it was never night, or where a year passed in the span of a month. Even the earth itself was strange: one island was entirely flat, almost

level with the sea; another was tall and narrow and made of crystal, so high they could not see its summit.

Terrestrial Paradise

Today, the reader could infer from the legend that Brendan sailed across the ocean and into the islands we now consider part of the New World. Many of his descriptions of places and things can be matched to what a medieval explorer might have found in the Caribbean islands or off the coast of North America. We can even chart a possible course from the Azores, the same route that Christopher Columbus would follow hundreds of years later. It is clear that these fantastic islands could have had a physical existence on earth.

However, from a medieval perspective, Brendan and his followers were not on earth. In a sense, one might say that when they sailed across the ocean, they dropped off of the edge of the world (though certainly many scholars of the time could tell you that the earth is a sphere). There, on the other side of the ocean, they found a strange, alien landscape, the terrestrial paradise that lies beyond the edges of the map. In *Ars Magica*, this land is called Arcadia, the living realm of faeries. More information about Arcadia can be found in *Faeries, Revised Edition*, pages 85-87.

Arcadia exists in another world, and is a land of dreams and potential. It corresponds to the mundane world, in that it is possible to travel from one to the other, but it does not occupy any physical space within it. At best, it “overlaps” Mythic Europe, like one enormous faerie regio. Thus, the fact that Arcadia may be approached exactly as if one were sailing to the Americas does not mean that Arcadia is the Americas. Whether or not the characters can discover the continents that lie on the other side of the ocean is something only the storyguide can decide.

Borders of Arcadia

Most of the ocean is simply impossible to cross with medieval vessels. Strong headwinds, storms, and treacherous waters plague any ship that attempts a directly western route from Europe. This might be seen as a great barrier, a wall that protects the fabled lands of afar from unworthy visitors. Those ships that have succeeded in crossing the dangerous ocean did so by sailing one of two ways: north and west, around the coast of Greenland; or south and west, carried by the Northeast Trade Winds across the equator.

It is in these areas that the boundaries separating Arcadia from the earth can be penetrated. These narrow passages can carry a sea borne vessel and everything it carries into and out of these fantastic lands of imagination. As described in the legend of Brendan, there are four different kinds of portal, usually found by traversing some sort of obstacle, as described below.

Dark Summer

Soon after leaving the community of Ailbe, the monks encountered an area of water that was so smooth and thick that they described it as “coagulated.” Medieval scholars describe this phenomenon as the Liver Sea, and it is a source of great fear for sailors. It is almost impossible to navigate through it, for the wind stops completely, and the water is dense enough that ships and oars pulled into the mire become stuck fast.

When Brendan reached this place, he lifted the sail and commanded the monks to let God steer. After twenty days, a wind pulled them through the dread waters, and guided them into the open sea. Soon after, they were attacked by a wild beast of the ocean, but were saved when another creature lured the guardian away from them and defeated it with fiery breath.

The Liver Sea is typically found in the southern part of the ocean, and in warm, temperate climates when sailing away from

the sun. Ships heading south and west are most likely to come across this gateway. Beyond it are dark, frightening isles where men and beasts are cruel and terrible.

Bright Summer

Another time, Brendan and his monks came upon a transparent sea, where they could see whatever was below the surface, and the monks were aghast. In the depths, they could see various kinds of beasts lying over the sand, and it seemed to them that they could touch them through the wonderful clearness of the water. There were flocks resembling cows and wild bulls lying in pastures, so numerous that they looked like a city of circles.

The monks asked Brendan to celebrate the Mass in silence, lest the beasts awake and pursue them. He laughed, saying not to fear, but that they should all raise their voices as best they could. And so they sang, and soon the fishes awoke and came about the ship so thick that they could not see the water. Still, they did not approach the ship, but swam far and wide until Brendan had finished his song. After this, as if they were taking flight, they all swam by different paths of the ocean away from the sight of them.

Similar to the Liver Sea, the transparent sea is found in warm waters, places teeming with life. It is most often encountered when sailing into the sun or towards the east, and the lands on the other side are warm and pleasant faerie havens. It may serve as a border to Faerie, or even as a bridge between different faerie oceans.

Bright Winter

One day, Brendan and his followers saw an enormous pillar in the sea, so large that they could not see the top of it. A large net was wrapped around it, so wide that a boat could easily pass through its openings. They could not determine what material the mesh was fashioned from, for it had the color of silver, and was harder than marble. The pillar was made of bright crystal, about





seven hundred yards on each side, and the net draped down on every side about a mile from the central column. Beneath them, the sea was as clear as glass, and they could see the foundations of the column and the edge of the net lying on the sea bed. The light of the sun was as bright below the water as it was above.

The gateway of the crystal pillar is a winter portal, found in cold northwestern waters. It is associated with the sun and daylight, and leads to icy lands of color and snow. It may also serve as an exit from the faerie realm, leading back to mundane oceans as it did for Brendan and his crew.

Dark Winter

Saint Brendan and those who were with him sailed the ocean for forty days. On the last night, as the evening drew on, a great fog enveloped them. None of them could see each other through the thick dark air, nor could they see the ship or the water. They sailed through this impenetrable mist for more than an hour, and then they broke free of the clouded skies and came across a great, wide land, which they called the Promised Land of the Saints.

Fog is not uncommon on the ocean, but as a gateway to Arcadia it occurs most often in cold climates, usually at night or dusk. It usually leads to uninhabited, dark lands where a year passes in the space of a few days, or the cold spirits of the pagan dead wait out eternity in slumber.

Adventure Seeds

1. The player characters' covenant is expecting important supplies from a distant location, including a unique and magical object. A group of faerie pirates attacks the ship carrying those supplies, and steals all its cargo. They escape into the deep ocean with the spoil, and the ship finally arrives several months behind schedule. If the characters want to get their supplies back,



they will have to follow the pirates, who were last seen heading into a thick, coagulated sea.

2. Many followers of House Merinita dream of visiting Arcadia, and traveling there by boat may not have occurred to them. After reading the legend of Brendan, an influential magus is taken with a powerful desire to see with his own eyes the lands it describes, and plans an ocean expedition to the faerie realm. Are the player characters willing to join him?
3. The guardian of a Bright Winter gateway to Arcadia demands a toll from those who would pass into his lands: the characters must find and bring back a pair of items that were stolen by St. Brendan many years ago. The legend tells that when Brendan discovered the Bright Winter gate, he found a crystal chalice and paten — a cup and plate — sitting in a hollow of the pillar, which he took back with him to Ireland. These objects are now considered holy relics, kept safely at his monastery in Clonfert, and probably contain some of St. Brendan's Faith. They may also have strange faerie powers, suitable for a long sea voyage, such as producing lasting food and drink that does not require *vis*. Will the characters attempt to steal the relics from the Irish church; and if so, will they trade them for entry into Faerie, or keep them for themselves?

The Island of the Smiths

The monks came upon a rocky, barren island, full of slag and the glow of smiths' forges. "I am troubled by this island," said Brendan, "but the wind carries us there." They passed as close as the toss of a stone, and they could hear the thunderous sound of bellows and the banging of hammers and anvils. As they watched, out from a rocky opening came one of the inhabitants, shag-

gy and full at once of fire and darkness. Upon seeing the monks, the creature rushed back to his forge, and they began to row as fast as they could. Soon the same barbarian ran back to the shore, carrying in his hands a pair of tongs with a fiery mass of rock, of great size and heat, and this he threw at them with great force. It did not harm them, for it passed overhead, but when it fell into the sea, it began to glow like the ruins of a burning mountain, and smoke arose from the sea as from a furnace of fire.

When Brendan had fled a mile from the place where the missile struck, a great gathering of islanders erupted onto the shore, each carrying a fiery mass. They hurled them into the sea behind the desperate monks, and always they kept returning to their forges and setting them ablaze, until it seemed the entire island was burning. Then the sea rose up like a pot full of boiling meat, and they heard throughout the day a mighty wailing. Even when they could no longer see the island, they could still hear the shrieking of the inhabitants, and an awful stench filled their noses. But Brendan consoled them, saying: "Be strengthened by the real faith and spiritual arms, for we are in the confines of Hell."

Forges of Evil

From the mines of the underworld or the dark places beyond the sun comes a metal as hard as gemstone, yet as flexible as iron. Demonic smiths work tirelessly day and night to forge this material into cruelly shaped armaments: axes, spears, knives, breastplates, helmets, boots, and more. Far from prying eyes, safe from the cities and shrines of the Dominion, these smiths are forging weapons of war, as they have been doing for centuries. When the final battle against God and the heavens comes, their army will be ready.

Brendan stumbled across one of the forges belonging to these creatures, an





Black Iron

Mined from the pits of Hell, *maleferrum*, or black iron, is similar to normal iron, but heavier and more durable. In its unworked form, it is a dirty lump of rock like coal or charred stone. When fashioned into instruments of war, it becomes a smooth and black metal, thick, and similar in color to smoked glass or onyx. It is impossible to smelt it in the heat of fires like that of a normal smithy; it needs to be worked in unnaturally hot temperatures like those within a volcano, and then be allowed to cool in an extremely cold climate encased in ice.

Its diabolic nature slowly surrounds the bearer of black iron with an infernal association, much as if the character possessed the -2 Tainted With Evil Flaw, and requires double the normal number of botch dice. Characters with Susceptibility to Infernal or Sense Holiness and Unholiness can easily determine the metal's evil nature. Removing the offending equipment does not immediately rid a character of its effects, though, for it takes some time for the corrupting influence to fade, especially if the character has struck a blow with it or worn it in battle.

Furthermore, black iron has a kind of dark sentience; it can sense when it is worn or wielded, and encourages its bearer to use it. Players touching *maleferrum* may be required to make appropriate Personality trait rolls to remove or drop it,

and may find they are more violent and battle-hungry while under its influence. As it is difficult to destroy, it is also difficult to resist for long periods of time; characters may find themselves drawn to it with thoughts of war and malice.

A piece of *maleferrum* can be used in a magical laboratory as if it were already invested with *vis*, as when preparing an enchanted item, but with perilous side-effects. At the very least, any botches associated with the item will require double the number of botch dice. However, this *vis* cannot be removed from the metal, for it is part of its nature, and will read as a magical effect to Hermetic investigation spells. Long-term study in the lab will eventually reveal its evil properties, if these do not become obvious in the meantime.

Black iron is extremely rare, for it is typically found only in infernal regions or wielded by demonic creatures. However, it can come to earth in other ways (see *The Fallen Angel*, page 14, for an example of an infernal rock from the sky). Demons do not bring the metal to mundane lands, except in battle, but they have been known to offer it in trade to those who deal with them, or in special circumstances to allow it to "accidentally" fall into hands that seem particularly ripe for corruption.

island of fire and frozen ice in the northern wastelands. Volcanic outlets such as this are a perfect place for these demons to work, for the molten lava is hot enough to smelt their dark metal, and the surrounding seas are empty enough that their work is rarely disturbed.

Should sailors accidentally stumble across the island of the smiths, the demons always attempt to destroy them. This is

partly out of spite, for they are all wrathful demons and enjoy causing suffering to humanity, but more importantly, word of demons massing an army tends to strike fear in the hearts of Christians everywhere, and thus causes many more souls to turn to God which otherwise would have been lost to Him. This information must be suppressed, even if it sends faithful souls to heaven, but especially when it prevents a

Black Iron Conversion Chart

Weapon	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Str	Load	Spc	Eff Rn
Shortsword	+3	+3	+4	+4	-1	-1.0	1	Reach
Longsword	+2	+2	+5	+5	+0	-1.0	1	Reach
Kite Shield	-2	+2	+5	+0	+1	-1.5	1	Reach
Tower Shield	-4	+0	+7	+0	+2	-3.0	1	Reach
Flail	+1	+8	+2	+8	+1	-1.0	2	Reach
Greatsword	+5	+5	+5	+9	+2	-1.5	2	Reach
Battleaxe	+4	+4	+4	+11	+2	-2.0	2	Reach
Spear/Lance	+4	+7	+2	+7	+0	-1.5	3	Close
Slag (Rock)	+3	+1	n/a	+3	n/a	-0.5	0	Near

Armor Material	Hauberk		Half		Full	
	Prot	Load	Prot	Load	Prot	Load
Scale Mail	7	-4.0	10	-5.0	15	-7.5
Chain Mail	9	-4.5	12	-6.0	18	-9.0

Ordo Nobilis gives optional rules for armor components, rather than a suit of mail taken all at once. Here are some examples of what these armor components would look like when forged in *maleferrum*.

Head	Prot	Load	Body	Prot	Load	Limbs	Prot	Load
Helm	+3	-1.0	Scale	+6	-3.0	Scale	+6	-3.0
Improved Helm	+4	-1.5	Mail	+6	-2.0	Mail	+6	-2.0
Great Helm	+6	-2.0				Cops	+2	-1.0
Mail Coif	+2	-1.0				Mittens	+2	-1.0

Fourth Edition Armor Type	<i>Ordo Nobilis</i> Equivalent	New Prot	New Load
Scale Mail, Hauberk	Scale Body + Helm	+9	-4.0
Scale Mail, Half	Scale Body + Improved Helm	+10	-4.5
Scale Mail, Full	Scale Body + Limbs + Improved Helm	+16	-7.5
Chain Mail, Hauberk	Mail Body + Helm	+9	-3.0
Chain Mail, Half	Mail Body + Improved Helm + Coif	+12	-4.5
Chain Mail, Full	Mail Body + Limbs + Great Helm + Coif	+20	-9.0



sinner's redemption.

The demons usually attack passing ships with chunks of slag and their hammers, which they can throw incredible distances, for they are very strong. They can also move beneath the ground like a burning river, and leap out of the earth where they are wholly unexpected. One of Brendan's crew was taken unawares in this fashion, pulled to a fiery death and torment when he stepped out onto a sandbar in the

vicinity of the island. As he had been sinful and impetuous in life, the saint could do nothing to save him.

To determine the combat statistics for a black iron weapon or piece of armor, subtract 1 from Init and add 1 to Atk, Dfn, Dam and Str. Add half the base score (rounding down) to Prot and Load scores. As examples, the *maleferrum* equivalents for several common pieces of equipment are described above.



Adventure Seeds

1. As supernatural punishment for past bad deeds, a volcanic island erupts in the vicinity of a nearby covenant – and as if the molten lava, ash and smoke are not enough, covenfolk have seen a group of fiends rampaging the area. They are dressed as knights in unholy armor, and bear terrible black weapons. An emissary from the besieged covenant begs the player characters to help them avoid their dark fate, and join their efforts to stop the progress of this dreadful calamity. The players must defeat this army of evil, and then discover what could have brought them to rise up against the covenant in the first place — perhaps they saw something during their last expedition at sea that they should not have?
2. The characters have recently defeated a powerful magical creature, and among the items they recover from its treasure hoard are a hauberk of black mail and a dark metal battleaxe. The equipment is heavier than the characters would expect, but is almost impossible to scratch. It is also clearly enchanted; *Intéllego* spells reveal active magic. When the characters realize what it is, how will they get rid of it?
3. A nobleman with a great deal of influence has been given a lump of raw *maleferrum*. He would like to have a sword forged from the metal, but none of the smiths in his realm can shape it. He has heard rumors of the covenant, and he offers the magi a handsome commission for their services. While *Ignem* magic could perhaps create a fire hot enough to affect the metal, the magi risk breaking the Code if they help him out, and also risk his wrath if they turn him down. If they do accept, the nature of the metal may give them second thoughts once they discover its nature.

Source

(1976) *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (tr. John J. O'Meara) (Humanities Press, Inc.)

The Voyage of Karlsefni

by Robert Angeloni and Richard Evans

Thorson Karlsefni was an Icelandic merchant of good repute. One summer he and his companions traveled to Greenland with 80 men and 2 ships, where they met and traded with Leif Erikson in Brattahlid. Karlsefni eventually married Leif's ward Gudrid. While wintering with Leif, Karlsefni heard from him stories of an amazing place to the west Leif called Vinland, and Karlsefni decided to visit it in the spring.

Karlsefni set out with 140 men and 3 ships to discover what he could. During their journey, they discovered many strange lands. They first came to a place with many stone slabs, each large enough for two men to lie across them, which they named Helluland. After that, they came to a great, forested land that they named Markland. Later they discovered a ship's keel dashed upon the coastal rocks, left by an earlier expedition. Searching the area, they discovered a land that seemed to offer many rewards. Enthralled with their discoveries, a harsh winter caught them unprepared. As winter tightened its grip, some called upon their pagan gods for help, but none came. Only after they threw themselves on the mercy of God did they find plentiful bounty.

A small group refused to embrace Christianity, preferring their pagan ways,

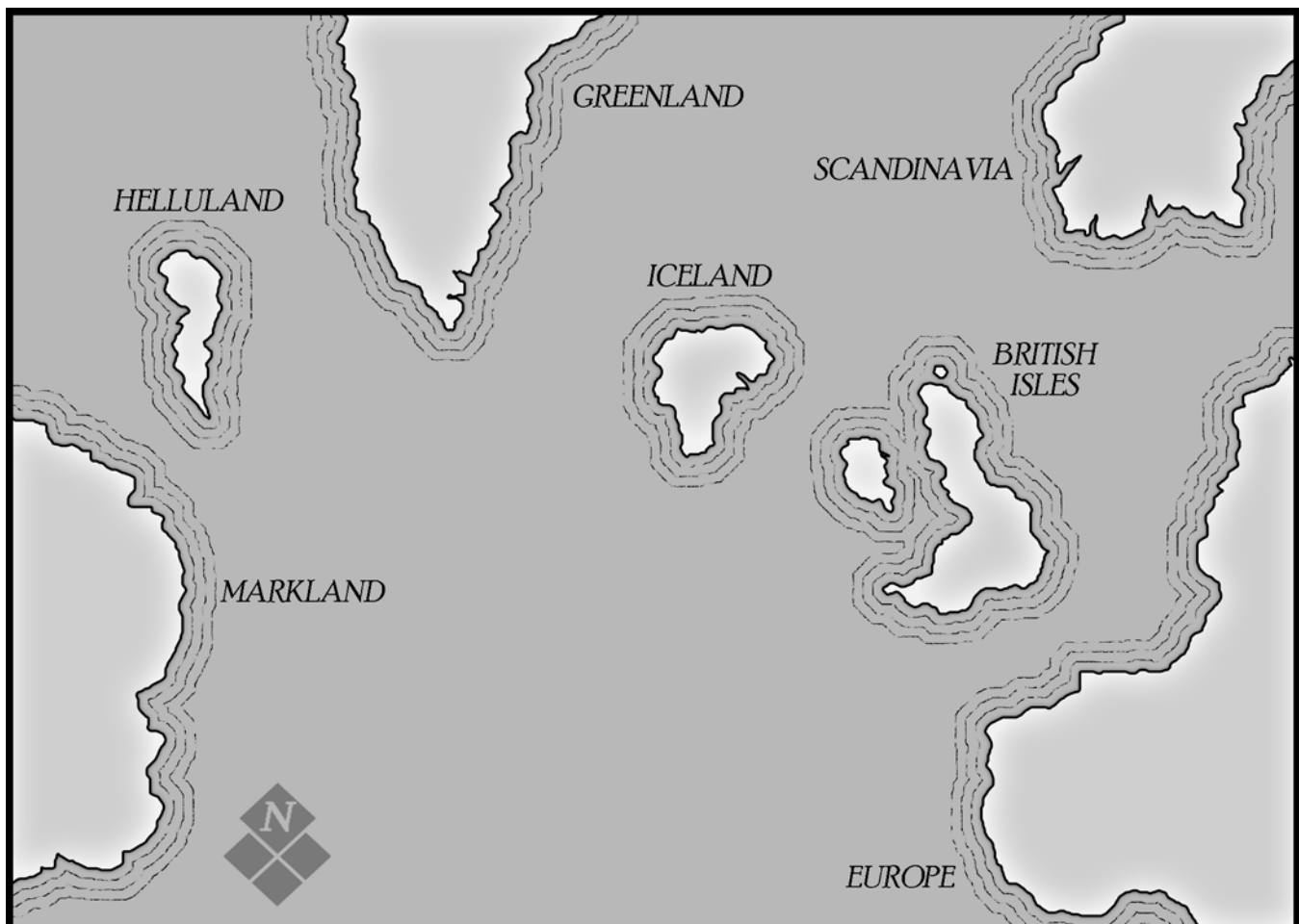
and they left taking one ship with them to the north that spring. These found only vicious storms and, eventually, shipwreck on the coast of Ireland, where they were beaten and enslaved.

The rest of the explorers continued south into new lands where they found another enticing spot they named Hop, which abounded with seemingly limitless wheat, fish, deer, grapes, and wood. Just a fortnight after landing in this luscious place, they surprised a group of odd-looking people who were smaller in stature than they were and who used hide-covered boats. After a moment of amazement, those strange people fled into the wilderness. The explorers proceeded to make camp for the winter, which, astonishingly, had no snow.

In the spring, a large group of those odd people returned and traded rare furs with the explorers for pieces of red cloth, until a

bull got loose and ran rampant through the encampment causing the visitors to run in fear. They returned, however, with many warriors, who proceeded to attack the settlement. The explorers were able to kill many, but they were outnumbered so severely they withdrew to make a defensible position inland. While making their retreat, a pregnant woman roused herself to such anger that in a wild fit of violence she frightened off their assailants.

Deciding the virtues of this land were beyond their current abilities to hold, they began their journey home, retracing their path. Soon a one-legged creature killed a member of their group; they gave chase but lost the monster in the woods. Later they stole two young boys from a family they found in Markland and taught the children their language. From these two they learned of yet another sort of people who





live underground in caves. Thus, they spent their third winter in this new land. Long away from home, there was much discord during the winter. Finally, they returned to Greenland and stayed the next winter there with Leif and his family. In the following spring, Karlsefni and his wife returned to their home in Iceland.

What Karlsefni found

Karlsefni went searching for Vinland. Instead he found not one wondrous place, but rather four distinctly different areas to the west. Helluland and Markland are islands to the west of Greenland. From there he and his companions wandered into a magical regio, which he named Straumsfjord. Later, he traveled a magical path to another regio which he named Hop. Each of these areas is described below. Together these areas are considered to be Vinland.

Finding regiones on the sea is exceedingly difficult, even more so than entering one on land. For example, finding the third wave east of the keel of the ship sunk 1,000 fathoms below the waves is next to impossible for travelers without special knowledge from those who have actually done it. The supplement *The Mythic Seas* offers some excellent rules for seafaring expeditions. The areas of Vinland can be found without following the “easy” path, but doing so offers its own dangers. Only by recreating Karlsefni’s voyage does anyone have a real chance of purposefully finding Vinland. The areas of Vinland can only be found safely during certain times of the year as the strait above Brattahlid is usually choked with ice in the winter. The path to Vinland starts by traveling out of Brattahlid to the north, until the travelers come to the Bear Islands, named because a bear was seen there. From there it is two days following a northerly wind across the strait to Helluland. Sailing

south against a northerly wind for two days will bring the explorers to Markland. Continuing south another two days brings the travelers to Kjalarnes, which is properly called Straumsfjord. Hop and Straumsfjord are connected by a magical path. A magical path is much like a faerie trod (see *Faeries*, page 80) except that magical creatures and strange phenomenon rather than faeries may be encountered on it.

There are a couple of hazards not mentioned in *The Mythic Seas* that one may find en route to Vinland; one is waterspouts, the other a maelstrom. *Tower of Whirling Water* (ArM4, page 117) gives the statistics for a small to medium-sized waterspout, and large ones can do +35 or more damage. Waterspouts can come in family groups of many spouts, some large and some small, swirling around together, each group containing a quality die of spouts. Whether these are water elementals at play or simply a natural phenomenon is immaterial to those caught within them...

A maelstrom is a swirling hole in the sea, devouring anything that comes within its reach. Those approaching Vinland via an uncharted route may find a maelstrom large enough to swallow ships up to size +6, much like *Pull of the Watery Grave* (ArM4, page 116).

The Mundane Realms of Vinland

The descendants of Erik the Red, Leif’s father, jealously guard the route to Vinland, because of the value of the wood found in Markland, which they trade with Iceland and Norway. Only members of the family are taught the safe route, and they work through their many friends and contacts to stop anyone else finding the lands to the west. This is made easier as the safest route starts at Brattahlid, which is

full of Leif's descendants, and there's really only one place you can go by sailing north from there.

Helluland

This sizeable island has many large, flat rocks upon it, some so big that two men can lie foot-to-foot upon them. For the most part, there isn't much here for the casual traveler. The island is covered with low-undulating hills, and lots of rock and ice. The large, flat rocks Karlsefni's group found are actually the roofing of a massive castle, sunken and covered long ago. The origin and current state of the castle are unknown.

Leif's family rarely ventures here, but they know that it is covered with ice in winter, which melts from a small southern section in the summer. Due to the ice, it is impossible to sail around the island. In summer, it would take about a week to cross the ice-free areas of the island, but they form only its southern tip.

Markland

Wood is very important for a sea-faring people, but Greenland is mostly devoid of lumber. The trees of Markland, however, are tall and straight, perfect for making ships. Some of the wood is especially valuable since the maple trees found here do not grow in Mythic Europe. The island is relatively large such that it would take a few weeks to circumnavigate, and the forested areas are huge, taking up most of the island. The only unforested areas are the hills some distance from the shores, where Markland's inhabitants live. These people, according to those caught by Karlsefni, live in caves and holes and are called dvergal (Dwarf-like) by the Norse. They are short and generally dirty from living underground. Although the dvergal are friendly, they distrust one another, often

Dvergal

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

Magic Might: 15

Size: -1

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Friendly +2, Distrusting +1

Wpn/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam	Fat
Brawling (fist)	+4	+1	+4	-1	+2
Rock	+10	+4	-	+2	+5

Soak: +1

Fatigue levels: OK, -3, -5, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Area Lore: Markland 5 (inland areas), Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Brawl 1, Craft: Stone 5, Hunt 4, Speak Norse 4, Thrown Weapon 3 (rock)

Powers:

Rock to Viscid Clay, MuTe 15, 1 point. As per the spell of the same name

Equipment: Dirty clothes, assorted utensils.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 4 Terram, two in each hand.

Description: Dvergal look like small men, not midgets. The stats above are for an average adult. Treat them as normal humans except for their special powers.

If the storyguide decides the dvergal really are the Dwarves from the sagas, they all have magical weapons and armor to help fight off the depredations of the "uplanders."



quarrelling over bits of etiquette and preferred ground, but never really fighting. Despite their subterranean nature, above ground they are quite nimble and quick, although their children can be quite clumsy and slow. The few Greenlanders that have been to Markland think of them either as barbarians to be caught for slaves or as Dwarves from the sagas. No one has entreated them for great works as yet.



The dvergal live as if they are one people under a single king, but they are really two separate groups of people, indistinguishable to those outside their community. There are two kings, named Avaldamon and Valdididda, one for each race of dvergal. Once every thirteen years the two peoples gather in a Grand Thing in their underground hall, where they work out their differences and reaffirm their kings.

Despite their generally amicable nature, they do not like strangers very much, as their few interactions with Greenlanders have led to them being enslaved or butchered. Although they are unfamiliar with war it will not take them long to catch on if they are attacked. Their main defense is to run and hide underground. They have also been known to roll rocks down upon those who have gotten too close to their caves. It is rare for anyone to be harmed by such action as most “uplanders” have the common sense to avoid putting themselves under an overhang with teetering rocks on it that some short guy just ran up.

The Regiones of Vinland

Severe storms surround the regiones and keep out most who do not know their way around the area. Often travelers find themselves washed up on the shores of Ireland.... If not following the path into the regiones from Markland, terrible things may occur, but to those on the path, the lands and waterways between them seem sunny, bright, and inviting. To get to Straumsfjord from Markland, one must travel south for two days until land is seen. On the northern most point of this land the keel of a ship will be found, left by Bjarney Herjolfsson many years ago, prior to even Leif’s journey. This point is called Kjalarnes and is the northernmost end of Furdustrandir, the wonder beaches, named for their vast length and smoothness.

Sailing past them one comes to Straumsfjord.

If following Karlsefni’s route there is no roll to enter Straumsfjord. If taking another route, one must make rolls to enter a level two magical regio (see ArM4, page 245).

Straumsfjord

Landing at Kjalarnes, one may find where Karlsefni and his compatriots stayed during their voyage by traveling overland, but this is dangerous, as one is also likely to find the Unipeds, as described below. Sailing along the beaches, one finds the site without the perils of the land route. The regio is a large one, encompassing an island that would take many weeks to circumnavigate.

Straumsfjord is a deceptively inviting place. During the summer, resources abound. Game animals and grain grow plentifully, and trees offer their bounty for the taking. The area is so inviting that some may feel no need to stockpile for a rainy day. This would be a mistake, but even those who wisely stockpile for winter will not be as prepared as they believe.

Straumsfjord is a two-level regio that forces its inhabitants to move between the levels at seemingly random intervals. The first level of the regio is summer and the second level is winter; there is no autumn or spring. From the characters’ perspective buildings, trees, and other stationary objects all remain, but the weather suddenly changes dramatically. When the party first arrives, it is winter in Straumsfjord if it is winter outside, otherwise Straumsfjord is in summer.

At the end of each season, those within Straumsfjord are forced into the other regio level. One may be camped near a grove in balmy summer, picking berries and listening to beautiful bird-song at sunset, and wake the following morning in a land shrouded in deep snow and battered by howling winds.

Time behaves strangely within Straumsfjord. The winter season lasts for winter outside, while the summer season covers the other three seasons of the year. However, the season may seem shorter or longer to those within the regio. Roll on the following table at the beginning of each season to determine that season's length within the regio.

Roll	Winter Length	Summer Length
1	1 week	1 season
2-3	1 month	2 seasons
4-5	1 season	3 seasons
6-9	2 seasons	4 seasons
10	3 seasons	6 seasons

For example, consider a grog who enters the regio at the beginning of winter, leaving his companions in Markland. The roll is a 1, so winter lasts a week in Straumsfjord. The grog leaves at that point, and finds that his companions have been waiting for three months. The grog has only aged a week, unlike his companions.

Both the summer and winter regiones have magical auras of two, but it is very difficult to move between them at any time other than the change of season; all rolls have a difficulty of 21. Even then, the characters must find some place with elements of the other season, such as a bush still in leaf in winter, or a frozen pond in summer. The roll required to go directly from the 'off' level to the mundane world has a difficulty of 25. Characters who move between the two levels of the regio find that time passes at the same rate in each.

The winter level of Straumsfjord is quite severe. The plentiful game and grain vanish, replaced by cold and snow. The waters around winter Straumsfjord are very stormy and filled with ice, making it dangerous to leave. Stores collected from Straumsfjord have every bit of nutritional value that mundane stores do, but they are badly affected by the change of seasons. 90% of any stores gathered in Straumsfjord vanish when the season changes to winter.

Uniped

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

Magic Might: 25

Size: +1

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Vicious +3

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist) +8 +6 +6 +3 +7

Short Bow +10 +8 - +4 +9

Soak: +1

Fatigue levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, Unconscious

Body levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, Incapacitated

Abilities: Area Lore: Straumsfjord 5 (hunting), Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Bows 8, Brawl 5 (dodge), Hunt 4, Speak Uniped 4, Stealth 4, Survival 4, Swim 3, Thrown Weapon 3 (rock)

Powers:

Flight of the Spring Doe, ReCo 10, 2 points. Allows the Uniped to run extremely quickly.

Endurance of the Berserkers, ReCo 15, 0 points. As the spell of the same name.

Equipment: Bow

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 5 Corpus in foot

Description: Unipeds are odd creatures.

They look like a misshapen, ugly humanoid with one massive leg, which ends in a large, powerful foot that affords them much speed and dexterity. The Unipeds' personalities are enigmatic, as no one has ever spoken with one. The statistics above are for an average young adult.



Conversely, any stores remaining at the end of winter become ten times greater when summer arrives. Stores brought from outside Straumsfjord are not affected by this phenomenon, nor are stores gathered there



but taken to the mundane world, even if they are later returned to Straumsfjord. Similarly, stores do not change if taken between the regio levels by characters.

For magi, Straumsfjord offers a plethora of vis sites. It should be rich in vis by the standards of your saga. As a rule of thumb, five times as much vis can be gathered in Straumsfjord as in a similar sized area of Europe.

During the summer, many types of vis may be found. Animál (abundant game animals), Aquam (sparkling pools and dew), Herbam (many self-sowing grains and other wondrous plants), Imáginem (sounds and smells of many types), and Terram (abundant shiny rocks) may all be had for those that have the inclination to search. Creo vis (from the nature of the season) and Muto vis (from the nature of the aura) can be distilled from the aura, using

the normal rules for extracting Vim vis (which can also be extracted).

During the winter those that brave the cold may find Ignem (cold and ice), Aquam (frozen pools), Imáginem (soft sounds of snow falling and harsh, howling winds), and Terram (ice again). Perdo (the nature of the season) and Muto (the nature of the regio) may also be distilled from the aura in addition to Vim. It is only possible to distill vis during winter if the season lasts for at least a season of apparent time.

Vis gathered in the regio acts strangely when moved between Straumsfjord's seasons. Vis not removed to the mundane realm or used prior to the changing of the season reverts to its non-magical state when the season changes. If kept within the regio until the next change of season, the vis regains its magical nature. If taken out of the regio after it has changed to its



non-magical form it remains non-magical forever. Note that vis taken into the mundane realm and then reintroduced to Straumsfjord will act as any other vis a magus has carried with him.

For example, an icicle of Ignem vis is harvested in winter and taken into summer. It turns into a normal icicle and it will remain a natural icicle and will probably melt unless it is taken back into Straumsfjord's winter, where it will then revert into vis. If that icicle were taken out of winter into the mundane realm and then brought into Straumsfjord's summer, it would retain its magical nature.

With the exception of the elements, the only real danger here is the Unipeds, a strange race of creatures that look much like men but have only one leg. They can hop amazingly fast, can "ski" down hills on their large foot, and can shoot arrows with deadly accuracy.

The Unipeds do not live in Straumsfjord, but hunt there frequently. They live far away in the mountains of the One-Legged, a land that no two-legged creature has ever visited. They frequently send their young out into the world to shoot powerful game to prove their adulthood, and are generally malicious in intent.

Hop

Hop is an area that is seems much like Straumsfjord: nice arable land, much game (deer, game birds, fish) and materials (wood, grapes, wheat). The weather is generally good and it does not snow in the winter. Hop is a land very near to perfection in the eyes of visitors, especially after coming from Greenland and going through Straumsfjord. It is a large island that would take about ten days to sail around, but that would be dangerous since you would be likely to meet the Skraelings. Hop has low rolling hills with areas of dense forest and

slow rivers. Grain grows in uncultivated meadows, and on the sides of some unforested hills grapes grow in abundance. Vis may be found much as in the summer regio of Straumsfjord. Unlike Straumsfjord, winter is very mild here. The only real danger, other than simply wanting to stay forever in a seeming paradise, is the Skraelings.

'Skraelings' is the Greenlanders' name for the natives of Hop. When the Skraelings come in peace, they wave a long pole sunwise, while when they come for war they wave it counter-sunwise, which makes an angry wail.

The Skraelings are an unusual people who are curious about strangers and want to trade. Their language is none anyone has ever heard, which makes trade difficult but not impossible. They trade rich, dark furs for weapons and textiles. They especially favor red cloth, and it does not matter whether it is fine silk or coarse wool. However, they are easily spooked. Anything that they consider sorcery will cause them to run in fear, and they will return in numbers with war in mind.

A king rules these people, but a sorcerer has stolen their queen. These people believe (whether rightly or wrongly is up to the players to figure out) that wrapping red cloth round their heads will protect them against the sorcerer, whom they call Isura. If they see visitors using "magic" they will assume they are allied with Isura and attack. Their ideas of sorcery are very rudimentary, so almost anything "strange" might be considered magic by them; odd movements or actions may well constitute magic in the Skraelings' eyes. The nature of Isura is up to the storyguide. He may be a lost member of the Order, a wayward Díedne, a member of the Order of Odin, or some other magical oddity. Given the Skraelings' fear of magic the sorcerer may not even be magical but a lost bunch of tricky Vikings trying to survive.





Story Hooks

Following are some way to get your troupe to Vinland. Obviously, those on the Atlantic coast, especially those in the north will have an easier time getting to Vinland.

Methods

- The normal way. Going to Greenland and hearing about the lands to the west. Exploration ensues.
- While Vinland is classically associated with a land to the west of Greenland, this area could be used as a strange place that could be found anywhere. Characters on a boat when a river floods or in a great storm could find themselves stranded in Vinland. Likewise, anyone lost in a great blizzard or stuck in hard, cold conditions may unknowingly wander into Straumsfjord. Someone lost in deep forests may find themselves emerging in Markland.
- Those versed in summoning spirits may ask one for knowledge of vast quantities of vis or of how a certain thing is made. The spirit could whisk these inquiring minds to Vinland in answer to the question. Likewise, hapless encounters with powerful spirits may result in the same fate.
- For those landlocked souls who really can't otherwise explain such a journey, fall back to the old menhir story. A magus is looking for magic stuff in the field. He finds a set of standing stones, and after some experimentation, he accidentally activates a gate and finds himself in Vinland.

Motives

- Simply hearing the story itself will make some want to investigate.

Skraelings

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

Magic Might: 5

Size: 0

Confidence: 3

Personality Traits: Brave +1, Skittish +2

Wpn/Attack Init Atk Dfn Dam Fat

Brawling (fist) +4 +3 +3 +0 +3

Longshaft

Weapon +9 +10 +5 +6 +4

Thrown

Weapon +8 +4 — +2 +4

Soak: +0

Fatigue levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Unc.

Body levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Abilities: Area Lore Hop 5 (finding furs), Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Bargain 1, Boating 3, Brawling 3 (All out defense), Craft: Hide Boat 3, Hunt 4, Longshaft Weapon 3 (Spear), Speak Skraeling 4, Survival 4, Swim 3, Thrown Weapon 3 (rock)

Powers:

Veil of Invisibility, PelM 5, 1 point. As the spell of the same name (Range Personal).

On a failed Brave roll a Skraeling automatically melts into the scenery and flees.

Equipment: Sling, spear, hide-covered boat.

Encumbrance: 0

Vis: 1 Corpus in heart.

Description: Skraelings are short with mean features, pale skin, tangled light-brown hair, and very wide eyes. The statistics above are for an average adult. Their powers of hiding make war somewhat difficult among them so they are by default a peaceful people. If they feel threatened by more "sorcerers" or there is some chance they may be able to get their queen free they may take the risk of assaulting strangers.

Characters can find out about Vinland in many ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Sven, your local Greenlander, tells you a tale of his cousin...
- Any merchant that deals with the Greenlanders (or northmen in general) may hear a fanciful tale of a strange land. This tale may quickly spread throughout most of Mythic Europe and eventually find the ear of someone interested.
- Magi, or other library bound characters, come across a story written in Icelandic, describing a strange land to the west. Alternatively, any magus may hear the tale of a lost Redcap, only recently returned from a strange journey to the west.
- As magi are usually looking for the strange and unusual, a merchant may bring for their inspection some samples of rare woods and curiously sweet syrup he can procure through his northern contacts. He might also have a very curious find: a Skraeling in a cage, which initially seems empty. Additionally, anyone on the sea may find a piece of maple washed up on the shore from a wrecked northern ship. If such wood and, especially, sugar are taken to market on a large scale, the new merchants may well find themselves in competition with Venetian merchants. The Venetians will be able to wage a long, cold war (or quite a hot one) against such interlopers into their family business.
- Those searching for Atlantis or Lyonesse may come across this tale because it involves a bunch of mysterious islands.
- A merchant comes to the covenant (or someone associated with it) to get financing for a trip to get wood from Markland. He tells the tale of some wood that has some fantastic properties. He isn't allied with the descendants of Leif Eriksson, though, so there

will be quite some intrigue trying to keep the family from finding out that he knows their secret. Alternatively, he is trying to get backing before finding the route.

- Those who know of the Díedne may come across a story in which the members of that house fled to the west at the end of the Schism War. The strangeness of Straumsfjord and Hop may seem like something that members of that house would like. Hoplites and quaesitores may be asked or forced to investigate the area to make sure the enemy isn't there.
- The fact that the inhabitants of Hop can disappear "like an illusion" may seem a little too much like the servants of an Imáginem master. Some may want to investigate.
- The large stones in Helluland are really the tops of a large castle. This is the result of a really large magical botch. An early member of the Order was experimenting with reducing objects and re-enlarging them in strategic places. He wanted to create a "pocket castle" that he could unleash on an enemy. Unfortunately, the magnitude of magic necessary was quite beyond him and it backfired. He still lies under this castle, his lab shattered along with his body. Those industrious enough to unearth his tomb may find many relics from the founding of the Order, most now long smashed from the weight of centuries and tons of stone.
- Alternatively, the castle may have been created by Díedne who migrated here after the Schism War. Over time the top of the castle has become exposed. Perhaps some magus' sigil is present in the stone and this is related in the story told to those at the covenant. Some perceptive magus who gets a Hermes Lore roll of 18+ can recognize that the castle was made by a member of the lost house.





- Perhaps both stories are partially true — some old magus screwed up but now Díedne are living there intent on pursuing their vengeance against the Order that cast them out.
- Your “local Northman” is found sporting a great magical artifact. Upon investigation, he claims the dwarves created it for him and him alone. Sure enough, the thing only works for him. Perhaps the characters will want to visit these dwarves themselves. Whether the dvergar are able to make magical items or not is up to the storyguide.
- Lost at sea, after braving horrific storms and sea monsters the characters find Markland or one of the other areas of Vinland. The descendants of Leif Eriksson will not like the competition if the party’s story gets around to them.
- The Unipeds send their young to hunt. One finds a passage to the covenant and begins hunting. The characters follow it back to Vinland.
- Some Skraelings leave Vinland looking for someone to help them get their Queen back. Somehow, they end up at the covenant. Assuming the magi don’t harvest them for vis, they may bargain with the Skraelings in exchange for

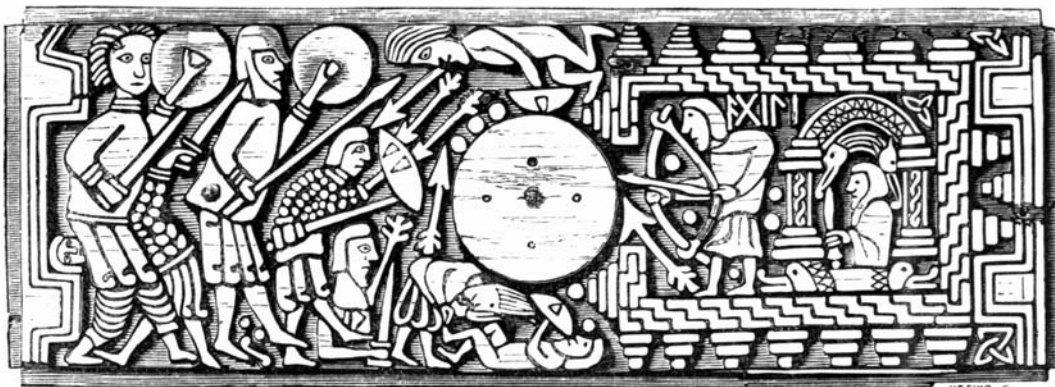
their help. Alternatively, the Skraelings get lost and end up at the covenant. All they want is to return home. The covenant may not realize that the Skraelings are stealing from them for some time as they can be invisible and quite stealthy.

- Someone who is trusted by the local Church may be asked to go to Greenland and help find a lost emissary and the missing yearly tithes. An abbot is also sent to oversee the operation. The party can discover that the emissary’s ship was lost at sea, and survivors have strange tales to tell of islands to the west. Intrigue comes from the locals who want to keep their trade route secret and not pay much to the church.

Source

Thorsson, Örnólfur, ed. “Eirik the Red’s Saga” in *The Sagas of the Icelanders*. Viking Penguin, 2000.

Thorsson, Örnólfur, ed. “The Saga of the Greenlanders” in *The Sagas of the Icelanders*. Viking Penguin, 2000.



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